PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

SIXTH SERIES—VOLUME 169

HOUSE OF COMMONS

OFFICIAL REPORT

THIRD SESSION OF THE FIFTIETH PARLIAMENT
OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND NORTHERN IRELAND
THIRTY-NINTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

SESSION 1989-90

COMPRISING PERIOD
12 MARCH—23 MARCH 1990

ISBN 0 10 681169 X

HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

(FORMED BY THE RT. HON. MARGARET THATCHER, MP, JANUARY 1990)

PRIME MINISTER, FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY AND MINISTER FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE—
The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, MP
LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL AND LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS—The Rt. Hon. Sir Geoffrey Howe, QC, MP
LORD CHANCELLOR—The Rt. Hon. The Lord Mackay of Clashfern
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS—The Rt. Hon. Douglas Hurd, CBE, MP
CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER—The Rt. Hon. John Major MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT—The Rt. Hon. David Waddington, QC, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WALES—The Rt. Hon. Peter Walker, MBE, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEFENCE—The Rt. Hon. Tom King, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY AND PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE—
The Rt. Hon. Nicholas Ridley, MP
CHANCELLOR OF THE DUCHY OF LANCASTER—The Rt. Hon. Kenneth Baker, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR HEALTH—The Rt. Hon. Kenneth Clarke, QC, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EDUCATION AND SCIENCE—The Rt. Hon. John MacGregor, OBE, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SCOTLAND—The Rt. Hon. Malcolm Rifkind, QC, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT—The Rt. Hon. Cecil Parkinson, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR ENERGY—The Rt. Hon. John Wakeham, MP
LORD PRIVY SEAL AND LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS—The Rt. Hon. The Lord Belstead
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SOCIAL SECURITY—The Rt. Hon. Antony Newton, OBE, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT—The Rt. Hon. Christopher Patten, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND—The Rt. Hon. Peter Brooke, MP
MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD—The Rt. Hon. John Gummer, MP
CHIEF SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY—The Rt. Hon. Norman Lamont, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EMPLOYMENT—The Rt. Hon. Michael Howard, QC, MP

LAW OFFICERS

ATTORNEY-GENERAL—The Rt. Hon. Sir Patrick Mayhew, QC, MP
LORD ADVOCATE—The Rt. Hon. The Lord Fraser of Carmyllie, QC
SOLICITOR-GENERAL—The Rt. Hon. Sir Nicholas Lyell, QC, MP
SOLICITOR-GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND—Alan Rodger, Esq, QC

MINISTERS NOT IN THE CABINET

PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY—The Rt. Hon. Tim Renton, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE, (MINISTER FOR THE ARTS)—The Rt. Hon. Richard Luce, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE, FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE—
Minister for Overseas Development—The Rt. Hon. Lynda Chalker, MP
The Rt. Hon. William Waldegrave, MP
The Lord Brabazon of Tara
The Hon. Francis Maude, MP
PAYMASTER GENERAL—The Earl of Caithness
FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY—Peter Lilley, Esq, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE, HOME OFFICE—
The Rt. Hon. John Patten, Esq, MP
David Mellor, Esq, QC, MP
The Rt. Hon. The Earl Ferrers
MINISTER OF STATE, WELSH OFFICE—Wyn Roberts, Esq, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE, MINISTRY OF DEFENCE—
Minister of State for Defence Procurement—The Hon. Alan Clark, MP
Minister of State for the Armed Forces—The Hon. Archibald Hamilton, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY—
Minister for Trade—The Rt. Hon. The Lord Trefgarne
Minister for Industry—The Hon. Douglas Hogg, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH—
Minister for Health—Mrs. Virginia Bottomley, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE—Mrs. Angela Rumbold, CBE, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE, SCOTTISH OFFICE—
Ian Lang, Esq, MP
The Lord Sanderson of Bowden

MINISTER OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT—
Minister for Public Transport—Michael Portillo, Esq, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY—The Rt. Hon. Peter Morrison, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SECURITY—Minister for Social Security—The Rt. Hon. Nicholas Scott, MBE, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT—
Minister for the Environment and Countryside—David Trippier, Esq, RD, MP
Minister for Local Government and Inner Cities—David Hunt, Esq, MBE, MP
Minister for Housing and Planning—Michael Spicer, Esq, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE—The Rt. Hon. John Cope, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD—The Baroness Trumpington
MINISTER OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT—Tim Eggar, Esq, MP

DEPARTMENTS OF STATE AND MINISTERS

Agriculture, Fisheries and Food—
MINISTER—The Rt. Hon. John Gummer, MP
MINISTER OF STATE—The Baroness Trumpington
PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIES—
David Maclean, Esq, MP
David Curry, Esq, MP

Arts and Libraries, Office of—
MINISTER FOR THE ARTS—The Rt. Hon. Richard Luce, MP

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster—
The Rt. Hon. Kenneth Baker, MP

Civil Service, Office of the Minister for the—
PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE—The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE (MINISTER FOR THE ARTS)—The Rt. Hon. Richard Luce, MP

Defence—
SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. Tom King, MP
MINISTER OF STATE FOR DEFENCE PROCUREMENT—The Hon. Alan Clark, MP
MINISTER OF STATE FOR THE ARMED FORCES—The Hon. Archibald Hamilton, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEFENCE PROCUREMENT—Michael Neubert, Esq, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE ARMED FORCES—The Earl of Arran

Education and Science—
SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. John MacGregor, OBE, MP
MINISTER OF STATE—Mrs. Angela Rumbold, CBE, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
Robert Jackson, Esq, MP
Alan Howarth, Esq, CBE, MP

Employment—
SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. Michael Howard, QC, MP
MINISTER OF STATE—Tim Eggar, Esq, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
Patrick Nicholls, Esq, MP
The Lord Strathclyde

Energy—
SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. John Wakeham, MP
MINISTER OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. Peter Morrison, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE—Tony Baldry, Esq, MP

Environment—
SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. Christopher Patten, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE—
Minister for the Environment and Countryside—David Trippier, Esq, RD, MP
Minister for Local Government and Inner Cities—David Hunt, Esq, MBE, MP
Minister for Housing and Planning—Michael Spicer, Esq, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
Christopher Chope, Esq, OBE, MP
The Hon. Colin Moynihan, MP (Minister for Sport)
The Lord Hesketh
David Heathcoat-Amory, Esq, MP

Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs—
SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. Douglas Hurd, CBE, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE—
Minister for Overseas Development—The Rt. Hon. Lynda Chalker, MP
The Rt. Hon. William Waldegrave, MP
The Lord Brabazon of Tara
The Hon. Francis Maude, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE—The Hon. Tim Sainsbury, MP

Health—
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR HEALTH—The Rt. Hon. Kenneth Clarke, QC, MP
MINISTER OF STATE—
Minister for Health—Mrs. Virginia Bottomley, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
Roger Freeman, Esq, MP
The Baroness Hooper

Home Office—
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT—The Rt. Hon. David Waddington, QC, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE—
The Rt. Hon. John Patten, Esq, MP
David Mellor, Esq, QC, MP
The Rt. Hon. The Earl Ferrers
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE—Peter Lloyd, Esq, MP

Law Officers' Department—
ATTORNEY-GENERAL—The Rt. Hon. Sir Patrick Mayhew, QC, MP
SOLICITOR-GENERAL—The Rt. Hon. Sir Nicholas Lyell, QC, MP

Lord Advocate's Department—
LORD-ADVOCATE—The Rt. Hon. The Lord Fraser of Carmyllie, QC
SOLICITOR-GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND—Alan Rodger, Esq, QC

Lord Chancellor—
The Rt. Hon. The Lord Mackay of Clashfern

Northern Ireland Office—
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND—The Rt. Hon. Peter Brooke, MP
MINISTER OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. John Cope, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
Richard Needham, Esq, MP
Peter Bottomley, Esq, MP
Dr. Brian Mawhinney, MP
The Lord Skelmersdale

Paymaster General—
The Earl of Caithness

Privy Council Office—
LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL AND LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS—The Rt. Hon. Sir Geoffrey Howe, QC, MP
LORD PRIVY SEAL AND LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS—The Rt. Hon. The Lord Belstead
MINISTER OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. Richard Luce, MP

Scottish Office—
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SCOTLAND—The Rt. Hon. Malcolm Rifkind, QC, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE—
Ian Lang, Esq, MP
The Lord Sanderson of Bowden
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
Lord James Douglas-Hamilton, MP
Michael Forsyth, Esq, MP

Social Security—
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SOCIAL SECURITY—The Rt. Hon. Antony Newton, OBE, MP
MINISTER OF STATE—
Minister for Social Security—The Rt. Hon. Nicholas Scott, MBE, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
The Lord Henley
Mrs. Gillian Shephard, MP

Trade and Industry—
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY AND PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE—
The Rt. Hon. Nicholas Ridley, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE—
Minister for Trade—The Rt. Hon. The Lord Trefgarne
Minister for Industry—The Hon. Douglas Hogg, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDUSTRY AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS—Eric Forth, Esq, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR CORPORATE AFFAIRS—John Redwood, Esq, MP

Transport—
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT—The Rt. Hon. Cecil Parkinson, MP
MINISTER OF STATE
Minister for Public Transport—Michael Portillo, Esq, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
Minister for Roads and Traffic—Robert Atkins, Esq, MP
Minister for Aviation and Shipping—Patrick McLoughlin, Esq, MP

Treasury—
PRIME MINISTER, FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY AND MINISTER FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE—
The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, MP
CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER—The Rt. Hon. John Major, MP
CHIEF SECRETARY—The Rt. Hon. Norman Lamont, MP
PAYMASTER GENERAL—The Earl of Caithness
FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY—Peter Lilley, Esq, MP
ECONOMIC SECRETARY—Richard Ryder, Esq, OBE, MP
PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY—The Rt. Hon. Tim Renton, MP
LORDS COMMISSIONERS—
David Lightbown, Esq, MP
Kenneth Carlisle, Esq, MP
Stephen Dorrell, Esq, MP
John Taylor, Esq, MP
The Hon. Tom Sackville, MP
ASSISTANT WHIPS—
Michael Fallon, Esq, MP
Sydney Chapman, Esq, MP
Greg Knight, Esq, MP
Irvine Patnick, Esq, OBE, MP
Nicholas Baker, Esq, MP

Welsh Office—
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WALES—The Rt. Hon. Peter Walker, MP
MINISTER OF STATE—Wyn Roberts, Esq, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE—Ian Grist, Esq, MP

Her Majesty's Household—
LORD CHAMBERLAIN—The Rt. Hon. The Earl of Airlie, KT, GCVO
LORD STEWARD—The Viscount Ridley, TD
MASTER OF THE HORSE—The Rt. Hon. The Earl of Westmorland, KCVO
TREASURER—Tristan Garel-Jones, Esq, MP
COMPTROLLER—Alastair Goodlad, Esq, MP
VICE-CHAMBERLAIN—Tony Durant, Esq, MP
CAPTAIN OF THE HONOURABLE CORPS OF GENTLEMEN-AT-ARMS—The Rt. Hon. The Lord Denham
CAPTAIN OF THE QUEEN'S BODYGUARD OF THE YEOMEN OF THE GUARD—The Viscount Davidson
LORDS IN WAITING—The Viscount Long, The Viscount Ullswater, The Lord Reay, The Earl of Strathmore and Kinghorne
BARONESS IN WAITING—The Baroness Blatch

SECOND CHURCH ESTATES COMMISSIONER, REPRESENTING CHURCH COMMISSIONERS—The Rt. Hon. Michael Alison, MP

HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

THE SPEAKER—Rt. Hon. Bernard Weatherill, MP

CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS—Rt. Hon. Harold Walker, MP

FIRST DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS—Sir Paul Dean, MP

SECOND DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS—Miss Betty Boothroyd, MP

CHAIRMEN'S PANEL—

Donald Coleman, Esq, MP, Patrick Cormack, Esq, MP, Stan Crowther, Esq, MP, Dame Janet Fookes, MP, Norman Hogg, Esq, MP, Geraint Howells, Esq, MP, Sir John Hunt, MP, David Knox, Esq, MP, James Lamond, Esq, MP, Michael Latham, Esq, MP, Ted Leadbitter, Esq, MP, Geoffrey Lofthouse, Esq, MP, John McWilliam, Esq, MP, Michael J. Martin, Esq, MP, Sir Anthony Meyer, MP, Michael Morris, Esq, MP, Robert Rhodes James, Esq, MP, Sir Giles Shaw, MP, Sir Michael Shaw, MP, Michael Shersby, Esq, MP, Sir John Stradling Thomas, MP, Nicholas Winterton, Esq, MP

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION—

Rt. Hon. The Speaker (Chairman), Alan Beith, Esq, MP, Dr. John Cunningham, MP, Rt. Hon. Sir Barney Hayhoe, MP, Rt. Hon. Peter Shore, MP, Rt. Hon. Sir Geoffrey Howe, QC, MP

SECRETARY OF THE COMMISSION—W. A. Proctor

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT—

Sir Clifford Boulton, KCB (Chairman), Sir Alan Urwick, KCVO, CMG, D. Menhennet, D. Phil., G. A. Roberts, I. D. Church, W. J. J. Smillie, FHCIMA, FCFA, ACF

SECRETARY OF THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT—B. A. Wilson

OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

SPEAKER'S SECRETARY—P. J. Kitcatt, CB

ASSISTANT SECRETARY TO THE SPEAKER—Miss S. Holt

TRAINBEARER—D. J. Lord

DEPUTY TRAINBEARER—P. L. Warwick

DIARY SECRETARY—Mrs. S. Norvell

SPEAKER'S CHAPLAIN—Rev. Canon D. C. Gray, TD, PhD

SPEAKER'S COUNSEL—H. Knorpel, CB, QC, G. E. Gammie, CB, QC

ASSISTANT TO SPEAKER'S COUNSEL—P. Harvey, CB

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS

SECRETARY TO THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS—R. I. S. Phillips

DEPARTMENT OF THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

CLERK OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS—Sir Clifford Boulton, KCB

CLERK ASSISTANT—J. F. Sweetman, TD

CLERK OF COMMITTEES—D. W. Limon

PRINCIPAL CLERKS—
H. M. Barclay (Public Bills)
W. R. McKay (Journal Office)
C. B. Winnifrith (Table Office)
R. B. Sands (Overseas Office)
G. Cubie (Select Committees)
A. J. Hastings (Select Committees)
R. J. Willoughby (Private Bills)
J. R. Rose (Standing Committees)
D. G. Millar (Financial Committees)

DEPUTY PRINCIPAL CLERKS—S. A. L. Panton, M. R. Jack, PhD, Mrs. J. Sharpe, Ms. A. Milner-Barry, R. W. G. Wilson, W. A. Proctor, F. A. Cranmer, R. J. Rogers, C. R. M. Ward, PhD, Ms. H. E. Irwin, D. W. N. Doig, A. Sandall, MLitt, D. L. Natzler, E. P. Silk, D. F. Harrison

SENIOR CLERKS—Mrs. S. A. de Ste. Croix, A. R. Kennon, D. W. Robson, L. C. Laurence Smyth, S. J. Patrick, D. J. Gerhold, C. J. Poyser, S. J. Priestley, A. H. Doherty, P. A. Evans, R. I. S. Phillips, R. G. James, Mrs. E. J. Flood, Ms. P. A. Helme, D. R. Lloyd, R. A. Lambert, B. M. Hutton, J. B. Ingram (acting), I. G. Gilbert (acting), J. Darling (acting), J. M. Hope (acting)

CLERK OF SERVICES SUB-COMMITTEES—K. J. Brown

ASSISTANT CLERKS—J. S. Benger, Ms. E. C. Samson, N. P. Walker, M. D. Hamlyn, P. C. Seaward, DPhil, C. G. Lee, C. D. Stanton, A. Y. A. Azad

SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICERS—G. E. Clayton, Miss R. J. Challis, P. G. Moon

HIGHER EXECUTIVE OFFICERS—L. L. Kaye, A. P. Hubner, Miss S. J. Fox, Mrs. P. Fisher, F. McShane, J. D. Whatley, S. D. Barrett, M. Clark, Miss A. M. Loader, Mrs. S. M. Barrett, Miss F. L. Allingham, Mrs. L. M. Nugent, J. A. L. Dresner

SPECIALIST ASSISTANTS—M. P. Hillyard, M. J. Cremin, Dr. L. M. Rosborough, Miss K. Rogers, E. Thompson, Mrs. J. Evans

EDITORIAL SUPERVISOR OF THE VOTE—G. H. Bright, MBE, DEPUTY—B. Tidball, ASSISTANTS—Miss B. Balcomb, Miss L. Lewis, J. Puricelli, K. B. Wood, P. D. Howlett, Mrs. L. R. Shade, P. A. Jack

EXAMINERS OF PETITIONS FOR PRIVATE BILLS—R. J. Willoughby, M. G. Pownall

REGISTRAR OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS—A. J. Hastings

TAXING OFFICER—R. J. Willoughby

SUPERVISOR OF BROADCASTING—J. F. Grist (temporary)

SUPERINTENDING CLERK—R. A. Broomfield

CHIEF OFFICE CLERKS—M. P. Oxborough, N. P. Wright, Mrs. B. Ward, Miss D. E. Symes, Ms. C. J. D. Quantrell, P. R. Coppack (acting)

DEPARTMENT OF THE SERJEANT AT ARMS

SERJEANT AT ARMS—Sir Alan Urwick, KCVO, CMG

DEPUTY SERJEANT AT ARMS—P. N. W. Jennings

ASSISTANT SERJEANT AT ARMS—M. J. A. Cummins

DEPUTY ASSISTANT SERJEANTS AT ARMS—P. A. J. Wright, J. F. Collins

CLERK IN CHARGE—Miss S. J. Scott Thomson

ADMISSION ORDER OFFICE—A. Chipperfield, BEM, Mrs. S. J. Warren, A. J. Spencer

PRINCIPAL DOORKEEPER—R. T. Warboys

SECOND PRINCIPAL DOORKEEPER—R. H. Usher

SENIOR DOORKEEPERS—R. A. F. Chapman, J. D. Garnett, C. E. Gray, J. C. W. Cooper, D. L. Hurley, D. Shiels

HEAD OFFICE KEEPER—W. H. Hazard, MBE

SENIOR OFFICE KEEPERS—M. Bryant, K. R. Kemp, K. R. Dickason

NURSING SISTER—Miss E. Needham

DEPARTMENT OF THE LIBRARY

LIBRARIAN—D. Menhennet, DPhil

DEPUTY LIBRARIAN—D. J. T. Englefield

LIBRARY AND RESEARCH—

ASSISTANT LIBRARIANS (Heads of Division)—G. F. Lock, Miss J. B. Tanfield

DEPUTY ASSISTANT LIBRARIANS (Heads of Section)—S. Z. Young, Mrs. H. R. Coates, Miss P. J. Baines, BLitt, K. G. Cuninghame, Mrs. J. M. Wainwright, FI InfSc, C. C. Pond, PhD, Mrs. C. B. Andrews, R. C. Clements, Mrs. J. M. Lourie

LIBRARY CLERKS, SENIOR—Ms. F. Poole, Mrs. J. M. Fiddick, C. R. Barclay, Mrs. C. M. Gillie, R. J. Ware, DPhil, Ms. D. Gore, PhD, R. J. Twigger, B. K. Winetrobe, T. N. Edmonds, R. J. Cracknell, Miss O. M. Gay, Miss E. M. McInnes, Miss M. Baber, Mrs. G. L. Allen (temporary). ASSISTANT—A. J. L. Crompton, E. J. Fishwick, MPhil, Mrs. K. Greener, Miss P. Strickland, Miss V. A. Miller, Ms. M. J. Quiney, Ms. N. R. Donlon, Ms. H. M. Jeffs, J. R. Lunn, PhD, Mrs. P. Carling (temporary), Mrs. J. M. Meadows (temporary), R. S. Dewdney (temporary)

SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICER—S. A. Wise

SENIOR LIBRARY EXECUTIVES—Mrs. S. M. Withers, ALA, Mrs. H. V. Holden, ALA, K. N. H. Parry, ALA, Ms. A. Muir, Miss C. E. Fretten, ALA, Miss I. O. White, ALA (acting)

EDUCATION OFFICER—Mrs. C. Weeds ASSISTANT—Mrs. C. C. O'Connor

PROJECT MANAGER, NEW BUILDING—Miss J. Seaton FLA

HIGHER EXECUTIVE OFFICERS—Mrs. P A. Bozdan

HIGHER LIBRARY EXECUTIVES—J. A. Prince, MLS, Mrs. P. V. Wiles, Mrs. D. W. Clark, Miss M. H. Fletcher, Mrs. P. E. Cook, ALA, Ms. H. Armstrong, Miss E. J. Jones, ALA, G. Haig, Miss B. Mee, MIInfSc, Miss G. L. Cooper, Mrs. E. H. Riley, ALA, Mrs. F. M. Ward, Mrs. M. A. Azim, ALA, Ms. F. Whittle, R. Freebury (acting)

SUPERINTENDING CLERK—J. R. Hutson

EDITOR, WEEKLY BULLETIN—Miss B. A. Rowlands, ALA

LIBRARY EXECUTIVES—Miss S. Holland, A. D. Parker, ALA, Ms. J. B. Hall, ALA, T. C. Holmes, P. E. M. Ward, Mrs. J. M. Smith, ALA, C. M. Sear, Miss J. Lyall, Ms. Z. A. Smallwood, Miss C. Owens, Miss C. M. Blair, ALA

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS—Miss N. Harland, D. B. Inns, Mrs. A. J. H. Mara, D. A. Brown, J. P. Brevitt, M. Greenhill (Head Library Attendant), B. Smith, Miss A. J. Hatton, Ms. J. Fessey, A. J. Fuller, Miss J. M. Perkes

VOTE OFFICE—

DELIVERER OF THE VOTE—G. R. Russell

DEPUTY DELIVERER OF THE VOTE—H. C. Foster

ASSISTANT DELIVERER OF THE VOTE—O. B. T. Sweeney

HIGHER EXECUTIVE OFFICER—C. D. Lister

SUPERINTENDING CLERKS—Mrs. S. Fuzio, B. G. Underwood, A. J. Ashton (Sales Office)

VOTE OFFICE ASSISTANTS—T. S. Wilson, G. E. Howard, C. P. Williams, P. Hannett

ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT—G. A. Roberts

FEES OFFICE—

ACCOUNTANT—J. L. G. Dobson

DEPUTY ACCOUNTANT—A. J. Lewis

SENIOR ASSISTANT ACCOUNTANT—A. R. Marskell

ASSISTANT ACCOUNTANTS—M. J. Barram, Miss M. M. McColl, M. Fletcher, R. Russell

SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICER—K. E. Walton

HIGHER EXECUTIVE OFFICERS—R. Gunn, M. J. H. Caswell, Mrs. P. D. Page, Mrs. N. Norman, Mrs. G. Crowther, Mrs. P. M. Lowther, Mrs. D. Hill, Miss P. Hurford, Mrs. J. S. Peach

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS—Miss D. E. Johnson, D. M. Allen, Miss L. J. F. Clay, Mrs. D. K. Euesden, D. J. D. Woods, Ms. M. R. Morris, Miss R. Harrison, G. L. Turner, Miss P. R. Mills, Mrs. J. D. Mead, Miss G. Bauman, P. F. Dawson, Miss S. E. Flavell, Miss S. A. Weaver, P. H. Olden, A. D. Rowlands, P. J. S. French, Miss. T. D. Ruewell, C. J. Bumstead

ESTABLISHMENTS OFFICE—

HEAD OF OFFICE—B. A. Wilson

DEPUTY HEAD OF OFFICE—J. A. Robb

SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICERS—Mrs. R. A. White, V. H. Stocker

PERSONNEL OFFICE MANAGER—N. P. Crawley

PERSONNEL OFFICERS—P. C. Kingsley, R. S. Harrison, Miss J. Bremner, M. Page

COMPUTER OFFICE—

COMPUTER OFFICER—R. S. Morgan, FBCS, FIInfSc

ASSISTANT COMPUTER OFFICERS—Mrs. G. S. P. Smith, Mrs. S. C. White

EXECUTIVE OFFICER—Mrs. J. M. Cleveland

INTERNAL AUDITOR—A. A. Cameron

STAFF INSPECTOR—R. C. Collins

WELFARE OFFICER—Mrs. A. Mossop

DEPARTMENT OF THE OFFICIAL REPORT

EDITOR—I. D. Church

DEPUTY EDITOR—P. Walker

PRINCIPAL ASSISTANT EDITORS—R. V. Hadlow, J. Gourley, J. Withers, W. G. Garland

ASSISTANT EDITORS—Vee Grainger, J. Ledgerwood, Miss V. A. A. Clarke, Miss H. A. Hales, Miss L. Sutherland

COMMITTEE SUB-EDITORS—D. Crosswell, Mrs. A. Roberts, S. M. Hutchinson, Miss V. A. Widgery, C. Fogarty, Mrs. H. J. G. Natzler, Miss M. Babington, Mrs. A. Street, L. Gilmore, Ms. G. Hardgrave, P. Oglethorpe, P. Hadlow, Miss C. Hanly, M. Watson, Miss K. Stewart

REPORTERS—Mrs. E. J. Gregory, Miss J. A. Bradshaw, Miss E. Morris, J. Ransley, Miss J. Goodman, Ms. J. Dall, Mrs. P. Pickford, Miss K. Myers, Ms. J. Burden

PRINCIPAL TRANSCRIBER—D. N. Harrington, MBE

DEPUTY PRINCIPAL TRANSCRIBERS—Mrs. M. J. Harding, Miss J. L. Brown

PRINCIPAL HANSARD ASSISTANT—Miss R. Washington

SENIOR HANSARD ASSISTANT—J. Brake

ANNUNCIATOR SUPERINTENDENT—G. Carpenter

REFRESHMENT DEPARTMENT

GENERAL MANAGER—W. J. J. Smillie, FHCIMA, FCFA, ACF

DEPUTY GENERAL MANAGER—E. J. Nash, MCFA

PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATOR—Mrs. S. M. Nicholls, FHCIMA, MIPM

PERSONAL ASSISTANT TO GENERAL MANAGER—Mrs. A. G. Lunn

BANQUETING MANAGER—C. J. Griffiths

CATERING ACCOUNTANT—D. R. W. Wood, FCA

ASSISTANT CATERING ACCOUNTANT—Mrs. B. A. Langley

EXECUTIVE CHEF—I. Gabay

HEAD CELLARMAN—D. Balcombe

HEAD STOREMAN—A. E. Edmond

SHORTHAND WRITER TO THE HOUSE—Mrs. E. M. C. Holland

PARLIAMENTARY WORKS OFFICER (PSA)—B. C. Sewell

HEAD OF SECURITY—Chief Superintendent A. J. Coxon

COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER—A. Blake

POSTMASTER—J. Arnold

TRANSPORT MANAGER—R. H. Hyde

THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

OFFICIAL REPORT

IN THE THIRD SESSION OF THE FIFTIETH PARLIAMENT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND
[WHICH OPENED 25 JUNE 1987]

THIRTY-NINTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

SIXTH SERIES **VOLUME 169**

EIGHTH VOLUME OF SESSION 1989-90

House of Commons

Monday 12 March 1990

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Oral Answers to Questions

TRANSPORT

United States Secretary for Transportation

1. **Mr. Colvin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on his meeting with the Secretary for Transportation of the United States of America.

The Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Cecil Parkinson): We met in Washington on 11 January. We discussed a variety of topics, including the prospects for liberalising services between the United Kingdom and United States of America and arrangements for new United States airline services to regional airports. Those discussions are now being carried forward.

Mr. Colvin: Will my right hon. Friend confirm that any air service agreements with the United States will be based on reciprocity, particularly with regard to cabotage, and that they will be negotiated by Britain on a bilateral basis rather than in concert with our European partners? We have much more at stake than other EEC members. To negotiate with them might lead to the building up of a fortress Europe mentality, which would be very much to Britain's disadvantage in its relationship with the United States.

Mr. Parkinson: I entirely agree with my hon. Friend. It is important that the package of measures that we agree between us is fair to both sides. The Commission has its work cut out to make progress on liberalisation within the Community and is certainly not ready to take on the duties of negotiating our bilateral international agreements. I therefore agree with my hon. Friend on both counts.

Mr. Prescott: At that meeting, did the Secretary of State discuss with Mr. Skinner the information that came to light in the presidential investigation into the Lockerbie tragedy—that 80 per cent. of the American embassy people who were to fly on that plane cancelled on receipt of the warning about that crash? Does the right hon. Gentleman accept that that is another good reason why he should reopen the inquiry into the Lockerbie tragedy, as it causes grave offence for him to co-operate with the American authorities while refusing to conduct such an inquiry in Britain?

Mr. Parkinson: I did not discuss the information about the United States personnel, although I discussed with Mr. Skinner the implications of Lockerbie for aviation security. As the hon. Gentleman knows, the two Governments have been co-operating to promote international agreement on a range of matters. We are still investigating Lockerbie—the investigations by the police and the air accident investigation branch continue. My right hon. and learned Friend the Lord Advocate has made it clear that there will be a fatal accident inquiry and he is already making those arrangements. There is no question of that terrible disaster not being fully investigated.

Road Improvement

2. **Mr. Barry Field:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much is being allocated in transport supplementary grant to local authorities in 1990-91 for road improvement programmes.

The Minister for Roads and Traffic (Mr. Robert Atkins): Government grants of £233 million have been made available to local councils this year—a 15 per cent.

increase on last year—further proof, if it were needed, of the Government's real commitment to improving local roads.

Mr. Field: I thank my hon. Friend for that excellent news. Has his Department had time to consider the report by Sir John Wolfe-Barry and Partners, dated 24 May 1924, on the construction of a bridge between east and west Cowes? I wonder whether my hon. Friend would like to earn 66 standing ovations on the Isle of Wight, one for every year since that report, as well as a free holiday on the Isle of Wight, for joining east and west and announcing that he will fund the river bridge over the Medina.

Mr. Atkins: My hon. Friend may have been around when the article was published, but I most certainly was not. None the less, his point is not lost on me or on my Department. The case for the Medina bridge is strong. As my hon. Friend will understand, I cannot commit myself at the moment to announcing whether transport supplementary grant can be made available, but this is obviously a good candidate. Clearly, were I able to provide that grant, a free holiday would be an attraction, but not the most persuasive one.

Mr. Fearn: Is the Minister aware that many bridges over disused railways are in a very bad state of repair? In the programme of moneys that he has in mind to allocate to the local authorities, are there any moneys for the repair of the bridges, as there is no doubt that they are in a dangerous state?

Mr. Atkins: I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will be aware that we have made an adjustment this year to enable local authorities to ring-fence the resources that were previously available to them under the rate support grant and which are now available under our own grant, to enable them to repair their local bridges. The local authorities have told me that they require more money, and we are considering that at the moment, but the Department's programme of repair of its own bridges on trunk roads, motorways and so on, is progressing fast and satisfactorily.

Mr. Adley: Is my hon. Friend aware that those who have had to listen over the years to the endless arguments about the Winchester bypass recognised the dilemma in which the Secretary of State found himself, and that most people realised that he had no choice whatever but to reach the decision that he reached? The decision that the Secretary of State has taken to return the existing road to greenery will do a great deal to allay the understandable concern about the environment, and most reasonable people accept what the Government have decided to do.

Mr. Atkins: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and I are grateful for my hon. Friend's judgment, bearing in mind his known interests in matters that are not always road based. I think that it is fair to say that a number of us involved in making the decision resent strongly the suggestion that, because that difficult decision was faced and taken, those at the Department of the Environment and at the Department of Transport are somehow less aware of the environmental considerations that are so important to many of us. My hon. Friend knows the area well and his support for the road on behalf of his constituents is greatly appreciated.

London Assessment Studies

3. **Miss Hoey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many responses he has now received to the London assessment studies consultation; and what was their nature.

Mr. Parkinson: Several thousand responses were received on the London assessment consultation and they are now being analysed.

Miss Hoey: Will the Secretary of State confirm that the vast majority of responses that he received from local authorities, businesses and property developers oppose the road-building aspects of the road assessment studies and call for more money to be spent on public transport? Will he now listen to what people are saying and, in particular, to the thousands of people in my area who are trying to save Clapham common from devastation?

Mr. Parkinson: Assessment of the representations is still going on and it would be unfair to suggest that we can summarise them in a word or two. Certainly, some of the major road-building proposals are very controversial but in other cases people accept the need for adjustments and improvements. I should also point out to the hon. Lady —I am glad that she underlined it her remarks—that the assessment studies contain quite a large number of public transport options and that the Government are already committed to the biggest ever investment programme for Network SouthEast and London Underground.

Mr. Gerald Bowden: Will my right hon. Friend note that during the consultation period I received an unprecedented number of letters—some 1,500 individual letters—from constituents about proposals for the south circular road? The vast majority of my correspondents do not wish large-scale road development to take place; they seek minor improvements at junctions and traffic management schemes. They would also endorse the proposals that I know my right hon. Friend and his Department are to put forward to improve the public transport system—in particular, the extension of the Underground route to the south-east.

Mr. Parkinson: On this occasion, as on others, my hon. Friend accurately assesses the mood of his constituents and represents it to the House. I thank him for his acknowledgement that a huge programme of investment to increase capacity on the Underground, to develop new lines and to extend and modernise existing lines is now under way and is being carried through.

Mr. Spearing: Does the Secretary of State agree that many of his public pronouncements have emphasised the importance of environmental factors when new roads are being built? Will he now reassess the decision—either of his Department or of the former Secretary of State for the Environment—not to put a road tunnel, as the inspector recommended, under Oxleas wood? Does he realise that the Government's failure to do that makes their claims to be green completely specious?

Mr. Parkinson: It is a little wild of the hon. Gentleman to say that the Government's reputation depends on a single decision, with which he does not agree, which affects his constituents. As the hon. Gentleman is aware, the

matter is being reconsidered and an inquiry is being reopened. We shall have to wait and see what recommendations are made.

Mr. Tracey: In his deliberations, will my right hon. Friend be clear about the fact that the London boroughs, and in particular the inner London boroughs, now place a much higher priority on environmental protection than on road building? Will he do all that he can to divert passengers to public transport and will he replenish the investment on public transport, which fell so radically under the Greater London council?

Mr. Parkinson: My hon. Friend is right to say that the Government must not underestimate the contribution that public transport can make in London. If we consider the investment programme, which is approximately four times what which we inherited from the Labour-controlled GLC five years ago, and also the £1,200 million that is to be invested in Network SouthEast, it is clear that we act while others talk and moan. We are aware of the need to improve public transport. However, we also recognise that many millions of people in London expect to use their motor cars and we are trying to ensure that that opportunity is open to them.

Marchioness

4. **Ms. Ruddock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he has yet received the report from the chief inspector of marine accidents about the Marchioness accident; and if he will make a statement.

The Minister for Aviation and Shipping (Mr. Patrick McLoughlin): The chief inspector of marine accidents will submit the final report on the Marchioness accident to my right hon. Friend when the parties specified in the marine accident regulations have had a chance to comment on his findings. That process of consultation began last week and may take up to two months.

Ms. Ruddock: I thank the Minister for his reply. I wonder whether I may refer to the Secretary of State through him. Fifty-one people lost their lives in that tragic accident and there was tremendous trauma for their dependants and relatives. Will the Secretary of State listen to the request of the dependants and relatives that there should be a full public inquiry into the Marchioness disaster as there was into the Zeebrugge disaster? If the Minister cannot give the House that assurance today, will he at least assure us that the Government have not set their mind against such an inquiry?

Mr. McLoughlin: It is open to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State to ask for a formal investigation at any stage. However, we are satisfied that the extremely thorough nature of the inquiry and report will be based on the evidence taken in the investigation. We do not want to postpone the publication of the report.

Mr. Hanley: May I ask my hon. Friend for clarification of what he has just said? Is it true that if a full public inquiry is entered into, the publication of the report on that tragic accident will be delayed and the inspector's recommendations might also be delayed? We all want justice for those who were killed and for their families. However, to delay safety on the river any longer would be a disaster as well.

Mr. McLoughlin: The marine accident investigation branch brought forward interim measures that were adopted very quickly after the accident. However, my hon. Friend is right. If a public inquiry were ordered, we should not be able to publish the report. I ask hon. Members to be patient and to wait for the publication of the report. When it is published, they will find that it is a useful and thorough document. That would be in everyone's interests.

Mr. Simon Hughes: May I also press the Minister to be clear? Are the Government saying that they have not yet formally ruled out a public inquiry, because press reports state that they have? Will the Minister confirm the earliest date by which the report will be published? I understand that there may be two months' consultation, but what is the earliest date when the report will be published? Just as important, will he and his Department comment on the practice whereby there is the most reluctant payment of compensation to the victims and so far no payment whatever to the bereaved? Does the Minister's Department support that? If not, can he do something to change that system?

Mr. McLoughlin: I shall try to answer the hon. Gentleman's three points. As I said in my initial answer, the consultation period with those who are specified in the regulations started last week. We hope to have the report published within seven weeks at the maximum. I confirm that, if something serious comes forward, it will still be open to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State to set up a public inquiry.

I should not like to comment on claims against insurance companies at the moment, but I remind the hon. Gentleman that, at the time of the disaster, we made a substantial contribution to the disaster fund.

Goods Vehicles

6. **Mr. Gregory:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received concerning mandatory reversing warning devices for all goods vehicles; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Atkins: Ministers received five letters on this subject in 1989, and one letter of complaint about noise nuisance from reversing alarms. We have received no representations in 1990. As my hon. Friend will be aware, mandatory fitting of alarms would require agreement from the EEC.

Mr. Gregory: I thank my hon. Friend for those comments. Is he as concerned as I am about the number of accidents involving vehicles without reversing devices? Each year, 2,000 accidents are a direct result of pedestrians coming into contact with vehicles that have not been fitted with such bleepers. Is my hon. Friend particularly concerned about schoolchildren, as lorries without reversing alarms may enter school grounds?

Mr. Atkins: Of course, I am worried about anything that may cause an accident or death. Therefore, I shall take action if I believe it to be necessary. The records demonstrate that, over the past 10 years, there have been about 50 fatal accidents involving vehicles without reversing alarms. That is a small proportion, but it is clearly too high.

My hon. Friend understands the situation pretty well. He will know that I must do my best to encourage drivers of vehicles to ensure that they take extra care as befits their standard of driving and the highway code and also that they take necessary care when making manoeuvres associated with reversing vehicles on streets.

Transport, South-East Essex

7. **Mrs. Gorman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will review the current transport facilities in south-east Essex.

The Minister for Public Transport (Mr. Michael Portillo): A total of 13 schemes are planned for the upgrading of the A13 at an estimated cost of well over £200 million. I am expecting proposals from British Rail for a £300 million package of improvements on the Fenchurch Street line, including new rolling stock.

Mrs. Gorman: I thank my hon. Friend for his reply. Is he aware—I am sure that he is—that south-east Essex has the largest influx of population in the country and that the railway lines and the A13, which he mentioned, are some of the worst in the country? At present, commuters on the Fenchurch Street line—my secretary among them—take three hours to do the journey from Southend to London. Also, the A13 services Tilbury dock, Shell Haven, the Mobil depot, Dagenham Ford, some of the biggest gravel workings in the country, and all the rubbish that is dumped from London. It is a dual carriageway for much its length. Congestion is simply terrible. It is not good enough to wait until the late 1990s.

Mr. Portillo: I know something about the frustration that is suffered by my hon. Friend's constituents, not least because she has written to me about it previously. She has been a great champion of her constituents' transport needs and anxieties. She will have heard me say that there is a package of £500 million investment for the road and the railway. That is a substantial figure. I hope that it will bring great relief. Taking the eastern region as a whole, we have added £1·9 billion in the recent White Paper on road spending. I am sure that that will go a long way towards helping her.

Mr. Tony Banks: Does the Minister recall that the Secretary of State for Transport denied that he was the strategic transport authority for the south-east? British Rail has also denied that that is its function. Who is looking after the strategic transport planning of the south-east? As the Government have walked away from the problem, is it any wonder that there is so much transport chaos, which the Minister, his colleagues and everybody in the south-east must know about? When will the Government take responsibility for looking after transport as a whole in the south-east?

Mr. Portillo: We took over responsibility for part of the transport network from the Greater London council, of which the hon. Gentleman used to be chairman. Since then we have doubled the investment on London Underground, and over the next three years we shall double the investment again. That investment will then be four times higher than it was under the hon. Gentleman's chairmanship. We take responsibility for that part of the network. The hon. Gentleman will have heard me say that there is an increase of £1·9 billion in spending on the programme for building trunk roads, for which we are also responsible. He will have also have heard me say that there is major investment in Network SouthEast. That is being made possible by the greater efficiency of the railways, which again has come about under the Government.

Mr. Squire: Will my hon. Friend accept my full endorsement of the comments of my hon. Friend the Member for Billericay (Mrs. Gorman), not merely on the Fenchurch Street line, which is still the Cinderella of much of British Rail in London, but on the A13? It is now almost 15 years since the proposal was first made to take it over the marshes. We have not yet seen the first sign of work commencing. The A13 is a major trunk road from the ports to central London and round the M25. It is critically important that we give it higher proprity.

Mr. Portillo: I agree with my hon. Friend that the A13 is of critical and strategic importance. He will know that the development of docklands has given an extra impetus to the need to get on with developing the A13. He will also know that I have a personal responsibility as chairman of the docklands transport steering group to make sure that the works are carried forward in a timely fashion. They are complex schemes, many of which have important implications, both for the environment and for residents. The necessary processes must be gone through.

British Rail

8. **Ms. Armstrong:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he has any plans to meet the chairman of British Rail to discuss matters of safety.

Mr. Parkinson: There are regular meetings between myself and the chairman to discuss matters of mutual interest. Safety can be and is discussed whenever appropriate.

Ms. Armstrong: Is the Secretary of State aware that, as a regular traveller through King's Cross, I share with other passengers great anxiety that, three months after the publication of the Hidden report, it still appears that British Rail is not sure how much it will cost to implement its recommendations? It has put only £200 million into its corporate plan for safety. According to all reports, it will cost much more than that to implement the recommendations of the report. Will he give the House and passengers a guarantee today that safety will be the priority of the Government and of British Rail and that he will make sure that British Rail receives enough money from the Government to implement the Hidden report?

Mr. Parkinson: The hon. Lady is right to say that the Government attach top priority to safety. Part of the reason why it is not easy to cost in full the Hidden proposals is that the technology, for instance on automatic train protection, does not exist. We have authorised expenditure on three pilot schemes to develop the technology. Only when the technology is available will we know the overall cost. There is no question of trying to avoid the issue. All the recommendations have been accepted. Work on all of them is in hand but work on some of them, especially this one, will take longer. It is the main recommendation, the biggest and the most expensive.

Mr. Simon Coombs: Is it correct that my right hon. Friend is considering the possibility of merging the railway inspectorate with the Health and Safety Executive? Does he except that many people——

Mr. Speaker: Order. Is the chairman of British Rail doing it?

Mr. Coombs: Yes, indeed. Will my right hon. Friend undertake to discuss that important matter with the chairman of British Rail? Will he accept the good wishes of many hon. Members that he should continue to discuss that important matter?

Mr. Parkinson: I congratulate my hon. Friend on his ingenuity. I reassure him that the discussions are in hand. We believe that it is a fundamental problem, that the Government own the railways and also have responsibility for safety. We do not own the oil industry or the other industries for which the Department has safety responsibilities. However, we own the railways. There is a case for transferring that responsibility to the HSE. That is what we are discussing.

Mr. Prescott: Has the Secretary of State read the report issued today by the Central Transport Consultative Committee, which makes it absolutely clear that the resources necessary to meet the safety recommendations of the Hidden report cannot be financed from the present corporate plan? In his discussions with the chairman, will the Secretary of State consider how the corporate plan can be renegotiated so that moneys can be found to meet those safety commitments and return some of the £2 billion that the Government have pinched from support for the railways?

Mr. Parkinson: I shall be discussing the report with the chairman of the CTCC. I remind the hon. Gentleman that we are talking about a three-year programme. The chairman seems to be jumping the gun in saying that on the evidence of a couple of months he can predict what can happen in the next three years. He seems to have been listening to too many ill-informed speeches from the hon. Gentleman. British Rail will have the resources necessary to meet the capital programmes that we have devised. Those resources will come from what the hon. Gentleman calls "public money"—from grants, sales of assets belonging to the public, depreciation of assets belonging to the public and loans from the National Loans Fund at preferential rates—so let us have no more nonsense about the Government and the taxpayer not contributing.

Mr. Hind: My right hon. Friend will be aware that he has the support of his hon. Friends for the present extensive investments in British Rail, but when he next speaks to the chairman of British Rail will he stress the need for speedy construction of new rail stock, because we in the north-west are receiving many complaints that trains are shorter than necessary and more overcrowded, that safety is affected and that services are being reduced due to the lack of new rolling stock? Will my right hon. Friend emphasise the importance of speeding up that programme?

Mr. Parkinson: Yes, and I should advise my hon. Friend that the shortage does not arise from a shortage of money. It is because deliveries of new rolling stock are already 40 weeks late, which means that rolling stock that should have been replaced is still being used—[HON. MEMBERS: "Because BREL was privatised."] No, the backlog was built up when British Rail Engineering Ltd was in the public sector. It has not got any worse—in fact it has slightly improved—since privatisation. We recognise the problem that my hon. Friend has identified, and it is being dealt with. The stock is on order and as soon as it is available it will replace the old stock which is causing so many problems.

Traffic Examiners, Wales

9. **Mr. Michael:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he will make it his policy that traffic examiners in Wales shall continue to operate under the direct supervision of his Department's traffic office in Cardiff.

Mr. Atkins: No, Sir. Traffic examiners will continue to be managed by the Department's traffic area office in Cardiff until April 1991.

Thereafter, responsibility for their management will pass to the Vehicle Inspectorate Executive Agency.

Mr. Michael: Does the Minister accept that the most efficient form of organisation is that which has the most direct line of communication and supervision? Does he agree that having a properly integrated operation, with the inspectors working directly to the office in Cardiff, would be the best way of achieving the best possible supervision and the most effective operation?

Mr. Atkins: I am entirely satisfied that the Vehicle Inspectorate Executive Agency and its staff will do their level best to ensure not only that the present high standard will be maintained, but that the even higher standard for which the hon. Gentleman is pressing will be achieved under our proposals.

Air Fares

10. **Mr. Tim Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps his Department is taking to bring down air fares in Europe.

Mr. McLoughlin: The Government are committed to removing the barriers to competition in air transport by liberalisation within the Community and bilaterally. This should lead to lower fares and increased consumer choice.

Mr. Smith: What progress is being made? Does my hon. Friend agree that it is still cheaper to fly to New York than to many European destinations? Does he agree that if liberalisation of air transport is to be meaningful for air passengers it must be carried out in such a way as to ensure that there is real competition and that small airlines can survive?

Mr. McLoughlin: I entirely agree with my hon. Friend about competition policy. It is vital that we ensure that there is room for all the smaller companies. Liberalisation will give those companies greater opportunities to take advantage of the market.

Mr. Alfred Morris: Is it not monstrous that there should be such huge fare differences from Manchester and the London airports to other European cities approximately the same distance away? Does the Minister agree that this hurts the interests of Manchester airport, discrimin-

ates against northern passengers and chokes the skies over south-east England even more dangerously? What action are the Government taking?

Mr. McLoughlin: A number of factors lead a person to decide where he should start his journey from. It is Government policy to encourage regional airports to take as much advantage as possible of a liberalised aviation market, and it is with that in prospect that we are trying to bring about a more liberal agreement between the Community and other areas. The Government certainly intend to see regional airports develop.

Public Transport, London

11. **Mr. Dykes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he has received any recent representations from the public on the standard of service to passengers using London public transport systems; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: Yes. The quality of service objectives that we have set for British Rail and London Transport, coupled with the much increased investment that we have approved, are designed to secure a significant improvement in service standards.

Mr. Dykes: I thank my hon. Friend for that answer. Although he does not have direct responsibility, will he again focus on the plight of the Metropolitan line from Harrow on the Hill to central London via Baker street? Does he recall using that line some years ago when he was a distinguished sixth former in that area and how good the service was then? Does he further agree that the daily scenario now of filthy, unswept, lurching, clapped-out old-fashioned, graffiti-swamped rolling stock, which sums up the coaches on the Metropolitan line service, despite its speed to Baker street, is an unacceptable concomitant to the daily psychological and physical pressures on my long-suffering commuter constituents? Will he discuss that urgently with his colleagues?

Mr. Portillo: I am sorry to hear of the deterioration that has apparently occurred in the past few years and I shall naturally look into it. My hon. Friend will be aware that his constituents are about to benefit from the massive investment of £100 million in new rolling stock on the Chiltern line, which runs through his constituency. They will also be beneficiaries of the £1 billion to be invested in extending the Jubilee line to Waterloo, docklands and Stratford. I hope that his constituents will derive great benefit from all that.

Ms. Ruddock: Does the Minister accept that public transport passengers in London are paying some of the highest fares in Europe for some of the worst services? Is he aware that in recent times on any one morning as many as 12 Underground stations are closed due to overcrowding, that two thirds of the timetabled bus services in the capital do not depart on time and that in January in an average week 26 Underground stations had to be closed due to lack of staff? The level of public complaints in London is clearly more than justified and the Minister should accept that.

Mr. Portillo: I am not sure what the hon. Lady is proposing. She knows perfectly well that investment in London Underground has been doubled since we took it over from the Greater London council, that we propose to double it again in the next three years, that we propose a major programme to upgrade all the existing Underground system and that we have committed ourselves to a £1 billion extension of the Jubilee line. The Labour Government could never even have dreamt of all the improvements which are under way now. The hon. Lady will see from the records that the Government have committed themselves not only to a record level of investment but to one which is as much as the Underground could physically manage.

Coaches (Limiters)

12. **Mr. Squire:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the progress achieved in fitting speed limiters to coaches.

Mr. Atkins: The programme for fitting speed limiters to all coaches first used in 1974 or later will be completed by 31 March next year. Speed limiters should by now be fitted to most modern coaches.

Mr. Squire: As my hon. Friend knows, I welcome this safety measure. Is he aware of reports suggesting that many coach operators have been slow to fit speed limiters, which will be a legal requirement from the end of this month for many coaches? Will he take this opportunity to repeat that from the Dispatch Box? Will he also look into the possibility of his Department advising various coach operators that they face legal penalties if they do not comply?

Mr. Atkins: I am grateful to my hon. Friend who has rightly often raised this matter. I have no evidence that the campaign of enforcement is being delayed. If he has evidence to that effect, I should be grateful to hear it. I am delighted to accept his offer to re-emphasise to those on both sides of the House who are interested the importance of speed limiters to coaches in that they can save lives and prevent unnecessary accidents.

Mr. Foulkes: Has the Minister also considered the introduction of compulsory spray-suppressant mud flaps for coaches and lorries because of the great danger created to other motorists by the spray from heavy lorries on the on the motorways? Such spray is one of the greatest dangers on motorways at present.

Mr. Atkins: The hon. Gentleman is right and that concern has been expressed to me on numerous occasions. We are having discussions with the European Community and, in those circumstances, the hon. Gentleman's views and the many suggestions from hon. Members on both sides of the House will be taken into account.

Motorists' Organisations

13. **Mr. Butler:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent meetings he has had with representatives of motorists' organisations; and what was discussed.

Mr. Atkins: I have met the Automobile Association and the Royal Automobile Club—and other road users' organisations—since the summer and have discussed matters of mutual interest with them. This afternoon I am going straight from here to meet the RAC again.

Mr. Butler: Did those organisations discuss with my hon. Friend the fact that motorists pay far more into the Exchequer than is spent on them by the Department of Transport? Will he bear that in mind before he develops any policy to increase taxation on motorists?

Mr. Atkins: I am sure that my hon. Friend, being a fair man, will be ready to applaud the substantially increased spending on public transport and roads among other things, within the Department of Transport budget and to recognise that as evidence of the Government's and the Department's commitment to the British driving public. There is, of course, always room for improvement and I shall be happy to try to oblige.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Clockwork Orange

55. **Mr. Allen:** To ask the Attorney-General when he last met the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Director of Public Prosecutions for Northern Ireland to discuss prosecutions arising from operation Clockwork Orange.

The Attorney-General: (Sir Patrick Mayhew): I have had no such discussion with either director.

Mr. Allen: If just a fraction of the allegations, accusations and rumours in respect of the Clockwork Orange operation are true, that is of great concern to hon. Members in all parts of the House.

Does the Attorney-General feel that he has some constitutional, political or even moral responsibility to get to the bottom of this?

The Attorney-General: No evidence suggesting that criminal activity took place has come to my attention—I would certainly have a constitutional role if that were the case. I notice that this matter was fully dealt with by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence in his oral statement of 1 February when he said that if people did have evidence of conduct that they believed to be criminal, they should

"produce it so that the matter can be investigated properly."

He went on to contrast the profusion of allegations with what he described as:

"an amazing unwillingness to produce evidence which can be tested and checked"—[*Official Report*, 1 February 1990; Vol. 166, c. 454.]

Director of Public Prosecutions

57. **Mr Skinner:** To ask the Attorney-General what meetings he has had with the Director of Public Prosecutions; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: I frequently meet the Director of Public Prosecutions to discuss matters of departmental interest; our last meeting was on 26 February this year.

Mr. Skinner: When the Attorney-General next meets the Director of Public Prosecutions, will he draw his attention to the House of Fraser report and ask him when the Al-Fayed brothers are to be brought before the British law courts? In view of the document that every Member of Parliament now has, surely those men should be treated with the same kind of justice as other people. Is he aware that millions of our electors are asking, "Why should we pay the poll tax and observe the law of the land when the City crooks can get away with it?" Is there one law for the Al-Fayed brothers and for big busness men and another for the millions of people who have to pay the poll tax?

The Attorney-General: There is no need for me to draw the attention of the Director of Public Prosecutions or the director of the Serious Fraud Office to the report on House of Fraser as they considered it for more than 18 months, having instigated a thorough police investigation. They instigated that investigation to secure the best chance of investigating matters with a view to prosecuting, if appropriate, to a successful conclusion. That was why they established the police investigation and why they asked the Secretary of State to withhold publication of the report.

Of course I agree that the same law should apply to the Al-Fayed brothers as to everyone else. *[Interruption.]* It is perhaps naive, but if the hon. Gentleman asks a question I assume, in his favour, that he wants an answer rather than merely to interrupt the whole time. The same law should and does apply, but there is one very important distinction that I wish to make clear. Whereas it was open to the inspectors to take account of hearsay evidence if they thought that it was reliable—and of course it was open to them to reach the conclusion that they did—it would not have been open to a jury in a criminal case to convict upon evidence of the same character. The inspectors are entitled to take account of evidence covering a wider scope than that available in criminal proceedings in an English court.

Mr. Lawrence: Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that, unsatisfactory though this whole matter is, taking action which is totally ineffectual and useless is worse than taking no action at all? He has made the point, which bears repeating, that what the inspectors saw to be completely clear and unarguable would not stand up in a court of law because it was based on hearsay evidence which would not have been admissible.

The Attorney-General: My hon. and learned Friend is absolutely right. Inquiries were pursued in every part of the world indicated by the inspectors' report, but the directors had to conclude, as they said in their joint statement issued on 1 March that there was insufficient evidence available for use in an English court in English criminal proceedings on any matter of substance raised in the inspectors' report to warrant the bringing of criminal proceedings. Exactly the same criterion has been applied in this case as has been applied in every other criminal case, and as was required under the code for prosecutors which has the approval of the House of Commons.

Mr. Fraser: What was the offence for which there was prima facie evidence? Can the Attorney-General confirm whether, if section 151 of the Companies Act 1989 had been in force, the conduct described in the Harrods case and in the British Aerospace and British Leyland case would give rise to prima facie evidence for offences under that Act? Will he have a word with the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry to ensure that that section is brought into force as soon as possible?

The Attorney-General: I will not deal with the effect of that section in this context, but I will draw the attention of the House—I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for raising the matter—to the substantial extra precautions that can be taken in the light of that legislation. We have

substantially improved the means by which conduct can be monitored in connection with company activities and that is a matter which is supplemented by the Criminal Justice (International Co-operation) Bill currently before Parliament, which will make it easier for a court to issue a letter of request for evidence from overseas. Those provisions represent some tightening up in the available legislation, and I believe that that is desirable.

Mr. Teddy Taylor: Can my right hon. and learned Friend, with his comprehensive legal knowledge, say whether there might have been sufficient rather than insufficient evidence if the Government had been able earlier to implement section 29 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988, which gave powers to obtain information from other countries, rather than implementing it last week, as he kindly explained in the letter that he sent to me?

The Attorney-General: It might have been of some assistance—it is very difficult to tell. As I have just said, these matters will be easier under the Bill now before Parliament. However, a commission rogatoire was issued to one country, and investigations have been pursued in every part of the world in which the inspectors' report showed that such investigations would be desirable.

Birmingham Six

58. **Mr. Mullin:** To ask the Attorney-General when he last discussed the Birmingham Six case with the Director of Public Prosecutions.

The Attorney-General: It was mentioned briefly on Thursday 30 November when considering parliamentary questions for answer on Monday 4 December.

Mr. Mullin: Does the Attorney-General agree that however much new evidence comes forward in the case the judges will never in any circumstances own up to a mistake, so the only way out for everyone is for the Director of Public Prosecutions to go to the Court of Appeal and ask for the convictions to be quashed, as he did in the Guildford case, in such terms as to allow the judges absolutely no discretion? Before the Attorney-General replies, I remind him that when I suggested on previous occasions at Question Time that the people convicted of the Guildford and Woolwich pub bombings were innocent he chose to poke fun at me. Will he now inject a note of humility into his reply?

The Attorney-General: I reject with force what the hon. Gentleman has said about judges being unwilling or unable to admit to making mistakes when mistakes have been made.

The decision on whether the case of the Birmingham Six is to be referred again to the Court of Appeal rests with my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary. The six were convicted after a trial by a jury and their case cannot be raised again, save by the Home Secretary referring the matter to the Court of Appeal, as has already happened once. My right hon. and learned Friend has said in written answers on more than one occasion that if matters are brought to his attention suggesting a need for serious investigation, they will receive it. He is already considering matters brought to his attention by a solicitor on behalf of some of the men, but in this country we do not set aside convictions by Executive action.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Latin America

63. **Mr. Jacques Arnold:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress is being made in supporting the teaching of English in Latin America.

The Minister for Overseas Development (Mrs. Lynda Chalker): New English language teaching projects are about to be agreed in Peru and Colombia, and a further project is in prospect in Bolivia. These will be in addition to existing projects in Brazil, Ecuador and Paraguay.

Mr. Arnold: May I welcome the support that has been given to the Culturå Inglesa in those various countries and congratulate it on the excellent job that it does in teaching English? Bearing in mind that Latin Americans prefer to learn English rather than American, and that they are ready to pay for that teaching, can my right hon. Friend tell us what more may be done to help the teaching and infrastructure of English in those countries?

Mrs. Chalker: I understand that the British Council has some self-financing programmes for teaching English anyway. There are, additionally, commercial courses teaching English in a number of South American countries, but we top up that undertaking with the sort of programmes that I have just mentioned which I believe will teach English well and show the people of those countries the benefits of knowing English and of being able to do business with Britain.

Sir Dudley Smith: My right hon. Friend did not mention Chile. Will she bear in mind that advances in regressive countries deserve consideration, and that Chile has now advanced to democracy again?

Mrs. Chalker: My hon. Friend will be aware that the income per head in Chile would rule out any aid programme. I believe that there are a number of totally self-financing commercial courses teaching English in Chile, and we should of course welcome more initiatives of that kind.

Sri Lanka

64. **Mr. Cox:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans the Minister for Overseas Development has to visit Sri Lanka.

Mrs. Chalker: At present I have no plans to visit Sri Lanka.

Mr. Cox: I note that reply, but is the Minister aware of the ongoing efforts of the President of Sri Lanka to try to reunite that country and to build up confidence in it? Against that background will she assure the House that she will do all that she can to encourage such confidence? Most especially, if requests are made for foreign aid or technical assistance, will she and her Department look favourably on them?

Mrs. Chalker: I am glad that President Premadasa has managed to make an improvement in the south of the country, but there are still grave concerns about what is happening in Sri Lanka. We have an aid programme in that country. In 1988-89, our substantial aid expenditure

totalled £19·4 million, although it will probably be a little less in the current financial year. We recognise that there is a need to provide help, especially in the environmental area, but we must be careful about the use of technical co-operation officers in a country which still has much civilian strife.

Mr. Jack: Pursuant to my right hon. Friend's previous reply about environmental policies, what benefit will there be for forestry in Sri Lanka?

Mrs. Chalker: A forestry project is at an advanced state of preparation and includes the study of land use and conservation in the Victoria dam catchment area. There is also a major project, which we are helping through the aid and trade provision, on the Samanalawewa dam.

Mr. Madden: What action is the Minister taking to gauge the extent of human and civil rights abuses in Sri Lanka? What representations has she made to the Government in that regard?

Mrs. Chalker: Our high commissioner in Sri Lanka saw the President on 28 February. We constantly monitor what is happening. Britain, like other major donors, is looking for a distinct improvement in human rights. We were extremely concerned about the abduction and death of Richard d'Zoysa.

Kenya

65. **Mr. Robert G. Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what was discussed during the visit to Kenya by the Minister for Overseas Development.

Mrs. Chalker: I had constructive discussions with the Kenyan Vice-President and Ministers during my visit to Nairobi last week. I reiterated our support for Kenya's economic reform programme and our intention to maintain a substantial bilateral aid programme. We also discussed regional issues, especially the tragic civil wars in the Horn of Africa and the impending famine in Ethiopia.

Mr. Robert G. Hughes: Did my right hon. Friend find that the Ethiopian famine loomed large with the Kenyan people? What was the nature of her discussions with the Kenyan Government about that and what further action does she plan to take?

Mrs. Chalker: The problems of the Horn of Africa loomed large in my discussions in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, as well as in Ethiopia. As a result of those discussions and the facts that we discovered, I am today announcing another £8·5 million of new emergency relief and food aid for Ethiopia.

Vietnam

66. **Mr. Tom Clarke:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he has any plans to restore development aid to Vietnam.

Mrs. Chalker: The Government are considering the possibility of supporting British non-governmental organisation activities in Vietnam, especially to help the communities in the areas from which the boat people came.

Mr. Clarke: Does the Minister accept that that sounds like a slight improvement in what was otherwise a scandalous position for the Government to take? Will she now respond positively to the pleas by the Save the Children Fund, Christian Aid and Oxfam to ensure that there is essential economic aid to deal with the appalling poverty in Vietnam? Will the Government use their influence to stop the international embargo which appeals to the Pentagon but to no one else?

Mrs. Chalker: The hon. Gentleman may remember that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and I had a meeting with a number of non-governmental organisations on 14 November 1989. At that meeting we invited the NGOs to put forward a number of proposals which may help people coming from the area where the boat people came from. We have received the proposals only in the last week, but we shall be considering them urgently.

Mr. Lester: Now that my hon. Friend has received those proposals, will she assure the House that they will be quickly targeted to those areas in north Vietnam, where it is expected that boat people will leave from next? I recognise that it is difficult to decide when to joint-fund those programmes, but urgency is vital. The quicker we can make the programmes work, the better for the boat people, for the people of Hong Kong and for the Vietnamese in south-east Asia.

Mrs. Chalker: I will do so as quickly as possible, but as it has taken a number of months for the agencies to come up with their proposals, they must be considered properly. If they are viable, we shall put them into operation as soon as possible.

Sir Russell Johnston: Does the Minister agree that the normalisation of relations with Vietnam is crucial both to the future of the boat people and to the stabilisation of the situation in Cambodia? Will she again give this further consideration and also consider exercising influence on the United States?

Mrs. Chalker: Yes, of course we shall. We greatly welcome the withdrawal of Vietnamese combat units from Cambodia. All those things are steps in the right direction, but we are still waiting to see how the Vietnamese Government will respond. Until we have seen how they respond, it is difficult for me to give the hon. Gentleman the total commitment that he would like.

Mrs. Clwyd: Does the Minister not understand that an end to the economic isolation of Vietnam is esential before we can solve the problem of the boat people? It is not sufficient to leave it to the voluntary agencies to provide the kind of aid that Vietnam needs. Has she not read the International Monetary Fund report, which urges enormous aid to Vietnam? Why do we continue to follow the policy of the American Government in imposing a vicious, vindictive embargo on the kind of assistance that Vietnam ought to have?

Mrs. Chalker: The hon. Lady is perhaps less aware than she might be of the outstanding arrears to the IMF. More than $100 million is owed to the IMF and $3·3 million to the Asian Development bank. Until a solution is worked out with the IMF, there will be no active lending programmes by any of the major donor countries, so in that respect we are no different from other donors. I am

very much aware of the needs of the people of Vietnam. We shall certainly start in the way that I outlined in November. A direct bilateral aid programme will not be possible until an economic recovery programme is agreed with the international financial institutions.

Climatic Change

67. **Mr. Spearing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what studies have been made by the Overseas Development Administration on additional development need occasioned by observed or likely climatic change.

Mrs. Chalker: As well as preparing a paper for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change on financial measures to help developing countries, the ODA has commissioned a study on options for reducing carbon dioxide emissions in developing countries, and has helped to finance a study on the phasing out of CFCs in India.

Mr. Spearing: I thank the Minister for that reply. Can she tell us whether any of the studies have been commissioned from the Overseas Development Administration's natural resources institute, or whatever its modern name is, in Chatham? Does she agree that client-based research by that institute is unlikely to be so effective as basic research which it might otherwise conduct?

Mrs. Chalker: Parts of the Deprtment are engaged in getting expert advice from within and without the Department for the papers being written for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. We certainly have excellent advice coming from the Overseas Development Administration's natural resources institute, but much of what we gain on forestry and on atmospheric emissions comes from other worthwhile but outside institutions.

Vietnam

68. **Mr. Wareing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he has any plans to visit Hanoi to discuss development aid with the Vietnamese Government.

Mrs. Chalker: My right hon. Friend has no immediate plans to do so.

Mr. Wareing: In view of the answers that the right hon. Lady has already given about Vietnam, is it not about time that she made arrangements to visit Hanoi? This country is already giving aid to some pretty rotten regimes so there is no excuse for following lamely in the footsteps of the United States of America on this. Does the Minister agree that if we took a real lead in giving unilateral aid to Vietnam we might have a stronger influence on that country in terms of bringing it forward in a more democratic spirit?

Mrs. Chalker: I was answering in the name of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs. I, too, have no immediate plans to visit Hanoi. I hope that progress can be made on the issues raised by my right hon. Friend the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office. We are certainly pursuing our own plan with Vietnam and not following in anybody's footsteps.

Iraq (Prisoners)

3.34 pm

Mr. Gerald Kaufman (Manchester, Gorton) *(by private notice)*: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on what action Her Majesty's Government are taking following the sentences imposed on Mr. Farzad Bazoft and Mrs. Daphne Parish by a court in Iraq.

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr. William Waldegrave): The whole House will join me in expressing dismay and horror at the unjustified sentences that Mr. Bazoft and Mrs. Parish received from the Iraqi revolutionary court on Saturday. The sentences are out of all proportion to any offence that may have been committed. In particular, we deplore the death sentence passed on Mr. Bazoft.

Before the trial opened last Thursday, we had made more than 50 separate representations to the Iraqi authorities making clear our concern for the well-being of Mrs. Parish and Mr. Bazoft. Our major concern at that stage was to try to secure a fair trial for Mrs. Parish and Mr. Bazoft.

In addition to that constant pressure on the Iraqi authorities, the Prime Minister wrote to President Saddam Hussain on 21 February, before the trial took place, to express her concern about the two cases. President Saddam Hussain replied to the Prime Minister on 28 February assuring her that the trial would indeed be a fair one. From the account that we have received, it is clear that no evidence was presented that would justify such harsh and disproportionate sentences.

Our immediate aim is to save the life of Mr. Bazoft and to secure a review of the sentence imposed on Mrs. Parish. As soon as the outcome of the trial was known on Saturday, the Prime Minister wrote again to President Saddam Hussain asking for both sentences to be reduced on humanitarian grounds. At the same time, we summoned the Iraqi ambassador and made clear to him the Government's reaction.

We have asked our friends and allies in the middle east and elsewhere to approach the Iraqi Government and support our call for clemency. The European Community has already taken action. The Irish, French and Italian ambassadors in Baghdad, on behalf of the Twelve, delivered a message to the Iraqi authorities urging them to reconsider the sentences.

In all this, we should not forget the plight of Mr. Ian Richter, another British prisoner serving an unjustifiably harsh sentence in a Baghdad prison.

Iraq has shown herself recently to be concerned about what she would call the misrepresentation of her policies abroad. She can be in no doubt about the damage that would be done to her standing in the world, let alone to her relations with the United Kingdom, if these unacceptable sentences were to be confirmed.

Mr. Kaufman: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the Government will have the full support of Her Majesty's Opposition in taking action to secure the release of Mr. Bazoft and Mrs. Parish? Is he further aware that we regard the sentences as unacceptable, having been imposed following a secret trial and a staged confession?

We welcome the action so far taken by the Government and by the European Community, and we welcome also the support of King Hussein of Jordan. We urge the Government to ask our European Community partners, individually as well as collectively, to make representations to the Iraqi Government. The French Government in particular should have a special status with Baghdad, following the help that it gave to Iraq in the Gulf war.

I note the right hon. Gentleman's comments about contact with middle eastern countries. Have the Government been in touch with the League of Arab States, for it would be very valuable if they would intercede—in particular, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, in view of their particularly close relationship with Iraq.

Will the right hon. Gentleman make clear to the Iraqi Government that, even though we have had serious misgivings about basic aspects of Iraqi policy, Members on both sides of the House have been active in seeking to improve the United Kingdom's relationship with Iraq and would wish that improvement to continue? Will he make it equally clear that, if Mr. Bazoft were to be executed, that would inevitably have the most damaging impact on our bilateral relations, both diplomatically and in trade terms, and, in particular, in terms of financial credit? How many British business men, for example, would be ready to visit a country where they might be arrested on trumped-up spying charges and face the death penalty?

In this case there are serious implications for journalistic freedom and serious implications for human rights. In whatever further approaches the British Government make to the Iraqi Government on behalf of Mr. Bazoft and Mrs. Parish, will they make it clear that they speak on behalf of a completely united House of Commons?

Mr. Waldegrave: I greatly appreciate the tone in which the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) has spoken. On occasions like this, the unity of the House is important, and in that regard I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman and his colleagues.

We have made a number of contacts in the middle east, both with multilateral organisations and with individual countries. I shall follow up one or two of the further suggestions that the right hon. Gentleman has just made. He is right to emphasise that Iraq ought to consider the utterly inevitable response, not only in the United Kingdom but elsewhere, if it should persist in these sentences. Even if the Government or the Opposition or individual politicians wanted to suppress the reaction in the United Kingdom, it would be beyond their capacity to do so. The right hon. Gentleman is right to emphasise that. Of course, we do not wish in any way to disguise our own horror.

As I said on Saturday, as events unfold we shall rule out nothing. We shall look at all the possibilities, but we hope that at this late hour the President of Iraq will respond to the appeal, not only of the Government but of the right hon. Gentleman, to look to the future of his country in relation to the rest of the world community. We hope that he will respond to the appeals for clemency.

Mr. Ian Gow (Eastbourne): Was any representative of our embassy in Baghdad present at the trial? Has my right hon. Friend received a transcript of the proceedings? Does he have any evidence that this trial could be described as having been in any way a fair one?

Mr. Waldegrave: Our consul-general was present at the trial. We have not received a transcript, but we have

[Mr. Waldegrave]

received his account. I would draw a distinction between a revolutionary court in Baghdad and the normal courts of Iraq, the latter of which follow procedures that would be relatively familiar to this House. A revolutionary court proceeds in a much more secretive way, and there is no formal appeal against its decisions. That is why we had to appeal to the President for clemency. In the terms of any proceedings that this House would recognise as a trial, we should not be happy to describe the proceedings of the revolutionary court as constituting a fair trial.

Sir Russell Johnston (Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber): I wonder whether, by any chance, the Minister heard a programme on the radio last night in which the press counsellor at the Iraqi embassy, whose name I do not remember, was interviewed. He said that he hoped that relations between Iraq and the United Kingdom would not be affected adversely "by this small matter". I thought that those words were quite chilling and indicated clearly that the gentleman concerned did not understand press freedom or human rights.

I welcome what the Minister has said, and I support what has been said by the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman). Has any direct request been made to the Iraqi Government that the two persons concerned be repatriated to this country directly?

Mr. Waldegrave: Our first suggestion, all those weeks ago, was that repatriation would be by far the best and simplest way of dealing with the matter. Unfortunately, there was no response to that suggestion. I share the hon. Member's anxiety that people should talk about human rights in the terms used by the press counsellor whom he quoted. We must get it across to Iraq that, to this House, these are not small matters but major matters. We understand that Iraq has been through a terrible war and that there is still no formal peace. We understand the tensions and the pressures that exist in that country. None the less, Iraq must understand that we attach immense value to human rights and to the protection of our citizens and those travelling in our name.

Mr. Jeremy Hanley (Richmond and Barnes): I am grateful to my right hon. Friend for his statement. He has the full support of all right hon. and hon. Members on the Government side—indeed, I am pleased to see, in the House as a whole. I am grateful also that he included in his reply a reference to my constituent Mr. Ian Richter, who has served nearly four years' imprisonment in Baghdad for a crime that most of us feel was completely trumped up —something more to do with internal Iraqi politics than with justice. Will my right hon. Friend reconsider how we might react to Iraq if things should go sadly wrong in this case, particularly as, only recently, we have increased credit to Iraq? Perhaps now is the time to start getting tough. In the meantime, my right hon. Friend's diplomatic pressure is extremely welcome.

Mr. Waldegrave: I deliberately referred in my answer to the case of Mr. Ian Richter, which my hon. Friend has assiduously pursued on a constituency basis, and I pay tribute to him for that. All the remaining Iraqi co-defendants in Mr. Richter's trial have been released. We have long sought his release. We add our plea for him to our pleas for the others. My hon. Friend referred to one relationship between Britain and Iraq. As I have said, we shall consider all the connections between our two countries as events unfold.

Mr. Andrew Faulds (Warley, East): Does the right hon. Gentleman accept that those of us who have long been friends of the Arab world find the conduct of a court such as this and sentences such as these very disturbing and that we would all urge the President of Iraq, who has powers of clemency in such matters, to use those powers?

Mr. Waldegrave: I very much value the hon. Gentleman's intervention. People like him who know the Arab world well and who can by no stretch of the imagination be decribed as Zionist plotters may carry some weight in this matter, and I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for making his point. An Iraqi information Minister said today that the pressure that was brought to bear by the international community in this case represented some form of intervention in Iraq's internal affairs. That is not so. We understand that it is perfectly in order for petitions for clemency to go to the President after a decision by the revolutionary court. That is what, I hope, the House joins us in pressing for.

Mr. Matthew Carrington (Fulham): Does my right hon. Friend agree that the only way of finding a solution to this terrible problem is through diplomatic pressure? Does he agree that, however genuine may be the revulsion of some hon. Members towards the Iraqi regime, this is not the time to malign that regime? Now is the time to look to Iraq to understand the seriousness of the implications for its role in the international community if it proceeds with these sentences.

Mr. Waldegrave: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for what he has said, just as I am grateful to the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman). Today the House is trying to achieve a particular outcome—to save Mr. Bazoft's life and to get a reasonable sentence for Mrs. Parish. This is not the occasion for loose rhetoric, and the House is not indulging in it.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. We have an important day on Northern Ireland matters ahead of us. I shall call two more Members from each side, and then we must move on.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): Should not the House be concerned with truth and honesty as well as with desperately trying to save the life of the person involved? Does not Iraq have one of the worst records in repression and in denial of human rights? Has the right hon. Gentleman noted, arising from the case of these two people, the way in which the British media have rightly spotlighted what has been happening in Iraq? If the worst came to the worst and this killing took place, would not British public opinion certainly expect from the Government stern action, undoubtedly including economic sanctions and, if necessary, the breaking off of diplomatic relations, just as we did, with every justification, with Iran and Syria?

Mr. Waldegrave: As I said, I hope that the House will not press me today to go into further details on any steps that may or may not have to be taken. As the hon. Gentleman said, rightly, if these sentences were carried out, immense revulsion would be felt in this country.

Mr. Anthony Nelson (Chichester): Is my right hon. Friend aware that my hon. Friend the Member for Beaconsfield (Mr. Smith) and I were visiting Mr. Ian Richter in Baghdad prison when Mr. Bazoft was arrested? Is he also aware that one of my constituents, Mr. John Smith, was released from a life sentence in Iraq the previous year? Therefore, I speak with some authority when I support the Government in their diplomatic efforts to secure some clemency and the release of Mr. Bazoft. I put it to my right hon. Friend that the important relationships between Iraq and this country cannot always depend on individuals and, if they act as imposters and fools—as some do—they invite some retribution upon them. But, in these instances, no one in his right mind would say that any crimes or offences that these people had committed were worthy of execution. I join the House in calling for clemency for Mr. Bazoft.

Mr. Waldegrave: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for joining hon. Members on both sides of the House in their general call for clemency. That is a matter on which we should concentrate today.

Mr. Peter Hardy (Wentworth): I endorse the views expressed about human rights and the threat to journalistic freedom and note that the European Community has been involved. But will the Minister consider having early consultation with the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe, which has some responsibility for human rights, with a view to an approach by the 23 member states—and perhaps, significantly, the guest member states—to assist the case advanced by the Foreign Office?

Mr. Waldegrave: The hon. Gentleman makes another useful suggestion, and I shall certainly look into it.

Mr. Cyril D. Townsend (Bexleyheath): Although I commend the comments made by my hon. Friend the Minister and the Opposition Front-Bench spokesman and have no illusions whatever about the poor standard of human rights in Iraq, may I caution my hon. Friend about in any way reducing our diplomatic representation in that country in the weeks ahead, bearing in mind how easy Britain seems to find it to break off diplomatic relations and how hard we find it to restore them? Is not Iraq just the kind of country where we need our skilled diplomats to protect Britain's business and commercial interests and also British individuals?

Mr. Waldegrave: My own preference would be to keep our ambassador there, working for the interests of those in this case and of other Britons. As I said, at this stage we cannot rule out any step, but certainly we need the ambassador there at present.

Points of Order

3.52 pm

Mr. Brian Sedgemore (Hackney, South and Shoreditch): I wish to raise a point of order, of which I have given you notice, Mr. Speaker, about the ability of a Back-Bench Member to give the Library a book or unpublished or confidential material that may help other hon. Members.

The point of order arises out of the preparation of the Osborne report to the House of Bishops on homosexuality. I had some correspondence with Dr. Runcie, the Archbishop of Canterbury, in which I asked whether he would make the report public. He refused by letter on the ground that it is confidential. I subsequently obtained a copy of the Osborne report, and on Thursday I gave it to the Library and it was accepted by the Library. On Friday, I tabled an early-day motion simply noting that I had given a copy to the Library so that other hon. Members would know that it was there and could read it.

I was astonished to find in my post this morning a letter from David Menhennet, the Librarian—a man for whom I have the greatest admiration—saying that on examining the document he had locked it in a cabinet pending clarification of its status and that it was a rule that private Members could not place unpublished or confidential material in the Library and citing page 196 of the 21st edition of "Erskine May". this letter says:

> "In my absence on Friday afternoon, the Deputy Librarian received a letter from the Secretary-General of the General Synod of the Church of England; and I have studied this letter carefully. It makes very clear that the Osborne Report is confidential to the House of Bishops and, at this stage at least, it is not for publication."

I have now been offered the report back.

I am disturbed because, as someone who uses the Library regularly and who has placed books in the Library before, I do not believe that it is in the invariable practice of the Library not to accept confidential information. I would recall your attention, Mr. Speaker, to the publication of the House of Fraser report, which came out over a year ago. *The Observer* published a two-page summary of that report, which was placed in the Library and made available even though it was clearly confidential and there was a court case concerning it. That summary was placed in the Library and hon. Members were allowed to go to the Library and see it.

The Library seems to be operating an arbitary policy and that cannot be right. Moreover, I seriously believe that for a library to refuse a book is little different from censoring that book or from burning it.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Gentleman gave me notice of his point of order, so I have been able to look into the matter with some care. The hon. Gentleman has more or less answered his own question. As "Erskine May" makes it clear on page 196, private Members may not deposit papers in the Library, and the unpublished paper handed in by the hon. Gentleman was not considered appropriate for acceptance as a gift.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. You have not answered the question because perhaps you have not been told the answer. My hon. Friend the Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore) referred to *The Observer* publication which caused a row 12 months ago. A copy of

[Mr. Dennis Skinner]

that document was placed in the Library and statements were made in the House to the effect that if any hon. Member wanted to look at the summary of the House of Fraser report which appeared in *The Observer* they could see a copy in the Library. Are the bishops and archbishops more important because there is a link between the Church of England and the House of Commons? Can they censure the document?

Mr. Speaker: No. The hon. Gentleman knows perfectly well that there is a considerable difference involved in that respect. As I understand it, this document has not been published. In effect, I suppose that it is stolen property. [HON. MEMBERS: "Oh".] Well, it was not considered appropriate for the document to be accepted by the Library.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett (Pembroke): Further to the point raised by the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner). If the hon. Member for Bolsover will place in the Library the minutes of last Friday's meeting of the National Union of Mineworkers which lasted five hours, would we be able to read what happened with regard to the Scargill inquiry?

Mr. Speaker: It would depend whether that was stolen property as well.

Mr. Anthony Beaumont-Dark (Birmingham, Selly Oak): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. As I understand this place, we are the House of Commons. [HON. MEMBERS: "No!"] Well, I thought that we represented the people. Is it not fair that hon. Members, who may be asked questions on any issue, including what happens with regard to those layabouts in the Synod, should be able to read any document that helps them to do their job properly? Why are we to be banned from reading documents which other people have? I agree with the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner). If we cannot read such documents, there is censorship, which I thought that the House was against.

Mr. Speaker: This document has not been published. that is the essential difference.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. We must make progress. I call Mrs. Clwyd.

Mrs. Ann Clwyd (Cynon Valley): I want to raise a point of order about the misuse of questions by the Minister for Overseas Development. She used question No. 65, which was specific and, was about Kenya, to make a statement about Ethiopia, from where she has just returned. We have only 10 minutes in Question Time every three weeks to discuss issues of great importance about overseas aid. Therefore, the Government should make a statement on the crisis in Ethiopia where thousands of people are dying every day from famine and war. We have had no statement from the Government on that important issue and I believe that it is the wish of the House that the Government should make a statement so that we can discover as soon as possible what action they intend to take about that crisis.

Mr. Speaker: Had I observed the hon. Lady rising earlier—I am afraid that I did not do so—I would have called her to put her question to the Minister. I do not know whether it was my fault; if it was, I apologise.

Statutory Instruments, &c.

Mr. Speaker: With the leave of the House, I will put together the 17 motions relating to statutory instruments.

Ordered,

That the draft Town and Country Planning (Compensation for Restrictions on Mineral Working) (Amendment) Regulations 1990 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.

That the draft Civil Legal Aid (Financial Conditions) (Scotland) Regulations 1990 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.

That the draft Advice and Assistance (Financial Conditions) (Scotland) Regulations 1990 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.

That the draft Water Undertakings (Rateable Values) (Scotland) Order 1990 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.

That the draft Mines and Quarries (Rateable Values) (Scotland) Order 1990 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.

That the draft Mercury Communications Limited (Rateable Values) (Scotland) Order 1990 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.

That the draft Lochaber Power Company (Rateable Values) (Scotland) Order 1990 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.

That the draft Industrial and Freight Transport (Rateable Values) (Scotland) Order 1990 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.

That the draft Glasgow Underground (Rateable Values) (Scotland) Order 1990 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.

That the draft Forth Ports Authority (Rateable Values) (Scotland) Order 1990 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.

That the draft Docks and Harbours (Rateable Values) (Scotland) Order 1990 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.

That the draft Caledonian MacBrayne Limited (Rateable Values) (Scotland) Order 1990 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.

That the draft British Waterways Board (Rateable Values) (Scotland) Order 1990 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.

That the draft British Telecommunications plc (Rateable Values) (Scotland) Order 1990 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.

That the draft British Railways Board (Rateable Values) (Scotland) Order 1990 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.

That the draft British Gas plc (Rateable Values) (Scotland) Order 1990 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.

That the draft British Alcan Primary and Recycling Ltd. (Rateable Values) (Scotland) Order 1990 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.—*[Mr. Patnick.]*

Northern Ireland (Terrorism)

3.58 pm

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Peter Brooke): I beg to move,

That the draft Northern Ireland (Emergency and Prevention of Terrorism Provisions) (Continuance) Order 1990, which was laid before this House on 26th February, be approved.

Right hon. and hon. Members who have taken part in these debates in the past will notice that the order bears a somewhat different title from those of previous years. As in the past, this order continues in force for a further 12 months the temporary provisions of the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Acts of 1978 and 1987. Without this order, the provisions would expire on 21 March.

This year, however, the order will likewise continue in force for a further period certain parts of the prevention of terrorism Act as they apply to Northern Ireland. The main body of the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1989 was the subject of a separate continuance order which the House debated last week, but, as some of the provisions are renewable as though they were part of the emergency provisions Acts, they are covered by the order.

I should like in a moment to say something about the level of terrorist activity against which today's debate is taking place, but, before doing so, it may help the House if I explain briefly what the provisions are that we are proposing to renew today and why we need them. In aiming, as we do, to create a just, peaceful and prosperous society in Northern Ireland, the chief aim of the Government's security policy is to end terrorism—from whichever side of the community it comes. Our first responsibility, therefore, is to ensure that the police and armed forces have the support and resources that they need to undertake their difficult and dangerous work on behalf of all people of Northern Ireland. That includes equipping them with the additional statutory powers that they require to deal effectively with the pestilence of terrorism in the Province by deterring and interdicting terrorist operations and, when terrorist crimes have been committed, by mounting in the courts successful prosecutions of terrorists.

Mr. Martin Flannery (Sheffield, Hillsborough): I am a little confused. When the continuance of the prevention of terrorism Act was debated the other night, there was no indication that the measures would be welded together. Why is that—or is the right hon. Gentleman now telling us why?

Mr. Brooke: Obviously there is a degree of overlap between them. Certain specific aspects that relate to Northern Ireland have been dealt with. I shall refer to the record to see whether the hon. Gentleman is correct.

The Government also recognise that, to be fully successful, the actions of the police and Army against terrorism, and indeed the operation of the whole criminal justice system, need support from all sections of the community.

It is, therefore, the two emergency provisions Acts which between them provide those extra powers that the police and armed forces still need to stop and question and to search for, and to seize, terrorist material. They create the category of proscribed organisations for Northern

[Mr. Brooke]

Ireland, and also offences associated with terrorist activity. In addition, they provide the legal authority for the so-called Diplock courts, and establish a scheme for the regulation of the security guard industry in Northern Ireland. But, at the same time, the Acts also guarantee statutory rights for terrorist suspects to have someone informed of their arrest and whereabouts and to have access to legal advice.

As for the Prevention of Terrorism Act, the order continues certain sections as they apply to Northern Ireland. Those include the provisions relating to terrorist funding and its investigation and also certain exclusively Northern Ireland provisions that allow the police and armed forces to impose restrictions during searches. They also set out arrangements relating to remission and sentencing of those convicted of scheduled offences, and to the licensing of explosives factories.

Those are the key provisions to which the order applies.

I now refer to the security background against which today's debate takes place. As the House will need no reminding, terrorism, both republican and loyalist, continues at a significant level, not only in Northern Ireland but in Great Britain and on the European mainland. Statistics indicate a welcome improvement in the security situation in Northern Ireland, but there is no consolation to be had in the loss of 62 lives last year or in the 800 or so injuries.

During 1989, nine members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary lost their lives in Northern Ireland, including the savage murder of Chief Superintendent Breen and Superintendent Buchanan in South Armagh, and of Superintendent Harris in Lisburn. Another senior police officer, Inspector Monteith, was murdered in Armagh earlier this year. There was also a bomb attack against the home of an assistant chief constable.

Fourteen members of the armed forces also died in 1989, including two members of the UDR. Three soldiers were killed in a massive bomb attack at Mayobridge in November and two more at the Derryard checkpoint in December in what must be one of the most vicious attacks of its kind during the period of the troubles.

The House will want to join me in paying an unreserved tribute to all members of the security forces, whether in the RUC or the RUC Reserve, the Regular Army or the Ulster Defence Regiment. They deserve the full support of all decent people for the firm stand that they have taken against terrorism and for the way in which they strive to bring peace and stability to Northern Ireland. Without their commitment, professionalism and courage, the levels of violence would have been immeasurably higher. Much of their work is unglamorous and routine, but they continue remorselessly to wear down terrorist organisations. There have been, for example, many important arrests and arms finds in recent months, and many terrorist attacks have been thwarted.

I commend the security forces for their speedy actions at Silverbridge only last month. I also pay tribute to the judiciary and the staff of the prison and court services who continue to do their duty in difficult circumstances. Incidents such as the planned breakout from the Crumlin road prison, which was disrupted only at an advanced stage, show that all of us concerned with defeating terrorism must remain on guard at all times.

Let me make it clear, unequivocally, that the eradication of terrorism, green or orange, remains the Government's top priority in Northern Ireland. There is no acceptable level of murder; we shall continue to work unreservedly for the defeat of terrorism with all the means at our disposal that are compatible with the letter and spirit of the rule of law. Let there be absolutely no doubt on this point: terrorism will never prevail. That is why the police and armed forces will continue to receive the full support of Her Majesty's Government for as long as it takes. We shall also continue to work actively for the political, economic and social progress in Northern Ireland that is necessary if their efforts are fully to succeed and lasting peace is to be won.

Mr. James Kilfedder (North Down): People in Northern Ireland will take comfort from what the right hon. Gentleman said about the Government's determination to root out terrorism. When he had been in office for three months, people were dumbfounded and demoralised by his statement that the IRA could not be beaten. That is why it is right that the Secretary of State should emphasise the point that he made. The present spate of tit-for-tat murders causes great anxiety to Protestants and Catholics alike in Northern Ireland. I roundly condemn those murders. Does he agree that the murders emphasise the need for all law-abiding people, including politicians and the Dublin Government, to give full and unequivocal support to the forces of law and order in order to destroy the evils of terrorism? There can be no trimmers in the fight between good and evil.

Mr. Brooke: I am grateful for the hon. Member's intervention. What I said three months after coming to office was that it was difficult to envisage the defeat of terrorism by military means and, by definition, by military means alone and that the armed forces needed to be supported in the way that I described a moment ago. I entirely endorse what he said about the tit-for-tat series of murders. The more voices that are raised in this cause, the better.

We shall also continue to maintain and improve security co-operation with the Irish Government under the auspices of the Anglo-Irish Agreement. But if the efforts of the RUC and Army are to be fully effective, they must also command support across the community. I should, therefore, like to speak briefly about how they approach the duties that have been given to them under the law. None of us should underestimate how difficult their task is. It is hard and often dangerous work to police a divided society, but I have been impressed by the determination of both arms of the security forces to achieve the highest professional standards. They know that if the terrorist is to be isolated even further in the community, they must act, and be seen to act, fairly and impartially between the two communities, and to the highest professional standards. This is easy to say but a difficult target to reach. But I can assure the House that, together with the Chief Constable and the GOC, we shall continue to try to maintain and improve public confidence in the integrity and evenhandedness at all times of the security forces, as well as in their effectiveness.

It is against this background that we are considering the order today. Once again, I express our gratitude to Lord Colville for his report on the Acts. It is a short report this year because, as the House will know, he is now engaged

in a more substantial review of the legislation to consider what changes should be made to it when the current Acts expire in 1992. I have asked him to submit his report on that review by Easter. In due course we shall, thereafter, bring forward proposals. But many of the larger issues which he has traditionally considered in his annual report he will deal with instead in his other review.

So far as today's debate is concerned, Lord Colville's main recommendation is that all the powers currently in force should be continued for a further 12 months. The Government accept that recommendation, and the order will give effect to it. It remains our policy to drop as soon as possible any powers that are no longer justified by the exigencies of the situation, and right hon. and hon. Members will recall that, last year, three minor sections of the Acts were allowed to lapse and that it had been our intention, on Lord Colville's recommendation, to allow a further section to lapse this year. This was section 13 of the 1978 Act which provides a police power of arrest. For the reason given in Lord Colville's latest report, however, that provision must clearly be retained for the time being.

Lord Colville also returned again this year to the idea of video recording terrorist interviews by the police. As my predecessor said last year, there are substantial arguments against such a course, but we shall examine the proposal again carefully and fairly once we receive Lord Colville's recommendations following his further review.

The House knows that progress on security matters does not stand alone, as I said a moment ago in response to the hon. Member for North Down (Mr. Kilfedder). Government policy embraces other vital aspects of the situation in Northern Ireland, such as economic development and political progress. It is therefore right in a debate on security matters to remind the House of the important role that they play in undermining terrorism and improving the position of the ordinary citizen in Northern Ireland.

Local exercise of political power on an agreed basis could help to bring terrorism to an end. It would demonstrate that constitutional politics can bring results in the form of a widely acceptable accommodation between the two parts of the community in Northern Ireland—something which terrorism, from either side of the community, can never do. It would marginalise extremists on both sides of the community and provide a firm basis for tackling Northern Ireland's community divisions.

It is the Government's hope and view that the present climate of political realism offers more hope of constructive political dialogue than for some time. My speech in Bangor on 9 January attempted to summarise my reading of the situation, and pointed out that I believed that there was some common ground between the parties that would allow them to engage in political dialogue. Politicians on all sides in Northern Ireland and senior voices in the Irish Government have contributed to the general mood of cautious optimism.

At present, the situation is fragile and delicate—it would be foolish to pretend otherwise—but with good will, flexibility and imagination on all sides, I do not see why the possibilities should not begin to be translated into probabilities.

Mr. Ken Maginnis (Fermanagh and South Tyrone): Does the Secretary of State like myself and my colleagues, regret the judgment of the Supreme Court in Dublin in the past fortnight, where it has been established beyond all doubt that the Irish Republic now has a legal claim—in its terms—against the territory of Northern Ireland? Does the Secretary of State realise that that gives great comfort and solace to the IRA, which has been saying that for many years? Will he assure us that he will do what he can to ensure that articles 2 and 3 of the Irish constitution are amended as soon as possible?

Mr. Brooke: I have never thought that it was the most productive of courses for politicians to be in judgment upon judges and their judgments but, of course, I acknowledge what the hon. Gentleman has said about the judgment given in the Supreme Court in Dublin last week. The hon. Gentleman and I have had the opportunity of discussing that and there is some variance between us on the exact interpretation of what occurred last week. However, I have no doubt that we shall continue to have further exchanges.

Rev. Ian Paisley (Antrim, North): Does the right hon. Gentleman not know that the Unionist people were told by the Government that the Anglo-Irish Agreement had put beyond doubt the fact that the status of Northern Ireland was now recognised and that there would be no change in that status until the majority of the people of Northern Ireland agreed with it? Does the right hon. Gentleman know that when the Unionists pointed out as forcefully as they could that the Government had to sign two agreements to please the Government of southern Ireland, they were laughed at? However, the Supreme Court is now saying to the Secretary of State, "You should not be in Northern Ireland. Your Government are illegitimate. It is the bounden and legal duty of Dublin to get you out of Northern Ireland and to use the Anglo-Irish Agreement to get you out."

Mr. Brooke: The hon. Gentleman may think that what happened in the Irish Supreme Court last week ended the right of my right hon. and hon. Friends to sit in government in Northern Ireland, but in practical and de facto terms, that is an unusual judgment. I acknowledge that since 1937 there has been on the statute book and in the Irish constitution the claim to which he and the hon. Member for Fermanagh and South Tyrone (Mr. Maginnis) referred. The hon. Gentleman will know that there is an equal claim on the statute book of this land. There is no question, de facto, about who provides the Government of Northern Ireland. Furthermore, under article 1 of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, the Government of the Republic of Ireland have confirmed that that status will change only by a vote of the majority in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Peter Robinson (Belfast, East): Does the Secretary of State recognise that today people in Northern Ireland will expect from the Dispatch Box in the clearest, most unequivocal terms a statement from him showing that he repudiates that arrogant claim, whether de facto or otherwise, and intends to do something to remove it from the constitution of the Irish Republic?

Mr. Brooke: It is beyond the capacity of anybody who stands at this Dispatch Box to change the constitution of the Republic of Ireland. That does not fall within our powers. I am delighted to join the hon. Gentleman in re-acknowledging the present status of Northern Ireland and its place on the statute book of the United Kingdom.

Mr. John D. Taylor (Strangford): Does the Secretary of State recall his predecessor's statement the day after the Anglo-Irish Agreement was signed on 15 November 1985 that article 1 confirmed that the Republic of Ireland accepted the status of Northern Ireland within the United Kingdom? Following last week's judgment in Dublin, will the Secretary of State repeat word for word what his predecessor said in presenting the Anglo-Irish Agreement to the House?

Mr. Brooke: I confirm that the status of Northern Ireland within the United Kingdom remains exactly as it was in 1937, subject to subsequent changes in our own statutes.

Mr. Maginnis: Oh.

Mr. Brooke: Before the hon. Member for Fermanagh and South Tyrone gets agitated, I remind him that Acts passed since 1937 have confirmed that on our statute book. Article 1 of the Anglo-Irish Agreement simply stated that the decision about the future status of Northern Ireland would be taken—this was endorsed by the Government of the Republic—by a majority of the people living in Northern Ireland. I can think of no readier acknowledgement by the Government of the Republic than that.

Mr. John D. Taylor: I am afraid that the Secretary of State does not grasp my point. I am talking not about the future status of Northern Ireland, nor about the attitude of the Dublin Government towards the future status of Northern Ireland, but about the present status of Northern Ireland, which in United Kingdom terms is exactly the same today as it was in 1985, subject to the introduction of the Anglo-Irish Agreement. In 1985 the right hon. Gentleman's predecessor won the approval of the House against our opposition for the Anglo-Irish Agreement on the basis that the Dublin Government recognised the status of Northern Ireland within the United Kingdom. Last week's judgment wholly rejects that presentation by his predecessor. The right hon. Gentleman can no longer repeat word for word what his predecessor said in presenting the agreement to the people of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Brooke: The right hon. Gentlaman knows that there is, in de jure terms, a claim from both jurisdictions. In practical terms Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom, sustained by the statute book of the United Kingdom. In article 1 of the Anglo-Irish Agreement we now have, in addition, an endorsement by the Government of the Republic that that status will change only on a majority vote in Northern Ireland. If that does not constitute a recognition of the continuing position of Northern Ireland within the United Kingdom, I do not know what does.

Mr. Ian Gow (Eastbourne): Does my right hon. Friend recall that the wording of the Sunningdale agreement on the status of Northern Ireland was precisely and in every respect in accordance with the wording used in article 1? Therefore, my right hon. Friend is unintentionally misleading the House when he says that the Government of the Irish Republic acknowledged, for the first time, in article 1 of the 1985 agreement that the status of Northern Ireland could not be changed save with the consent of the majority of the people of Northern Ireland.

Mr. Brooke: Were I, on the advice of my hon. Friend the Member for Eastbourne (Mr. Gow), misleading the House, I would certainly apologise. My hon. Friend's question in no way militates against my observation since the questions addressed to me were in relation to the Anglo-Irish Agreement and to which I replied that article 1 confirmed that it would be the majority view in Northern Ireland that would decide the matter.

Rev. Ian Paisley *rose*—

Mr. Barry Porter (Wirral, South) *rose*—

Mr. Brooke: I have been generous in responding, and I must get on.

Terrorism continues at a high level and remains the dominant social problem in Northern Ireland. It is the Government's wish to create a better, more prosperous future in which the people of Northern Ireland can freely make decisions about their own future, without coercion and the threat of violence. Eradicating terrorism of all kinds will, therefore, remain the central theme of our policy as long as is necessary. To this end, the courts, the police and armed forces must continue to have at their disposal all the legal resources they need. I therefore unreservedly commend the order to the House.

4.21 pm

Mr. Kevin McNamara (Kingston upon Hull, North): At the outset, on behalf of my colleagues, I express our sympathy to all those who have lost relatives or seen their relatives injured in the past year as a result of the troubles. I also pass on our sympathy to the injured. I want to mention specifically those who have been savagely gunned down in the past week, Sergeant Thomas Alexander Jameson of the Ulster Defence Regiment, Mr. Sam Marshall and Mr. Eamon Quinn, who was savagely gunned down in front of his wife. They have our prayers and their relatives and families have our sympathies.

We should also like to pay tribute to the members of the security forces who, in their day-to-day conduct, are responsible for ensuring that life progresses normally for the majority of people in the Province. Upon them, more than upon politicians and policy makers, depends the people's acceptance of the rule of law. Their day-to-day contact with the community depends, more than anyone else's, upon the community's acceptance of their role—defending that community. We give an awesome authority to the ordinary squaddie and policeman on the beat.

Today we are debating the renewal of the emergency abnormal powers. As the Secretary of State has said, we are indebted to Lord Colville for his assistance and careful and meticulous examination of the workings of the emergency provisions legislation. Whether we accept his conclusions or not—often the Government do not, as illustrated today—we are grateful to him for taking us through the legal minefield of the different pieces of legislation with which we must deal. He makes his report against a background of continuing terrorism and counter-terrorism in Northern Ireland.

In the introduction to his report this year Lord Colville stated that it was a "short report" because he was embarking this month on his "enhanced review" of the Northern Ireland Emergency Provisions Act 1987. Nevertheless, within his review, he has given us much food for thought. The Labour party has already submitted its proposals to Lord Colville for his enhanced review. We

expect that, when his report is published, the Government will give us time to have a full discussion of it before they embark on any of their own proposals for dealing with and changing the Act.

Despite the fact that we regarded Lord Colville's terms of reference as rather narrow, the Labour party's evidence was based upon two principles—first, that no power should remain on the statute book unless the case for its present existence is clearly established, and, secondly, that there is a need to consider the operation of the Act and to take into account its interrelationship with the rest of the criminal law in Northern Ireland—both emergency and ordinary laws.

Nevertheless, despite Lord Colville's recommendations that the measure should stand, section 12—the provision for internment without trial—in our opinion is both repugnant and redundant. While it remains on the statute book it is a constant reminder of the greatest political error made by any Government in the handling of the present emergency and it is a constant reminder to one section of the community of what may eventually be used against them yet again. It must go.

In last year's review of the operation of the Act Lord Colville stated in paragraph 1.5 :

"The battle for the hearts and minds should be the paramount preoccupation of those who exercise emergency powers."

That is the background against which we must judge the operation of the powers at the present time. Sadly, a number of events over the past year have raised the question of the competence of the way in which the law is administered and therefore of the future of the battle for hearts and minds. They include the McKerr judgment in the House of Lords last week, the Stevens inquiry, the role of the Ulster Defence Regiment and the primacy of policing in the campaign against terrorists.

In the McKerr case, the House of Lords ruled last week that the power of Northern Ireland coroners to compel persons to give evidence at an inquest into a death, where the person is suspected of causing the death, or has been charged with those likely to be charged with an offence relating to the death, is a rule which regulates the practice and procedure at an inquest and was validly made. That was an important decision based, as Lord Goff said, on procedural law and not on substantive law. It overturned a very closely reasoned and important judgment of the Court of Appeal in Northern Ireland.

The House of Lords decision is now the law, but we must consider its effects. No member of the security forces can now be compelled or examined under oath at a coroner's inquest if he or she has been involved or is suspected of being involved in the killing of a terrorist, a suspected terrorist or an innocent person. The reasons for their decision and the actions that they took in the killings cannot be examined.

The brother of one of my constituents was killed at Loughall. The dead man was an innocent person; he happened to arrive on the scene with his brother—they were the Hughes brothers—who was gravely injured. Their legal representatives cannot interrogate members of the security forces about the circumstances leading to the death of Mr. Hughes as a result of the House of Lords' decision.

At the coroner's inquest into the shootings and killings of three men outside a bookmakers earlier this year, one of whom who was allegedly unarmed and was shot unwarned, sitting in the front of the car, the people who killed him cannot be asked about their motives. That means that the security forces are being protected to the extent that they are no longer merely civilians in uniform.

We now have three standards at coroners' inquests. First, in Northern Ireland we have the limitations placed upon inquests now, and the fact that the police can vet jurors, which is a return to the old provisions of the special powers act with a vengeance. Secondly, there is the type of coroner's inquest that we had in Gibraltar, with all its limitations, behind which the Government seek to hide to prevent further inquiries into what happened there. Thirdly, there is the coroner's inquest that we have on this island, where no such inhibitions and restrictions exist upon people being questioned and asked to account for their actions under oath.

The decision in the House of Lords was a sad day for British justice. To argue that Northern Ireland coroners exercise their powers of inquisition in such a manner as to give protection to citizens who might otherwie be impelled to give evidence and so to be exposed to embarrassment in circumstances where they may be subject to criminal proceedings by invoking the privilege of self-incrimination is little consolation to the relatives of my constituents. There is also little consolation in the matter of embarrassment. As *The Independent* said in its leader comment the day after the decision,

"Experience teaches that when a judiciary construes the law so narrowly as to seem to be intent on saving functionaries of the state from the embarrassment of being questioned by citizens, it risks losing citizens' respect".

As a general proposition, that would be accepted as important in any society, but in a divided society such as Northern Ireland it is of the utmost importance. This is a decision that we shall live to regret. The opportunity to lay to rest the shoot-to-kill policy which the Court of Appeal in Northern Ireland had given—a policy which the Government had continuously tried to cover up for reasons of state—has been lost because of the decision in the House of Lords.

The Independent drew attention to another issue:

"Perhaps their Lordships see the idea that law should have a policy as a strange and alien notion. Certainly they seem indifferent to the broad issue of policy in this case: whether the judiciary will effectively challenge the executive's reluctance to permit effective scrutiny of its conduct in matters which are of the gravest importance to both human rights and constitutional principle."

That is a question of supreme importance, and in the divided society of Northern Ireland, in which both sides are concerned about the role of the security forces and about the policy directions that they are given, it is an issue which must be resolved.

There is also the issue of the background to the Stevens inquiry. When Mr. Stevens was appointed to head the inquiry into possible security leaks in the security forces to members of loyalist paramilitary organisations, there was considerable hope that a man of such distinction as a policeman in this country would be able to root out what had long been part of folklore in Northern Ireland—the connection between the UDR and members of the paramilitary loyalist forces.

No one was suggesting that the connection applied to every member of the UDR, a body of brave and dedicated men and women who have suffered a great deal at the hands of terrorism, as we sadly witnessed again this week. They have taken over many of the roles from the Army in the fight against terrorism. The role of the UDR is itself a

[Mr. Kevin McNamara]

matter of controversy, but no one must underestimate the courage that many of its members have shown when carrying out their role.

We understand that the Stevens inquiry is likely to be wound up at the end of this week, and I should be grateful if the Minister would confirm that. We also understand that the report will shortly be sent to the Chief Constable, which means that the circumstances of the murder of Mr. Sam Marshall will not be examined by Mr. Stevens, even though the original statement by the RUC that his bail arrangements were public knowledge were later withdrawn. Who told the paramilitaries?

Mr. Stevens will also not be able to inquire into the discovery of large quantities of intelligence documents in east Belfast last week in a house usually occupied by a member of the UDR who has gone missing. These matters are only peripheral to the problems of the allegations about unhappiness with the UDR high command, of the disagreements with the RUC, and of the resulting strange developments in which Mr. Terry Loughlin, the respected assistant editor of the *Irish News*, refused to co-operate further with the Stevens inquiry, following the story of the RUC inner circle, because of statements issued by the RUC press office before he had given his full witness statement to the Stevens inquiry.

Perhaps most important of all is the issue of the chief witness, Brian Nelson, who has been used by the Stevens inquiry. The statement last week in the case of Mr. Gordon Mahafy, the lead story on Northern Ireland BBC news, is of considerable importance. He was charged with the wrongful possession of documents relating to IRA and INLA suspects. Defence counsel said that Brian Nelson had been helping the Stevens inquiry with its inquiries and that he had been a Government agent for several years, having infiltrated the UDR as an agent provocateur. If that allegation is correct and if Mr. Nelson was acting as a double agent, working both for the UDA and for some branch of the security forces—perhaps the RUC—questions arise about his role as chief intelligence officer for the UDA. What operations, if any, were set up as a result of information that he supplied? Did he know of them? Did he partake in any of them? What information about any of them did he give to his handlers and what was their response to any such information? What credence can be placed upon his evidence if any of those cases come to court?

Finally, there is the allegation of Mr. Colin Hall—who is charged with making an RUC uniform available to the UFF—that he was struck by one of the members of the Stevens inquiry team, so the RUC is being investigated by the Stevens inquiry, which is now being investigated by the RUC.

The problems of the Stevens inquiry are highlighted by the story in *The Guardian* today, which states:

"A paramilitary fraud ring has been uncovered operating inside a large army base in Northern Ireland, creaming off nearly £500,000 from under the noses of the security forces." Paramilitary loyalist groups, believed to belong to the Ulster Defence Association and its offshoot the Ulster Volunteer Force, are said to be involved.

I can understand why the Ministry of Defence wanted to cover up that information in the evidence that was sent to the Public Accounts Committee. However, it is not only a problem for the anti-racketerring unit of the RUC because it means that, for years, paramilitaries have had access to buildings inside the camp at Ballykelly. They could obtain security information and details about IRA suspects and gain access to maps and plans of the buildings on the camp from the PSA office inside the fence. That is a serious matter, as it impinges on the nature of the Stevens inquiry. In addition, the UDR—which is recruited locally—has many facilities at Ballykelly.

I should be obliged if the Minister would tell us whether any papers on this matter have been sent to the Director of Public Prosecutions. Are any past or present members of the security forces involved in these matters? Did they come under the scrutiny of the Stevens inquiry? Were any of the UDR members who were arrested or questioned by the Stevens inquiry team ever stationed at Ballykelly? Despite what the Under-Secretary said in Committee on the Bill to privatise the Property Services Agency—it is responsible for work on MOD establishments in Northern Ireland—will he and his right hon. Friend now insist that Northern Ireland be left outside the scope of that Bill, whether or not it relates to MOD establishments? Evidence was given to the Committee by my hon. Friend the Member for South Down (Mr. McGrady), supplemented by my hon. Friend the Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley), about how paramilitary frauds work. It is essential that no public work be used as a means to channel funds to paramilitary forces on either side.

There has been considerable controversy about the work of the UDR. I have already said that it is the role of the security forces on the street that will inspire confidence in this legislation. That will come about not through speeches in this place or the amount of support that we give them, but from their day-to-day contact with members of the public.

I fail to understand why it remains impossible for Ministers to give the precise numbers of UDR patrols accompanied by the RUC. Why cannot they be logged, statistics taken and figures published? It is a simple matter and we could then understand the scale of the problem that the RUC and the UDR face in carrying out the undertaking of the first Anglo-Irish Agreement that, wherever possible, Army and UDR patrols would be accompanied by a member of the RUC.

Mr. Barry Porter: The hon. Gentleman has been speaking for about 16 minutes and has not once mentioned the Provisional IRA. Will he ever get round to that?

Mr. McNamara: I sometimes think that the hon. Gentleman gives too much credence to the Provisional IRA. I would rather spend our time looking at the workings of the Act and its relevance to the law-abiding people in Northern Ireland. If I may use the style of the Prime Minister, at the start of our speech we voiced our support for the security forces and saluted them for their bravery. I should have thought that in a democratic assembly it is not necessary to go into what paramilitary and terrorist organisations are doing. It is enough to say that we roundly condemn them. That was implicit in all that I said in my speech which looks at problems involving terrorists from both sides.

We were discussing one of the ways to try to defeat the paramilitaries, including the Provisional IRA, from both sides. One of the methods of doing that is to inspire confidence in the security forces. Another is to try to ensure that when possible the RUC will accompany other

members of the security forces on their patrols. That would demonstrate the primacy of the RUC in all policing matters in Northern Ireland, thereby cutting the ground from under the feet of those who seek to find excuses to support paramilitaries. This is a simple matter and can be done quite easily. The week before last the Minister of State was quick to tell me at Question Time that all Army and UDR patrols are tasked by the RUC. Therefore, he should be able to tell us the number of patrols that are tasked and whether the plain clothes patrol that killed three men outside a bookmakers in Belfast earlier this year was tasked by the RUC.

I have outlined the background against which we are discussing this legislation. It must be evident that we are dealing with an abnormal situation and need abnormal legislation. The question that we must answer is how we approach the legislation and the inference that can be drawn from the legislation that the House proposes. This is emergency abnormal legislation and it is right to discuss it, as we do, every year. We believe that the normal practice should be to assume jury trial as normal and Diplock courts as abnormal. For that reason it is important that there should be contracting in of scheduled offences rather than contracting out. We should look carefully again at some of the rules about the admissibility of evidence and confessions.

I should like to pursue some of the matters to which Lord Colville referred in his short report. The first matter is the use of force in murder cases, and the second is the use of closed-circuit television in detention centres. In 1989 Lord Colville gave his opinion on the matter of the use of lethal force in murder cases and a House of Lords Select Committee recommended action on this point. As the noble Lord says, White Paper Cm. 965 does not disclose whether there is any intention on the part of the Government to act on this proposal. This is not merely a matter for cases involving the security forces, although it is of the utmost importance to them.

The Opposition believe with Lord Colville that the use of excessive force for self defence in the prevention of crime should be capable of amounting to manslaughter. The introduction of this new category would help the security forces in their actions and would also help the perception of the general public about the role of the security forces and their accountability.

Perhaps more important and more immediate, and arising from the experiment announced by the Home Secretary for the taking of tape recordings of evidence in PTA cases, is the proposal by the noble Lord that all interrogations in Northern Ireland at Castlereagh and Armagh should not merely be monitored but that a video record should be kept of them. Despite what the Secretary of State said, that makes eminent sense. I regret that he did not accept the urgency of what Lord Colville said and has again postponed a decision, apparently until 1992.

The argument against tape recordings of terrorist interrogations used to be that it might reveal intelligence sources. That is an interesting argument and might hold some water if it were not for the fact that, once a terrorist has been interrogated, he will almost certainly be heavily debriefed by his friends and will have noted the source of the evidence that the security forces are using. Therefore, that argument does not stand. Even if it did, it would be possible for transcripts to be treated in the way that they are treated in Select Committees where a meeting has been held in secret. Application for a transcript could be made to the Committee or to a judge in chambers for part of the transcript which, in the opinion of the judge, would reveal delicate intelligence sources to be expunged—provided that that was not fundamental to the bringing of a case against a suspect. By his experiments in two places, the Home Secretary has said that this matter can now be adequately dealt with.

I accept that Lord Colville does not address this matter precisely in his report. However, in paragraphs 5.1 to 5.6 he deals with the keeping of video tapes of interrogations. Originally closed circuit television was used to keep watch in such matters, because it enabled matters of a disciplinary nature against the police or complaints by defendants to be dealt with. The objection was that brutalisation might take place when somebody was not watching the monitoring screen, or it could be alleged that brutality took place and that the person monitoring the scene turned a Nelson's eye to the television screen.

In the current Colin Hall case allegations have been made that a member of the Stevens inquiry beat or struck Mr. Hall. That is being investigated by the RUC. That matter could have been immediately cleared up one way or the other by a video recording. If the Home Secretary is prepared to have an experiment about transcripts of interrogations, surely the same could be done with video recordings. There could be both a video recording and a tape recording and we would be better able to ensure that the evidence coming before the court was accurate and not obtained under duress. That would also protect the police from unfair accusations.

It is sad and lamentable that nearly 20 years after the introduction of this temporary legislation we are once again debating it. We shall vote against the order, not because we do not accept that Northern Ireland is an abnormal part of our society in terms of law and order and must have special measures, but because we think that the Government have not responded to the recommendations made by the Labour party and by Lord Colville to improve the situation. They do not seem to be properly seized of the fact that it is not legislation alone that improves the situation but the administration of legislation, and confidence in it and in the impartial administration of justice. Those aims are essential and we do not think that the Government have gone far enough in seeking to achieve them.

4.48 pm

Rev. Ian Paisley (Antrim, North): Unlike the Front-Bench spokesman for the Labour party, the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North (Mr. McNamara), and the Leader of the Opposition, I am concerned about the Irish Republican Army because the overwhelming number of killings and terrorist incidents are carried out by the so-called Provisional IRA. Statistics quoted by Unionists might be challenged, but I am sure that the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North would not want to challenge the hon. Member for Foyle (Mr. Hume), the leader of the SDLP. In addressing his party conference the hon. Member for Foyle made it clear that in the troubles 44 per cent. of victims had been killed by the IRA and 18 per cent. by other Republican paramilitaries, making 62 per cent. of all killings.

Twenty-seven per cent. of the victims were killed by loyalists, 10 per cent. by the British Army, 2 per cent. by the RUC, and only 0·28 per cent. by the UDR. I always

[Rev. Ian Paisley]

wonder why such attacks are made on the UDR, when it is responsible for only 0·28 per cent. of the total number of killings in Northern Ireland. I shall return to that point.

Between 1981 and 1988, the number of terrorist incidents for which republicans were responsible totalled 3,739, while the figure for loyalists was 278. If one compares the two figures, it is obvious that the overwhelming number of incidents and killings were the responsibility of the IRA. I condemn killings from both sides, but they must all be put into perspective.

Mr. Flannery: Having condemned tit-for-tat killings, it would be very sad if the argumentation in this House also became tit for tat. Of the three killings that have just occurred in Northern Ireland, two appeared to be the work of loyalist paramilitary terrorists, and the other was apparently the work of the IRA. I agree profoundly with the hon. Member for Antrim, North (Rev. Ian Paisley) when he says that our struggle is against all killings. I hope that it does not emerge from this debate that that sentiment is not so true as it sounds in a single sentence.

Rev. Ian Paisley: I am sure that the hon. Member for Sheffield, Hillsborough (Mr. Flannery) will agree that I, as a Northern Ireland Member of Parliament, have a duty to speak for my constituents. The fear in Northern Ireland must first be measured by those responsible for the vast majority of killings. No right hon. or hon. Member condones any killing. No matter who uses the gun, such killings are to be condemned unequivocally. As the hon. Member for Hillsborough knows, that has always been my attitude. However, in view of the remarks of the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North, I felt that I had to put down a marker at the beginning of the debate.

I want to deal first with the circumstances which have brought about the present deterioration in law and order in Northern Ireland. What lies at the heart of it, why does that problem exist, and why does it continue? I believe that at the root of the problem is the territorial claim made by the Republic of Ireland that it is the legitimate ruler of Northern Ireland. When an IRA man takes the gun, he can say, "I am engaged in a legitimate cause," and he can say it even more now that the Lord Chief Justice of the Republic of Ireland has said that the British Government have no legitimacy and that the Dublin Government have a legitimate duty to do everything in their power to oust the illegitimate British Government and to establish their own jurisdiction over the whole of Ireland.

The House must recognise that until that Berlin wall —which was built not by Unionists or by Ulster Protestants but by the Dublin authorities—is dismantled, there will not be peace in Ireland. That is at the heart of the matter.

When the Anglo-Irish Agreement was reached, it was argued, particularly by members of the Government Front Bench, with great eloquence and force, that a change had taken place and that, for once, the Government of the Republic of Ireland had become convinced that Northern Ireland must remain a part of the United Kingdom. We were told that the agreement set out in article 1 that the status of Northern Ireland was as a part of the United Kingdom. We pointed out at the time and subsequently that there is no mention in article 1 of the status of Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom. The words "United Kingdom" do not even appear in that document. However, there is a reference to the status of Northern Ireland.

In the Assembly Committee which was established in Stormont to deal with the Anglo-Irish Agreement, presided over by the right hon. Member for Lagan Valley (Mr. Molyneaux), leader of the Ulster Unionists, the Labour Front Bench spokesman was asked whether he believed that the status of Northern Ireland would be changed by the agreement. He answered that of course it has been changed, because no other part of the United Kingdom holds a conference at which members of a foreign jurisdiction meet Government officials from the United Kingdom as equals and pledge to do everything to reach agreement and a consensus policy for a part of the United Kingdom's territory. That is what happened, so let no right hon. or hon. Member try to tell the House that the Anglo-Irish Agreement established the status of Northern Ireland as an integral part of the United Kingdom.

In the McGimpsey case, on appeal the McGimpsey brothers argued that article 1 of the Anglo-Irish Agreement amounted to an acknowledgement by the Republic that it was not entitled as of right to jurisdiction over Northern Ireland and that it therefore contravened articles 2 and 3 of the Irish constitution. That was a good legal point to argue, but the highest court in the land made it perfectly clear that there was nothing contrary to articles 2 and 3 of the Irish constitution, and that there was no recognition in the agreement that Northern Ireland was part of the United Kingdom—and its legitimate status was denied.

Every right hon. and hon. Member should be aware that the court went on to deal with the legitimacy of the United Kingdom Government in Northern Ireland and with the duty of the Dublin Government to seek to establish constitutionally its jurisdiction over the whole of Ireland. The Anglo-Irish Agreement can be used by the Dublin Government to proceed along a road that will lead to its attaining the ends of articles 2 and 3 of the Irish constitution. Down through the history of Northern Ireland, the question of the Republic's jurisdiction has arisen time and again. When it was certain that Northern Ireland would not in any way be betrayed and that its future lay firmly in the hands of its own elected leaders, articles 2 and 3 of the Irish constitution were practically meaningless, but they are no longer meaningless now that the British Government have provided a platform and supplied the machinery for the South to achieve the objectives of articles 2 and 3 of its constitution. That is why the Unionist people are so stirred.

Mr. Geoffrey Dickens (Littleborough and Saddleworth): Does the hon. Gentleman agree that it seems that in the House of Commons there is no political will to give a total commitment to Northern Ireland? If we were debating Nicaragua or South Africa the Benches would be packed with Members displaying outrage, passion and indignation. But today we are debating the United Kingdom—our own country. The public do not understand why we are so passionate about remote countries but somehow cannot get to grips with the problems in our own nation. Does the hon. Gentleman agree with that sentiment?

Rev. Ian Paisley: I agree totally. It is what the Ulster Members have been saying all along. When the Stormont

Parliament was disbanded and the power-sharing Executive came into existence I was told by the then Prime Minister that the trouble was all over.

Mr. Flannery: Has the hon. Gentleman seen him here?

Rev. Ian Paisley: I am glad to see that the hon. Gentleman's colleague has a stick with which to deal with him.

When the power-sharing Executive came into existence the then Prime Minister said that the trouble was all over, that at last there would be peace.

In a speech in this House I said that previous events in Northern Ireland had been a picnic by comparison with the killings that would follow. How right that prophecy turned out to be—and the killings will go on and on until the Government have the guts to deal with the situation.

I am surprised that today the Secretary of State did not say, "I am a defender of Her Majesty's territories, and I say that the Dublin Government have no authority over part of the United Kingdom and no right to claim that they have such authority." The British Government have the power to say to the southern Government, "You must come into the 20th century and stop claiming territorial rights over a part of our territory." If the people of Northern Ireland want, in an election, to express the desire to become a part of the united Ireland, let them do so. As a democrat, I should have to accept that. I do not want it, but I should have to accept it. However, I know that the people of Northern Ireland do not want such an arrangement.

The Government will not even repeat the referendum exercise. They will not say to the people, "Let us have another vote on this issue." The SDLP does not want a vote on it. Nobody wants to put the matter to the test. Why? If there is such a willingness on the part of the people of Northern Ireland to go south—and even among Unionists there are some who seem attracted by the magnetism of the Republic—let us have a referendum. The Secretary of State has the authority to call one immediately. Let the people of Northern Ireland give their decision. We in this House know only too well what the outcome would be. No betting shop would offer odds.

The Government cannot ignore what happened in the Supreme Court of the Irish Republic. The British Government must get to grips with article 1 of their agreement with the Government of the Republic. That agreement is not what it was sold to this Parliament and to the people of Ulster as being. It contains no guarantee about the status of Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Maginnis: Perhaps I may draw the hon. Gentleman's attention to the terms in which article 1 of the agreement was defined by senior counsel in the Supreme Court of the Republic. He said:

"Now, Mr. O'Flaherty"—

Mr. O'Flaherty was the senior counsel representing the McGimpseys—

"referred to Article 1, my Lord, headed 'The Status of Northern Ireland'. When one reads that Article, one looks at the status of Northern Ireland, it's not defined at all. It is carefully not defined, my Lord, carefully not defined."

Rev. Ian Paisley: The hon. Gentleman confirms exactly what I and, indeed, all Unionists have been saying. The finding of the Supreme Court comes as no surprise to any Unionist. In an article in *The Times* on Saturday, Conor Cruise O'Brien said that the British Government would ignore that decision at their peril. If the British Government do ignore it, it will become an increasingly serious festering sore. I trust that the Secretary of State will have second thoughts. He has had second thoughts before, and I have congratulated him on that. I hope that, after this debate, he will realise that this is a matter that will not go away.

Rev. Martin Smyth (Belfast, South): The hon. Gentleman has said that the Government sold the Anglo-Irish Agreement to Northern Ireland. Does he agree that we have not bought it, that we see it for the fraud that it is and have constantly rejected it?

Rev. Ian Paisley: I should have said that the Government had sold the agreement to this House. They certainly did not deceive the people of Northern Ireland —the agreement has not been sold to them. Ministers may go to North Antrim as often as they like and tell people there how wonderful the agreement is. They may do their best to get poor souls to join the new Tory party of Northern Ireland which, we are told, will show the people what Toryism can do for Northern Ireland. When one sees the closed hospitals, the long unemployment queues and the degradation in the Province, one realises that no Northern Ireland person in his senses would vote for the Tory party. That will be made clear at the next election. I would welcome an election tomorrow. I should make it clear that I am talking about present-day Toryism, not Conservatism.

Mr. Barry Porter: What about Harland and Wolff?

Rev Ian Paisley: What was done for Harland and Wolff was what any Government would have done for the shipyard. The hon. Gentleman would have advocated similar action in his own area. However, I do not want to cross swords with the hon. Gentleman as I have other quarry to kill.

I come now to a matter which is causing great concern. I refer to the consistent conspiracy to blacken the Ulster Defence Regiment. We have seen this conspiracy evolve. The Stevens inquiry was not set up to deal with the leaking of information from the UDR to paramilitaries; it was set up to deal with the leaking of information from the RUC to paramilitaries. The Opposition spokesman did not mention that. But suddenly the whole inquiry changed. Documents that many of us had had for years—an Assembly colleague of mine produced page after page of photographs—were systematically leaked in the press.

Every morning one heard that a reporter from some paper had another document.

Rev William McCrea (Mid-Ulster): Can my hon. Friend confirm that I made such a statement in the Assembly? Members of the RUC took me there and left me home but, to this day, have not asked me where I got the information.

Rev Ian Paisley: I can only say that those policemen must have been very lenient. When I mention in this House any matter on which the RUC seems to think I should not have information, a policeman comes to my door asking, "May we have the document to which you referred?" Indeed, on one occasion I had to appeal to a former

[Rev Ian Paisley]

Speaker for protection of my right, as a Member of Parliament, to produce documents whose contents I thought that the public needed to know.

There has been a conspiracy. The "Panorama" programme had one aim—to discredit the whole Ulster Defence Regiment. If members of the UDR are doing things that are wrong, they must be made amenable to the law. Members of British regiments—I refer to "British regiments" not because the UDR is not one but because it is a term that the House knows—on this side of the water have done dastardly deeds, but I have never heard any hon. Member say that a whole regiment should be disbanded, even though some of those deeds were gruesome indeed. Of course, such a regiment should not be disbanded. If a man goes wrong and is dealt with, his regiment should not suffer—others should not be guilty by association.

"Panorama" said that the UDR trained 40,000 Protestants to use a gun. When the UDR was first formed, 20 per cent. of its members were Roman Catholics. The programme did not say that since a fifth of the total membership at one time were Roman Catholics the Government also trained so many thousand Roman Catholics to use a gun. Where does it end? Those men were not trained to use a gun for unlawful purposes; they were members of the Army and were given their training as such. They were not trained as Protestants or as Roman Catholics; they were trained as members of a British regiment.

At the end of the programme, the commentator said that the UDR had been brought into existence to solve the problem but that now it was part of the problem. The gallant members of the UDR take their lives into their hands. On Sunday, I was at a UDR funeral. As I delivered a message in my capacity as leader of the Free Presbyterian church, I looked down and saw one of my members sitting with her three young children, and I thought about people saying, "Your husband was part of the problem." That man took his life into his hands on two counts—first, as a sergeant in the UDR and, secondly, in working for a builder who helped to carry out contracts for the security forces. Statements that that man is part of the problem are deeply resented by the people of Northern Ireland.

The situation has become intolerable, especially for those of us who have to pay the British Broadcasting Corporation and then have that programme shown on our screens. I put our views to Lord Barnett, a former Member. I have been told that a book has been produced containing more than 300 names and that every UDR man has a copy. But that book does not exist. I rang up Mr. Stevens and asked whether he had the book and whether he had seen the man who compiled the "Panorama" programme and taken the book from him. Mr. Stevens said that he could not answer me but had to put me on to the inquiry officer. He said that he was not putting me off and that I could state my case.

Five minutes later, the officer spoke to me and said that he had visited the man who made the programme and asked about the book. I asked whether the adviser had seized it, and he said no and asked whether I knew why. I said, "Of course I know why"—a parliamentarian never asks a question to which he does not know the answer, and it would be foolish to do so. I said that it was a bogus book and the adviser said, "That is right—I have no authority to confiscate a book that is bogus." The book was waved before millions of people who watched that programme. We are told that every UDR man has a copy of that list of suspected IRA men and that it is given to other men to kill those suspects. The House must face up to this serious matter.

The Secretary of State knows that I am not one to defend him, but I do not believe that any responsible BBC producer should go to the Secretary of State, take nearly an hour of his time, go to the head of the UDR and take an hour of his time and then go straight to Dublin, play the programme to the foreign secretary of another country and ask him to have the last word on it. That is not fair to this country or to the UDR. The UDR does not deserve such treatment.

Until the House faces up to that matter, we shall not come to grips with it. Why does the IRA want to get rid of the UDR? It is because the UDR stands as a bastion against the IRA and all the citizens of Northern Ireland in the areas in which it operates. If members of the UDR did something that they should not have done, they should be dealt with like anyone else, but the whole regiment should not be maligned as it has been. Other matters have been raised which cause concern in the hearts of everyone. All of us want civil and religious liberty. We are all dedicated to that. The two matters that I have raised lie at the foundation of this debate.

5.16 pm

Mr. Ken Maginnis (Fermanagh and South Tyrone): Last year, the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North (Mr. McNamara) began his speech by saying that we were debating the order in the shadow of the gunman. Sadly, we do so again this year. My party offers its sincere sympathy to the families of all the victims of the past week and year. There is nothing—whether membership of the UDR, the fact that a person's work takes him into security bases, the chance that causes one person to be in the wrong place at the wrong time, or even membership of an illegal organisation—that can justify murder. That, too, is the unequivocal position of the Ulster Unionist party. Hence we as legislators have a responsibility to those in whom we vest authority to protect our community from such terrorism and to ensure that we provide the means by which people can carry out their tasks within the law. That is our first priority. All other considerations must remain secondary.

Lord Colville recognises this and my party supports his recommendation that the emergency provisions powers must remain in place for the immediate future. I continue to be disappointed, not at the official Opposition's desire to see an early return to normality in Northern Ireland, but by the strange thesis that the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North continues to promote to the effect that continuance of the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1984 and the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978 constitutes a suspension of human rights. The hon. Gentleman will surely agree with me that the greatest infringement of human rights is that perpetrated by the paramilitaries when, acting as judge, jury and executioner, they carry out assassinations in the most arbitrary manner. It is in the nature of our

society that even the basest of killers is entitled to his rights under the law, but that right must never be enhanced at the expense of the innocent victims or of our security forces.

Unlike the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North, who appears to concentrate almost exclusively on what he regards as the deficiencies of our security forces —deficiencies which I do not experience on the ground —I intend to deal with the victims of terrorism and with the innocent community trying to get on with their lives in Northern Ireland.

The hon. Member for Antrim, North (Rev Ian Paisley) referred to the television reporter, John Ware, and to the disgraceful one-sided and biased programme that he produced for "Panorama". When John Ware first came to the Province, he came to see me. He stated unequivocally and unashamedly that he was there to follow up the Stevens inquiry and to expose the UDR, in so far as he alleged it was involved in the leaking of information to paramilitary organisations. He had his mind made up. I gave him an hour of my time and he recorded three or four cassettes containing what I had had to tell him about the UDR. As right hon. and hon. Members know, I speak with some personal experience, having served with the regiment for 11 years. After all that, I was horrified by what he said as he turned round to leave my home. I said, "I hope that you will be objective in your treatment of what I have said, although obviously you can't carry all that you have recorded." His reply was, "Well, we'll try —but you're not going to like it." Those were John Ware's exact words and they can scarcely enhance his reputation as an objective journalist. But why should we criticise John Ware when the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North concentrated almost entirely on diminishing the security forces? There was no objectivity in what he said and no acknowledgment of the plight of the people whom I represent or of those represented by the Ulster Democratic Unionist party.

I have used the terms "emergency powers" in referring to the order. Like many hon. Members, I suspect, I find it no easy task to differentiate that which falls within the compass of the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1984 and that which comes within the scope of the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978. Nor has the Police and Criminal Evidence Order (Northern Ireland) 1988 made it any easier for the layman to identify the relevant legislation. That is why the Ulster Unionists feel that it is time to rationalise the legislation. When Lord Colville brings forward his major report, the emergency provisions Act should be allowed to lapse and a number of its provisions should then be incorporated in the prevention of terrorism Act, which should then cease to be temporary.

In its document "Emergency Laws Now", which has been presented to Lord Colville for consideration, the Ulster Unionist party makes a number of recommendations which are worth mentioning at this stage. Part I of the emergency provisions Act 1978, as amended by the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1987—the provisions relating to scheduled offences, and the court, the mode of trial and the evidence in scheduled offence cases—should be inserted into the prevention of terrorism Act. The Lord Chancellor could be given a power, by order requiring parliamentary approval, to bring that part of the Act into operation for any defined area for a defined period. In addition, the Lord Chancellor could direct that that part should apply to a particular case. There is little doubt that such a provision would be beneficial in cases such as that of the Birmingham Six because, irrespective of one's overall opinion of the matter, the view is widely held that, in the wake of such an atrocity, there must be less than an even chance of being able to find a completely impartial jury.

Part II of the emergency provisions Act 1978 and part II of the 1987 Act, dealing with arrest, search, detention and the conditions of detention, are largely supplementary to the powers in part III of the prevention of terrorism Act and could easily be integrated in that part.

The provision in part III of the 1978 Act which deals with proscription and public order matters could be consolidated with those in the prevention of terrorism Act. For the first time in years, we could then produce a uniform list of proscribed organisations. The public order provisions would surely be better included in existing public order legislation.

The length of time for which accused persons are held in custody before being brought to trial is often criticised, although it is more likely to arise from the unavailability of a particular defence counsel chosen by the accused than from undue delay in the court's timetable. But the power to make regulations governing the time limits for proceedings in scheduled offence cases should still be retained as a safeguard. The present classification of scheduled offences and their mode of trial—before a single judge—should also be retained. There is no evidence that the Diplock courts, as they are called, have caused problems—the pressure for change has had more to do with political propaganda than with justice. The allegations concerning the Birmingham Six and others bear that out because, as the House will recall, those cases were brought before a jury.

Again, it is merely political gesturing to call for three-judge courts, as it has yet to be proved that there is a need based on the furtherance of justice. Cases going to appeal—proportionally, there are few that do—go before three judges. The practical difficulty of providing three-judge courts for all Diplock cases would result in an unacceptable backlog in the court system. Even if it were desirable to increase the number of judges, we should still have to ask whether justice is better served by having our most experienced legal brains on the Bench or below the Bench. I think that there is a happy medium. As judges must be appointed from the ranks of senior counsel, it is perhaps better justice to ensure that the accused has a reasonable choice of good and experienced defence counsel.

When we debated the prevention of terrorism Act a few days ago, I was somewhat saddened by the fact that there was so little acknowledgment of the suffering of the community. Too much sympathy was expressed then, as it has been today, for those who perpetrate violence against the community. It is perhaps because the legislation that we are debating is designed to constrain those with evil intent that we tend to forget the victims and consider the legislation purely in terms of how it relates to the evil men in the community.

Is there real evidence that the emergency powers legislation is counter-productive, as the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North has alleged, or that it is unnecessary in as much as it fails to accomplish what it sets out to achieve? I believe that without the emergency provisions legislation and the prevention of terrorism legislation we would be tying the hands of our security

[Mr. Ken Maginnis]

forces. The legislation does not give and never has given our security forces a free reign, but without it they would not be able to deal with the problems that we face from international and local terrorism.

We constantly hear the number of people detained for questioning being compared with the number of people actually charged with terrorist offences. Indeed, that point was raised by an Opposition Member in the debate on terrorism a few days ago. I, too, am bothered that there is such a differential between the number questioned and the number charged—not because I believe that the wrong people are being detained for questioning, but because too many terrorists are beating the system.

In my constituency at the moment, a well-known terrorist who has been associated with the Provisional IRA for a long time can still organise murder and get away with it. He is known to have arranged the attack which was to have been made against my wife and myself on 11 January this year. Here I acknowledge the bravery and efficiency of the RUC, whose good work on that occasion frustrated the terrorists and probably saved my life and that of my wife. Sadly, a lorry driver—a constituent of my hon. Friend the Member for Londonderry, East (Mr. Ross) —who was murdered within half a mile of that incident on Thursday last—was not so fortunate. He was murdered at the behest of the same villain. I should be happy to ensure that the Secretary of State knows the name of the person to whom I am referring, but I have no doubt that he already knows the name of that arch-villain and conspirator in the murder of my constituents and those of my hon. Friend the Member for Londonderry, East.

Mr. Flannery: What the hon. Gentleman has just said must alarm us all deeply. He has said that he knows that that person is guilty. It would seem to be an ordinary thing in these extraordinary circumstances that if one knew that evidence should be put before the proper authorities who would take the proper steps. That surely should be done instead of simply saying that someone is guilty and leaving it at that. Instead of the name being given to the Secretary of State—I do not object to that—it should be given to the proper police authorities.

Mr. Maginnis: I cannot believe that the hon. Gentleman is so naive as to believe that the police and the community at large do not already know the identity of that person. Unfortunately, the problem over the past 20 years has been that it is not possible to deal with terrorists effectively and completely within the normal civil law. There is a great difficulty because witnesses are intimidated and fear pervades the community, especially the community in which that individual lives. No one is willing to come forward and give evidence because it would make the provider of that evidence the next target. We have faced that problem for so many years and the House has shown itself unable or unwilling to grapple with it.

I wish now to consider Executive detention, or internment as it is known. My party is disturbed that Lord Colville, for whom we have considerable regard, may be considering the ending of that provision. While we acknowledge that no Government have had the courage to implement such a measure, even on the most selective basis, we are convinced that it should remain an option. We are convinced that Governments should continually face this challenge: are they more concerned with the terrorists or with the victims of terrorism? It is morally wrong that a terrorist such as the man to whom I have referred should be able to continue to thumb his nose at the law of the land and to organise—and at times participate in—the continuation of the murders which so diminish our community. The greater good of the community should not be sacrificed on the altar of political expediency. Where is the justice in that?

The Government have a responsibility to protect the hundreds of thousands of innocent people in Northern Ireland on both sides of the community against the few hundred active terrorists from both sides of the community. I make no distinction, nor do I wish to argue the rights or wrongs of any side. However, it is possible to do more to assist the security forces and to help those who, at terrible cost, have stood for so long and so steadfastly as a bastion between us and the terrorists. The introduction of identity cards is one of the simplest ways in which, without having to seek any derogation from a European body, we could make the task of our police a little easier.

Earlier, the hon. Member for Antrim, North referred to the Stevens inquiry and to the attack on the UDR. Having served for more than 11 years with that regiment and having commanded men within it, I can state that I never experienced a complaint against any man under my command, let alone a complaint that was upheld. Therefore, the derogatory terms that the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North all too often employs were a personal insult to me as well as to the many good and honest men who have served the country well and truly over many years, many of whom—including many of my best friends—have lost their lives serving the community and standing between the terrorists and ordinary people.

We accepted that the Stevens inquiry was necessary, because we were told that that was the case, and we certainly wanted leaks to be cleared up, but we did not expect such dangerous naivety when 28 members of the regiment were swooped on early one Sunday morning and taken in for questioning—and that was after certain sound and sensible voices had persuaded the inquiry that it should not opt for almost 100. That was the original intention. To what extent was Stevens acting on sound information?

Rev. Ian Paisley: Is it not a fact that there have been dreadful repercussions for those men, who had to be released almost immediately because they were completely innocent? They have had to leave their districts and their families. They have been attacked and intimidated. A cloud of darkness, which should not be put upon them, has been put on them by that action.

Mr. Maginnis: The hon. Gentleman is absolutely correct. The majority of those men were released almost immediately, after having had their homes surrounded and being taken off like common criminals. There is no excuse for endangering not just those men but their families. Many of them have had to move house. Right hon. and hon. Members know that one cannot do that at a profit. They are young men with families who need every last shilling. They have to move away from family support. If

their wives went out to work, the children could stay with aunts, uncles or grandparents, but that family support has been wiped out.

Irrespective of how efficient the Stevens inquiry turns out to be, and irrespective of its report, I shall always be left with a bitter taste in my mouth because innocent people have been victimised for the sake of political expediency. Some have been charged with the most ridiculous offences—such as having two extra rounds of ammunition for a personal protection weapon. If somebody came to my home, I could not guarantee that I would not have two extra rounds of ammunition for my personal protection weapon. There is no danger that those extra rounds, any more than the rounds that I legally possess, will fall into the hands of anyone who wishes to commit a crime against any member of the community. It is sad fact that one bungling by the Stevens team has meant that anything good which might emanate from the inquiry will be undermined or overshadowed by the repercussions of what happened on that Sunday morning.

Any legislation is only as good as the means of enforcing it. The continuing high rate of deaths and injuries is unacceptable to many hon. Members, but it is heartbreaking for those who have to endure it daily. Therefore, I urge hon. Members, especially those who wish to vote against the order, to examine their motives and to ask themselves what hope there is for democracy if we do not meet our obligations to the innocent members of the community. Nothing enshrined in the order should give offence to any right-thinking person, either here or on the streets of Northern Ireland. If, for some reason that I fail to understand, some hon. Members at present consider that they cannot vote for the order, I hope that in the interests of those who may still become the victims of terrorism they will not vote against it.

I look forward to the time when we have a single piece of legislation to deal with the problem of terrorism, and I commend such a course to Lord Colville. My colleagues in the Ulster Unionist party and I hope that all such legislation will soon become unnecessary. In the meantime, my party supports the order.

5.45 pm

Mr. Julian Amery (Brighton, Pavilion): The reasoned argument of the hon. Member for Fermanagh and South Tyrone (Mr. Maginnis) and the more vibrant eloquence of his reverend friend the hon. Member for Antrim, North (Rev. Ian Paisley) deserve a better congregation. So does the subject of the debate. It is a disgrace that our Benches should be so empty as we return to this grim subject.

Of course, I shall support the Government tonight, but it will be with a sense of growing frustration. We have now had to renew the order for nearly 20 years without seeing any daylight at the end of the tunnel. The statistics on death and wounded oscillate from year to year, rather like a malaria fever chart, but there is still no sign of any cure.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State paid the security forces a well-deserved tribute in which most hon. Members joined wholeheartedly. They have done and are still doing a fantastic job. But it looks as though they will continue to need to do it. My right hon. Friend was right to say that we are against terrorism in any form, either orange or green. It is the duty of hon. Members to uphold the law and it is my right hon. Friend's duty to enforce it. At the same time, given that hon. Members mould opinion, we must make a distinction between different kinds of terrorism. I say that after careful thought. We must remember that the increase in loyalist terrorism is a reflection of the Government's failure to defeat the IRA. We must in our hearts, although not in law, make a distinction between those who fight to overthrow the Queen's Government and those who, though wrongly, take up arms to fight against those who are trying to overthrow that Government. We must have that point in mind when forming opinion, if not in the administration of the law.

The speech by the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North (Mr. McNamara) shocked me more than I had expected. It was an attempt to indict the security forces, to drive a wedge between the UDR and the RUC, and to attack the security forces in every possible way. There was no attempt to balance his speech, which is understandable perhaps, bearing in mind present circumstances, by reference to the Libyan connection with the IRA, to mention only one matter. The hon. Gentleman's speech will have given comfort to the IRA and those who sympathise with it. It left me with the feeling that, if public opinion polls are right and there is to be a Labour Government, it will be a very sad day when the hon. Gentleman is Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

Mr. McNamara: My future position is not in my gift but in that of my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition. Is the right hon. Gentleman saying that one should not be anxious that the forces of law and order in Northern Ireland should be seen to uphold the law impartially on the occasions when members of either community fall from grace? I have already paid tribute to the heroism and gallantry of the armed forces, as the right hon. Gentleman would have heard in my speech. Is he saying that such matters should not be of concern to us all and be examined by the House and the elected representatives of the nation?

Mr. Amery: The hon. Gentleman is sufficiently experienced in politics to know that there are ways of saying things and ways of not saying them. I shall read his words carefully, but it was my impression that his words would bring comfort to the IRA more than they will enable the House to form an objective judgment on the matters that he discussed.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State was reported some weeks ago as saying that we could not expect to win the war against the IRA by military means. I thought at the time that those words were not the happiest that he could have used, but I see his argument. Successive Governments, both Conservative and Labour, have sought political solutions. My God, we have tried hard enough. The dissolution of Stormont was a political step. It did not bring us much good. Sunningdale was a political step. It failed lamentably. The Prior assembly was, as some of us predicted, a complete failure. Now we have the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

I sympathise with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State. He ducked somewhat the questions put to him on the Dublin Supreme Court interpretation of the agreement. It leaves me with the feeling that we have bought a dud chip. We need some clarification. I do not see

[Mr. Amery]

how we can reconcile the judgment of the Supreme Court with the interpretation that we place on article 1 of the Agreement.

So far all our political initiatives over a long period have failed. Yet one which has been consistently suggested by many of my right hon. and hon. Friends and with some support from the Ulster Unionist party has always been brushed aside. It is the simple expedient that, instead of dealing with Ulster matters by Order in Council—which makes them virtually undiscussable—the House should treat legislation in much the same way as Scottish legislation by some Committees. I would leave it to my right hon. and learned Friend the deputy Prime Minister to devise the best way of doing so.

Another political initiative would be a return to relatively ordinary local government in the Province. We are told that if that happened there would be discrimination on a great scale. I do not know if it has ever been tried. The Secretary of State would have sufficient powers to suspend a local authority if there were discrimination. Of course, there is no great danger here. Any such move would be seen as abandoning the attempt to return to devolved government. But every attempt to return to devolved government has proved a fiasco. How long can we continue attempting to do something that apparently cannot be done? Would my right hon. Friend be right to attempt it?

It is only if my right hon. Friend adopts the course of a return to ordinary local government that he will give the necessary signal to both communities that there is no question of this Government, or any Government that we would support, moving towards a union of the North and South. We would then say in a clear and categorical way that we stand for the union of the kingdom. That is not yet understood or appreciated. After the judment of the Supreme Court in Dublin, it is hard to believe.

My right hon. Friend is the fourth or fifth Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. He has opted for an attempt to create devolved government. Let there be a time limit in his mind when this experiment should be abandoned. We really cannot go on like this.

5.54 pm

Mr. Menzies Campbell (Fife, North-East): I shall say only a few words about the order because several hon. Members wish to speak, not least Northern Irish Members. It will be a matter of regret to me, if the order is passed, that the principles of our system of justice will not be universal throughout the United Kingdom. Notwithstanding that regret, I shall vote for the order and I shall advise my hon. and right hon. Friends to do likewise. I shall give them that advice and vote in that way because I believe that the circumstances in Northern Ireland justify that course of action. I shall vote for the order with a sense of reservation and regret—reservation that universality is not possible, and regret that there appears to be no immediate prospect of its coming to pass.

It is right that we should have to renew these provisions every year. Every year it is incumbent on us to ask ourselves whether they are really necessary. When I ask myself that question at this juncture, I have little difficulty in answering in the affirmative. It is clear that normality, as we understand it on the mainland of the United Kingdom, is still absent from Northern Ireland. None of us could have been other than affected by the moving way in which the Northern Ireland Members who have already spoken described their personal experiences and the sense of grief which they, and, of course, the communities that they represent, experience, sometimes almost daily. Perhaps that is what makes these powers, which in other circumstances might seem draconian, justified at this time.

I hope that the House will accept that we should not seek to maintain these powers for a moment longer than they appear to be justified. They represent a serious incursion into the rights that citizens of the United Kingdom should normally expect. We should tolerate them grudgingly. We should never embrace them enthusiastically. We should work to withdraw them at the earliest date possible. Nor should we assume that the system of justice which the powers embrace cannot be improved or changed.

I suggest to the Secretary of State that the powers that the order confers are at least worthy of reconsideration in four separate aspects. In doing that I am aware that I may be adopting a position which is contradictory to that of the hon. Member for Fermanagh and South Tyrone (Mr. Maginnis).

For example, internment is a procedure which, although rarely, indeed currently never, used, remains a source of great political inflammation. If we believe that the rule of law is gradually being imposed, albeit in difficult circumstances, to maintain the possibility of internment is to embrace a policy of desperation. Internment can never be a long-term solution. It is only of short-term value. It is our duty carefully to consider whether that procedure will in the long term most speedily bring about a solution to the problems in Northern Ireland, which the vast majority of people in the country, and, indeed, in the House, wish to be brought about.

I come now to what are called the Diplock courts. As one who has practised at the Bar for more than 20 years, I have come to realise that there is no such thing as judicial infallibility. In the Diplock courts, a single judge has to determine not only questions of law but sometimes difficult questions of credibility—who is to be believed and who is not be be believed. In that regard, I cannot but think that a court of three is much more likely to be able to reach an informed judgment than a court of one. I believe that there should now be some acceptance of the view that trial by jury should be the norm and that it should not be taken away unless causes of why that should be so can be shown.

I come to the topic of the periods of remand in custody with the benefit—if it may be so described—of the Scottish experience. For almost 100 years we have had the 110-day rule, which means that any trial against a person who has been remanded in custody must be commenced within 110 days of the remand. As I have said, that has operated in Scotland for about 100 years—and with great success. It has provided a protection for the accused, and has been a means of ensuring that prosecution is effected swiftly and efficiently. Although I understand that to suggest that it can be introduced simply by inserting a clause into some legislation would be facile, I urge the Government to give serious consideration to a form of such a rule that would reduce extended periods of remand in custody.

I turn finally to the video-taping of interviews. My professional experience, in which I have both prosecuted and defended people charged with serious crimes,

although never with crimes of terrorism, leads me to the view that often the only available peg on which a defence can hang something is to challenge the propriety of what took place in a closed room in the presence only of policemen, whose record is in their notebooks, which are frequently made up after the event. I have seen people acquitted who should never have been acquitted simply because the mere fact of a suspicion about the events that took place while they were in the exclusive custody of the police was enough to raise a reasonable doubt in the minds of the jury. Therefore, such a contemporary record is as much for the protection of the police—and for the efficient carrying out of prosecutions—as it is for the protection of the accused person.

Working with the powers that the order contains and confirms, I believe that improvement is still possible. Indeed, it is desirable if confidence in the legal system of Northern Ireland is to be enhanced. Confidence in that system will be the best assistance towards a return to the life of normality which the Province previously enjoyed and which we, in the mainland, take for granted.

6.2 pm

Mr. Ian Gow (Eastbourne): I welcome the speech made by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State. Every right hon. and hon. Member who sits on this side of the House will vote in favour of the order.

Reluctantly, I agree with the conclusion of my right hon. Friend the Member for Brighton, Pavilion (Mr. Amery) about the speech of the shadow Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North (Mr. McNamara). Everybody knows that the hon. Gentleman would wish to give no aid or comfort to those who believe in terror, but I reluctantly share my right hon. Friend's judgment that the hon. Gentleman's speech will give aid and comfort to the IRA. I shall have no hesitation in voting for the order.

I turn to an aspect of the debate that was outlined by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State. He said that the most important single factor in prolonging terrorism in Northern Ireland was uncertainty about Northern Ireland's constitutional future. I believe that to be the case. Everybody knows that the official policy of Her Majesty's Opposition is that there should be a united island of Ireland—united by consent. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State claims to believe in the union, but I want to explain to him why it is perceived in Northern Ireland —and not in Northern Ireland alone—that there is some equivocation about his position and that of Her Majesty's Government.

The judgment in the Supreme Court of the Republic of Ireland last week has done nothing to diminish the doubts that are felt about the commitment of Her Majesty's Government to the Union. On 5 November 1985 Her Majesty's Government entered into an agreement with the Government of the Irish Republic. The Irish Republic is the only country that lays claim to part of the territory of the United Kingdom. That claim is made in the most solemn form possible—in articles 2 and 3 of the written constitution of the Republic. Thus, by virtue of the agreement of 15 November 1985, Her Majesty's Government conferred a place of special privilege upon the only country with a constitution that lays claim to part of Her Majesty's dominions.

May I give an analogy? No analogy is perfect, and I do not claim that this one is. Let us suppose that Germany laid claim to the two French départements of Alsace and Lorraine. Let us suppose that among the German-speaking people of Alsace and Lorraine were some who wished to be severed from the French republic and joined with Germany. Let us suppose that, over the years, terrorists had come from Germany into Alsace and Lorraine, murdered French people living there, and then returned to Germany. Let us suppose further that the people of Alsace and Lorraine had believed that the German police were not always as enthusiastic as they might be in seeking to apprehend those who had come into France, murdered and returned to Germany. Would it be conceivable that in those circumstances the French Government would confer a place of special privilege upon Germany, giving Germany the right to put forward views and proposals about how those two French départements were to be governed? Would it not be even more inconceivable that such an arrangement would be made between France and Germany if the German constitution laid claim to two French départements?

For those who believe in the Union, the idea—and the Government's decision—to make a treaty with the Irish Republic when the Irish Republic was failing to withdraw articles 2 and 3 of its constitution was inconceivable to many Unionists. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State knows full well what happened. He knows that the then Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary, saw that danger and asked the Irish negotiators, "Would you please remove articles 2 and 3 of your constitution?" My right hon. Friend then said, "If you, the Irish, were to do that, you would make it easier for me to sell this agreement to the Unionists." As my right hon. Friend knows, the Dail cannot alter the constitution; that can be done only by referendum. The Irish Government said, "We are willing to ask our people, by referendum, to remove articles 2 and 3, but upon one condition—that we should have a Minister resident in Belfast." That was too much, even for my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary.

We are put in this further difficulty by last week's decision of the Supreme Court, but there is a way in which my right hon. Friend can get out of it. Would it be possible for Ministers in the Northern Ireland Office to be every bit as unequivocal about the Union as Ministers who serve in the Scottish and Welsh Offices who adopt a different tone and language? My right hon. Friend and his predecessors have said again and again from the Treasury Bench and outside this place that Northern Ireland will remain part of Her Majesty's dominions unless and until a majority of its people decide otherwise.

That is not the language used by either the Secretary of State for Wales or the Secretary of State for Scotland. That is not what they say. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales, shortly to leave the Welsh Office, and my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland speak at by-elections. Whenever we have a by-election in Wales or Scotland, the most natural thing in the world is for the Secretary of State to speak in support of the Conservative candidate. Mercifully that which we have failed to do in Northern Ireland, my right hon. Friend and even other Ministers will shortly have to do. *[Laughter.]* My hon. Friends laugh. Certainly they will.

Rev. Ian Paisley: I have yet to see that.

Mr. Gow: Mercifully my right hon. and hon. Friends will be obliged to do that.

Mr. John D. Taylor: I have a simple question: how could a Secretary of State for Northern Ireland campaign for a Conservative candidate in East Belfast when the Conservative association there wants integration and the Secretary of State says that he is against it?

Mr. Gow: The Conservative associations in Northern Ireland are anticipating a forthcoming change in Government policy. *[Laughter.]* However surprising it may be to the right hon. Gentleman, many of Her Majesty's Ministers have been willing to come to Eastbourne to speak in my support, although I am in respectful disagreement with the present policies being pursued by Northern Ireland Ministers. It is mercifully possible for there to be a Conservative candidate at a by-election who does not agree with official Conservative policy on every matter. If anybody doubts the truth of that, I remind them that my right hon. Friends the Members for Chesham and Amersham (Sir I. Gilmour) and for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) were Conservative candidates at the general election. I do not wish to be diverted, so I shall return to my main theme.

The present Treasury Bench line is to say that Northern Ireland will remain part of Her Majesty's dominions unless and until a majority of its people decide otherwise. I want my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State to say, "I believe in the Union. I will do all in my power to maintain and strengthen it. I will continue to argue against all people who wish to diminish or dilute the Union." As a Scotsman speaking about Scotland, even I would say that if at the end of the day the people of Scotland over time and by a large, or even not-so-large, majority wished to sever themselves from this kingdom, the Queen could have no unwilling subjects. I beg my right hon. Friend to think about that aspect of the matter.

Rev. Ian Paisley: Will the hon. Gentleman carry the argument further? The people in Northern Ireland have not been given the right to decide a change in their status. Their status was changed under the Anglo-Irish Agreement, but they were given no opportunity through a referendum to say aye or no to that agreement.

Mr. Gow: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State believes that the status of the people of Northern Ireland was not changed by the agreement of 15 November 1985. I believe that their status was changed. Furthermore, I believe that we cannot govern successfully one part of the kingdom differently from the rest, save with the consent of a majority of the people who are to be governed differently. That consent to be governed differently is unobtainable from the people of Northern Ireland.

We can send a signal to friend and foe alike by following the recommendation made by my right hon. Friend the Member for Pavilion. It is nearly 11 years since Airey Neave was assassinated. With his death the policy which he had fashioned and to which he had secured the agreement of the shadow Cabinet died also. Airey Neave was shadow Secretary of State from 12 February 1975 to his assassination on 30 March 1979—for more than four years. As the right hon. Member for Lagan Valley (Mr. Molyneaux) will confirm, he worked closely with the right hon. Gentleman. It was with his assent that the words that appeared in the 1979 Conservative manifesto appeared.

We have not attempted to govern Northern Ireland as closely as may be to the way in which the rest of the kingdom is governed. The longer we continue to govern it differently, the easier it will be perceived to be to prise Northern Ireland from the United Kingdom. There are differences among Unionists about whether we should have a devolved assembly, or what I call administrative devolution, which means conferring modest additional powers on the 26 district councils and establishing some sort of regional or county council. I say that although I have an increasing will to diminish the number of tiers of local government, but I let that pass.

We should follow the policy which Airey Neave fashioned after so much toil and study. We should give a much more ringing commitment to the Union. We most certainly should say to nationalists in Northern Ireland that we respect their position and shall protect it. We shall give them, provided that they are constitutional nationalists, precisely that equality of treatment under the law that we give to nationalists in Wales and Scotland. We shall protect all of their legitimate interests under a just law and do all in our power to eliminate such discrimination as there may be against those who hold nationalist convictions. However, it is deeply divisive to give to the Government of a foreign power, notably the Government of the only foreign power that lays claim to the territory of Northern Ireland, the task of representing nationalists in dealings with Her Majesty's Ministers. Nationalists should be represented by the four nationalist Members who have been elected, three of whom have taken their seats in this House. It is deeply divisive to say that the Irish Republic shall have the task of representing nationalists.

This debate has given the House, although too few hon. Members, an opportunity to look not only at the important issue of the emergency powers but at ways in which through political change and a change of political language we may be able to bring to the Province the peace, stability and reconciliation which all decent men are striving to attain.

6.19 pm

Mr. James Molyneaux (Lagan Valley): As always, I am delighted to follow the hon. Member for Eastbourne (Mr. Gow). On behalf of my right hon. and hon. Friends and, I suspect, my hon. Friends who sit on the Conservative Benches, I am delighted to be able to express our appreciation of the hon. Gentleman's deep understanding of the problems with which we have to contend. I do not believe that it is disrespectful to add the following comment—would to God many other Members of this honourable House had the same depth of understanding.

In common with the hon. Member for Eastbourne, I well remember the determination of the late Airey Neave to introduce to Northern Ireland something which might not have given everyone all that they wanted but which would at least have been a beginning in a practical sense. He was determined to press on with that. I have previously quoted words spoken the day before he was murdered which left me in no doubt as to his determination to carry out what until that time had been the approved policy of the Conservative shadow Cabinet. It is a sad reflection that his successors who took over as the ministerial team in the Northern Ireland Office under the new Government were told bluntly, "Sorry—we cannot do that because of commitments entered into". For a variety of reasons that

is a sobering thought. I know that I carry the right hon. Member for Brighton, Pavilion (Mr. Amery) on this because he has seen the seamier side of politics and knows how improper influences can be brought to bear.

The hon. Member for Eastbourne provided us with some encouragement by reminding us that his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has power to put forward proposals from his side of the table at the Anglo-Irish Conference. It is not a common occurrence, but presumably it can be done. The contracting parties, the Secretary of State and his co-chairman, Mr. Collins, are pledged to make determined efforts to reach agreement on any proposal put forward. The Secretary of State should oblige his hon. Friend the Member for Eastbourne, and all of us, by putting forward a reasonable proposal in the light of the judgment of the Supreme Court, simply suggesting that Dublin Ministers set about removing the offending articles 2 and 3 from their constitution. Having done that, the Secretary of State could sit back and watch as Mr. Collins made determined efforts from his side of the table to reach agreement on that reasonable proposal. I am sure that we would not be disappointed.

Our failure as a nation to eradicate terrorism is due to our unwillingness to recognise terrorism as a long-term challenge. The present Foreign Secretary, when Home Secretary, said in March 1989 referring to the IRA:

"They are just professional killers . . . No political solution will cope with that. They just have to be extirpated."

Irish terrorism can claim to be the pioneer of murder for political ends. The present 20-year campaign is rather more sophisticated than its predecessors. I derive no pleasure from repeating the warning that I gave to the House in my maiden speech in 1971, when I explained that Northern Ireland was then seeing the first demonstration of urban guerrilla warfare in western Europe. That demonstration was followed by repeat performances in most western nations but, somehow or other, those nations developed the technique to snuff out their indigenous terror gangs—partly through single-minded determination on the part of the Governments concerned and partly through a courageous refusal to make concessions to the aims of terrorists. Unfortunately, the aims of terrorists are usually shared by others who would not stoop to use terrorism otherwise.

United Kingdom Governments have, unfortunately, all too often taken the opposite course. By steadily giving ground to terrorists and their rescue brigades—an important part of the conundrum—they have prolonged the agony and have helped to cause the deaths of no fewer than 2,800 citizens of Northern Ireland and members of the Army serving there. The tragedy is that the Government know the error of their ways because their own Foreign Secretary told them that no political solution could cope, and that the terrorists had to be extirpated. What pressure, what malign influence, holds the Government back from doing what at last one of their number knows to be their duty?

The key to success in the battle against terrorism is the denial of the expectation of victory. Even the most dedicated idealist will be reluctant to sacrifice his life for a lost cause. Republican hopes of success had all but faded by the late 1970s. Some Opposition Members will understand very well what I am talking about—the degree of stability established by the late 1970s. From 1979 and throughout the 1980s, however, a constant stream of flawed initiatives rekindled hopes in the breasts of terrorists, as the right hon. Member for Pavilion reminded us. The fluid situation developed by such pot-stirring experiments encouraged terrorists on both sides to believe that there was something in it for them.

It is true that the IRA condemned the Anglo-Irish Agreement because it did not go far enough—it said that it was only a half-way house. We also said that, only it was the other way round. Though it was a half-way house, it provided a terrific boost to the IRA, particularly in the light of the words of Her Majesty's Government at the signing ceremony at Hillsborough in 1985. Those were terrible words:

"We entered into this agreement because we were not prepared to tolerate a situation of continuing violence."

On other occasions I have illustrated how those words were decoded—an Enigma device was not needed—in the brigade headquarters of the IRA. Those words could mean only one thing to the IRA, "Aha—here we have a Government who have reached the end of their tether; they have said that they are not prepared to tolerate continuing violence, so let us murder another 100 citizens and get it all instead of just a half-way house".

Again, the IRA was quick enough to spot that the Anglo-Irish Agreement side-stepped the de jure position of Northern Ireland. In the aftermath of the signing of the agreement we did our best, as did the hon. Member for Eastbourne, to enlighten fellow right hon. and hon. Members, but on that occasion they were blinded—I give them that excuse, although they have not made it—by glossy labels saying "Peace", "Stability" and "Reconciliation". Who in his right mind would want to vote against that? We knew, of course, that the words were not real.

Today the Secretary of State has said honestly that he is faced with two conflicting de jure claims. The draftsmen of the Anglo-Irish Agreement realised that all too well and cleverly side-stepped the issue. They invented article 1 of the agreement, which is said to respect the rights of the majority, after a fashion. The judgment of the Irish Supreme Court, however, demolished article 1 because it says that a claim to a united island of Ireland is what it calls a "constitutional imperative"—so imperative that every Dublin representative, be he a member of the Government, of the Dail or a member of the Dublin delegation attending the inter-parliamentary body which has just been established, is bound by it to achieve the reintegration of the national territory of the whole island not, this time, qualified by the words

"wish of a majority . . . in Northern Ireland."

It is an overriding demand and requirement, which binds him in honour to achieve that at all costs—regardless, but not necessarily in physical defiance, of the democratically-expressed wishes of the majority of people living in Northern Ireland.

Some 20 years ago, the United Kingdom started to export a type of terrorism to Europe. My hon. Friend the Member for Fermanagh and South Tyrone (Mr. Maginnis) and other hon. Members have expressed the hope in the debate that the day will come when the powers that we are considering will no longer be required. To a certain extent, I share that hope, but I fear that international terrorism may continue to exist in one form or another for decades.

We have all watched with a degree of admiration the vast demonstrations in eastern Europe which have brought such dramatic changes and have had some

[Mr. James Molyneaux]

dramatic successes, but we should be fooling ourselves if we thought that it would stop there. Democracy will merely transfer power from one element to another in those eastern European countries. Admittedly, it will transfer power through some form of democratic process, although that might be imperfect to begin with, but in every eastern European country a tiny element of the population—perhaps 4 or 5 per cent.—will flatly refuse to accept the majority democratic rule. They will not have forgotten the lesson of how easy it is to exploit what has become known in eastern Europe as "people power".

The tendency to exploit grievances has been all too apparent in this country, even in the past week. I do not make the mistake, as some people do, of tarring the Labour party with the same brush—they probably regret as much as the rest of us the fact that a ruthless minority, determined to get their own way, to subvert democracy in the House and in this island, are exploiting certain grievances that we need not discuss today. Unfortunately, the House may still need to provide a model of how democracy can be defended in eastern European countries. We shall have to give an example of how a country can be "made safe for democracy." We need a standard, permanent, simple and unified code of security regulations, which I hope would be vetted and scrutinised by a rather better system than our annual debate in the House, as sometimes that annual debate is not particularly helpful.

6.32 pm

Mr. Peter Robinson (Belfast, East): It is almost 11 years since I was first elected to the House. During that time the nation has had many crises and there have been emergencies of many kinds. I think that other hon. Members who have lived through the experience of those emergencies know that usually there is a sense of urgency among hon. Members throughout the House.

I think that it was the hon. Member for Littleborough and Saddleworth (Mr. Dickens) who came in for the best part of a minute to tell us how few people were in the Chamber and then absented himself for the remainder of the debate. He said that there should be a passion and a feeling of indignation about the emergency that we are dealing with. Having been through the other emergencies, I do not feel the same sense of urgency, passion or indignation in the House today that there has been on other occasions and which there should be on this occasion.

Are the people of the Falklands more important to the House than the people of Northern Ireland? More people have died in Northern Ireland as a result of terrorism than were killed during the Falklands crisis, and yet the House does not show the same urgency and does not accord to Northern Ireland the importance that it should.

Instead of meeting to consider emergency legislation, we just go through what has become a ritual. I think that this ritual is different in one respect from some of the others over the past 13 years, because of the absence of the late Harold McCusker. He contributed fully and passionately to the debates. As a representative of a border constituency, he knew only too well the destructive power of the Provisonal IRA, and he knew of the need for emergency measures to be taken against it. Knowing the circumstances that surrounded him, he left a message to his constituents to be read to them after his death. I think we should listen to his words in the House and take warning from them:

> "I shall carry to my grave with ignominy the sense of the injustice that I have done my constituents down the years —when, in their darkest hours, I exhorted them to put their trust in the British House of Commons which one day would honour its fundamental obligations to them to treat them as equal British citizens."

Mr. McCusker had been confident, as I was confident during my early years in politics, that our constituents could be content that the watchful eye and the strong arm of Britain would be looking over them. He and I felt secure in the knowledge that they would protect Northern Ireland against injustice and wrong.

In all my years in politics, the sense of impatience that I felt and my confidence that one day the British Government would come to put right all of those wrongs —both in the constitutional relationship and in the security relationship—have given way to a feeling of impotence. I do not see a desire to defeat terrorism in any of the actions of the Government. The emergency provisions legislation simply marks time. It is a reaction to terrorists, not a vigorous pursuit of terrorism.

Almost 3,000 people have been butchered in Northern Ireland as a result of terrorism. Those killings have not discriminated against people because of religion, sex, or social strata. Because Northern Ireland is such a small community, everyone has felt the impact.

More than 30,000 people have been maimed or mutilated in Northern Ireland as a result of terrorism. Billions of pounds have been lost through subversion. However, all the advice we get is to be calm and cool headed—almost compliant—when we deal with these issues. Our security forces are left to operate against a wartime situation under peacetime conditions.

I join hon. Members who have criticised the Opposition spokesman, the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North (Mr. McNamara), for his contribution to the debate. Despite the kind words for the security forces—and there were some—the burden of the speech was critical of the security forces. Would that the hon. Gentleman had spent time criticising the Provisional IRA. Coming from someone with his background, that would have been helpful, and it might have had some influence on people who might support the Provisional IRA. Instead, the weight of his time and effort was spent putting down the security forces.

That does not just happen only here. Hon. Members have referred to the Stevens inquiry. Its whole emphasis has been directed away from its original purpose, which was to look into the divulging of certain information arising from a police station at Dunmurry, towards putting the spotlight on the UDR. That has a political purpose—to undermine the regiment. The "Panorama" programme played its full part; so, too, did John Ware, whose reputation I give nothing for, having had experience of him in the past. That was exactly the sort of programme that I would expect from that sort of person.

The UDR is in every way in the front line of the battle against terrorism in Northern Ireland. It is the chief target of the IRA, because its members know the terrorists and the terrain in which they operate. The Ulster Defence Regiment is owed a deep debt of gratitude by the people of Northern Ireland and of the United Kingdom. Its soldiers have acted with fortitude and courage. More than

220 of them—serving soldiers and former members—have been killed as a result of terrorism. Unlike other regiments in the British Army, members of the UDR do not face death only when on patrol or on operations. Because they live in the community they face death coming out of work, or leaving or going to recreational activities—even after they leave the regiment.

I want to issue a word of warning about any future change in this legislation. I know from having spoken to Lord Colville that considerable pressure—from the Labour party and from the SDLP and others in Northern Ireland—has been brought to bear on him to wipe off the statute book the part of the emergency legislation that deals with internment. It can be argued that it has not been used for many years, that this Government lack the political will to use it and that there is no likelihood that it will be used, so it is redundant. I opposed internment when it was introduced, and I have since been justified in my opposition, but I must say that it is a weapon that should be available to Government should they find that nothing else is working in the battle against terrorism. I have heard it argued that if internment became necessary we could legislate for it. That is nonsense: at the first whiff of a rumour that legislation needed to be passed in the House to introduce internment there would be a flight across the border and beyond. As soon as internment is removed from the legislation it will be removed for all time as an effective weapon in the battle against terrorism. On no account should the Government accept any recommendation that this vital element in their hold over the terrorists should be removed from the statute book.

The security situation does not affect merely the lives and limbs of those who live in Northern Ireland and of those who come to the Province as part of the security forces. It also affects the value of life there, not only socially and economically, but constitutionally. In my years in politics I have observed how much major decisions are influenced by circumstances rather than principles, especially by security circumstances. Was it not the Prime Minister who said, after signing the Anglo-Irish Agreement, that she simply could not allow the violence to continue? That was a clear signal that the security circumstances had prompted her political action. The Anglo-Irish Agreement is a product of violence. I ask the Government, when dealing with security and constitutional matters, to do what is right, not what is expedient.

6.45 pm

The Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office (Mr. John Cope): This has been an interesting, good and wide-ranging debate. It has ranged over matters that lie outside the order and over matters that have come up since it was laid—including the House of Lords ruling on inquests, and the judgment of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Ireland. There has also been quite a lot of discussion—I do not complain about it—of matters that affect Lord Colville's long-term review and the long-term re-enactment of the legislation, which we shall have to deal with in primary legislation in due course. I shall try to deal with these issues as best I can, and I shall also have to refer to the order itself.

It is a matter of profound regret to us all that again we have to renew these powers, but it is essential that we do so to fight terrorism and to try to minimise the loss of life and property and the suffering in Northern Ireland, which have continued for so long.

The debate has been held against the sombre background of the three apparently sectarian murders in less than a week since the order was put on the Order Paper. Nothing could better demonstrate why the police and Army need emergency powers to deal with such evils, but there have been plenty of other evil murders in the past year, too. It is because the Government are determined that terrorism—loyalist, republican or any other sort—should be fought and extirpated from Northern Ireland that we must renew these powers. Anyone who knows the realities of life in Northern Ireland knows just how necessary they have proved to be in the fight.

This is why I found the Labour party's decision to vote against the order regrettable. To some extent, I agree with the criticism voiced by various hon. Members of the tone of the speech made by the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North (Mr. McNamara). I do not accuse the hon. Gentleman of this, but his speech had some of the flavour of speeches made by those who say that there are only a few misguided individuals who are offended by the constitutional difficulties in the legislation, and that if only someone would explain matters to them and treat them nicely they would shut up and go away. It is not like that. We face a determined and sophisticated criminal conspiracy—it is longstanding and well organised—to impose the political will of the terrorists on the people of Northern Ireland by violence, terror or murder.

The ordinary law may be sufficient on its own to deal with individual criminals or small gangs of the sort with which we are familiar on this side of the water, but it does not provide the police and Army with the full statutory armament that they need if their work in protecting the whole community from the menace of terrorist gangsters is to succeed and the rule of law is to prevail. That is why the powers are necessary, and why it is necessary to have the powers to stop and search vehicles, to mount checkpoints and to stop and question people. These powers have led to the recovery of terrorists' equipment and they have also, as we saw last summer—especially during August—deterred their operations.

We all wish that we did not need these powers, but we do need them—and all the other powers in the order.

Much has been said about confidence. We all recognise the tremendous importance of everyone having confidence in the security forces, but it is not a one-sided affair. Everyone must have confidence that the security forces are fair and impartial and that anyone in the forces who acts outside the law will be made amenable to the law. There are people in all organisations—we know that there are some in the security forces—who occasionally break the law. They must be and should be made amenable to the law, and they are. If any Catholic or nationalist——

Sir Michael McNair-Wilson (Newbury): Does my hon. Friend think that the remark of Gerry Collins, the Foreign Minister of the Republic, that the Ulster Defence Regiment as presently constituted has no role to play was helpful in building up confidence in the UDR among the minority community in the North?

Mr. Cope: My answer to that question will become clear in what I say later.

[Mr. Cope]

If any Catholic or any nationalist doubts the fairness and impartiality of the security forces in the way that they treat terrorism, they should examine the figures. The hon. Member for Antrim, North (Rev. Ian Paisley) referred to the figures on terrorism given in the past by the hon. Member for Foyle (Mr. Hume). One can judge the effectiveness of the security forces from the number of arrests. That is not a novel point as it has been made many times. The effect of the security forces against loyalist terrorists is greater than their effectiveness against nationalist terrorists. That demonstrates their fairness and impartiality more strongly than anything that I could say. However, there is another side to confidence. Both Unionists and nationalists must be confident that the security forces can protect them from the terrorist gangsters of the Provisional Irish Republican Army and other paramilitary extremists and terrorists. The Government will not—I say this especially to the hon. and learned Member for Fife, North-East (Mr. Campbell) who spoke for the Liberal Democrats—retain those powers any longer than they are needed. That is not our intention, but my goodness they are needed now, as the hon. and learned Gentleman recognised. Together with the Chief Constable of Northern Ireland and the General Officer Commanding, we will do our best to ensure that those powers are implemented sensitively and with the least inconvenience to the overwhelming innocent majority in Northern Ireland, from whichever community they come. Those powers are undoubtedly effective—although not 100 per cent.—and essential in helping us to deal with the problems of terrorism. The Diplock courts have enabled high standards of justice to be maintained in the Province. In his previous report, Lord Colville reminded us that the intimidation of jurors remains a big problem. That is one example of the special problems of Northern Ireland. The intimidation of witnesses is also of the greatest importance. The McGimpsey judgment by the Supreme Court of the Irish Republic was also mentioned and we have begun to examine that judgment carefully.

The Anglo-Irish Agreement is binding on the Republic of Ireland. Under it, whatever the wording of the Irish constitution, or whatever was said in the recent judgment, the Irish are committed to the agreement, including article 1. The essential point remains that both Governments accept that the future of Northern Ireland will depend on the consent of the majority. Of course, it is true that the judgment confirms that the Irish constitution lays claim to Northern Ireland, just as the British constitution and law lay claim to judge Northern Ireland. International law also makes the same claim, because that is de facto the position and the Irish have agreed that that will continue to be the position unless there is a majority for change in the future.

I cannot match the rotundity of the phrases used by my hon. Friend the Member for Eastbourne (Mr. Gow), who is an expert in those matters. We hope and we believe that the Union will continue and I trust that that will reassure my hon. Friend. After all, we are a Unionist party as well as a Conservative party. There is no change in the position that article 1 records the formal acceptance by both Governments that the status of Northern Ireland will not be changed on the same basis.

Rev. William McCrea: Before the Minister leaves the point of reassuring the people of Northern Ireland, can he tell me how, as the elected representative for Mid-Ulster, I can reassure my people about the safety of their lives? From the beginning of the year, my constituency has suffered more than any other constituency in the entire Province and the United Kingdom. My constituency is rampant with IRA terrorism. How can it be right that in a security debate, when we are discussing the lives of our people, the hon. Member for Mid-Ulster cannot say a word? Yesterday we buried a constituent, who was a member of my congregation and of the UDR. What should I tell the widow and the three orphans who have been left without a father? How is it that the hon. Member for the constituency that has suffered more than any other in the Province cannot make a contribution to the debate? It is disgusting and says a great deal about what the people of Ulster and my constituents are suffering.

Mr. Cope: The management of debates is no longer in my hands, although it once was. I am glad that I could at least give the hon. Gentleman the opportunity to make that point. However, I must rush on as I must finish at 7 pm.

The hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North referred to the inquest judgment. It is not merely a question whether a policeman or a Government might be embarrassed by the giving of evidence. It is not embarrassment in the usual sense of the word. The policeman concerned had already been charged with and acquitted of murder. It is not the case that the inquest judgment applies only to security force members; it applies evenly across the board. In England and Wales no one can be compelled——

Rev. William McCrea: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Could you help me and my constituents to understand something? There used to be a full day to debate these matters of life and death for the people of Northern Ireland under the emergency provisions. Why did the Government decide some days ago to reduce the debate to three hours and end the discussions at 7 o'clock? As I have already said, since the beginning of the year my constituents have been slaughtered and the stations in my constituency blown to bits, yet I am told today, as the elected representative of the people who are suffering more than any others, that this debate must stop at 7 o'clock and that I must remain silent. My constituents have been silenced by the IRA and now I am silenced by the House. I object to that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): I understand the hon. Gentleman's concern, but it is not a matter for the Chair. The House decided by a resolution on 2 March that the debate would conclude at 7 o'clock. I am afraid that I cannot help the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Cope: I shall have to resort to letters to answer some of the questions that have been raised during the debate, and I apologise for that. Since we have taken on our responsibilities, my right hon. Friend and I have spent much time visiting the Royal Ulster Constabulary, the UDR and prisons throughout the Province.

The UDR was subjected to an unbalanced attack by the "Panorama" programme. That has been referred to a great deal and I will not expand on it now. The UDR is a very fine and increasingly professional regiment. As is acknowledged on all sides, its members are exceptionally brave day in and day out, not only at their work in the

UDR but often at their work elsewhere and, of course, in their homes. The same applies to the Royal Ulster Constabulary and to many people in the Province.

The main message that we should send to the terrorists tonight, as on other occasions, must be that their struggle is futile. They are not getting anywhere with all their violence. I say to terrorists on both sides that those who think that they can achieve their apparent political aims by terrorism are wrong. The past 20 years, among other things, have proved them wrong. The main reason for the struggle being futile is that neither the Government nor the House will give way to terrorism, not only in Northern Ireland but elsewhere. What we are——

It being Seven o'clock, MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *put the Question, pursuant to order [2 March]:—*

The House divided: Ayes 224, Noes 130.

Division No. 112] **[7. pm**

AYES

Adley, Robert
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amery, Rt Hon Julian
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Beggs, Roy
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Burns, Simon
Butler, Chris
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Cartwright, John
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Fishburn, John Dudley
Fookes, Dame Janet
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Fowler, Rt Hon Sir Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Sir Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gow, Ian
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Hague, William
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hind, Kenneth
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Janman, Tim
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Key, Robert
Kilfedder, James
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
McCrea, Rev William
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
Maginnis, Ken
Maples, John
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Sir David
Moate, Roger
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Mudd, David
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Paice, James
Paisley, Rev Ian
Patnick, Irvine
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Redwood, John
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Robinson, Peter *(Belfast E)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Sackville, Hon Tom
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Steel, Rt Hon Sir David
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, Rt Hon J. D. *(S'ford)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Thatcher, Rt Hon Margaret
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thurnham, Peter
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Trippier, David
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Walker, A. Cecil *(Belfast N)*
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Wallace, James
Waller, Gary
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wheeler, Sir John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. John M. Taylor and
Mr. Stephen Dorrell.

NOES

Allen, Graham
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Margaret
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Corbett, Robin
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunningham, Dr John
Dixon, Don

Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Fatchett, Derek
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Galloway, George
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Gordon, Mildred
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Hardy, Peter
Haynes, Frank
Hinchliffe, David
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howells, Dr. Kim (Pontypridd)
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Livingstone, Ken
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McCartney, Ian
McFall, John
McGrady, Eddie
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McNamara, Kevin
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliot
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
O'Brien, William
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Redmond, Martin
Reid, Dr John
Richardson, Jo
Robertson, George
Rogers, Allan
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Ruddock, Joan
Sheerman, Barry
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Stott, Roger
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Walley, Joan
Wareing, Robert N.
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony

Tellers for the Noes:
Mrs. Llin Golding and
Mr. Allen McKay.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Resolved,

That the draft Northern Ireland (Emergency and Prevention of Terrorism Provisions) (Continuance) Order 1990, which was laid before this House on 26th February, be approved.

Northern Ireland (Appropriation)

7.14 pm

The Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office (Mr. John Cope): I beg to move,

That the draft Appropriation (Northern Ireland) Order 1990, which was laid before this House on 13th February, be approved.

The draft order has two related purposes. The first is to authorise the expenditure of some £71·8 million in the 1989-90 spring supplementary estimates. That amount, when added to the £4,223 million previously approved by the House, brings the total estimates provision for Northern Ireland departmental services to some £4,295 million for this financial year, within a public expenditure total of some £5·8 billion.

The second purpose is to authorise the vote-on-account of some £1,816 million for 1990-91. That amount will, as usual, enable the services of Northern Ireland Departments to continue until the 1990-91 main estimates for Northern Ireland are brought before the House later this year.

The estimates booklet and the "Statement of Sums Required on Account", which give full details of the sums sought under both headings, are, as usual, available from the Vote Office. The House will be aware that the estimates for the Northern Ireland Office, for law and order services, are not covered by the order that is before the House today.

I turn to the specific estimates before the House. I do not propose to refer to every vote where supplementary provision is being sought, but I shall draw attention to the main themes.

I start with the Department of Agriculture's vote 1, which provides for Northern Ireland expenditure on United Kingdom-wide support schemes. Some £2·4 million is sought mainly for increased payments under agricultural improvement schemes to meet higher than anticipated uptake and value of claims. Some £1 million is also required under the hill livestock compensatory allowance scheme as a result of an increase in the number of animals eligible, and to provide for the increased premium for hardy bred sheep announced by my right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food on 30 January. Those increases are, however, fully offset by lower than expected demand on capital grant schemes resulting in only a token increase of £1,000 in the vote, to some £36 million. That is in the nature of a bookkeeping exercise, but it is important nevertheless.

In the Department of Agriculture's vote 2, covering local support measures, some £1·8 million is required to meet increases in professional fees and compensation payments under the disease eradication programme. The sum of £0·6 million is required for laboratory modifications and scientific equipment. Those increases arise mainly from an upturn in the incidence of brucellosis and tuberculosis which has required more testing of animals. That enabled a serious outbreak of brucellosis in the pre-Christmas period to be contained. Regrettably, the incidence of tuberculosis has risen, despite determined efforts by the Department to contain the disease. Therefore, that area will continue to receive high priority. The sum of £200,000 is required for the woodlands grant scheme, to reflect a welcome increase in participation by the private sector in afforestation.

The increases is this vote are fully offset by reduced requirements under the Northern Ireland agricultural development programme. Expenditure under the programme has been less than expected, partly because of lower investment trends and partly because the conditions attaching to the scheme have been refined to achieve more effective targeting. The estimate includes also additional payments on behalf of the International Fund for Ireland in respect of the refurbishment of the marine research vessel Lough Foyle. These costs are recouped in full from the fund.

I now turn to the Department of Economic Development, which has supplementary estimates for three votes. In vote 2, net additional provision of £12·5 million is sought. Of this, £10·7 million is in the section of the vote relating to assistance to the aircraft and shipbuilding industries. The House will recall that, under the agreement with Bombardier for the sale of Shorts, the Government undertook to fund losses incurred by Shorts from 1 April 1989 until the completion of the sale on 4 October 1989. The additional funding now required will discharge the Government's obligations in this matter.

Hon. Members will wish to note that, since the estimates were printed and laid, it has become apparent that some £5·6 million of the 1989-90 provision previously sought under the capital heading for Shorts will, in fact, be used to cover expenditure on Harland and Wolff in 1989-90. This remains consistent with the ambit of the vote. To compensate for that, there will be consequential adjustments to the provision for Shorts in 1990-91.

Also in vote 2, I am glad to say, additional funding is provided for the Local Enterprise Development Unit—LEDU—Northern Ireland's small business agency. Hon. Members will know that in my previous job I had a good deal to do with small businesses. I am glad to acknowledge the tremendous importance of small firms to the Northern Ireland economy. We do our best to stimulate and improve their performance. Under this head, £4·2 million is sought to enable LEDU to continue its work of stimulating growth in the small-business sector in Northern Ireland. In particular, it will enable LEDU to develop its network of local enterprise agencies, which is experiencing an increased level of uptake. These agencies are extremely valuable. The provision will also help to promote more enterprise through increased provision of enterprise training.

Many businesses fail because it is difficult to have simultaneously all the skills that are required to run a small business successfully, particularly when launching out. The training will include training on topics such as financial management and marketing techniques designed to prepare participants for self-employment. It will also cover special initiatives, such as the Northern Ireland innovation programme—part of a Europe-wide initiative aimed at supporting innovatory projects which are technology-based and export-oriented. These increases are offset by reductions of some £2 million, due mainly to delays in implementing projects in the industrially relevant research and development sector.

A token supplementary estimate is sought for the Department of Economic Development under vote 3, where various increases in expenditure are offset by savings elsewhere within the vote. Hon. Members will note that, as part of the Government's plans to rationalise the training system in Northern Ireland, a single training organisation, to be known as the Training and Employment Agency, will be established in April. We require £0·6 million as a contribution towards the costs of winding up the existing Northern Ireland Training Authority, which currently has responsibility for supporting, developing and promoting training in the private sector of Northern Ireland industry. This is another important area with which I had something to do previously, and whose value, therefore, I appreciate.

Rev. Martin Smyth (Belfast, South): Is anything being done, by way of the grant towards training the disabled, to remove discrimination, especially in respect of deaf young people, and to change the community's attitude towards such people?

Mr. Cope: I am afraid that I cannot answer that question off the cuff. However, I shall ensure that, if possible, it is dealt with in the winding-up speech.

An additional £5·8 million is sought for the Department of Economic Development, under vote 5, mainly for financial assistance to the gas industry. Twelve gas undertakings have completed their closure programmes on target, and some 79,000 consumers have had their homes converted from gas to alternative fuels. The additional provision is required mainly for accelerated payments in connection with the rundown and closure costs of Belfast Gas.

The Department of the Environment, under vote 1, covering roads, transport and ports, requires a net additional provision of £3·5 million. Of this, £2·9 million relates to grants paid by the Department to bus companies for capital expenditure on the purchase of new buses.

A token supplementary estimate is required for the Department of the Environment, under vote 3, where various increases are being offset by savings elsewhere in the vote. The main increase is in respect of consultants' fees for design work on water and sewerage schemes associated with compliance with European Communities directives.

An additional £1·9 million is sought for the Department of the Environment, under vote 5, mainly for capital expenditure on office accommodation and office furniture. Of this, £1·6 million relates to the accommodation requirements of the operational strategy computerisation programme in the Department of Health and Social Services.

Turning to the Department of Education, a net increase of £9·9 million is sought, under vote 1. An additional £11·1 million is required for grants to education and library boards. Of this, £7 million is for pay awards and price increases and for the youth training programme. The amount required for capital grants is £4·1 million. An extra £1·8 million is for capital expenditure by voluntary schools, including the purchase of sites and properties for integrated schools.

The increases in this vote are offset by a reduction of £3·1 million, owing to the delay in settling the 1989 pay award for further education lecturers. These adjustments will bring vote 1 provision to over £760 million in the current year, within a total education budget of some £899 million.

Hon. Members will note that additional provision of some £1 million is made within this vote for expenditure in support of the Government's proposals for education reforms. This brings the additional resources that have been made available for this purpose to over £5 million in

[Mr. Cope]

1989-90. This will help to ensure that schools and teachers are prepared, and have the necessary facilities, to implement these important changes.

In the Department of Education, under vote 2, an additional £2·6 million is sought on a range of services. The main increase of £1·6 million is for grants to universities, and includes the 1989 lecturers' pay settlement, as well as capital expenditure on information technology, including an upgraded automated library system at Queen's university.

Finally, for health and personal social services, an extra £29 million is being sought in vote 1. Of this total, some £17·6 million is for the health and social services boards, mainly to meet the cost of pay settlements. It will also enable further progress to be made in the transition from institutional care to community care for those in long-stay accommodation. A further £4·7 million is required for family practitioner services to meet increased demand and higher costs. These additions bring vote 1 provision for the current year to £865 million, within a total health and social services budget of over £960 million.

The House will note that, included in the additional sums sought, £3·5 million is for initial work on the implementation of health service reforms in Northern Ireland. These are designed to give patients better health care, a greater choice of services and better value for money, which is very important.

I have sought to draw the attention of the House to the order's main provisions. I realise that Members from England and Wales no longer have an equivalent debate. This debate enables Members from Northern Ireland constituencies in particular to draw attention to individual points, to which my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State will do his best to respond. I commend the order to the House.

7.30 pm

Mr. Jim Marshall (Leicester, South): The Minister of State went through the details of the order in his well-known fashion and we are all grateful to him for shedding more light on the bare figures. I regret that on this occasion he has not taken the opportunity to speak at some length about the overall economic prospects for the North of Ireland.

Mr. Taylor (Strangford): The hon. Member obviously does not know that the term "North of Ireland" is distasteful and offensive to most people in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Marshall: On many previous occasions when I have used that term in the House and in the Province, it has not been treated in that fashion.

Mr. Taylor: That is nonsense.

Mr. Marshall: The right hon. Gentleman will have his opportunity to put his point of view later in the debate. I am not prepared in this debate, which is about the economy in the North of Ireland——

Mr. Taylor: Northern Ireland.

Mr. Marshall: —to continue the debate that took place between 4 pm and 7 pm. I am prepared to learn, as the House knows, but there is a limit to the amount of knowledge that I am prepared to imbibe from the right hon. Gentleman.

This occasion enables us to have a comprehensive debate on the economy of the Province, but it is unfortunate that on this occasion the Minister of State did not see fit to outline the Government's view of the economic prospects for the Province in the coming years. It is fair to point out, as I have done previously, that the economy in the North of Ireland cannot be insulated from that of the remainder of the United Kingdom. Experience has shown repeatedly that when expansion has occurred in Britain, expansion in Northern Ireland has proceeded after a due period and has been at a much lower rate than in Britain, History is repeating itself. As a consequence of the economic downturn faced by the country as a whole, the Province is likely to experience a greater decline than the remainder of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Cope: I should like to draw the hon. Gentleman's attention to the latest figures for Northern Ireland manufacturing output, which show an increase to September 1989 of 9 per cent. compared with 3 per cent. for the United Kingdom as a whole. In that respect, as in one or two others, the Northern Ireland economy is doing better than the economy of the United Kingdom as a whole.

Mr. Marshall: The Minister of State will be pleased to know that I shall address those specific points. We can all pick evidence from various parts of the economy to try to prove our points. The underlying evidence from statistics in the Province is that the economic indicators for the next few years are bleak, to say the least. Unless the Government are prepared to take further action to activate the economy and to take further economic initiatives the progress that we have seen over the past 12 months will amount to little in the long term.

Hon. Members, especially those from the North of Ireland, will recognise that poverty continues to be endemic in the Province. That has been exacerbated by the recent changes in the social security system. As in the remainder of the United Kingdom, one's opportunity of getting a grant from the social fund depends on where one lives and how much money is left in the pot. I repeat a plea that I have made many times: this is not the way that we should deal with poverty. It should not just be a matter of luck, of where one lives and of how early one applies for the grant from the pot. Poverty must be judged on the basis of need, not on geography and how much money is left in a fund. I urge Northern Ireland Ministers with responsibility in these matters to speak to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State for Social Security to ensure that the people in the North of Ireland, and the rest of the people in the United Kingdom, have their applications judged on the basis of need, and not financial stringency, which is the method that operates in the social security system.

The Minister of State mentioned Shorts. On a previous occasion, I put a number of specific questions to him and I shall repeat two. I hope that the Under-Secretary will answer them specifically or, if he cannot, at least pledge that he will write to me with the answers. The House would like to know why the Government retained ownership of the leasing companies when Shorts was privatised. What is the extent of the Government's financial liability as a

consequence of retaining those leasing companies? The Minister mentioned further assistance to Shorts and, almost as an afterthought, said that just over £5 million would be given to Harland and Wolff. Why is that £5 million required by Harland and Wolff?

I wish that the Minister had spoken at greater length about the enonomy of the Province, because 1992 and the single market are rapidly approaching. Taken together with the opening of the Channel tunnel, this will again highlight the problems and questions arising from the peripherality of the North of Ireland and the island of Ireland. I should like to know whether the Government will announce their present thinking on improved transport links between Northern Ireland and Britain and what, if any, discussions they have had with the Republic to improve transport links between the island of Ireland and mainland Britain. I hope, therefore, that the Minister will be able to give us an inkling of the Government's view of the transport problems facing the North of Ireland and the island of Ireland as a whole as a consequence of the single market and 1992 and the probable opening of the Channel tunnel a few years later. The non-economic problems of the Province were discussed at length in our previous debate——

Mr. William Ross (Londonderry, East): Before the hon. Gentleman moves too far from the question of transport between the island of Ireland and Great Britain, may I ask him to press the Government to make every effort to maintain the pre-eminence of the port of Larne as the point of export for the whole island—in particular, by improving the quality of roads to Larne port?

Mr. Marshall: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman, who is a regular attender of these debates. He will know that 18 months or two years ago I made precisely that suggestion to the Government. If he consults the report of that debate, he will find that I pressed for the widening of the route between the port of Larne and Belfast. He will be pleased to hear that I support, and will continue to support, that aim. I hope that the hon. Gentleman is satisfied.

Mr. Kevin McNamara (Kingston upon Hull, North): Even though it is in the North.

Mr. Marshall: As my hon. Friend says, even though it is in the North.

One problem that we face in discussing the economy of the Province is the tendency to underplay the problems and a tendency for any criticism of the Government to be somewhat muted. I presume that that is a cross-party desire, based on the belief that unnecessary criticism is likely further to undermine confidence in the Province. But in spite of the economic index that the Minister cited, everyone in the House and the Province needs to be aware that the economic prospects are not especially good.

Last year, bankruptcies in the Province increased by 75 per cent., whereas in England and Wales they increased by just under 10 per cent. I realise that there are particular causes for that, with the high gearing ratio of many companies in the Province. Nevertheless, that high incidence of bankruptcy is not indicative of a strong underlying economy.

In addition, the National Westminster Bank is again predicting increases in unemployment. I know that Ministers will point out that unemployment fell substantially in 1989. I applaud that fact, and I accept that the figures are correct; I do not suggest that that fall can be attributed solely to the juggling of statistics. Nevertheless, most non-partisan observers in the Province take the overall fall with a large pinch of salt and point out that the fall results in part from the fact that more people are leaving the Province for England, that there are more places on Government training schemes and that there have been further restrictions on eligibility for unemployment benefit.

The latest Coopers and Lybrand report states the case more succinctly, and with a non-partisanship that the House may accept:

"it would appear that some of the changes have been cosmetic, and aimed at reducing the unemployed total rather than securing lasting employment."

Meanwhile, manufacturing productivity in the Province continues to lag behind that in the rest of the United Kingdom; the Province achieved 80 per cent. of what was achieved in the remainder of the United Kingdom. More disturbing still is that in some cases productivity figures are only half the figure achieved by comparable employers in West Germany.

The construction industry is reporting a downturn in activity. If the figures are correct, they must place doubts over the continuation of economic growth in the Province.

In its latest annual report, the Northern Ireland Economic Council predicts difficulties for the economy arising from high rates of inflation, high interest rates and the balance of payments deficit facing the United Kingdom as a whole.

That is the economic background, and it leaves no room for complacency. It is against that background that we must ask how the Government react to the problem. To be fair, they do not do nothing, although they do not do a great deal. They tinker with the problem, because there is a vacuum at the heart of their economic policy for the North of Ireland. Specifically, they lack a coherent strategy for economic development in the Province. They tinker because their political dogma dictates a market approach, while their experience suggests the need for an interventionist approach. Their tinkering leads to uncertainty at the heart of their industrial development policy; it places question marks over their objectives and over the means by which they hope to achieve them.

The latest annual report from the Northern Ireland Economic Council says at paragraph 2.14:

"Elements of both the market approach and the intervention model co-exist uneasily within the current framework of industrial development policy in Northern Ireland. The perceived thrust of recent government policy statements in respect of industrial development clearly favours an increasing reliance upon market based solutions to the Province's industrial problems. However, the agencies responsible for the conduct of industrial . . . policy, the IDB and LEDU, are equally clearly inclined to a scale of interventionism more in keeping with a planning approach to these problems. In the Council's view this anomalous situation breeds uncertainty as to both the objectives of industrial development policy in Northern Ireland and the means by which those objectives are to be achieved."

Again, that is the non-partisan view of an organisation with no particular axe to grind, and it highlights the uncertainty that lies at the heart of the Government's economic policy in the Province.

We must conclude—reluctantly or otherwise—that the Government would prefer to apply their market philosophy to the Province but that they know that they cannot because of the particular and extensive nature of

[Mr. Marshall]

Northern Ireland's problems, especially given its status on the periphery of the United Kingdom and the European Community, and, in many instances, because of the outdated industries and the specific problems arising from the troubles.

Government economic policy in the Province tends to fall between two stools—the fully-fledged market approach and a fully fledged interventionist approach. That, again, leads to tinkering and a half-hearted approach to the market model and to the interventionist model. That half-hearted approach is reflected in expenditure levels. If the Under-Secretary examines the figures, he will see that since 1982-83 there has been an annual average fall in real terms of about 3 per cent. in overall expenditure on development and industrial support. That is the real position, contrary to what the Government would have us believe.

What should the Government be trying to do? It is clear to most hon. Members—if not Ministers—that there is an urgent need to produce a proper strategic plan for economic development in Northern Ireland. A continuation of existing policies will not be sufficient to achieve a rate of growth that would allow the Northern Ireland economy to catch up with other regions in the United Kingdom. Specifically, a number of key issues must be addressed, including better training and skills forecasting, encouragement for more of the talented young people to stay in the Province, improving the quality and quantity of goods and services and further developing the local tourist and leisure industries.

The Opposition believe that those issues will not be addressed coherently if the Government maintain their hands-off approach to the economy in the Province. At a minimum, there must be greater co-ordination between existing plans. As we all know, there are already corporate plans for the Department of Economic Development, the Industrial Development Board and the Local Enterprise Development Unit. However, they cannot individually be said to amount to an economic strategy. They do not claim to be pointing the way ahead or to be setting targets.

I recognise the limitations of the interventionist approach and I also recognise the political difficulties facing Northern Ireland Ministers if they want to pursue such an approach. However, the interventionist approach helps to focus attention on the major problems and possible growth areas in an overall co-ordinated fashion. In particular, such an approach would enable concentration to focus on those sectors of the economy with the best potential for development, including the health sector, education, miscellaneous services and the distribution service. Concentration on those areas and others could yield substantial dividends in terms of a more secure economic base for Northern Ireland.

Even within the present limitations of Government policy, some specific improvements could be made. For example, the IDB could be made more accountable for its expenditure. I am sure all hon. Members would agree that banner headlines such as the one that appeared in the *Belfast Telegraph* on 5 March promising that 500 new jobs would be created in the textile industry are no good if many of those jobs fail to materialise.

The suggestion made by the Northern Ireland Economic Council that the IDB should include in its annual report an update on jobs created as a consequence of expenditure in previous years would be beneficial because it would provide at least a crude measure of the efficacy of the IDB in promoting job creating.

Mr. John D. Taylor: I fully support the hon. Gentleman's theme about the IDB. However, does he support the separate existence of LEDU? There are proposals that LEDU should be abolished and incorporated into the IDB. Many of us involved in business in Northern Ireland would resent that.

Mr. Marshall: Did the right hon. Gentleman say that he would resent that?

Mr. Taylor: Yes.

Mr. Marshall: In that case, the right hon. Gentleman may not like what I am about to say. He will recognise from what I have said about the existing plans for the Department of Economic Development, the IDB and LEDU that I was calling for much closer co-ordination of those plans. With the privatisation of Shorts and Harland and Wolff, there will be a need for a reorganisation of the Department of Economic Development as a consequence of that and other economic changes that have taken place in the North.

If we were to develop the kind of corporate interventionist model that I have suggested, I would urge my right hon. and hon. Friends to accept that there is a need for greater co-operation between the three bodies to which I have referred and a need perhaps for some amalgamation as well. Therefore, effort and financial expenditure could be directed to the potential growth areas in the economy of Northern Ireland. I appreciate that the right hon. Member for Strangford (Mr. Taylor) will not be happy with my suggestion, but at least it offers an opportunity for a coherent economic plan for the North of Ireland.

Mr. Taylor: Northern Ireland.

Mr. Marshall: The right hon. Gentleman and I will have to agree on the use of adjectives sooner or later.

During a previous debate, the Minister of State promised a White Paper on the privatisation of Northern Ireland Electricity and the effect that that privatisation would have on electricity tariffs in the North of Ireland. He promised that White Paper early in the new year and I believe that the year that he referred to was the beginning of 1990, not the beginning of 1991. When is that White Paper likely to see the light of day? When will the House and Northern Ireland Members have the opportunity to debate fully the privatisation of Northern Ireland Electricity? I should like a specific response to that.

From visits to the Province and from reading the local newspapers, I note that the exploitation of lignite resources has received relatively little public attention in the past few months. Hon. Members would argue that the exploitation of lignite reserves in the Province represents a potentially significant addition to the Northern Ireland economy. What time scale do the Government have in mind for the commercial exploitation of lignite reserves? More specifically, will they give an assurance that, when privatised, Northern Ireland Electricity will not be permitted to delay plans for the exploitation of lignite?

To be frankly partisan, the only hope for the Northern Ireland economy, as for the remainder of the United

Kingdom, is the return of a Labour Government who are committed to creating the basis of economic prosperity, jobs for all and the elimination of poverty, not the further creation of poverty that the Government have caused through the allocation of financial resources on the basis of rationing rather than on the basis of need.

8 pm

Mr. James Kilfedder (North Down): The people of Northern Ireland are generous-hearted and kind. They will not reject any party that wishes to stand in an election in Northern Ireland—the more the merrier. More lost deposits should benefit the Province in some way. We believe in democracy. We do not try to stop anybody standing in elections. If the Labour party wishes to put forward candidates in my consitutency of North Down, it is perfectly welcome to do so. I shall have no objection.

I make no apology for again stressing that senior citizens in the Province are being denied basic rights. That denial applies in every other part of the United Kingdom, but I am chiefly concerned with Northern Ireland, and my constituency of North Down in particular. The time has come for a Bill of Rights for the elderly. About 18 years ago, I argued for a Bill of Rights for the whole United Kingdom. The hon. Member for Derbyshire, North-East (Mr. Barnes) is interested in that point. I was prepared to accept a Bill of Rights that was limited to Northern Ireland if need be. The elderly people of Northern Ireland certainly need a Bill of Rights to protect them. They should have the right to live out their lives in dignity and in reasonable comfort. That is not too much for an old person to ask.

Elderly people have the right to adequate care in the community. Surely that right should be bestowed upon them after a lifetime of service to their communities. They should have the right to a decent pension that takes account of the high cost of living in Northern Ireland. The cost of living in Northern Ireland is higher than that in the rest of the United Kingdom. Elderly people should have an immediate pension increase of £10 a week per person, although that would still not bring the amount up to that which is available to other retired people in the European Community.

If we judge a society by the way in which it looks after the elderly, the handicapped and the chronically sick, the Government fail the test. One simple step that would give great comfort to many elderly people throughout our country would be to introduce concessionary television licences. Most elderly people depend upon television as a means of entertainment and communication with the outside world. Television has become basic to their way of life. If they cannot provide completely free television, a caring Government should provide television licences at a concessionary rate.

Many elderly people in Northern Ireland feel particularly angry because, from next month, they must pay £71 to the BBC so that they can hear all sorts of nasty things said about the forces of law and order who protect them in their homes and in their community. They are angry that their money should be spent on such propaganda.

The Health Service has deteriorated in many respects as a result of budget cuts in Northern Ireland. We had a good Health Service—good local hospitals and major hospitals throughout the Province. Unfortunately, the Health Service has become worse. There is a waiting list for operations. That means great anxiety not only for patients, many of whom rightly dread the prospect of an operation, but for relatives. Money is needed for our hospitals in Northern Ireland. The Government must take action to reverse the rundown in local hospitals such as Bangor hospital, in my constituency.

I shall give an example of how the Government approach social services in Northern Ireland. The Eastern health board, which one could regard as a minion of the Government, has introduced further cuts in home help services for the elderly. Those cuts are quite disgraceful. Elderly people in the area suffer discrimination, and many are denied proper home help services. I shall quote one example. It is not the worst case that has come my way, but it is one that I could readily put my hand on when I left home this morning.

An elderly constituent of mine who lives on her own and who has suffered the effects of a stroke and a heart attack had home help services for six hours a week. That dear old lady desperately wanted someone to assist with cleaning her home. Most elderly people are houseproud, and it is certainly bad for their morale when conditions in the home deteriorate. That elderly lady wanted a home help to clean her home, in addition to making her breakfast and her main meal of the day and doing a bit of laundry. She privately arranged with her home help that, instead of doing one bit of business, she would also clean the house.

The Eastern health board heard about it and immediately cut that lady's six hours' home help to three and a half hours a week. It said that she was not entitled to have a home help to clean the home. How callous can an organisation be to deny an elderly lady living on her own, and who is dependent on her home help, the services of a person to clean her home? That is the only case that I shall quote tonight, but there are many others.

A letter from the responsible Minister in the Department of Health states:

"In the North Down and Ards Unit of Management"—

that is within the Eastern health board area—

"due to budget constraints, it is not generally possible to provide a cleaning service."

For this reason, this lady's hours were reduced to three and a half hours per week. Of course, that made my poor constituent heart broken. I thought that the Government believed in the policy of keeping elderly people in their homes for as long as possible. It is a callous, hard-hearted bureaucracy that denies home help to the elderly.

I have dealt with a case where only 15 minutes of home help was provided. I mentioned it on the last occasion when I spoke on the home help service about a month ago in the House. The home help would hardly have time to take her coat off, say good morning to the old lady and make her a cup of tea before she had to put on her coat and go away again. It is morally wrong to punish the elderly when the Government have to find means of making cuts in expenditure.

Mr. Harry Barnes (Derbyshire, North-East): The hon. Gentleman and I share a belief in certain principles in connection with Northern Ireland. One is a Bill of Rights, which he mentioned, and another is devolved government. I agree with his point about the need to extend expenditure on social welfare. Does he share a fourth principle, expressed by my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, South (Mr. Marshall) when he argued that interventionist policies, if not socialist policies, are appropriate for the

[Mr. Harry Barnes]

regeneration of the economy of Northern Ireland? That would enable the hon. Gentleman's remarks about social welfare and perhaps other principles to be put into practice.

Mr. Kilfedder: I do not wish to go off at a tangent. I agree with the hon. Gentleman. We have only to look at the history of Northern Ireland to see that it depended more than any other region of the United Kingdom on high public expenditure. That is why so many people's jobs depend on the Government. I am nervous about the way in which certain firms have been moved into the private sector. But I am afraid that I should go beyond the time that I promised to take and perhaps the terms of the order if I were to respond further to the hon. Gentleman's point.

I wish to refer to another section of the order. I congratulate the Minister with responsibility for the Department of Education on his recent announcement that £11·5 million is to be spent on the North Down and Ards further education college. The programme is to cover five years and to begin next year. Will the Minister consider bringing the programme forward by one year and accelerating the rate of the order so that we can achieve in four years what is planned for five years? Given the urgent need for innovative ideas in the related fields of education and training, particularly if Northern Ireland is to surmount the problems of being part of the European Community yet being a peripheral member of the single market, I urge the Secretary of State to explore, perhaps with the universities and certainly with the Industrial Development Board and the further education colleges in Northern Ireland, ways of improving employment training.

The keener competition that Ulster firms will face after 1992 means that we must achieve higher standards in Northern Ireland. Two factors follow. The infrastructure of roads, rail, ports and airports must be brought up to date and made highly efficient. The talents of our people must be harnessed with the aim of making our productivity the highest in Europe. That seems an almost impossible task if we start now, but it is vital if Northern Ireland is to play a full part within the EEC.

We must consider how to improve the output of people working in industry and commerce now. They are the people who will create future jobs for Northern Ireland and we must look to them for improvements in our prospects in the single European market. The second group of people whom we must train are those who are completing their final year of compulsory school education. Somehow they must be saved from joining the dole queues of the unskilled and semi-skilled.

The new training and employment agencies mentioned in the order for which provision of £70 million has been made will occupy a pivotal position in the strategy after 2 April when the order commences. It would completely defeat the aim if we were to follow the old-style approach. Years ago we had the employment and training committees. They were advisory only and had no executive power. They were useless. In the same way as the Department of Agriculture gives assistance to production, marketing and processing and is also responsible for technical education, something must be done for industry and commerce in the Province.

The new training and employment agency could be the machine to oil the pistons of change in training. The labour market services and other initiatives are costed at over £83 million. The job training, youth training and action for community employment programmes have become important to the unemployed. Many people aged between 25 and 35 have known no other kind of employment. If we are to make a real contribution to the future of Northern Ireland, we must make sure that our young people are highly trained.

The two intractable problems that remain are long-term unemployment and youth unemployment. Both are high in the Republic of Ireland. Outward migration of 40,000 a year helps to keep down the total number of unemployed people in the Republic. In Northern Ireland the number of people emigrating has increased from over 8,000 a year. Emigration is a tragedy because we must keep as many of our young people as possible in the Province. In both countries it is the young and short-term unemployed who emigrate. The proportion of long-term unemployed is rising. It is 8 per cent. higher today than it was six years ago. Long-term unemployment for the under-25s accounts for one third of all unemployed young people. We must fight for those young people. That is why I make an appeal to the Minister.

As the Minister responsible for the Department of the Environment is on the Front Bench, I shall briefly refer to pollution. I urge him to make sure that following recent international expressions of anxiety the dumping of sewage in the sea off the cost of North Down comes to an end now. Such pollution endangers the health of people, particularly young people, who use the coastal waters.

8.18 pm

Mr. Clifford Forsythe (Antrim, South): When taking part in these debates, we are always aware that regardless of the number of points that we raise or the mistakes that we discover, we cannot alter a single figure or word in the order. Therefore, one feels that one is speaking almost in a vacuum, remote from the real world. However, the Minister will hear what we say and, more importantly, *Hansard* will record our proceedings and others will be able to read them.

The scope of the order is wide and one could make a considerable number of observations about it, but in the interests of other right hon. and hon. Members who wish to take part in the debate I shall compress my remarks into as short a time as possible.

On vote 1, Department of Agriculture, I appeal again to the Minister to set up a single section or a single department at a convenient level within the Department to co-ordinate all the road, river, public health and agricultural drainage. It is most distressing for householders, business men or farmers to be passed from one section or Department to another at, say, midnight, when their belongings are floating in anything from 2 inches to 4 feet of water, with each person who is contacted expressing great sympathy but apparently unable or unwilling to help until, on occasions, Members of Parliament have to intervene to try to get something done. Therefore, once again I ask the Minister to look seriously at that.

In relation to vote 4, Department of the Environment, in part II of the order, if a wrong planning decision has been made in the past, will the Minister ensure that that

wrong decision is not used to approve an even more outrageously bad decision in the future? It is incredible that, because of departmental direction, professional officers are forced to ignore common sense and good planning practice simply because a ridiculous decision has been approved in the past, for whatever reason. Will the Minister also consider appointing a specific senior officer capable of arriving at a planning decision when the planning section and the road section disagree about a planning application? It is ridiculous that where an applicant seeks advice before putting in an application, he or she becomes more and more confused as the inquiry proceeds. The planners may insist, for instance, that a replacement dwelling is rebuilt in more or less the position of the original, using the existing access or road, while the roads section may insist equally vehemently that the dwelling should be moved to a new position with a new access. In those circumstances, one is advised to tell one's constituents to apply, to be turned down and then to take their case to appeal so that the commissioner can make the decision. It is a good job that in certain areas the planning department is not privatised as I am sure that it would go into liquidation within a month.

Another problem is the planners' insistence, when giving permission to retired persons to build a retirement bungalow, that they should build the bungalow 100 metres or so from the road, thus creating a wilderness between the house and the road because the owner is not capable of mowing a quarter of an acre of grass once a week.

Mr. William Ross: Before the hon. Gentleman leaves his point about building a retirement bungalow 100 yards from the road, will he also draw the Minister's attention to the fact that on farms a retirement bungalow often has to be built practically in the farmyard? If the one is bad, the other is surely worse. Surely some flexibility could be allowed so that we can get away from the idea of having a group of buildings clumped together so tightly that young and old are looking down each others throats all their days.

Mr. Forsythe: I agree with the use of the word "flexibility". I am sure that we could get a little fliexibility while, I hope, working within the planning laws.

With regard to vote 1, Department of Environment, and to section (g) dealing with railways, once again I should like to put on the record my own and my party's sympathy for the relatives of those who were tragically killed at the Slaght crossing. Our hearts go out to the children who were orphaned by the crash and to all those who have lost loved ones. As party spokesman on transport, in the past I have put on record my concern about such crossings and I hope to have the opportunity to do so again at the public inquiry. I most sincerely congratulate the Under-Secretary of State, the hon. Member for Eltham (Mr. Bottomley), on his prompt action in setting up the inquiry. I congratulate also the fire service, the ambulance service, the Royal Ulster Constabulary, the hospitals, the nurses, the doctors and everyone who helped at the scene.

The inquiry must look at all aspects of that type of crossing, not just at that specific instance. I am concerned that we should do that because on 1 October last year—just five months before the accident at Slaght crossing—a gentleman was driving towards that crossing with his wife, sister and brother-in-law. Just before he reached the crossing, he almost overtook a number of children on bicycles. As a result of that, the driver was then extremely careful to make sure that everything was correct. When he got to the crossing, he made sure that the warning lights were not flashing. He allowed the children in front of him to cross the crossing. He then proceeded to cross the railway lines as quickly as possible. As he reached the middle of the railway lines, one of his passengers screamed in his ear, "Quick, there's a train coming", or words to that effect. The car had just reached safety when an engine thundered past behind it, without any warning whatever.

I repeat that that incident was at the crossing where the later incident occurred. Because of the shock and because of the incline beyond the crossing on both sides, the driver had travelled about 30 yd further before he recovered himself enough to turn back to check the situation. As he approached the crossing for the second time, the warning lights started to flash—long after the engine had passed. Along with the other road-users at the scene, the driver waited for a long time, but the lights still continued to flash. Eventually, one of the other drivers got out of his car, walked to the railway line, looked up and down it, saw that nothing was coming and eventually went across, as did everyone else.

The gentleman concerned was willing to appear to give evidence. The incident was reported to the Royal Ulster Constabulary and a statement was taken. The facts are all on record. It is imperative that all such evidence should be brought before the public inquiry. That is why I should like the inquiry to be sufficiently wide to take in the operation of all such crossings. I should like the evidence of such events, if the RUC has records on them, to be gathered together and examined. Various questions must be asked so that the causes of the accident are revealed and, if necessary, changes made to such crossings before we have further tragedies. I know that the Minister agrees. Sadly, those who could tell us exactly what happened on that occasion are no longer with us. We owe it to them and their children to discover the truth.

I hope that more attention will be paid to the result of the inquiry than is apparently being paid to the Tully road closure inquiry. One of the points made by the inspector—he made only two—was that the roads division should complete the Killead bypass as soon as possible. Not only local representatives but the Department at its headquarters in Belfast led me to believe before the result of the inquiry was known that the bypass would be started as soon as possible, perhaps even during this financial year. I have been dismayed and alarmed since the report was published to be told by local councillors that the bypass is being further postponed. I have not been told that, but if it is true, it is intolerable.

The one section of road near Aldergrove international airport which has the greatest volume of traffic, including heavy traffic, of all the roads in the area—the Minister gave me the figures—is not being improved, yet another section of the road which has less traffic is being improved even as we speak. That is incredible. If no work is started on the Killead bypass after all these years—it goes back to the time when my right hon. Friend the Member for Lagan Valley (Mr. Molyneaux) was the Member for Antrim, South and was promised the bypass—it is a scandal. The Department is treating the residents of Killead village very badly. I hope that the Minister will ease my fears and tell me that what I have heard is not true and that the bypass is to be started in the near future.

[Mr. Forsythe]

I wish to make a few points about the number of employees and the sums being spent by the Department. Out of £156·5 million, which covers roads, lighting, parking and ferry services, transport, railways, ports and administration, and other expenditure, only £29 million will go on new construction, while £36 million will be used for maintenance. Public liability will continue to cost £6 million. That is a high figure and must point to something being wrong with the roads.

The number of industrial workers has fallen by 15 and costs £19 million while the number of administrative staff has increased by 134 and costs, with consultancy fees, £30 million. I can assure the Minister that if the overheads of my former business in the construction industry had been as high as that, I should have been out of business. I am sure that that cannot be to the advantage of the general public.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Peter Bottomley): Some of the extra staff may be creating designs which go out to tender in the private sector, so those whom the hon. Gentleman does not praise as he might might be keeping his business in business.

Mr. Forsythe: I accept what the Minister has said and note his use of the word "might"

In the water and sewage section, the number of industrial workers has fallen by 29 and costs £17 million, whereas the number of administrative staff has fallen by only 20 and costs, with consultancy fees, £23·5 million. I am not suggesting that we should make people unemployed, but I am emphasising that out of a total of £93 million the administration costs are £23·5 million, or 25 per cent.

Grants to small and medium-sized firms are listed. I heard what the Minister said about being a supporter of small businesses. That is why I wonder why the small businesses total has been reduced by £268,000. I do not know whether the Minister welcomes that. What is the reason for it? I have received complaints from constituents who feel that unless one has a foreign-sounding name or comes from certain parts of the Province the chances of securing assistance are remote. I know that that does not apply to the Local Enterprise Development Unit, but to the Industrial Development Board.

Will the Minister explain why many people in Northern Ireland are worried about pollution in our rivers and lakes? The hon. Member for North Down (Mr. Kilfedder) commented on that. I drew the Minister's attention to the problem of work being carried out on river beds by the drainage division of the Department. Fishermen have been complaining about that. Indeed, they have been complaining readily about many environmental problems and there is certainly support for their views. I understand that recently Ballymena borough council called for a public inquiry into the Fisheries Conservancy Board. Perhaps the Minister has some idea of the problem. I should be interested to know what the problems are.

Mr. Roy Beggs (Antrim, East): Does my hon. Friend agree that there is also tremendous anxiety about the depletion of salmon and Dollaghan in Lough Neagh, which is believed to have come about because of inactivity by bailiffs and the Fisheries Conservancy Board to the extent that fishermen feel that the word "conservancy" should be dropped and it should simply be called the fisheries board?

Mr. Forsythe: My hon. Friend puts his case well. I am concerned that the borough council should go to the trouble to make such a proposal and it should be looked at.

I am also concerned about the past year's underspend of the social fund last year, which amounted to as much as 66 per cent. in certain areas. I agree with the hon. Member for North Down about the problems faced by pensioners and the handicapped and, in particular, the problems associated with the attendance allowance. When doctors examine applicants for that allowance, the applicants are often too proud to show that they need it. Pride will not allow them to say that they cannot do certain things and, sadly, it is their wives or their carers who have to bear the brunt of that. I know several who are in that postion. Those who administer the fund may believe that they are working to the guidelines, but perhaps they should be studied further.

The Government's aim is for better targeting of social services, but they have not hit the right target in Northern Ireland. I could discuss many other problems, but I know that many other hon. Members wish to speak, so I shall conclude my remarks.

8.40 pm

Rev. William McCrea (Mid-Ulster): I have already expressed my frustration and anger about the conclusion of the previous debate, which related to matters of life and death for my constituents. The time allotted to that subject was cut drastically and now we are to talk of more mundane things. It is interesting to note that the time allotted for the mundane things is more than that for the life and death issues faced by my constituents.

I am sure that you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, will understand my frustration. We are supposed to be discussing jobs and money for industry, but one of the first people murdered since December was an excellent business man, whom the Minister knew, Mr. Glover. He contributed so much to our community, yet the IRA decided that he should no longer live. Another business man was murdered in Castlederg, Mr. Alwin Kilpatrick. He was a gentleman of excellent sterling character, a Sunday school teacher, and a man who desired to give employment in the Castlederg area, which has been blighted with unemployment. However, the IRA decided that Alwin Kilpatrick was too valuable to the community. It acted as executioner after holding a back-room court somewhere in my constituency.

When we talk about the environment we should remember another young man, an employee of the Magherafelt district council, Mr. John Crawford. He was doing his ordinary day's work picking up paper as an employee of that district council. It was his job to tidy the environment, but because he was a part-time member of the UDR the IRA decided that he should no longer live and so it planted a bomb under his car. John will never walk again. His life has been spared, but his legs were blown off right to the end of his body. That is why I am so angry and frustrated.

When we discuss votes for business we should remember the value of the contribution made by Sidney McFarlane. He lost his legs, which were blown off because

the IRA decided he should no longer make any contribution to his community. The IRA decided that he should be lying in a coffin. His life has been spared, but he has lost his legs. He is another of my constituents who, since the beginning of this year, has been the subject of a terrorist attack.

What about the ordinary people of Sion Mills? I agree with what the hon. Member for North Down (Mr. Kilfedder) said about senior citizens. At the weekend I met two elderly people who said that in their day they did what they could for their country in their work. They gave all that they had, but now they have no roof over their heads, because, in common with many others, the IRA decided that the buildings of Sion Mills should be blasted to the ground. Those elderly people have been left without one stick of furniture, without one piece of bed clothing and, other than the clothes on their back, they have absolutely nothing.

We are supposed to discuss agriculture, but what about the farmer who was doing his day's work—*[Interruption.]* The hon. Member for Wigan (Mr. Stott) may not find my speech attractive, but I am talking about the realities faced by my constituents.

Mr. Jim Marshall *rose*——

Rev. William McCrea: I am not talking about the hon. Gentleman, so I shall not give way.

Mr. Roger Stott (Wigan): The hon. Gentleman has mentioned me, but I must tell him that I was saying to my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, South (Mr. Marshall) how I admired the hon. Gentleman's adroitness in getting his points across under the order we are discussing. I was not treating his speech as a laughing matter—it is a serious one.

Rev. William McCrea: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for that and I accept his words in the spirit in which they were spoken.

If we are supposed to discuss agriculture, I must think of the farmer outside Cookstown who drove through a hail of 70 bullets, 40 of which went through the cab of the tractor. Thank God, his life was spared. I also think of another young director of a firm who the IRA decided should no longer live. He was a member of my party and a fellow member of the council on which I sit. The IRA put a bomb under his car.

Thomas Jameson was murdered coming home from his day's work—I buried him yesterday. He was a brave young man who worked, as his child said to me, from morning to night to try to give them the ordinary things of life. The IRA thought that he was a threat to its ideal of a united Ireland because he drove a cement lorry. He was such a threat because he happened to work for a firm which desires to create business and to give employment to our community. It has an excellent record.

Tommy Jameson was done to death. It sickens me—I care not who likes it or otherwise—that so-called mighty Provos can decide that such men must die. Thomas Jameson was an ordinary worker in our society and he is now six feet under. The IRA planned his death and its leader in that area of County Tyrone who planned his murder and saw that it was executed, Brian Arthers, struts around as though he was a chief administrator of justice. He decides when my people of my constituency are going to die—he takes it out of the hands of God and puts it into his own.

Therefore, many problems face my constituents. It sickens me that members of Sinn Fein can condemn economic deprivation in our Province and, as elected representatives, we have to sit on councils with them, looking across the council chamber at them, and listening to them condemn the Government for the unemployment situation, and yet Sinn Fein supports an organisation which has blasted jobs out of existence and blasted young men out of employment. It has flattened businesses, blown up factories and lengthened the dole queue. The Minister should take the first step—the honourable step—and remove the mouthpiece of terrorism from the council chambers once and for all, so as not to give it the semblance of democracy because its members are not democrats. They are the mouthpiece of terrorism and they make no apology for that.

The hon. Member for North Down has already mentioned senior citizens who helped to build the nation, who gave their best and sacrificed much but got little in return. In their youth, with the sweat of their brow and for little money, they were willing to fight in world wars to defend the nation's freedom and to build the country that we, as the younger generation, have the privilege to live in. Those elderly people are being treated disgracefully in their old age.

Pensioners in Northern Ireland can have little pride in the benefits given to them. Northern Ireland has a higher cost of living than other parts of the United Kingdom. There are higher heating costs. The Government ought to give elderly people some comfort and help in the last days of their lives. They ought to give them not concessionary but free television licences. There ought also to be proper concessionary travel passes for elderly people throughout the Province.

What is called the home help service is despicable because it is not home help any more. The Government have to help elderly people. If they want them to stay in the community, they must provide the money to keep them there. It is not enough to come out with pious attitudes and statements of what they desire and then withdraw the money that allows that desire to be fulfilled. I support keeping elderly people in the community, if it is humanly possible, and it is right to give the appropriate money to allow that to be done. It is despicable to give an old-age pensioner 15 minutes of home help when the person doing the job can hardly get through the door to boil a kettle in that time, never mind make the tea, and then has to go.

Attendance and mobility allowances seem to be given a great deal of publicity. It is said, "Why don't you apply for this allowance?" but when people apply, the Government wonder how they can prevent them from getting the allowances.

I believe that a watchful eye must be kept on private nursing homes. I support such homes, but the Government must ensure that they give the elderly exactly what they are supposed to get—proper nursing care in the latter days of their lives.

Other matters are troubling my constituents, and I shall try to mention them briefly. I trust that the Minister will consider them. I do not expect an answer tonight on many of the subjects, but I expect an answer for my constituents.

[Rev. William McCrea]

One issue is the new history park at Gortin outside Omagh. The local council is spending £3 million on the development of that excellent pavilion. The greatest necessity for the region is to encourage tourists. Therefore, we need a proper infrastructure of roads, and I beg the Minister to give urgent consideration to proper roads leading to the new park at Gortin.

Another issue is the Omagh bypass. Phases 1, 2 and 3 are urgently required and I appeal to the Minister not to stop after phase 1 or to allow some 18 months' delay until the money is available for phase 2. Will he consider allowing the contractor to continue with phase 2 because it is so urgently needed for the county town of Omagh?

A ring sewer has been promised for the south of Omagh. It is urgently needed and has been talked about for years. It will go from Cranny Bridge to Dromore road. Housing development in the area has been restricted because there is not sufficient sewage capacity, so builders are permitted to build only seven houses in a development each year. That is pushing up the price of houses for people who desire to buy their own homes. I know that it is the Minister's and the Government's policy to encourage people to buy their own homes and to invest money in them. It is deplorable that prices are being inflated because of the lack of sewage provision in the area and because builders are not permitted to build the number of houses that they are willing to build. I have made representations and I am having discussions with the Northern Ireland Office on that subject.

We are disappointed about the removal of the regional Housing Executive office. There has been pressure to transfer the Housing Executive office to Londonderry and that is a death blow to jobs in the area. Will the Minister reconsider that decision and ask the Housing Executive to maintain the regional office in Omagh?

I also ask the Minister to consider helping the physically and mentally handicapped children of Fermanagh and Tyrone. We urgently need a centre for them in Omagh. The one in Stradreagh, Londonderry is not enough for the people of Fermanagh and Tyrone. I ask the Minister to consider the representations from the Western board for more money for this vital facility.

I ask the Minister also to consider the urgent need for a bypass for Cookstown. It should be brought out of the minor roads programme and put into the major works programme. I am told that £60,000 has been allocated for next financial year. If the work is done piecemeal, the traffic jams will merely move from one spot in the town to another. Why does not the Department grasp the nettle and solve the problem? Cookstown has the second highest unemployment in the Province and it is being strangled because the bypass that is essential to industrial development is being built piecemeal.

Only a few weeks ago an industrialist decided not to come to Cookstown because he found that it would be too costly. He found out about the build-up of traffic at the checkpoints in the town and discovered that, at one end of the town, the traffic had to wait for 20 minutes before moving on. To a business man, the money involved could mean survival or going under. I appeal to the Minister carefully to examine the Cookstown problem and allow proper development of the bypass, which would rejuvenate the town. Employment and business are already leaving, and we need help.

Road surfaces in my constituency are generally not commendable, and some of them are deplorable. Many constituencies in the Province have major roadworks—they have dual carriageways and motorways—but not Mid-Ulster. We do not even have proper road surfaces, never mind the building of larger roads.

In rural planning policy we need urgent revision review and amendment. I agree with the hon. Member for Antrim, South (Mr. Forsythe): there are more refusals now than there have been for some time. Flexibility should be exercised towards those who want to live in the countryside, and those who must live there. I assure the Minister that he will have the support of the elected representatives of Ulster if he considers greater flexibility in rural planning; he will also have the support of the Northern Ireland electorate. Perhaps then he might decide to stand in one of our constituencies——

Mr. Peter Robinson (Belfast, East): But then he would stand against me: he is a member of the East Belfast Tory association.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Although I am a member of the Stormont Castle workers branch of the East Belfast Conservative Association, if I were to stand I should find it difficult to choose between the constituency of the hon. Member for Belfast, East (Mr. Robinson) and that of Londonderry, East.

As for the planning applications, it might make sense if Members representing the rural areas came together and spoke to my hon. Friend the Member for Wiltshire, North (Mr. Needham):

Rev. William McCrea: I am taking full advantage of the place to which I was elected to make representations to the relevant Minister tonight. I trust that he will answer accordingly and not pass the buck to someone else.

I also want to ask the Minister about Department of Economic Development allocations of grants. Is it the aim of the Industrial Development Board, when awarding grants to help with jobs, to award them to projects with or without IFI grants? It is believed that if one does not get an IFI grant one will not receive an IDB grant. There is pressure to apply for an International Fund of Ireland grant to obtain some of these grants. Is that Government policy? If so, have the Government abandoned their responsibilities to create jobs? I trust not, but I have been asked to have the matter clarified this evening.

Rev. Ian Paisley (Antrim, North): I am sure that my hon. Friend and the House will be interested to hear the Minister tell us something about the news that broke today that there is some question about the Fruit of the Loom jobs that were to come to Londonderry, and about the viability of the firm in question. I trust that that can be put to rest; we all welcome jobs wherever they can be got in the Province——

Mr. Peter Bottomley *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): Order. We cannot have an intervention in an intervention.

Rev. William McCrea: I give way to the Minister.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: This point was dealt with on the radio in Northern Ireland this morning. There was full knowledge of the news, which appears to be new news, but is not. I hope that there will not be a scare about the announcement by Fruit of the Loom. It cannot be possible that it is a requirement on an application for Local Enterprise Development Unit or Industrial Development Board assistance that people apply to the international fund. I hope that people with appropriate projects will apply to the international fund as that is useful. People should not think that they must be accepted by a non-governmental body to be acceptable to a Government body. Obviously, there are some things that LEDU and IDB would not deem acceptable.

Rev. William McCrea: I thank the Minister for that assurance, which will be considered carefully by those outside the House.

I will draw to the Minister's attention two other matters connected with the vote. The elected representatives in the Province are concerned, when they sit in their district councils and decide on the district rate and the rate burden, that after careful scrutiny of the books and after listening to the appeals to keep the district rates down, they find that the regional rate is dumped on top of the district rate with a massive incease in percentage. That happened last year. Will the Minister examine that matter carefully? I trust that when the regional rate is set it will not be an exorbitant burden on my constituency.

Will the Minister examine the area of Castlederg, which has suffered so much? It needs proper roads and proper hotels to bring in and accommodate tourists. It also urgently needs jobs because it is dying. Because of terrorist activity, it has suffered more than any other village in the Province in the 20 years of troubles. Will the Minister act as quickly as possible on the survey that has already been carried out? If he does, the district of Castlederg will be rejuvenated and life will be brought back to the people who have suffered so much.

In the surrounding area of Strabane appeals have been made for appropriate grants to bring several cottages up to a reasonable standard. The Housing Executive is not willing to provide sufficient grants. It is trying to force the tenants out of the cottages and into Strabane. Many people have resided in those cottages all their lives, and some of their parents resided there before them. They have reared their children in those cottages. They would prefer to stay there, instead of being forced out because they do not have the appropriate amenities. Will the Minister give earnest consideration to the need of that district of Castlederg?

9.3 pm

Mr. Eddie McGrady (South Down): I was interested in what the Minister of State said in his intervention in the speech of the hon. Member for Leicester, South (Mr. Marshall). He said that things were looking rosy in Northern Ireland in reports up to 30 September 1989 and he quoted a 9 per cent. increase in the economy to that time. Will the Minister in replying to the debate examine the reports from those same sources after 31 December 1989? As was pointed out by the hon. Member for Leicester, South, the indicators from all the sources that we take for granted as being the authority on the matter point to either a very low rate of increased industrial production or no increase at all. Some sectors are even forecasting a fall. The Government's response might indicate a degree of complacency that would be totally unwarranted.

In the next couple of years up to and beyond 1992 it is incumbent on not only the Government but the public representatives, industrialists, workers, and everyone else in Northern Ireland to seek new and innovative ways of enhancing the prospect of increasing production and job creation within Northern Ireland. At the same time, we must make it attractive and easier for investment to be brought into Northern Ireland. We have a continuation year after year of safe and tried measures. I suggest that it is time for us to look at new schemes, new ideas and new models, not only in industrial development per se but in tourist promotion, the growth of which could be equal to the growth of industrial development in the 1990s and beyond.

The Northern Ireland tourist board has been laying low for the past couple of years under the guise of revamping its ideas or evolving a new strategy. We are still waiting, and I know that a document was issued, but nothing is happening. We may have missed the boat on the tourist potential for Northern Ireland's economy always because tourism should be a primary industry allied to the normal industrial base to which we usually refer when talking about economic development.

There is much talk about small industry and small business, but the small farmer, the small fisherman or the small self-employed builder are not placed in those categories. They are not treated with the same urgency and do not receive the same open-handedness from the public purse.

It is perhaps appropriate that in the order the Department of Agriculture is first on the list. I remind the Minister that on several occasions in the recent past I have reminded him of the great difficulties of small farmers whose real income is reducing year by year. Their profitability has virtually been wiped out in many of the sectors in which they operate, yet there does not seem to be genuine concern for what is, after all, Northern Ireland's base industry.

The small farmer needs to be given even a temporary hand. I refer especially to the hill cow subsidy. I do so with some parochialism because my constituency is hilly. The hill livestock compensatory allowance was recently increased. The increase was welcome but totally derisory when compared with the inflation of the past couple of years. That can be added to the farmer's troubles over milk quotas and the green pound values. Presumably such issues will be addressed in Brussels at the end of this month and at the beginning of April. However, what happens if the result of the negotiations is unsatisfactory? Is there a contingency plan? If there is not, many small farmers in Northern Ireland will go under and, as I have said, they form the rock base for our whole population, especially in the rural areas.

I shall stray slightly from agriculture because I want to deal with fishery matters, which are particularly important in my constituency. I am extremely disappointed that the Minister who will reply to the debate and his colleague who is in charge of health and social services and who sits in another place have not seen fit to alleviate the grave hardship that fishermen in my constituency and in other constituencies in Northern Ireland, especially in North Down and Strangford, have suffered since December. The Minister knows the arguments well because I have made

[Mr. Eddie McGrady]

them to him verbally and in writing. It is pathetic that no real effort has been made to alleviate the problem. I understand that it would be primarily a DHSS programme, but I should like to think that when he is responding the Minister will lend his support to such a concept. He has not done so in the past.

Mr. John D. Taylor: Does the hon. Gentleman agree that the problem of unemployment benefits for fishermen is of national as well as provincial importance? Does he agree that we should press the Minister to make representations to his colleagues in the Department of Social Security?

Mr. McGrady: I welcome the intervention of the right hon. Member for Strangford (Mr. Taylor) and support his interesting idea. Such an approach would have my full backing.

If I may be parochial for a moment, I ask the Minister to expedite after 20 years the minimal proposal that is now on his desk for improving the harbour facilities at Ardglass in County Down. He knows the arguments very well, and I should like to think that he will make a positive and immediate response. Promises have been made, broken, made again, and then broken again for 20 years. Very little has been done to increase the fishing fleet at Ardglass. The improvements sought would at least serve as a salve to soothe the hardship that fishermen have endured since last December.

I commend the Minister for establishing the interdepartmental committee on rural regeneration. Although these are early days, and too soon to seek from the Minister a response to that committee's output, I ask him to treat its recommendations as a matter of urgency and not let them go the way of all previous rural programmes in Northern Ireland over the past two decades. They paid lip service to regeneration but were pigeonholed and never implemented. I hope that under the chairmanship of a permanent secretary in the Northern Ireland Office the interdepartmental committee will produce results in the near future.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The degree of seriousness with which the question of regeneration is taken can be assessed by the fact that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and other Ministers met the rural action project team recently and announced that its work would continue to be funded. In addition to the interdepartmental committee headed by the permanent secretary to the Department of Agriculture for Northern Ireland, direct contact is being maintained. Although I am not one for making commitments or giving assurances, I feel strongly about implementing an effective rural improvement programme so that people can stay in the countryside rather than feel that they must slide towards Belfast or slide out of Northern Ireland. Such a contribution would be welcomed by Members on both sides of the House.

Mr. McGrady: I thank the Minister for that information, and I commend his course of action. I hope that he will always keep in mind the fact that rural regeneration depends entirely on a multi-disciplinary approach. It is not simply a matter of farming or of housing; it embraces a number of factors. I commend to the Minister a small community project in my own constituency, the Seeconnell community project, which is almost a microcosm of the Minister's attempts—and a very successful one.

I turn to the Department of Economic Development and refer to answers that I received to my questions Nos. 159 and 160, which I cite because they caused me both despair and great annoyance. I asked how many visits to Northern Ireland were made over the last three fiscal years 1986-87, 1987-88 and 1988-89 by firms seeking inward investment. The numbers were 190, 180 and 214 respectively, making a total of 584. I asked for an analysis of the number of firms who were invited to visit or who did visit my constituency, which qualifies for full grant aid and is therefore deemed by the Government to be a deprived area. Over those same three years, the numbers were four, four and four respectively—less than 3 per cent. of the total number of inward investment visits.

When one analyses the entire answer, one can plot certain areas—Mid-Ulster is one of them—in which, it seems, there is a scarcity of visits. If one were to plot those areas politically, one could come to the conclusion—though I should hate to do so—that there was a tendency not to bring investment to the areas of highest unemployment where the people have national leanings. If that is the case, I hope that it will be corrected. Certainly the statistics point clearly in that direction. I ask the Minister to look at the reply to which I have referred and to determine whether a change of direction by the Industrial Development Board is required.

Mr. Beggs: Does the hon. Gentleman accept that those of us who have been involved in bringing to Northern Ireland people considering new investment and job creation find it offensive that such people are encouraged by the IDB to go to the very areas that the hon. Gentleman is promoting? This is done despite personal contact by other Members working on behalf of their constituents.

Mr. McGrady: I cannot answer for the case to which the hon. Gentleman refers. That is one case, whereas I can quote five in which the course of events was in the opposite direction. That rather nullifies his remarks.

The statistics provided by the IDB to the Department support what I am saying. If I am wrong, those statistics are wrong; if the statistics are right, I am right. It is as simple as that. The figures are there for anyone who wants to look at them.

On the question of industrial development—specifically, the attraction of industry to Northern Ireland—I should like to refer to two matters that have always puzzled me. The first, which has been mentioned already, is the cost of energy. Why is the cost of electricity constantly being increased more than is necessary to make the industry viable? Is it simply a case of creating artificial profitability for the purposes of privatisation? If, as appears to be the case, that is what is being done, it is detrimental to the concept of a cheap production area—a concept that the IDB is trying to sell abroad.

The second point is one which, to my mind, has never received any attention: why has the bank rate in Northern Ireland always been 2 per cent. higher than normal lending rates in the rest of the United Kingdom, even though the minimum lending rate is fixed in London and the sources and destinations of Nothern Ireland bank deposits are in London? An artificially dear economic climate is being

created. Why is this allowed? Is it not a disincentive to investment? Would it not be cheaper to get finance elsewhere? It seems to me that this and the high cost of electricity are two self-imposed hurdles that we could do without.

Small farmers in my constituency are now being charged between £3,000 and £6,000 to be provided with an electricity connection to their premises. They just cannot afford such a charge. That means that they have to do without electricity, so they do not modernise and, therefore, cannot increase their income. It is a vicious circle. I hope that the Under-Secretary of State, who is in charge of agriculture in the Province, will see whether it is possible to alleviate the problems of small farmers who do not have a mains electricity supply. It may be that Northern Ireland Electricity, with its very high overheads, has to make such charges, but the consumers certainly cannot afford to pay them. Thus small farmers find themselves in an impossible position.

The Minister did not mention housing, although I believe that the hon. Member for Leicester, South did. I am greatly concerned about this matter, and I obtained some figures yesterday. The Department says that the housing budget is better than it has ever been. The Housing Executive built 4,620 houses in 1981-82, but its target for 1990-91 is 1,000.

Mr. William Ross: We are all interested in housing. I should be grateful if the hon. Member would tell me under which heading in the order he finds housing. I looked, but it was not clear to me that it was mentioned anywhere. That worried me a great deal, and I hope to make that point later.

Mr. McGrady: I hope that the hon. Member will make that point and will support my comments. I was referring to its absence.

Mr. Stott: Vote 2 on page 8 provides

"For expenditure by the Department of the Environment on housing services, including certain grants in aid."

The hon. Member is therefore entitled to draw attention to housing problems under that heading.

Mr. McGrady: I am always grateful for assistance from any hon. Member. I thank the hon. Member for Wigan (Mr. Stott) for reminding me of that vote.

The Housing Executive is responsible for administering grants. In 1985-86 they amounted to £60 million, but they had been reduced to £32 million in 1989-90—a reduction of 60 per cent. There has been an 80 per cent. reduction in house building and a 60 per cent. reduction in the amounts available for grants. I strongly believe that there is a death wish over the Housing Executive, a body that I have ardently supported since 1973. Whether that has come about because of departmental restrictions or whether it has come from within, the Housing Executive seems to be about to fail in its primary purpose. Although one can admire its innovation, the outreach scheme and all the grant schemes that it operates, the basic purpose of a public housing authority is to provide housing for people who cannot otherwise afford it. The house building programme for 1990-91 has been reduced to a paltry 1,000 houses—an inadequate response to increasing housing needs. Housing Executive statistics show that the number of people who are in urgent need of housing has increased since last year.

In referring to the Department of Health and Social Services, I shall be particularly parochial and refer to the on-going saga of the Downe hospitals in Downpatrick. It started when I began public life in 1961, believe it or not, and since then matters have been bandied about from pillar to post. The difficulty is that every time a conclusion is reached a new examination has to be carried out. We are suffering from paralysis by analysis. I ask the Minister to break the log-jam.

The case for the Downe replacements has been made. Two parts—the geriatric and the maternity sections—have been provided and the general surgical section remains to be provided. I should like the Minister to refer to his ministerial colleague, who cannot answer in the House, the on-going attempt to downgrade this group of hospitals so that someone with a financial knife can cut them off. I refer especially to the lack of urgency to provide ophthalmology services in the Downe unit of management and to fill the third permanent anaesthetist post, both of which have been promised for a considerable time, but only lip service has been paid to filling the need.

I also draw the Minister's attention to the St. Leonard's nursing home at Warrenpoint—a home for mentally and physically disabled people. Some of the residents have been there for 20 years; they are a family and they are happy there. The unit is well managed and economical and the patients are well cared for. I have been asking the Southern health and social services board and the Department to still the rumour, which is causing great distress, that patients who have had close associations with the nursing home for two decades are now threatened with dispersal. I was assured that no decision had been made. Yet I now discover that one of the most tragic cases in the history of Northern Ireland—I shall not refer to the person by name, but the case has been the subject of a television documentary—has been moved out this week after 20 years in that environment. That completely contradicts the information given to me by the Department and the board and it is a despicable and inhuman action to have taken in the circumstances. If the Minister wants further details, I shall be happy to supply them.

The Department of Health and Social Services has made great play of the lack of take-up of family credit in Northern Ireland. But, as I said in opening my remarks, Northern Ireland is made up largely of small farmers and proprietors of small firms—many of them self-employed. Because of the tax system, building labourers, for example, have to be self-employed because of the exemption certificate qualifications. I ask the Department to simplify the form issued and the responses and proofs that they require. Otherwise people will be deprived of their entitlement because of the bureaucracy surrounding their claim. I recommend a much simpler amd more easily completed form and request for information.

9.32 pm

Mr. A. Cecil Walker (Belfast, North): I join my hon. Friend the Member for Antrim, South (Mr. Forsythe) in criticising the way in which these orders are taken without our having the power to amend or debate them in any meaningful way. Now that there appears to be little prospect of a political settlement in Northern Ireland in the near future, will the Government face their

[Mr. A. Cecil Walker]

responsibilities by granting parliamentary democracy to the Province and legislating for Northern Ireland in the same way as for all other parts of the United Kingdom?

I refer first to vote 2 of the Department of Economic Development vote. On the development of tourism, I welcome the appointment of Mr. Paul Lavery as the Northern Ireland tourist board's new marketing director. He takes over at a time of real challenge to the industry in both parts of Ireland. The tourist board is extending its marketing offensive into Europe. I hope that it will get an excellent response and that we shall have many more European visitors to our lovely Province.

As one who, on occasions, likes to indulge in a little angling, I am concerned that in some parts of Northern Ireland charges to local anglers have increased substantially. Those increases could be due in part to rising costs but in large part they are what someone in authority feels that the market will stand. In effect, "the market" is the overseas visitor, who is exploited by unscrupulous operators who milk him for his interest in his sport. In many cases, local anglers just cannot afford the exorbitant charges for the right to fish in their own rivers. Without the contribution of local anglers, who pay for bailiffing and other local services, the angling scene would become a free-for-all from which no one would benefit. I hope that the tourist board will recognise that unacceptable state of affairs which is prevalent in our good angling waters. The activities of those so-called entrepreneurs who rely on state services to control poaching and pollution must be curtailed so that everyone, visitors and anglers alike, can benefit from our natural resources.

With regard to vote 3 and community projects, I am concerned about allegations that the Department of Economic Development is considering major cuts in the ACE—Action for Community Employment—programme, particularly when it is generally believed that more funds will be made available in the forthcoming Budget. The Minister should be aware that the purpose of that scheme was to provide meaningful employment for our long-term unemployed. I know from experience how much a year's community work can mean to those unfortunate people who, through no fault of their own, are unemployed.

There can be no justifiable reason why any cut in the employment programme should be considered. Managers in the various projects should be more than capable of working within their existing budgets, particularly under the leadership of Mr. Cecil Graham and his staff who have done so much to make the ACE concept so successful in Northern Ireland.

With regard to vote 5, I refer to the previous appropriation debate in which I expressed concern about a decision to grant a prospecting licence for the Cavehill area of Belfast. I am still concerned about that and my concern is shared by more than 10,000 people who have expressed horror at the fact that that beautiful landscape might be subjected to any form of interference through mining.

The Minister should be aware of what happened in the town of Cavencaw in the Omagh district of County Tyrone, in the constituency of the hon. Member for Mid-Ulster (Rev. William McCrea), where a prospecting licence was granted to Rio Tinto-Zinc. I am sure that the hon. Member for Mid-Ulster will support me when I say that an area of outstanding natural beauty there has been pillaged and plundered in that prospecting operation.

Mr. John D. Taylor: And in the Boyne valley, too.

Mr. Walker: I will leave that issue to other hon. Members who may be more qualified to speak about it.

The people in the area to which I have referred will confirm that the prospecting operation is equivalent to an open-cast mine. Habitats in that area have been destroyed for ever and thousands of years of evolution have gone down the drain. Under those circumstances, is it any wonder that the people of north Belfast are concerned? They are very suspicious of the hole-in-the-corner method of granting the licence and the surreptitious way in which news of the granting has leaked out. It is now the duty of the Department of Economic Development to allay the fears of the public and I call on the Government to define specifically the area of the Cavehill and Belfast mountains that they are prepared to exclude from any fresh quarrying or mining operations.

With regard to vote 3 and the Department of the Environment, I want to bring to the notice of the Minister the problems caused by the disruption of the water supply in the Cavehill area. Many of my constituents in that area have had their water supplies severely restricted for long periods. The problem seems to have been caused by a housing development which was allowed to take place at a level which puts additional stress on the existing 20-year old water supply system which could not possibly cope with the requirements imposed on it. Attempts to remedy the situation with a new main resulted in poor infill compaction, causing innumerable breaks in the existing main and resulting in many instances of water cut-off. There is still noticeable continuous settlement in line with the newly laid main, and soil movement is causing distress to other underground services in the area. I am anxious that a proposed link with another main be undertaken as a matter of urgency to give an alternative supply to residents in the upper Cavehill area who have suffered greatly at much too frequent intervals through being denied a water supply.

The Government should give thought to four points in an attempt to save taxpayers' money. First, planners should liaise with the relevant services before granting development permission. Secondly, only experienced staff should supervise contracts. Thirdly, the retention period on pipe-laying contracts should be extended to at least five years. Fourthly, the roads service should ensure that there is a materials matching concept so that there will be no patchwork effect in the final reinstatement.

On the Department of Health and Social Services, vote 1, I am alarmed, as are many general practitioners in my constituency, about the criteria announced by the Department in the designation of deprived areas on a percentage basis. In certain deprived areas, financial allowances are available to GPs to facilitate improving services to people. The index used in the United Kingdom caters for 20 different criteria. The criterion that was used to formulate the Northern Ireland figure was based on the 1981 census, and it resulted in 14 per cent. deprivation in Northern Ireland, compared with 18 per cent. in England and 26 per cent. in Scotland. The figure for Wales was not available. I state categorically that there must be something seriously amiss in that calculation.

Rev. Martin Smyth: Will my hon. Friend confirm that, under the new terms for Belfast, greater west Belfast and large sections of east Belfast are all outside the area of deprivation?

Mr. Walker: I was not aware of that. If that is the case, I hope that the Minister will take note of it and answer the accusation.

Everyone knows that deprivation in Northern Ireland is at an all time high. The 14 per cent. deprivation can never be justified. The DHSS findings which resulted in that figure should be published in full so that all interested parties can be given the opportunity to comment. I am particularly anxious that that be done as soon as possible, as I understand that GPs are being pressured to accept the figure, which could result in a serious financial shortfall for the sick and infirm who are in most need.

Mr. McGrady: Is the hon. Gentleman aware that Jarman indices which determine such areas lack two indices which are applied in the rest of the United Kingdom? I refer to the under-fives and the unskilled. If those indices were applied to Northern Ireland, there would be a much higher deprivation figure.

Mr. Walker: I thank the hon. Gentleman for that intervention. I am aware of the Jarman indices. That is why the Minister should be aware of my case. It underlines why the figure of 14 per cent. cannot be justified.

I am appalled by the Government's reticence about providing a magnetic resonance imaging facility in Northern Ireland. For the benefit of right hon. and hon. Members, that revolutionary scanning equipment is essential in diagnosing medical conditions beyond the reach of the out-dated X-ray machines currently used in many of our hospitals. Time and again, in response to public demand, medical personnel involved in hospital X-ray facilities have given considered advice to the DHSS on the necessity for such machines to be provided in the Province. The Government have persistently opposed their provision with the lamest of excuses. They say that they are waiting for a Medical Research Council report, but that is now obsolete in the light of clinical experience in Europe and America. They also say that the MRI facility is in its infancy—a strange statement when one considers that there are 27 such machines operating in the United Kingdom and one in Dublin. They were installed as long ago as 1980 and it is expected that a further 23 will be installed within the next 12 months.

Other excuses such as a lack of funds are equally unacceptable, given that the Minister refused charitable financial assistance when it was offered in 1988. Patients are adversely affected by the delay in diagnosis and the traumatic effects of being sent to Dublin or England for scanning. At present, more than 100 people per month are sent. The Government should be aware that 68 per cent. of the Eastern board's X-ray equipment, with a value of £5,639,880, is more than 10 years old.

Modern MRI equipment would give much less irradiation and would go a long way towards replacing the outdated machines. The approximate cost would be £1·4 million for a building and the instrumentation, with running costs of £150,000 per year, based on 240 patients per month. The costs and trauma of sending patients to England would be more than recouped through the installation of such a machine. Such discrimination in the treatment of our citizens is to be deplored. I trust that the Government will take the necessary action to remedy that disgraceful state of affairs as a matter of extreme urgency.

Figures just released show a 30 per cent. drop in the number of people going for eye tests in Northern Ireland since the Government introduced a charge for them. The worrying factor in the figures is that the number of people aged over 60 who have had eye tests has fallen by two thirds, or more than 60 per cent. Naturally, the Minister challenged those figures. He said that there was a rush to have free eye tests before the charge was introduced and that the availability of ready-made glasses was also a factor. But the ready-made glasses could be detrimental to those who choose that method of acquiring spectacles. Eye tests can detect the early stages of illnesses such as glaucoma, hypertension, diabetes, cataracts and brain tumours. People have only one pair of eyes to last a lifetime and they deserve the best possible care. The Government should reconsider the imposition of the charge, particularly on elderly people caught in the poverty trap and therefore outside the existing criteria.

At the conference on developing services for old people, the Minister of Health said that he wanted to create a new culture which would provide a sensitive and responsive way of working for the needs of the elderly. He said that most elderly people wish to spend their remaining years in their own homes and that the right balance of care should be provided to help them to achieve that with dignity and independence. I agree with those sentiments, but in the prevailing circumstances in Northern Ireland they need to be backed with the necessary finance to bring them to fruition.

In my area I am constantly reminded that the resources are not likely to be available to give elderly people a reasonable home help service. In my constituency I have several elderly people who live alone and receive only half an hour of home help per day. That is not the right balance to enable them to live with dignity and independence.

The Minister should also consider the position of carers and their struggle to care for elderly relatives. He said that he was providing increased support. It could not be too soon. But for the efforts of completely unselfish, dedicated carers in our community, there would be a breakdown in the section of the Health Service responsible for the well-being of the elderly.

No matter how the Government juggle with the figures, it is completely unacceptable that 42 per cent. of patients in Northern Ireland have been waiting more than a year for operations. On those figures, the Government must accept the allegation that they are using the sick as political pawns in an attempt to set up the Health Service for privatisation. It is an irrefutable fact that people who cannot afford it are opting for private treatment rather than spending painful years on the waiting lists. It is an indictment of the Government that they should create conditions in which people are suffering for interminable lengths of time. Waiting lists must be reduced and it is the Government's responsibility to take whatever steps are necessary to achieve that objective.

Finally, I am disappointed at the Minister's refusal to meet a deputation on behalf of the Clanwillian homes and to discuss the refused planning application relating to No. 4 Blaris road, Lisburn. The Minister says that he cannot become involved in a specific planning application. Why not? I ask that because the planning directorate did not take many aspects of the proposal into account, including

[Mr. Walker]

planning considerations and the provisions for particular services in connection with the proposal. Furthermore, the Minister should be well aware that all political parties and Members of Parliament as well as Lisburn borough council are in favour of the application.

I advise the Minister that there is serious concern in the area about why he has chosen not to meet the deputation. So far as I am aware, there have been other instances in which the Minister has used his powers to overturn a decision by the planning directorate when he felt that there was justifiable reason to do so. I ask the Minister to meet the deputation and to listen to the various factors surrounding the application before an appeal is considered.

9.51 pm

Mr. Alex Carlile (Montgomery): I start by making a brief reference to the speech of the hon. Member for Mid-Ulster (Rev. William McCrea). I am sorry that he is not in his place at the moment to hear what I am saying, but I am sure that his hon. Friends will agree with my comments.

At the beginning of his remarks, the hon. Member concentrated on fundamental matters, with a rare combination of passion and reason. I hope that he will accept the reassurance from someone who represents a constituency on the other side of the Irish sea that we regard murder—whether it is murder in Northern Ireland, north Wales, northern England or the north of Scotland —as murder. From time to time it is a good thing for all of us in England, Wales and Scotland to be reminded by speeches such as that of the hon. Gentleman that murders are still continuing on a horrendous scale in Northern Ireland—in the name of politics. Of course, they have nothing to do with what we understand as politics, and everything to do with unreason, with fanaticism and with all that is unacceptable to a democratic society.

I should like to deal briefly with two points that have not been raised so far in the debate. The first relates to education. In a recent debate in the House I spoke about Northern Ireland's excellent education system. That bears repetition. The secondary education system in Northern Ireland is the envy of those of us in Wales who know of its achievements and quality. I hope that in the Northern Ireland appropriations relating to the funding of education there is sufficient money to ensure that the secondary sector does not go the way that it is showing signs of going in Wales, at least.

Rural education in Wales is now in a dreadful state. The comprehensive high schools, many of which have an excellent reputation of a great Celtic educational tradition acquired over many years, are facing financial privation. Teachers are demoralised and the schools are in a poor condition. That is appreciated by the pupils, as one can see if one looks at the graffiti and listens to how they talk about what is happening.

Northern Ireland suffers from the same rural problems as many parts of Wales, including my consituency of Montgomery. If we do not provide a quality education system so that pupils acquire the ability to start businesses in their constituencies and districts, they will leave.

Hon. Members have spoken about small businesses. The political situation in Northern Ireland may provide a greater incentive to leave than there is to leave Wales. It is vital, therefore, that every incentive and inducement should be given to people to remain. What better inducement could there be than an education system in which headmasters are not struggling day after day to pay for the exercise books and pencils, as is happening in England and Wales?

Will the Minister assure the House that the sums provided for education are ample for all the changes deriving from the education reform order? Will he assure us that sufficient money is available fully to support the commitments made to integrated education where it develops? If, under the new legislation, many more schools qualify for support, may we have an assurance that the Government will provide the resources to honour the pledge made to integrated schools?

The Fair Employment Commission is at least showing signs of doing excellent work in Northern Ireland. Indeed, its aims and achievements have not been sufficiently publicised elsewhere. It would do the reputation of the Government and the United Kingdom good in Northern Ireland if its achievements could be itemised so that the House and Governments of other countries that look with interest at what is going on in Northern Ireland can see precisely the effort and financial backing put into the pursuit of equal opportunities of all kinds. Will the Minister assure the House that the Government have reviewed fully the resourcing of the commission and that he is happy that the allocation does not need to be increased in the light of the commission's ever-increasing responsibilities?

9.58 pm

Mr. William Ross (Londonderry, East): Reference was made earlier to the short period allowed for the previous debate. It is only right to put on record that the emergency provisions order is normally dealt with in one and a half hours. Had it not been for the efforts of my right hon. Friend the Member for Lagan Valley (Mr. Molyneaux), we would have been limited to that period. Because of his efforts we had much longer. That debate and this one highlight again the problems experienced in Northern Ireland in trying to deal with unalterable wordings of measures in a limited time.

A few days ago the Under-Secretary had the privilege to stand on one of the prime blocks of land not only of Northern Ireland, but of the United Kingdom. He saw what can happen when a sea wall breaks. I hope that he took on board the implications and dangers that exist along the shores of Lough Foyle. If the Minister had looked to the north side of the mouth of the River Roe, just within his view would have been a bank, where there is no sea wall, which suffers grievously from sea damage year on year. The local environment would gain enormous protection if many large boulders were put down to stop the soft sandy soil washing away.

It being Ten o'clock, MR. SPEAKER *interrupted the proceedings.*

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Ordered,

That, at this day's sitting, the Capital Allowances Bill *[Lords]* may be proceeded with, though opposed, until any hour.—*[Mr. Patnick.]*

Northern Ireland (Appropriation)

Question again proposed.

Mr. Ross: Lough Foyle is one of the major areas of the British Isles for over-wintering wild fowl. The erosion of that coastline has been detrimental to the habits of wintering birds. I hope that the Minister will do something to protect that coastline. If the Department does not have the resources, perhaps the Minister will look for resources from the European Community. Conservation is the in-word nowadays and we should make every effort to protect not only the environment but high-quality farming land.

When the Minister visited Ballykelly he saw the break in the sea wall and he will appreciate that local farmers were not happy—no one can be happy when they suffer such as disaster.

There is a case for the Government seriously reconsidering how sea defences will be kept in shape in future. We hear a lot about global warming and God only knows what will happen in the next century—such warming could have a disastrous effect not only on Ballykelly, but elsewhere in the United Kingdom.

There is evidence to suggest that there are, periodically, storms of great violence that cause enormous damage to many people. Recently I asked the Prime Minister to consider setting up a disaster fund for the United Kingdom from which people could draw. I do not believe that the cost of such storms can be left to local disaster funds; nor should it be left to the individual to bear the cost of something that, if not uninsurable, is insurable only at an unreasonable cost.

Mr. John D. Taylor: Does my hon. Friend agree that one of the problems is the Government's failure to make representations to the EC for assistance for farmers, fishermen and other people who suffer from storm damage? On many occasions the Community has assisted areas throughout the EC that have been damaged by storms. First of all, however, the national Government must make an application for assistance, but the Government had failed to do that in recent weeks to gain assistance for Northern Ireland and other parts of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Ross: My right hon. Friend is correct up to a point, because the Government have received two tranches of £220,000 and £440,000, which are infinitesimal sums in relation to the amount of damage caused—

Mr. Taylor: Nothing for Northern Ireland.

Mr. Ross: As far as I am aware, no money has gone to Northern Ireland, but I have already written to the permanent secretary expressing the hope that the Government will apply, if they have not already done so. We must remember that it is the individual who is at risk and who has suffered. The Government are not grabbing the money to restore a road or a bridge that has been washed away. On this occasion we are trying to help the individual and I hope that the Government will consider my request seriously, because the threat of storms will not go away. As our society becomes more dependent on machines, more highly sophisticated greater problems are created every time something goes wrong.

As for the Ballykelly incident, I am no engineer, but I have some experience of water. I hope that the Government will consider the possibility of making permanent the present bank which they have put across the mouth of the Burnfoot river so that waves cannot break through the river banks in the future. Also I hope that they will consider raising the bank on the left-hand side of the Burnfoot to the same height as the other. I understand that the storm and flood overtopped the bank on one side, but not on the other, so I think that work needs to be done. I also hope that they will find a lot more pumps to pump the water away, because I do not like the idea of the soldiers paddling around in it any more than I like my constituents paddling around in it, and I am sure that they are thoroughly fed up with the whole affair.

As I said, the Minister was standing on one of the prime blocks of land in the United Kingdom. It grows grass, which has to be cut, and, if *The Guardian* this morning is to be believed, someone is making an awful lot of money out of cutting remarkably little grass in the airfield at Ballykelly. I should be grateful if we could have an assurance that that is being thoroughly investigated. I hope that that leak has not harmed the investigation, because if that sort of fraud is going on it should be stopped as soon as possible because none of us is happy with it.

The Minister will probably know that a couple of my neighbours rent most of the airfield for silage and hay. They are not very happy because they feel that their names may be dragged into the matter, and they are just farmers trying to make an honest day's living. Somebody has been breaking the law and I hope that they are caught.

Having said that, and having got away with it by pure chance, I hope that the Government will seriously consider all the things that need to be done in Northern Ireland as well as stopping fraud and cutting grass on Ballykelly aerodrome.

I hope that the Government will question seriously the case that has undoubtedly been put to them that the fish laboratory at The Cutts, Coleraine should be moved. That would be wrong. The laboratory provides employment, and is close to the River Bush where, as the Minister knows, there is a large experimental undertaking, which is probably the most important study of salmon in Europe. I believe the station at The Cutts should remain and that the laboratory accommodation should be used to a greater extent. If people are to be moved, they should be moved back to Coleraine and not away from it, because it is the natural centre for that type of work.

I shall ask the Minister more questions on this subject, and I hope that he will follow them up and not sign the answers too readily before he has considered the implications of what lies behind the questions he is asked. He should ensure that he gets all the information because that might help his thinking.

I was glad that my hon. Friends mentioned angling earlier this evening.

Mr. Beggs: And poaching.

Mr. Ross: No, not poaching, just angling. I shall return to poaching, if my hon. Friend wishes me to, in a moment, but most of that is done by Donegal people off the north-west coast, in the salmon runs.

We also have a research vessel, the Lough Foyle, which is based in Belfast. That is not quite where I should like it to be, because I think that it should be in Coleraine.

[Mr. Ross]

In a recent answer the Minister told me that it cost £1,500 a day to run that vessel. They had managed to rent it out for 93 days last year and they got £93,000. That is not the way to make money, because one does not make money out of leasing a vessel if one loses £500 for every day that it is leased. It would be better if it were tied up on the dockside. I hope that if the vessel is leased again they will charge sufficient money to cover its running costs and will not depend on the International Fund for Ireland all the time. I hope that the Minister will carefully consider the answers to my questions before giving them to me.

An order on angling has been pending for some two years and I have made representations about it. It would be excellent if the Government reconsidered their earlier attitude and presented the measure to the House as a Bill. The anglers and I would be much happier if they did. This is a sensitive subject which needs in-depth discussion. It is not controversial in a party-political sense. The measure has been delayed for two years already; a little longer would not make much difference. If changes have been made as a result of earlier representations, we could possibly make further changes to the measure if it were brought in as a Bill.

The Minister knows the arguments about the Limavady bypass. I hope that he will not allow anyone to slow up work on it. It is a choke point for east-west traffic in the northern half of Northern Ireland, and it needs to be built —soon. The economic study must be finished and the road put into the five-year programme. We do not want that done in the fifth or sixth year; we want it done in the first or second, so that the work can go ahead.

I am still worried about the slow provision of proper hospital facilities in Coleraine. I have had excellent responses from the Minister of State about this, but I still want the work pushed on as rapidly as possible.

Finally, I turn to industrial development in Northern Ireland, and particularly the activities of the Industrial Development Board and the Local Enterprise Development Unit. Like all other Members who represent Northern Ireland, I have had long correspondence about various cases with LEDU, and sometimes I have been unhappy about the outcome. Some of my constituents have provided all the necessary reports and still wound up with no grant after spending several hundred pounds on accountants' fees——

Mr. A. Cecil Walker: More like several thousand.

Mr. Ross: I should not be surprised.

LEDU needs to be more careful when giving advice to people; it represents the lower end of the scale. We need to rethink what we are trying to do to help people who invent things in Northern Ireland. Sometimes they have ideas that could create jobs but no money with which to develop them. Patent costs are high, as are development costs. Inventors need proper advice to be able to get on with development at an early stage. They need advice on where to find the necessary expertise. It is not always available.

The Government should be prepared to find the money for this. They find money for people like De Lorean and all sorts or wonderful projects that cost millions and come to nothing. I should prefer a few thousand pounds to be lost on a local man's efforts, instead of losing millions on a foreigner's efforts. Will the Minister provide development money for local people? It could be repayable if the project took off, but sometimes the money will be lost. According to the IDB report, local people can develop projects that create jobs for half the price that it would cost those from outside the Province.

I am horrified, looking at the Government's expenditure plans for 1992-93, to see that they intend to cut the public contribution to LEDU. I hope that LEDU will not depend too much on private sector funding; the private sector in Northern Ireland does not have enough high risk capital to provide the necessary money or to encourage small business men who are trying to create jobs.

10.14 pm

Mr. John D. Taylor (Strangford): As has been pointed out, we cannot amend the motion. However, this debate gives Northern Ireland Members an opportunity to explain to the Government the problems being experienced in the Province. In all fairness, we live there and we represent the people, so we are more likely to be aware of the problems. It is wise and good to seize this opportunity to acquaint Northern Ireland Ministers with the issues.

The hon. Member for Leicester, South (Mr. Marshall) used the term, "the North of Ireland". That term is misunderstood in Northern Ireland and he would be unwise to continue to use it if he wishes to serve in Northern Ireland in some future Government. The hon. Member for Mid-Ulster (Rev. William McCrea) excellently acquitted himself when speaking about the tragedies in his constituency. He said that words could kill. One of the problems in Northern Ireland is that words are certainly misunderstood.

When a new Secretary of State is appointed to Northern Ireland, he is given a brainwashing session for 10 days and educated on what words to use or not to use. Only after those 10 days is he released to the public in Northern Ireland—[HON. MEMBERS: "Too soon."] Some may well think that that is too soon. One of the phrases that he is educated not to use is, "the North of Ireland". The correct term for the state is "Northern Ireland", and for the country is the "United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland". Even the Dublin Government now refer to the Province by its correct name of Northern Ireland. The term, "North of Ireland" is used only by the IRA and its fellow travellers. That is the general understanding within Northern Ireland. If the hon. Member for Leicester, South uses that term, he will be misunderstood in Northern Ireland. He should think before he repeats such an offensive term because otherwise he will be resented in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Peter Robinson: In the light of our previous debate, there is the additional danger, that the use of such a term might lead some to think that we were making a claim to jurisdiction over Donegal.

Mr. Taylor: That is true. Indeed, it would be easier to assimilate Donegal today than it was in 1921 because half the population have had to leave in the past 70 years.

I shall deal briefly with some of the supplementary Estimates. It is interesting to note which items are dramatically reduced because savings have been made during the current year, and which items are considerably increased because costs have increased above estimates. I

shall deal first with the Department of Agriculture. There is a great concern in the Province about the increase in brucellosis and bovine tuberculosis. The estimates show a considerable increase in expenditure in those two areas. Can the Government provide any evidence to show that the problem is now being brought under control?

Page 6 of the estimates shows savings in the European Community schemes—for example, the agricultural and horticultural development scheme and the farmland and conservation grants scheme. They are huge savings, and the reason given for them is that the initial interest in Northern Ireland is lower than had been envisaged. What measures are the Government taking to ensure that Northern Ireland participates fully in those European Community schemes? Now that the Government have stated publicly that they are not being taken up, what are they doing to ensure that Northern Ireland has its fair share?

Another matter of concern in Northern Ireland is that expenditure on planting grounds for woodland have declined. I should like to see the Government doing more to promote the new woodland schemes in Northern Ireland, as has been happening in Scotland.

Page 9 deals with the milk quota. As we know, the production of milk in the United Kingdom, including Northern Ireland, is presently above quota. What is the present situation with the milk quota in the Province? How far are we above quota, and have Northern Ireland's milk producers been sufficiently warned and advised about the problems that will arise if surplus production continues? Certainly, it will impose a major financial burden on milk producers if the situation is not brought under control in the present production year.

There is a reference on page 10 to the marine research vessel. My hon. Friend the Member for Londonderry, East (Mr. Ross) spoke about that. In the context of the International Fund for Ireland I should like to mention the training centre for fishermen. They applied for a training centre in the port of Portavogie, but the application was rejected and they were told that they could travel to the existing centre in north Donegal. No one who listened to the speech by the hon. Member for Mid-Ulster (Rev. William McCrea could seriously suggest that fishermen from Portavogie should go for training in north Donegal. I could give many reasons why that would not be advisable. The Government should use their influence to try to ensure that a proper training centre for fishermen in Kilkeel, Ardglass and Portavogie is considered. I hope that it will be set up in Portavogie.

Page 12 deals with the Department of Economic Development. Some hon. Members have already spoken about the Local Enterprise Development Unit and the Industrial Development Board. I am involved in business in Northern Ireland and I certainly appreciate, although I have never received any grant from it, the work of LEDU throughout the Province. It is important to continue to support small business men throughout Northern Ireland. One of the attractions of LEDU is the way in which it has promoted the small business man and encouraged community involvement through its area boards and offices. I was concerned to see recently a leading Member of the Conservative party in Northern Ireland, Dr. William Hastings, call for the abolition of LEDU. I hope that that will not be the policy of the Conservative party in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Peter Robinson: He is a member of the Minister's branch.

Mr. Taylor: That makes it even worse. The hon. Member for Belfast, East (Mr. Robinson) confirms that Dr. William Hastings, who is a partisan and active politician in Northern Ireland, belongs to the same branch as the Minister who is to reply to the debate. I hope that when he is replying the Minister will say whether he intends to pursue the policy of Dr. William Hastings and abolish LEDU.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Taylor: No, the Minister will have a chance to reply at the end of the debate.

Mr. Bottomley: It is on a separate point.

Mr. Taylor: Very well.

Mr. Bottomley: I welcome the fact that in this instance the right hon. Gentleman is working on publicly available information and that there has not been a leak about members of the East Belfast Conservative Association.

Mr. Taylor: There are many leaks about who and what in Northern Ireland, but I am sure that we have a list of the three people who are members of the East Belfast Conservative Association.

I should like to turn to the economic development section on page 14 and speak about the importance of the tourist industry in Northern Ireland. Reorganisation is taking pace in the Northern Ireland tourist board, and it was said that it would now have a new commercial emphasis. One of the first things that happened was the transfer of a civil servant to become the chief executive of the board. Those of us who are involved in business are not too convinced that a civil servant will be the main promoter of a commercal enterprise.

I have looked through the Northern Ireland tourist board's first annual report since the changes. As the Member for Strangford, one thing that worries me is the total failure to mention, let alone recognise, the importance of caravan holidays in Northern Ireland. One third of caravans in Northern Ireland are based in the Ards peninsula. We must get away from the idea that developing tourism means pumping more money into hotel and licensed premises. The caravan tourist industry is important to Fermanagh on the north coast, the Ards peninsula, and South Down around the Mourne mountains. Hopefully, we could attract more caravanners from Scotland, and, with the completion of the Channel tunnel, the continent. I hope that the Northern Ireland tourist board will not continue to ignore the importance of the caravan tourist industry. Certainly the borough and district councils are doing their utmost to promote the development of more caravan sites in the Province.

Page 20 of the estimates refers to the Northern Ireland Electricity Service and to the £90,000 spent on further consultants' reports on the feasibility of privatising Northern Ireland electricity. I ask the Minister for an up-to-date report and for an indication of how much more money he intends to spend on consultants' reports before deciding whether or not to privatise the Northern Ireland Electricity Service.

Page 22 refers to the Department of the Environment, and once again the question of privatisation arises—in

[Mr. Taylor]

respect of the aviation services. Northern Ireland Airports recently advertised for a new chief executive—the third in three years. That suggests that there must be some problems as to who actually manages Northern Ireland Airports—the chairman of the board or the chief executive.

Rev. Ian Paisley: The chairman is a Tory.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Taylor: I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, but I did not say that. However, apparently the chairman of Northern Ireland Airports is a Tory, and that is unfortunate. Incidentally, at school he was a fag to one of the Ministers in the Northern Ireland Office.

The advertisements for a new NIA chief executive appeared in several publications. Some of them sell in Northern Ireland, such as the *Belfast Telegraph* and *The Times*, whereas others have very little circulation in Northern Ireland, such as *Flight International* and *The Irish Times*. It is interesting that the advertisement which appeared in the Northern Ireland press was different from that in the publications which do not sell well in the Province. The advertisement in the Northern Ireland publications simply advertised for a chief executive, whereas that appearing in the other publications also mentioned that Belfast international airport was to be privatised.

Can the Minister tell the House why different advertisements appeared in different publications? It is very strange that the public should be misled in that way. Also, what is the programme for the privatisation of Aldergrove airport?

Page 25 of the estimates refers to the royal harbour at Donaghadee in my own constituency, which is a contentious issue locally. As I said, the reference is to the "royal" harbour. There was an understanding that, as it is a royal harbour, no berthing charges would be made, but now there is a scheme to introduce them. I ask the Minister to re-examine that proposal to see whether that policy is consistent with Donaghadee's status as a royal harbour.

The hon. Member for Down, South (Mr. McGrady) referred to the fishing industry. In this context, I should like to draw attention to the fact that the Portavogie harbour, which was designed for about 60 fishing boats, now accommodates 85. In February this year two boats were damaged. They could not get into the harbour because it was chock-a-block. There is a great need for the Department to look into the capacity of that harbour and to proceed with an enlargement to accommodate the additional boats.

On page 26 there is a list of road schemes. Because of the shortage of time I am unable to go into them in detail, but I must ask the Department to look closely at some projects in my constituency. The question of the bypass for Comber has been with us for years. Comber is growing constantly and is chock-a-block with traffic early in the morning and at five o'clock in the evening. The bypass is required urgently and I ask that it be given greater priority.

The Minister will probably be able to give a very favourable reply to my inquiry about the Donaghadee road out of Newtownards. I hope that he can tell us that the scheme will start this year. The other two schemes to which I shall refer are in my constituency and in that of the hon. Member for Belfast, East (Mr. Robinson). The first relates to the Castlereagh road roundabout. There is serious difficulty in emerging from the Casaeldona estate on to the Knockbreda dual carriageway. We have been told that the difficulty cannot be overcome until the Castlereagh road roundabout has been improved. I hope that this, too, will be given priority. Then there is the Saintfield road-Knockbreda dual carriageway junction. Here, too, there is chaos in the early morning and in the late evening. I hope that the proposed scheme, which we have examined and which we welcome, will be given the priority that it deserves.

On page 34 one sees a great increase in expenditure. Many schemes are mentioned, but I draw the Minister's attention particularly to the Castle Court office block. Originally the cost was estimated at £7·5 million, but today the estimate is almost £16 million—an increase of more than 100 per cent. We deserve an explanation for that dramatic increase. It is unbelievable. I happen to be involved in a scheme in Royal Avenue near Castle Court, and in this regard I declare an interest. If my consultants came back and told me that the cost would be 100 per cent. more than they had originally said, I should not be standing here. There is something very wrong—unless, in the meantime, the scheme has been doubled in size. Clearly, we need an inquiry and an explanation for this dramatic increase.

Education is dealt with on page 40. I welcome the reference to the extension of Armagh Royal school, on whose board of governors I serve. In that case, the original estimate was £3,873,000, and the figure is now £3,883,000. That is very good estimating. I hope that the historic grant, which has been so slow in coming, will be given some attention and that the school will receive those funds as soon as possible.

On page 43 there is reference to expenditure on the two universities in Northern Ireland. These will now be the only universities in the United Kingdom whose students do not have to pay the poll tax. That being the case, we expect an increased number of students from Scotland, England and Wales. That will be good for university life in Northern Ireland. I hope that the youth of Great Britain who flee to Northern Ireland from the poll tax will find good facilities. I hope that the Government will provide more funds for expansion of the universities in Belfast and Coleraine.

Finally, I refer to the celebrations that we hope to have this year. I refer not to the tercentenary of the battle of the Boyne, though the present Government owe their existence to the victory at that battle, but to the bicentenary of Armagh observatory. I am glad that the observatory is mentioned. This is an important year for the observatory and I hope that the Government will be liberal in their support.

On page 10 of the draft order, we find that it will cost us £123,000 this year to maintain the devolved Northern Ireland Assembly, which collapsed because of the imposition of the Anglo-Irish Agreement. Consideration should be given to greater public use of the parliamentary buildings at Stormont. I know that there would be security problems in doing so, but there are security problems in the Palace of Westminster, too. There must be greater scope to hold functions and meetings at Stormont, to earn some money for the state and to give the Northern Ireland people the right of access to a building which is rightfully theirs.

Rev. Ian Paisley: Although the Stormont library is being increased and certain students are given access to it, Members of Parliament who are elected to serve the people of Northern Ireland do not have the right to use it. Does the right hon. Gentleman agree that they should have that right?

Mr. Taylor: That is news to me. I did not know that students were allowed to use the library. I am horrified to hear that news. I understood that we had a right to use its facilities. I have done so in one way or another without realising that I was misbehaving. I hope that that matter will be investigated, because it sounds serious.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. Three hon. Members have risen. I understand that the Front Bench spokesmen would like to reply to the debate at about 11.5 pm. I hope that we can include in the debate everyone who wants to speak.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker]

10.36 pm

Mr. Peter Robinson (Belfast, East): I should like to take up the comments of the right hon. Member for Strangford (Mr. Taylor) about the use of the Stormont parliamentary buildings. I understand that the library can be used by former Ministers of either the power-sharing executive or the Stormont Parliament, by a number of researchers and by students. I see no satisfactory reason why Northern Ireland Members should not be able to use not only that facility but some of the others in parliamentary buildings for which taxpayers pay. I trust that the Minister will look into that matter which falls within either his remit or that of the Department of Finance and Personnel.

The right hon. Member for Strangford referred also to the road network in Castlereagh. My constituency joins Strangford at the Castlereagh roundabout. The road services section of the Department of Environment decided that it would be pleasant to have a 20 ft. high concrete flyover at that site. The local community disapproved of that proposal and fought it at the Belfast urban area plan hearing. I am glad to say that the fight was successful. I represented the local community at the hearing and we were delighted that it recommended that the flyover should not be constructed but that an "at grade" level improvement should be made. The Department has proposed that traffic lights should be installed at each of the roads that now enter the roundabout and that the roundabout should be removed.

A problem exists, of which the right hon. Member for Strangford will be aware. The Castledona estate is a congested area where, after much pleading with the Department, it was agreed that traffic lights were needed where the road met the dual carriageway. We have been told, however, that the necessary money is not immediately available in the budget for this financial year and it is doubtful whether it will be made available next year. A tragedy is likely to occur if that money is not made available in the next financial year. I ask the Under-Secretary who is to reply to the debate—it is his Department's spending to which we are referring—to move that further up his list of priorities to ensure that the expenditure for that work falls within the coming financial year.

I agree with the hon. Member for Leicester, South (Mr. Marshall), who referred to the Fruit of the Loom proposal for Londonderry, that it would be a tragedy if the prospect of 500 jobs were lost, especially in an area where there is a clear need for more employment. It matters little to me —or, I suspect, to any other Unionist present tonight— whether those jobs go to those of nationalist or of Unionist persuasion. They are jobs for the Province, and I trust that the Minister responsible for that Department will do everything possible to ensure that they are secured for Northern Ireland.

In the same vein, a depressing article about the employment prospects in west Belfast appeared in this morning's edition of *The Irish Times*. It is clear that, as a part of the United Kingdom, west Belfast should enjoy the benefits of being a part of the United Kindom. Even though its elected representative may not come to the House and, therefore, does not plead the case for his constituents, there is a clear need for more employment prospects for west Belfast. I trust that the Department will not chicken out and let the people of west Belfast down because it does not like their Member of Parliament. I suspect that, if that were the criterion, certain other constituencies might be treated none too favourably.

I trust that the Minister, who is now showing a special interest in Ulster Conservatism, will take a special look at the prospects for his party in west Belfast, and do something to encourage the people of that constituency to believe that the United Kingdom can provide job prospects in an area where there is a great deal of deprivation.

The Minister is a member of the East Belfast association of the Conservative party. I am sure that he will accept from me my concern about housing in my constituency, which he now wants to adopt. As the Minister responsible for the deplorable housing situation in east Belfast, he will know that the waiting list for that area alone demonstrates a housing need greater than the housing provision that is being made for Northern Ireland as a whole. There are more than 2,000 people on waiting lists looking for housing in east Belfast. Statistics that I have show that on the A priority and urgent needs lists alone, there are more than 500 people waiting for housing in east Belfast; that is as many houses as the Housing Executive will be building in the whole of Northern Ireland, if not more.

It is not just in relation to house building that the Government's policy of cuts has been affecting the people of Northern Ireland. We have people waiting to get essential repairs carried out. A survey of house conditions in 1987 showed that 8·4 per cent. of the housing stock in Northern Ireland was unfit, while 14·1 per cent. required substantial repair. The Housing Executive's own stock was also in need of repair. Around 60,000 of the executive's properties required improvement and upgrading. That is more than one third of the executive's stock, which has in any case been substantially reduced as a result of the house sales policy that the Government have pursued. Incidentally, I approve of that policy, but I do so because it should leave more public money available to put into the housing of the executive and to make money available to build more houses. The policy is not achieving either of those ends. We are finding that once the money from rents has gone towards the meagre house building programme, the executive has next to nothing left to maintain the properties that it holds.

I have no doubt that the Minister will play statistical ping-pong with us on this one. It is easier to juggle statistics than facts. As everyone knows in Northern Ireland, fewer houses are being built and the need for housing is increasing. The Minister is happy to hand the problem over to the private sector and to tell it to build the houses. He is oblivious to the fact that a large section of the community in Northern Ireland cannot afford to buy houses or pay the vastly increasing mortgage rates.

I am paying nearly twice as much on my mortgage as I paid two years ago. The terrible point is that the Government's policy towards rents in Northern Ireland means that rents have increased more than mortgages. The Department has a policy of increasing rents on a formula of inflation plus 5 per cent. By 1993 the average Housing Executive rent will be about £25 a week. That may not seem a lot of money by Great Britain standards, but houses cost three times as much elsewhere in Great Britain

as in Northern Ireland. There is much less disposable income for property after the higher prices have been paid for consumer goods in the Province. The Housing Executive's bid for funding has been cut by £13·7 million. We can imagine that the executive, in making its bid, took cognisance of the fact that the Minister's policy required it to cut back. It is cutting £13·7 million off an already pruned budget.

As chairman of the environment committee of the Northern Ireland Assembly I pressed the Government at the time to extend repair programmes to modern post-war housing in which the residents could not afford to carry out essential repairs. The executive has had to trim back its grants and to target those in greatest need. As a result, the importance of prevention is being overlooked and that is a false economy. If people cannot afford to have necessary repairs carried out, the condition of the houses will deteriorate. Therfore, the people will need alternative accommodation which the executive cannot afford to provide and we end up with all sorts of housing problems.

I plead with the Minister to deal with housing on the basis of need instead of in relation to the finance that he would like to provide for housing. The need for housing is increasing and that requires a substantial increase in finances into public sector housing in the Province, particularly when the Belfast urban area will allow the executive to consider new areas for house building for which I trust the Minister will provide sufficient funds.

I have a plea to make about the system of planning approvals in Northern Ireland. As an elected council representative, I become increasingly frustrated at the way in which planning applications are dealt with.

The right hon. Member for Strangford and I serve on the same district council. At our last council meeting, 25 per cent. of the planning applications that we were asked to consider were for buildings that had already been constructed. There is a now a policy of "build now, apply later". The Minister has done nothing to introduce a reasonable policy on ex post facto applications. People are thumbing their noses at the Minister. His planning department is a joke. People no longer need to go through the normal process of applying for planning permission, because they simply go ahead and build. They know that, by virtue of the fact that the building exists, the planning department will not have the guts to tell them that it would not have given permission in the first place and that enforcement action should be taken.

Mr. Beggs: Does the hon. Gentleman agree that it is serious that people can proceed to build without even having building control approval?

Mr. Robinson: Yes. There clearly needs to be a link between building control approval and planning permission so that both must be applied for, either at the same time or within a certain period.

During the life of the Northern Ireland Assembly, the environment committee put a proposal to the then responsible Minister that there should be a strict penalty for those who submit applications after buildings have already been constructed. We suggested that about 20 times the normal application fee should be applied to those persons. The Minister must do something when a quarter of the people who require planning permission apply when structures have already been erected. It is time for the Minister to do something, rather than sitting, waiting and hoping that, perhaps, people will obey the law and act according to the regulations. Of course, they will not do so.

It is not just Joe Citizen—the ordinary wee guy who is building an extension on his garage—who is acting in that way. Major public companies such as Shorts are the main offenders in our area. That company has built fences around its property without submitting a planning application. It submitted a planning application only when local residents objected to the Berlin wall that it was building. In the knowledge that it required planning permission, it did the same on other sites in the Province. If that was not enough, it then put in an application to have three massive tanks constructed on its site on Alanbrooke road.

The council was naturally concerned that the chemicals that might be in the tanks might affect the local residents, and it asked for a site meeting. The council was given a date and time that was agreed by the security personnel at Shorts, but it was later cancelled by Shorts management, who would not allow councillors to go in. The management said that they would need the names and addresses of all the people involved before they would be allowed on to the premises.

In the past few days I have found out why Shorts did not want the councillors in. It was because the tanks were already constructed. The Minister should do something about that disgraceful situation. Large companies such as Shorts are breaching planning laws, and their bad example is being followed by many others.

I have had meetings with several groups in my constituency who look after the mentally and physically handicapped. They do a remarkable job. Because they have a special love for the handicapped, they devote almost the whole of their lives to looking after them. I have seen the effects on their lives. I know how much they have sacrificed. If they did not do so, there would be a significant charge upon the state. I see how little the Government do to give assistance and succour to those people, if only in terms of looking after a handicapped person for a matter of hours, days or even a weekend to allow their carers to have at least a break from their exertion.

I was speaking to a lady who has two handicapped children. She must carry one of them upstairs on her back. She does that every day, every week, every month, and every year. She cannot get anybody to take over that responsibility. Who, by way of neighbours and friends, is likely to take over that responsibility? I trust that the whole issue of respite care can be tackled by the Government.

Mr. Stott: I am interested in what the hon. Gentleman says. Clearly, he speaks with a great deal of experience. When local government is working properly—I take it that in the Province it is not—in spite of the problems of the past 10 years of Conservative Government, in the United Kingdom we have a system whereby people such as the hon. Gentleman described can get relief. They can go away on holiday and get a rest from what they do in their daily lives. The local social services committee in my constituency will provide social workers and other people from the department to give such people relief from the arduous tasks that they have to perform every day of their lives.

Mr. Robinson: I accept what the hon. Gentleman says. It is encouraging that in some areas of the United Kingdom such assistance is given. In Northern Ireland, because of the restrictions on local government, local authorities have no responsibility in relation to the Department of Health and Social Services. Indeed, it would be ultra vires for local government to spend any money on such a respite care scheme. Therefore, it is left to charities. I know of only one charity that is making moves to do the work that the Government refuse thus far to do. There is a great need and I believe that most people in Northern Ireland have great sympathy with it. I trust that the Minister will encourage his colleague with the responsibility to take action to ensure some relief for those who have done so much for society. It is important that people who are handicapped, whether mentally or physically, are maintained as an integral part of society, rather than put into hospitals, homes or other types of organisational structure. I trust that the Minister will consider that issue.

10.56 pm

Rev. Martin Smyth (Belfast, South): I agree with the point made by the hon. Member for Belfast, East (Mr. Robinson). I draw the attention of the House to a remark in the commentary on public expenditure published in 1989:

> "Take-up of disability benefits is difficult to measure, and there has been only limited information available about the numbers who might be eligible."

It is an indictment of the Department and the health boards that, despite a survey made some years ago, we still do not have accurate figures on those who need care because of their disability.

In that context, I should like to ask some questions about the vote on the Department of Health and Social Services. There is a growing waiting list in most hospitals except Musgrave park, where there has been a marked decline in the waiting list. That decline was brought about because the orthopaedic specialists got together, targeted areas of need and, using new computer techniques, reduced the waiting list drastically. In spite of that, the hospital could do with another specialist appointment to deal with rheumatoid arthritis in the orthopaedic department. If that one extra specialist were appointed, it would have a tremendous impact on the needs of people throughout Northern Ireland because it is a regional specialty. Are there any plans in the Department for the appointment of such a specialist?

Recently an ex gratia payment was made to the Haemophilia Society for those who have contracted HIV as a result of blood plasma transfusions. Will people in Northern Ireland who were so infected be recipients from the same grant, or will that be done through the Department's budget in Northern Ireland? If so, how many are involved? I understand that between 32 and 52 people in Great Britain were affected, not because they were haemophiliacs but because they went through the normal process of an operation and the blood transfusion that they received infected them. Nothing has been done for such people. Is there any record of the numbers of people so affected in Northern Ireland? Is the Department prepared to make an ex gratia payment that is equivalent to the £20,000 to help those people to meet their challenges and needs?

If agencies of the Government make mistakes, without blame being attached, I believe that there should at least be compensation for the victims.

There has recently been a court case about the restrictions of the social fund. I asked earlier about the use of the social fund in Northern Ireland. Has the Department in Northern Ireland taken account of the court order? Are people with genuine needs now receiving special payments outside the limited number that were granted according to the Department's guidelines? Is the money that has been set aside in vote 3 of the Department of Health and Social Services for

> "the Belfast Social Security Centre and the paid order store at Lisahally as agent for the Department of Social Security"

coming from the Northern Ireland Consolidated Fund or from the general Great Britain allocation? We are always told that we are receiving more benefits than other areas.

Is the money in the Northern Ireland Consolidated Fund used in the best interests of developing the Northern Ireland economy and for the training of Northern Ireland young people, or is it being returned to the Treasury because it is not being used for the purpose for which it was designated? In that context, I should like to ask about the discretionary grants from both the Departments of Education and of Health and Social Services that are aimed at helping young people to train. Is it a fact that we have restricted the number of people who are eligible for such grants in Northern Ireland when, if they lived in Great Britain, they would receive such grants, especially for training in physiotherapy, through the Department of Health offices at Blackpool and when, if they came from any other country, they would be entitled to similar grants? If they are eligible for training for a diploma in a university or college in Great Britain and the Northern Ireland Department says, "We have enough here—we don't want any more trained", are those young people being discriminated against, or is the Department finding other means of training them up to their capacity so that they may be useful servants, not only of the community in Northern Ireland, but of the nation as a whole and even further afield?

Finally—I have been pushing on because I realise the time—has the Minister been made aware of the concern about the working of the parliamentary commissioner? It is not so much that he is not doing his job properly, but the regulations under which he works are so restrictive that people are having their cases turned down—not because they do not have a case, but because the commissioner is not entitled to investigate it. If he is a commissioner who looks into maladministration, and if there is maladministration, is it not time that it should be investigated rather than the person concerned being told by the commissioner, "I'm sorry, I cannot look into your case"?

11.3 pm

Mr. Harry Barnes (Derbyshire, North-East): I thank the hon. Member for Belfast, South (Rev. Martin Smyth) for finishing his speech quickly so as to allow me to make one or two comments. Obviously, I cannot make the type of speech that I had been planning. Because of the time restraints, I shall limit myself to two major points. First, I shall explain why I think that our debates on appropriation are important. Secondly, I shall elaborate on a point which I made earlier in an intervention.

The appropriation debates are important because they allow us to discuss bread and butter issues in Northern

Ireland. The material contained under the headings of the appropriation order are usually considered to be the stuff of politics that we deal with in the House day by day for the rest of the United Kingdom. The debates are less dramatic and arouse less emotion than those on the prevention of terrorism. They provide an opportunity to discuss issues affecting people's everyday lives and they should be given priority in our considerations. We should be allowed to develop economic and social policies which create the framework to solve some of the other problems in Northern Ireland.

The debates also allow us to discuss economic policy generally and to co-ordinate the various headings of the order. They are the nearest that we come to a Northern Ireland budget debate, separate from the general Budget provisions. Sometimes we get too bogged down in detail to discuss wider economic considerations.

In discussing economic policy we need to be aware that Northern Ireland is not an island, nor is the island of Ireland an island as wider issues of multi-national economies, such as Bombardier, European social and economic policies and the United Kingdom economy and budgetary position, are involved. They are relevant to our debates and to the policies which could begin to help create a different framework for Northern Ireland.

In an intervention I suggested that the social welfare policies discussed by the hon. Member for North Down (Mr. Kilfedder) and others begin to be appropriate to Northern Ireland. The Government should take them on board, especially as all Northern Ireland Members, whatever their political complexion, are pressing for them. My hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, South (Mr. Marshall) suggested economic interventionism. If interventionism produces bureaucratic problems, the answer to those problems is to seek devolution and a Bill of Rights. I know that the hon. Gentleman and I agree that that is the constitutional answer and would provide the framework for these important developments.

The answers always seem to me to be democratic Socialist answers. Economic interventionism and social welfare are Socialist elements. The democratic side of Socialism attempts to get people together to control their destiny collectively.

11.8 pm

Mr. Roger Stott (Wigan): We have had a diverse and interesting four-hour debate. Naturally, Northern Ireland Members have spoken with feeling and a deep understanding of their constituencies about how the appropriation order impinges and should impinge on everyday life. I have listened with interest to practically all the speeches.

My speech will be relatively brief because it is important that the Minister has time to respond to the points made by the elected representatives of Northern Ireland. This is another piece of oratorical brilliance that will have to go on the cutting room floor.

I have two points to make briefly. The first relates to the section of the order dealing with the Department of the Environment and, particularly, the transportation provision. I know that the Minister recently had discussions in Dublin with the Republic's transport Ministers and I should be grateful if he would share his thinking with the House about how he sees cross-border co-operation to develop an integrated transport system.

In the past three years the Government have exhorted British industry and commerce to get into shape to meet the challenges of the internal market of 1992. My party has been critical of the way in which the Government have gone about that, but we agree with them that some strategic thinking is needed on that matter. If we are to take advantage of the huge internal market that will be created in 1992 we must remember that, geographically, Britain, and particularly the island of Ireland, will be on the periphery of Europe. It is, therefore, essential that our transport infrastructure is geared to facilitate the transportation of people, goods and materials to mainland Europe speedily and effectively.

After 1992 both parts of the island of Ireland will be in the internal market. Economic and trading borders will cease to exist and if the Republic and the North of Ireland are not to be marginalised, the integration of their transport systems is vital. The rapid transit freight facilities that will be provided by the Channel tunnel—if it is built—will be a major asset to the United Kingdom. If Britain is to be Ireland's landbridge to the continent decisions must be taken about the Euroroute to provide that link. To ensure that landbridge, the transportation links with the island of Ireland must be strengthened and improved. The rail line from Dublin to Belfast and on to Larne could play a vital role in the transportation of freight. I join the Minister and other hon. Members in their condemnation of terrorist attacks on that line. The paramilitaries should be told in the clearest terms that the Irish and British Governments and the people of Northern and southern Ireland are not intimidated by their actions.

Although I know that the Minister has no responsibility for British Rail, I hope that he has remonstrated with its board in the strongest possible terms about the inconvenience caused to the people of Northern Ireland by the withdrawal of the InterCity service between London and Stranraer. Instead of cutting services, we should be strengthening them.

I understand that British Rail is planning a rail freight terminal near Warrington in the north-west of England. If that is so, the British and Irish Governments should be looking to formulate a strategy to ensure that road, rail and ferry services are integrated so that freight from Dublin and Belfast, via Larne, Holyhead and Liverpool, can be transhipped to mainland Europe via the Channel tunnel speedily and effectively. I note that the Minister is smiling at that prospect and I hope that he and his Department are giving serious consideration to those problems. If the Minister and his counterparts in the South of Ireland fail to do so, Northern Ireland will be relegated to the periphery of economic activity after 1992.

The hon. Members for Belfast, East (Mr. Robinson) and for Mid-Ulster (Rev. William McCrea) and my hon. Friend the Member for South Down (Mr. McGrady) spoke about housing problems. Yet again, I put on record our appreciation of the work done by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive. Earlier this year I had a working dinner with members of that executive when we discussed many of the problems that it encounters. No doubt the Minister is aware that the executive's budget for this year has been cut by £13·7 million—the hon. Member for Belfast, East mentioned that—and that the new-build programme has been reduced from 1,300 starts to 1,000 starts.

The hon. Member for Belfast, East also outlined the problem of unfitness and disrepair in housing. I would add

[Mr. Roger Stott]

the problem of homelessness because if the hon. Gentleman looks at the recent report by Shelter, he will realise that homelessness is a problem in Northern Ireland as well as in the United Kingdom. I fear that that problem will not be solved by the amount of money that the Government are putting into the budget for the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

As the Minister only has a quarter of an hour to reply, I shall just mention briefly the question of rural housing. I mentioned it in Question Time last week, and I am sure that the Minister is aware of the real problem with rural housing in Northern Ireland. He must also be aware of the impositions placed upon the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and of the way in which the grant system applies to urban housing there but not to rural housing. If the Minister studied some of the recommendations made by Shelter for the organisation of the grant precedure and the redefinition of what people can get for housing improvements, some amelioration in rural housing in the Province would result.

I apologise to the House for the fact that I have taken only five minutes to reply to what has been said, but I think that the Minister ought to reply to the many significant points made by hon. Members who represent Northern Ireland.

11.10 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Peter Bottomley): I am grateful to the 14 hon. and right hon. Members who have spoken for leaving me some time to respond to some of the themes in the debate. As the hon. Member for Belfast, East (Mr. Robinson) said, it is not possible to answer all the questions in detail.

If the hon. Member for Belfast, North (Mr. Walker) will allow me, perhaps I can write to him about some of the points that he raised. I shall try to ensure that letters to hon. Members in response to their questions are put in the Library so that they will be available to all hon. Members who have taken part in the debate.

The hon. Member for Mid-Ulster (Rev. William McCrea) effectively made points which received assent from hon. Members on both sides of the House. When I was west of the Bann yesterday I learned of some of the things said and done by those who have been most affected by the killings in his constituency. I do not want to give a running commentary on the hon. Gentleman's address —that would be totally improper of me—but the dignity and non-retaliation of many of the families of people who have been killed, and of those directly affected, and this applies as much to Belfast as it does to Mid-Ulster, is an inspiration to the rest of us. I am not suggesting that there is not a strong role for the security forces in anticipating and following up terrorist activity afterwards, but the families set an example that the rest of us should follow.

Occasionally, I feel that one of the tragedies is that Northern Ireland has some of the best politicians in the land—they are articulate and persuasive—but occasionally they are totally unable to agree with one another. That is not a criticism of them, but a description of fact. It is important to recognise that the faster we find effective ways—there are a number of them—of reducing the impact of terrorism, the sooner we shall be able to provide the jobs and the justice that we come into politics to work for in our different ways, with our different insights and with our disagreements.

It is important to realise that there has been spending of some £6,000 million per year—between £3,000 and £4,000 per person—in Northern Ireland. It can be more effectively directed at people's needs if we can overcome or reduce the impact of terrorism. I say to those people who speak out publicly in Northern Ireland that those who manage to speak out against the terrorism that affects both sides of the community and everyone in Northern Ireland are setting an honourable example for the rest of us while the people behind the killers cause as much killing in their own community as they direct at those on the other side.

The hon. Member for Belfast, South (Rev. Martin Smyth) asked about the possibility of helping those with disabilities to find employment and to take advantage of education. It is clearly much better to use money to help people work than to give them money solely on condition that they do nothing worth while. Many of the job training and other schemes are designed to do that. Much of the help for the disabled is designed to help people achieve something rather than sit back and do nothing. I will send the hon. Gentleman a more specific reply. If it is inadequate, he can take up the matter with me again.

It is not possible to undertake all the high priority road schemes at the same time. A deliberate decision was taken in Northern Ireland to spend more on housing and less on roads, because of the housing priorities. Tributes have been paid to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive for its remarkable achievements over the years. The money has been used well. It is still necessary for the Housing Executive to find the most efficient way of translating money into better homes, taking account of what the private sector does. I shall not produce the string of statistics foreseen by the hon. Member for Belfast, East (Mr. Robinson), even though he is the Member of Parliament for the area in which my Conservative association is.

The Housing Executive has a gross budget of more than £500 million per year, so it should be possible to find more effective ways of carrying out its work each year. It is important that it should be answerable to the people in the districts. I pay tribute to the Housing Executive's determination to ensure that advice is available to people in both rural and urban areas. Shelter and other organisations have given a general welcome to the way in which the Housing Executive has extended the terms of some of the grants to recognise that owner-occupiers may sometimes live in homes as bad as any that they might otherwise have rented.

There is a determination to ensure that the rural improvement programme and the inter-departmental committee take an across-the-board approach to people's problems. It is no longer any good telling people that their problems do not match the way in which the authorities are organised; we must make sure that we are organised so as to match people's problems.

Mr. William Ross: Is the Minister prepared to put forward a scheme which, instead of offering repair money, replaces some of those poor rural homes?

Mr. Bottomley: We have not yet been able to agree on what the Housing Executive has put forward on this issue; it is under consideration. It is worth remembering that

many people want to avoid wholesale demolition of historic homes in the countryside. We want to find ways of maintaining our heritage, using replacement grants when that is sensible. I cannot promise that we have found the solution, but, as the hon. Gentleman rightly suggested, we must seek to move forward.

It is important to remember that the contribution of the private sector to housing has risen from 3,000 homes a year 10 years ago to 7,000 now. That enables the Housing Executive to reduce the number of new homes that it builds while spending more on rehabilitation. Tribute has been paid to some of the Housing Executive's imaginative schemes; the part-ownership schemes, for instance, are greatly appreciated by young people who would otherwise find it difficult to get a place on the ladder.

I shall leave questions about hospitals to my noble Friend in another place and to my hon. Friend the Minister for Health. I should not find it easy to give detailed responses in the remaining seven minutes.

Hon. Members on both sides have stressed the importance of recognising the carers and the need for respite care. The latter idea has been developed in the United Kingdom generally over the past 10 years. The Carers National Association and the Association of Carers, which have wisely joined forces, have done a great deal to help health authorities to provide the sort of help that is of real value, allowing people to remain in their homes for longer while lifting some of the burden from those who give themselves over for decades to the care of the handicapped and the elderly. Those who are rightly concerned with the care of children at least know that parents can usually sign off when their children are 16 or——

Mr. McNamara: Not mine.

Mr. Bottomley: The hon. Gentleman can speak from his family experiences, but I am trying to make this an impersonal debate, picking up the themes that affect many people in every constituency in Northern Ireland. I am sure that health authorities and social services—with the help of people in the community and with the help of professional staff such as doctors, nurses and others, not forgetting the voluntary groups—are doing their best to achieve a spectrum of care opportunities which allow people to do what they can without being broken by the experience.

Industrial development is too important a subject to leave to correspondence. Although some of the announcements do not come to fruition, the figures show that the Industrial Development Board is achieving an ever greater proportion of jobs referred to in the preliminary announcements. That is a tribute to its work. In the past few years, delivery of jobs has been at a higher ratio, leaving aside the Lear Fan business. The IDB is rightly to be congratulated on asking outsiders to examine its performance, and the results of that exercise will be built into its future work.

Questions were raised about LEDU. Experience in Scotland and other parts of the United Kingdom have shown that small groups of jobs can make a dramatic difference to the earning opportunities of people in rural areas, and I think that there will be a greater concentration on that. I was delighted to note some of the diversifications in South Armagh, where with a little help people put together small businesses which provide employment not only for the small-scale entrepreneur, but for others around him. I pay tribute to the interest that my right hon. Friend the Minister of State has paid to that during the past eight years, in the same way as he has encouraged my hon. Friend the Member for Wiltshire, North (Mr. Needham) as Minister with responsibility for the economy. It is a partnership to ensure that there is value for money as well as taking the opportunity to put on the public agenda the issues that individual Members of Parliament have discovered from their experiences or those of their constituents.

In the long run, flesh will be put on the development of the rural improvement programme, as well as that for the cities, through tourism. Some 45 million people in the United States know that they are Irish-Americans, Ulster-Scots and so on. About 8 per cent. of US citizens hold passports—unlike in Europe where about 60 per cent. of people hold passports—but that still amounts to some 20 million people and in the next few years we can look forward to more and more of them visiting Ireland. Indeed, I look forward to the Ulster-Canada year in 1991, when I hope that there will be many more tourists from Canada. I think that all those people are now beginning to believe that with their Irish connections they should visit Northern Ireland—and indeed the South—at least once during their lifetime, in the same way as people of Jewish origin visit Jerusalem or those of Islamic faith visit Mecca. If people claim to have a connection with Northern Ireland, they should stand at Navan Fort and look at the twin cathedrals of Armagh or go fishing in Fermanagh. Changes in the approach to tourism will increasingly make people realise what they can gain from visiting Northern Ireland. One of the tragedies of the necessary media attention to bombs, bullets and bigotry is that sometimes it squeezes out other things for which Northern Ireland would otherwise be known.

It is of benefit to the South, too, if terrorism can be extirpated and eliminated and if the conditions that people currently tolerated can be improved. That involves not only the security forces, but the attitudes of the people. They want to feel that jobs and justice are coming.

Perhaps I could finish by talking about links with the South. It is criminal in every sense for the railway line to be blown up. The railway crossing accident shows by mistake what the IRA is trying to do deliberately. The IRA relies on the emergency services, Northern Ireland Railways and the security forces to make sure that bombs placed on the line to Dublin do not explode and cause a crash. During the inquiry into the level crossing crash we may find that everything was not done perfectly. That is the reason for the inquiry and I hope that the information given in the debate will go to the inspector. If anyone has any information, he should put it forward. That is what we in the Department of the Environment will do.

Rev. Ian Paisley: Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Bottomley: It is difficult to give way when only 30 seconds remain of the debate, but I will do so.

Rev. Ian Paisley: Will the Minister look at that crossing? Will he note that it has inclines on both approaches causing a loss of visibility to car drivers?

Mr. Bottomley: I will make sure that the inspector looks at all the issues.

[Mr. Bottomley]

This has been a useful debate and I hope that the appropriation receives the approval of the House.

It being half-past Eleven o'clock, MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *put the Question, pursuant to Standing Order No. 14 (Exempted business).*

Question agreed to.

Resolved,

That the draft Appropriation (Northern Ireland) Order 1990, which was laid before this House on 13th February, be approved.

NORTHERN IRELAND (LICENSING)

Resolved,

That the draft Licensing (Northern Ireland) Order 1990, which was laid before this House on 18th January, be approved.—*[Mr. Chapman.]*

Orders of the Day

Capital Allowances Bill *[Lords]*

Order for Second Reading read.

11.31 pm

The Solicitor-General (Sir Nicholas Lyell): I beg to move, That the Bill be now read a Second time.

The Bill consolidates certain enactments relating to capital allowances. The last such consolidation took place in 1968 and the additions and amendments to the law made by each subsequent Finance Act have made a new consolidation exercise necessary. The Bill is pure consolidation; no amendment to the present law is made. It represents a further stage in the continuing programme of consolidation of revenue legislation, and comes just two years after the consolidation of enactments relating to income tax and corporation tax.

I am sure that the House will wish me to acknowledge once again our debt of gratitude to the draftsmen for their considerable achievements in producing the Bill. It has been passed in another place where, in the usual way, it was referred to the Joint Committee on Consolidation, which reported that the Bill, as amended by the Committee, is pure consolidation.

11.32 pm

Mr. John Fraser (Norwood): When I saw the Bill and looked at the Irish business, I wished that the House had licensing hours. I shall simply assume that the landlord has called last orders and do no more than congratulate the draftsmen on their splendid work in consolidating these measures and on making life easier for layman and practitioner alike.

11.33 pm

Mr. Jeremy Hanley (Richmond and Barnes): If my right hon. and learned Friend the Solicitor-General is permitted to speak again, perhaps he will tell us whether he believes that the clause numbers in the Bill will remain the same until final publication. That would help many people who need the Bill for technical purposes. I should also be grateful if my right hon. and learned Friend would tell us whether there are to be any further amendments.

11.34 pm

The Solicitor General: By leave of the House, may I say that I would not expect any further amendments, but I hope that my hon. Friend will know the answer in about 45 seconds.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read a Second time.

Bill committed to a Committee of the whole House. —*[Mr. Greg Knight.]*

Bill immediately considered in Committee; reported, without amendment.

Motion made, and Question, That the Bill be now read the Third time, *put and agreed to.*

Bill accordingly read the Third time, and passed, without amendment.

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS, &c.

Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 101(5) (Standing Committees on Statutory Instruments, &c.).

HOUSING

That the draft Housing Corporation Advances (Increase of Limit) Order 1990, which was laid before this House on 20th February, be approved.—*[Mr. Greg Knight.]*

Question agreed to.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Ordered,

That, at the next sitting of the House on which numbers for defence services or estimates are put down for consideration, Standing Order No. 53 (Questions on voting of estimates, &c.) shall apply with the following modifications—

(1) as if the words *'(aa)* supplementary votes on account for the comng financial year;' were inserted after line 22; and

(2) as if the words 'for the coming financial year' in lines 5 and 21 were omitted.—*[Mr. Greg Knight.]*

PETITIONS

Human Embryo

11.35 pm

Mr. Patrick Thompson (Norwich, North): I am very pleased to present formally petitions from the constituents of Norwich, North and from residents of Norwich and Norfolk. They concern the protection of the human embryo. The number of names on the two petitions totals 405. The petitions read:

Wherefore your petitioners pray that the House of Commons will take immediate steps to enact legislation which, *(a)* forbids any procedure that involves the purchase or sale of human embryos, the discarding or freezing of human embryos, their use as sources of transplant tissue, or as subjects of research or experiments, unless this is done solely for the benefit of the embryo concerned, and *(b)* forbids all forms of trans-species fertilisation.

Your petitioners, as in duty bound, will every pray, &c.

To lie upon the Table.

Speech Therapy Services

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Greg Knight.]*

11.36 pm

Mrs. Ray Michie (Argyll and Bute): I am grateful for this opportunity to raise the subject of speech therapy services. While I appreciate that the Under-Secretary of State for Health will only be able to answer primarily for England and Wales—and I would not have it otherwise, because Scotland is supposed to run its own Health Service—the generality pertains to the whole of the United Kingdom.

The Minister may be aware that my interest in the provision of speech therapy services stems from my membership of the College of Speech Therapists, and I have the honour to be one of its vice-presidents. Prior to entering the House, I was a practising speech therapist, and managed the service for the Argyll and Clyde health board.

The organisation of speech therapy services has evolved over the years. Prior to 1974 they were managed by local health and education authorities. After 1974, they came under the auspices of the National Health Service. That was a good move, because it provided an opportunity to develop a comprehensive and integrated service for both NHS patients and education departments. The latter was of prime importance to the thousands of children requiring help with their speech.

Between 1974 and 1980, speech therapy managers developed the service in each health authority or health board. Some had greater success than others, depending on available resources. But the model was there for allowing the employment and deployment of speech therapy manpower offering a variety of expertise and specialisms to meet the large number of different communication problems. They ranged from learning difficulties and stammering to patients suffering from strokes, head injuries, cleft palates, and Parkinson's disease, to name but a few examples.

The model also provided wide clinical opportunities for student training and the sharing of expensive equipment. Most important of all, it encouraged a team approach throughout an area, providing valuable support, in particular, to speech therapists who have to work on their own. Many still do so, particularly in rural areas.

Unfortunately, since 1980, the profession has been caught up in a series of NHS reorganisations and restructurings that have done nothing for continuity. On the contrary, they have led once again to fragmentation of management and of provision. No sooner had people adapted to one restructuring and tried to manage with it than they found themselves being overtaken by yet another.

I stress that this is a small profession. Even fully staffed, it will always be small in the context of the large numbers of people employed in the Health Service. It is therefore not sensible or cost-effective, nor is it an indication of good man or woman management, to allow the profession to be broken up into little bits and pieces at unit, sub-unit or locality level, each trying to do its own thing and still service the wide range of problems. It really is a very narrow and restricted outlook that leads to the belief that every service and profession in the National Health Service can or should be delivered in the same way.

[Mrs. Ray Michie]

The results of the most recent research—carried out by Enderby and Davies, and funded by the Department of Health—were published in the December 1989 issue of the "British Journal of Disorders of Communication." That research concerned, in the first place, the size of the speech and language impairment problem. The results indicated that in the United Kingdom there are 2·3 million people with a speech and/or language disorder. Of those, 800,000 have a severe communication difficulty; in other words, they have difficulty in making themselves understood by anyone other than their immediate family. Then there are 1·5 million who have a moderate communication disorder —that is, a speech and/or language problem that is noticeable to the lay person.

Enderby and Davies estimate that, under present patterns of speech therapy provision, 26 qualified speech therapists may be required per 100,000 of the population. This is four times as many therapists as are currently employed. There has certainly been growth in the numbers and service since 1972—most of it took place between 1974 and 1980—but the expansion has not kept pace with the need and with the realisation of what a comparatively young profession can do. The Minister will say that extra money has been put into the service, and that there has been an increase in the number of therapists. I appreciate that, but it does not meet the reality of the situation.

Services have developed very patchily. For example, Government figures indicate a variation in provision from 22 speech therapists per 100,000 in Hampstead to two per 100,000 in Hereford—to say nothing of the Greater Glasgow health board area, where 18 speech therapy posts have been frozen or are unfilled because of financial constraints. The average figure is 5·9 therapists per 100,000 people: no improvement on the Quirk report, which, in 1972, almost 20 years ago—on figures based on hospitals alone—suggested that it was necessary to have six speech therapists per 100,000 of the population.

Of course, recruitment and retention of staff are of fundamental importance. Success will depend to a large extent on the provision of decent salaries. The present salaries do not reflect the qualifications, knowledge, expertise and dedication of speech therapists. They remain significantly lower than those of other professionals requiring similar qualifications. I often wonder whether this is because 98 per cent. of the people in the profession are female. Of course, in so many occupations in this country females have traditionally been low paid. On 1 December 1989, a speech therapist wrote to me, stating:

"I hope we achieve something for the young therapists —too late for me at the end of my career.

I qualified in 1956 and after 33 years earn the princely sum —£10,974!! Good job I have a husband!!"

What about all the therapists who cannot call on their husbands for help?

It is vital to retain an open self-referral system. That does not mean writing a blank cheque. The system is already restricted by the number of therapists available and the size of the budget allocated. Sadly, there is still a great deal of ignorance, which is not confined to the general public but is evident also in the medical profession where, if it were left to people in the profession to refer, many patients would be missed or ignored. That will continue unless the therapist can continue accepting open referrals and retains the right to assess, treat and discharge his or her patients. Too often those who think that they should refer patients to speech therapists say, "Oh, they will grow out of it", or, "Nothing can be done."

I am deeply worried about a proposal to meet the need on the cheap by introducing a three-tier profession. It will not work and will mean a downgrading of the profession and the service available. I shall try to explain why. At present, there is a speech therapy helper or assistant grade, but it has never been successful on an extensive basis because there are not enough qualified therapists to supervise. An assistant tends to be allocated to a speech therapist who works at a number of different locations, such as schools and health centres, and if that therapist leaves the post and it is not filled the assistant is on her own and is unable to work because there is no direction or supervision. One could argue that he or she could be deployed elsewhere, but that is unlikely to happen if the management of the service has been fragmented. To introduce a second tier of therapists, half-trained for 18 months, is certainly not the answer. I know that schools and education authorities in particular have already said that they will not accept second best for their children.

I wonder whether the Minister knows that increased secretarial help would go a considerable way towards freeing therapists to concentrate almost entirely on hands-on patient and client care. That option should be seriously considered before we travel down the dead-end road of a second tier. Whatever plans are afoot, I hope that the Minister will first consult and involve those responsible in the College of Speech Therapists. They are more than willing to help. With respect, all the civil servants in the world, excellent as they may be, cannot and should not be asked to come up with a solution, because they do not know what happens.

I am aware that members of the college met the Minister of State on 28 February and that there are to be further meetings with Department of Health officials in April. The college officials are delighted that these meetings are taking place.

The achievement of a better service must surely be treated as a separate exercise because the NHS reforms and the National Health Service and Community Care Bill, which is going through the House at the moment, do not give the answer. Speech therapy is part of the National Health Service, but which reform will increase the number of therapists? And precisely which reform will equalise the service to patients throughout the country or see to it that speech therapists are paid a salary that reflects their qualifications and expertise so that health authorities can attract and recruit women and men to the profession and retain them once they are there?

Sometimes I think that little will be achieved until there is greater understanding of the problem among the general public. The profession has certainly tried to do something about that—for example, by its excellent "Speak Week" last week, which publicised the problems of communication handicapped people.

There needs to be greater understanding by the Government and the health authorities, too, because there remains a great deal of ignorance. Ministers keep saying that the level of speech therapy service to be provided will, as now, be a matter for determination by the district health authorities, in the light of local circumstances and of their assessment of priorities and available resources. But too often health authorities and health boards tend to treat speech therapy as a Cinderella service that is of no great

importance because the inability to communicate is not a life-threatening disorder. Matters will not improve unless the Government demand of the health authorities that they face up to their responsibilities to the communication handicapped and provide a decent service.

No one except those affected can fully appreciate the terrible sense of isolation—the deep psychological trauma—of those who have lost the ability to communicate. No one can understand the embarrassment and turning in on themselves and hurt—what has been described by many patients as an inner death—that patients suffer when they can no longer talk even to their own families. A speech and language problem is not visible to the world outside. Dysphasia is not supported by a zimmer; a stammer is not held in a sling; a laryngectomy is not in a plaster cast.

I am grateful to the Minister for having listened. I dare to say that I am optimistic that he will have a greater understanding of the needs of the communication impaired and the speech therapy profession than any of his predecessors.

11.53 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Mr. Roger Freeman): I congratulate the hon. Member for Argyll and Bute (Mrs. Michie), who is an expert in the field, having been a practising speech therapist, on initiating the debate. I apologise to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and to the hon. Lady if my voice is not what it normally should be.

This has been a valuable debate. Not only has it provided a valuable education for me—there is nothing like an Adjournment debate to focus one's attention and encourage one to learn what one can with the benefit of advice from officials—but it has given the Government the opportunity to put on record for the first time for a number of years the valuable contribution that speech therapists make. It is not a Cinderella service; it is an important service.

I would not dissociate myself from the hon. Lady's estimate of the number of people with a communication problem. She said that the figure was 2·3 million, of whom perhaps 800,000 suffer some form of severe disability. That is the order of magnitude of the problem. That is very much greater than the estimate that was made 20 years ago by the Quirk committee. The service is important, and it is increasingly recognised by the Department of Health and by the NHS.

I want briefly to refer to the expansion in the service over the past 10 years. The hon. Lady reminded the House that there has been an expansion. The record should show that expenditure on the speech therapy service in England has increased by more than 120 per cent. in real terms since 1979. That is a phenomenal increase. Between 1979 and 1988, the number of speech therapists employed in England increased by 80 per cent., and for Great Britain as a whole by 65 per cent. Those are impressive numbers, although I accept the thrust of the hon. Lady's argument that more needs to be done.

Since 1979, speech therapists have benefited from an increase in pay of 20 per cent. in real terms. It is interesting to note that the profession has recently accepted a 9 per cent. pay settlement for the 18-month period from 1 April 1989 to 30 September 1990. I appreciate the hon. Lady's comments about that increase in relation to other professions, but it includes the benefit of that 9 per cent. pay rise.

I assure the hon. Lady that we are committed to a proper review of the grading structure for speech therapists towards the end of the year. We have brought that review forward at the request of the profession, and we are committed to it. I understand that, between 1989 and 1990, regional health authority plans in England suggest that the profession will be expanded by a further 5 per cent.

So much for the past. The hon. Lady rightly said that a recent study by Enderby and Davies recommended the need for a fourfold expansion of the service. She poured a little cold water on the idea of a three-tier profession, and I can understand why she did so. However, it is important for the House to appreciate that demographic factors alone will make it very difficult for us to expand the service to the extent to which she referred, a fourfold increase.

There are two things that we can and should do in relation to the expansion of the profession. First, to meet the hon. Lady's point about clerical assistance, there is a good case for expanding the number of assistants available to qualified speech therapists. There were only 40 assistants available at the most recent count, which I believe was in 1987. We can and should expand the use of assistants to relieve some of the relatively mundane and clerical tasks of the profession.

Secondly, we should discuss further with the College of Speech Therapists the introduction of another grade, perhaps less qualified than the fully qualified speech therapist, to provide appropriate assistance for the qualified members of the profession. We must be flexible in our approach, because we must further expand the service, and, without looking at other ways of increasing numbers, we shall not succeed as we all wish.

I now consider the main burden of the hon. Lady's comments, which concern the NHS reforms and the White Paper. The hon. Lady is concerned about the fragmentation of the profession. Those fears were repeated when representatives of the profession recently met my hon. Friend the Minister for Health. I do not share those concerns because we are placing on district health authorities the responsibility to plan for all aspects of the health care needs of all who live within the district boundary, and that includes the need for speech therapy.

For the first time we have placed on health authorities a clear responsibility to plan. Incidentally, we have preserved the right to local access where NHS trusts might be established. Speech therapy, like many other services, can—and I am sure will—be designated as core, or necessary, services for a local community and therefore must be provided by NHS trusts.

In most cases, when preparing a contract for speech therapy, a district health authority will be able to deal with speech therapists—the professional group to the district—as a whole. From consultations with occupational therapists, I am well aware of the fears about fragmentation. I made it plain in another debate that there is no reason for such fears. The professional group within the district can and should remain intact. It seems only sensible that contracts written by the purchasers of health care should respect that integration and cohesion necessary for planning, recruitment, morale and retention in the writing of contracts.

[Mr. Roger Freeman]

The hon. Lady referred to open referral. I assure her that we have no plans to change that. The figures show that 40 per cent. of referrals come from consultants or GPs, but the majority come from those working in the community such as health visitors, local education authorities or from individuals referring themselves for treatment. We have no plans to change that. Open referral is an important principle that should and will remain.

We have no plans to cloud or affect the clinical autonomy of the profession and the professional group operating within a particular district health authority. It is important that that should be maintained. Very often, professional groups are concerned that there is nothing specifically in the White Paper, "Working for Patients", referring to them, so they fear that they are being neglected or forgotten. The White Paper was all about introducing a new structure for the organisation of health care. It contained no reference to speech therapists, and the same is true for many other professional groups, but I can offer the hon. Lady two assurances.

First, nothing in the White Paper would prejudice the provision of services by speech therapists. They are an important group, their services are needed and they will expand. Secondly, the hon. Lady laid great stress on consultation. I assure her that the Department will work closely with the College of Speech Therapists in planning the future expansion and provision of services.

It is our intention to work in true partnership and co-operation with that most important professional body to achieve what the hon. Lady and the Government seek to achieve—the expansion of the service within available resources and within the constraints of the demographic trough and to provide the best quality of speech therapy services for the greatest number of people.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at three minutes past Twelve o'clock.

House of Commons

Tuesday 13 March 1990

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PRIVATE BUSINESS

STRATHCLYDE REGIONAL COUNCIL ORDER CONFIRMATION BILL

Considered; to be read the Third time.

Oral Answers to Questions

EMPLOYMENT

Labour Statistics

1. **Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the unemployment rate in Worcester in *(a)* 1979, *(b)* 1984 and *(c)* 1989.

The Minister of State, Department of Employment (Mr. Tim Eggar): Between 1984 and 1989 the rate of unemployment, unadjusted, for the Worcester travel-to-work area fell from 11·2 per cent. to 4·5 per cent. Worcester travel-to-work area, as currently defined, did not exist in 1979.

Dr. Thomas: I am grateful to the Minister for that reply. Will he confirm that that decline is greater than the reduction in unemployment achieved in Wales during the comparable period? Are the employment policies pursued by the Welsh Office and by his Department identical? If the Secretary of State for Employment was to succeed the Secretary of State for Wales, would those policies continue?

Mr. Eggar: The hon. Gentleman has a close personal interest in the future of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales in relation to both their voting records. From January 1989 to January 1990, unemployment fell by 22·4 per cent. in Wales whereas in the United Kingdom as a whole it has fallen by 18·7 per cent. Wales has done considerably better than the United Kingdom over that period.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: Will my hon. Friend confirm that unemployment in Wales has fallen by 150,000 as a result of inward investment and that that achievement is due in great part to the efforts of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales? I am sure that the people of Worcester, too, would like to thank my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales for his efforts.

Mr. Eggar: I agree completely with my hon. Friend. The hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy (Dr. Thomas) also agrees, because he described my right hon. Friend as the best Secretary of State that Wales has ever had. In response to the question of my hon. Friend the Member for Pembroke (Mr. Bennett), more people are employed in Wales than ever before.

3. **Mr. Sumberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment by what amount the level of unemployment in the north-west of England has changed over the last three years for which figures are available.

The Secretary of State for Employment (Mr. Michael Howard): Between January 1987 and January 1990 seasonally adjusted unemployment in the north-west region has fallen by 179,000 or 43 per cent.

Mr. Sumberg: Does my right hon. and learned Friend recall that at the previous general election the Labour party promised to reduce unemployment by 1 million inside two years? Does he recognise that we have achieved that and more inside a shorter period? Does he agree that the best hope for the north-west, whose economy is booming, is a continuation of this Conservative Government?

Mr. Howard: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. We made no such specific pledges at the election, but we beat the Labour party's promise by two months. Unemployment has continued to decline since, and my hon. Friend correctly attributed that to the success of the Government's policies.

Mr. James Lamond: Is the Minister aware that in January there were 7,500 unemployed men and women in Oldham, that the number has increased since and that it is likely to increase even more unless his Department puts pressure on his colleagues to ensure that the multi-fibre arrangement is renewed and textiles are protected?

Mr. Howard: The hon. Gentleman knows very well the attitude of my right hon. and hon. Friends to that matter. We must look at the whole employment picture in the north-west, which, as I said to my hon. Friend the Member for Bury, South (Mr. Sumberg), is a very bright one.

Mr. Hind: Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that the fall in unemployment of 179,000 in the north-west is due in no small way to the vigorous policy of inward investment operated by the Department of Trade and Industry and to his Department's strong small business policy which have created thousands of new businesses and brought in much new investment from overseas?

Mr. Howard: I am always happy to pay tribute to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, and I agree entirely with my hon. Friend's observations. It is easy to overlook the important contribution that inward investment makes to sustaining our excellent employment record.

Mr. Blair: As he surveys the background to the Budget next week—we have the highest real interest rates of any of our main competitors, the worst inflation record, the worst balance of payments deficit, and training gaps and skills shortages—can the right hon. and learned Gentleman tell us when unemployment will get back down to the level that the Government inherited in 1979?

Mr. Howard: The hon. Gentleman should be aware, but perhaps is not, that there are 1·5 million more people in

work now than in 1979. That is the answer to his grossly extravagant claims, and that excellent record is the result of this Government's policies.

5. **Mr. Couchman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the latest figure for the total work force in employment in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Howard: In September 1989 the work force in employment in the United Kingdom was 26,955,000—the highest level ever. This represents an increase of 3,391,000 since March 1983.

Mr. Couchman: I am grateful to my right hon. and learned Friend for those figures. As he said, it proves that 1·5 million more people are in work now than in 1979. Will my right hon. and learned Friend point out our job creation record to our European partners who would foist upon us a social charter?

Mr. Howard: My hon. Friend makes a most important point. We are determined not to have inflicted upon us policies that would undo our achievements since 1979. Those achievements are due to our policy of lower regulation and the freeing of enterprise. Many of our European colleagues have much to learn from that.

Mr. Duffy: It is not difficult for the Secretary of State to comfort one of his hon. Friends from the south-east on a question such as this, although I note that he did not point out that two thirds of the increase in jobs last year was represented by part-time jobs. What does the Secretary of State say to an hon. Member from the north of England—from, say, the Sheffield travel-to-work area —where the number of registered claimants in January rose for the second month running?

Mr. Howard: Unlike Opposition Members, Conservative Members do not denigrate part-time work, which we believe has an important part to play in improving prospects for employment. The hon. Gentleman is aware that during the past few years unemployment has been falling in the north at least as fast as in other parts of the country, if not faster. Prosperity is spreading to all parts of the country.

Mr. Ian Taylor: Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that one reason for the high number of people in work is the bonfire of controls over industry and the enormous benefits from reducing corporation tax levels, especially for smaller firms? Will he try to explain that to the Opposition, some of whose emergent policies would throttle British business and increase unemployment?

Mr. Howard: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. The task of explaining these matters to the Opposition is very difficult, but we must never give up trying.

Mr. Alton: Notwithstanding the welcome improvement in unemployment figures, does the Secretary of State accept that the numbers of long-term unemployed people in some parts of the country, including the pockets of unemployment in Liverpool, remain stubbornly high? Does he further accept that when chambers of commerce make representations about the impact of the Channel tunnel on the more disparate regions of England, it could have a detrimental effect on employment patterns? What consideration is the right hon. and learned Gentleman giving to that?

Mr. Howard: The hon. Gentleman is right that there are still pockets where long-term unemployment is too high, although long-term unemployment has been falling faster than unemployment generally. The Channel tunnel will benefit all parts of the country. I hope that when the hon. Gentleman talks about the effects of Government policies on unemployment, particularly in Liverpool, he will pay full tribute to the uniform business rate, which will go a long way to improving employment prospects in his area.

Tourism

6. **Mr. Franks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the increase between 1988 and 1989 in expenditure in Britain by overseas visitors.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment (Mr. Patrick Nicholls): It is provisionally estimated that overseas residents spent £6,850 million in the United Kingdom during 1989, 11 per cent. more than in 1988.

Mr. Franks: Will my hon. Friend confirm that last year was the third record year in a row for the tourist industry? Will he also confirm that more than 1·5 million people work in the industry? Does he agree that the Opposition's attitude to tourism is an insult to the people who work in it?

Mr. Nicholls: My hon. Friend is entirely right to draw our attention to the fact that tourism is a highly vibrant industry. About 17·2 million visitors came to the United kingdom in 1989, and about 15·8 million in 1988. As my hon. Friend said, that is a record. It is welcome, especially for people working in the industry.

Mr. Eastham: The Minister mentions the importance of the tourist industry and the benefits to the nation, but I draw his attention to the miserable amount of money that the Government spend on promoting tourism in Britain. The sum of about £50 million is just petty cash compared with the potential earnings for the nation.

Mr. Nicholls: When one looks at the facts, rather than the rhetoric, one sees that in 1991 the British Tourist Authority will receive £27·7 milion and the English tourist board will receive about £14·5 million. Those are increases of 11 per cent. and 9 per cent. respectively. Where the hon. Gentleman goes wrong is in believing that an extremely thriving, mostly private sector industry could be helped by the dead hand of the state. Those days are gone and it is time the hon. Gentleman caught up.

Mr. Gregory: Does my hon. Friend remember the figures under the Labour Government in 1978-79, when tourism was derided as a candy floss industry good enough only for Mickey Mouse? Could not we further increase expenditure if we put out tourist information centres to competitive tender and concentrated, in this European Year of Tourism, on foreign languages?

Mr. Nicholls: In an industry as successful as this, the good ideas will keep on coming. I agree entirely with my hon. Friend that tourism has done extremely well under the Government. It comes badly from the Opposition to pledge their support for tourism but to deride jobs in the service industries.

Mr. John D. Taylor: I welcome the extension of foreign tourism in the United Kingdom. Does the Minister agree that it usually coincides with the success of the Government's policies and a decline in the exchange rate of the pound sterling?

Mr. Nicholls: I am not sure whether I can comment on that. The important point is whether we consider the industry in terms of overseas tourism of our citizens or of overseas citizens coming here. The industry is buoyant and has done extremely well under the Government.

Training

7. **Mr. Quentin Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what proportion of firms with 10 or more employees provide training.

Mr. Michael Howard: The latest survey carried out by my Department shows that 80 per cent. of firms with 10 employees or more provided training for their employees in 1986-87. The survey excluded agriculture and the armed services.

Mr. Davies: Does my hon. Friend agree that those figures are most encouraging for the future? Do not they give the lie effectively to the charge that is often made that British employers are not willing to provide training?

Mr. Howard: My hon. Friend is right. A total of £33 billion was spent on training in 1986-87, and the amount spent by employers has increased substantially.

Mr. Cryer: When the Minister calculates the amount spent on training, will he include in this year's figure the £11 million given to Astra Training Limited and the land which was passed to Astra, valued at almost £100 million, on which the skill centres are situated? That was a complete break with the policies set out in the Deloitte Corporate Finance Ltd. document issued on behalf of the Department of Employment. When will this ramp of taxpayers' money be given the publicity that it so richly deserves?

Mr. Howard: That money was made available to ensure that Astra could continue training at those skill centres. It represents an excellent agreement for the taxpayer and those who will continue to get training at the skill centres concerned.

Mr. Paice: Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that the increase in expenditure on training demonstrates the Government's increasing commitment and the fact that, in addition to the substantial success of the training and enterprise councils, the more control employers have over the delivery of training, the more their commitment will be and the better it will be for the long-term future of the British work force?

Mr. Howard: I agree entirely with my hon. Friend. Training and enterprise councils represent the most exciting initiative ever in training. I am delighted with their progress and my hon. Friend is absolutely right to recognise it.

Mr. McLeish: Is the Secretary of State aware that the 1989 labour force survey has just been published? Why, after 11 years of indifference and inactivity, do only 14 per cent. of British employees receive any form of either on or off-the-job skills training? Will he concede that we are in the second division for skills training—and not seeking promotion to the first division, but trying to avoid relegation to the third?

Mr. Howard: I congratulate the hon. Gentleman on drawing on his footballing past for the analogy in his question. I do not accept the suggestion of second division status in any respect. The latest labour force survey statistics show a substantial increase in the number of employees in receipt of training. We propose to build on that increase, and the training and enterprise councils will ensure that we succeed.

Disabled People

8. **Mr. David Nicholson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many disabled people were helped into jobs by his Department's programmes in 1988-89.

Mr. Eggar: In 1988-89, an estimated 77,200 people with disabilities were placed into jobs by jobcentres. In addition, many found jobs by other means following participation in other Department of Employment programmes.

Mr. Nicholson: Does my hon. Friend acknowledge that the figure that he has just announced is an impressive witness to the work undertaken by his Department to help the disabled? I say that with particular pleasure because 22 years ago I was a junior official in the Department. Will he continue to give a high priority to helping people with disabilities to get and keep work?

Mr. Eggar: I shall certainly draw my hon. Friend's remarks to the attention of the officials in my Department concerned with disabilities. The evidence of increased commitment can be seen in several ways, one of which is by looking at the increase in expenditure. In 1986-87 we spent £220 million on help to the disabled in employment and now we spend about £350 million.

Mr. Hannam: Is my hon. Friend aware that it is two years since his Department commissioned an important review into employment services for disabled people? When will the report be published?

Mr. Eggar: My hon. Friend and many other right hon. and hon. Gentlemen await the publication of the consultative document, and we are doing our best to produce it as soon as possible. We have decided that it would not be appropriate to publish it before we know the results of the survey of people with disabilities in the labour market. That has been commissioned and is being completed. We hope to be able to publish the consultative document in June this year.

Unofficial Strikes

9. **Mr. Dickens:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what proportion of industrial action taken in Britain is unofficial action.

Mr. Nicholls: A recent special exercise showed that in 1988 approximately one half of all stoppages and one third of all working days lost resulted from unofficial disputes.

Mr. Dickens: Does not the common sense vote by the ambulance workers to return to work illustrate how awful it would be if there were an unofficial strike by pockets of ambulance workers? Does my hon. Friend agree that it

says much for the Employment Bill which is going through the House of Commons that it would make such wildcat strikes illegal?

Mr. Nicholls: My hon. Friend is entirely right to draw the House's attention to the provisions in the Employment Bill which will require trade unions to say whether they support industrial action in particular cases. It is interesting that in Committee Opposition Members did everything that they could to defend the rights of unofficial strikers.

Mr. Heffer: In view of the ambulance workers' decision, why could not the Government have settled the dispute much earlier without the problems that have been caused? In relation to unofficial strikes, does the hon. Gentleman want workers to become wage slaves who must accept work whether they like it or not? The last right that ordinary working people have is the right to say no if they do not want to work for a particular employer in certain circumstances. By denying that, the Government are taking away a basic human right.

Mr. Nicholls: That really is the voice of the day before yesterday. It is remarkable that at a time when the citadels of state Socialism are crumbling all over Europe, the hon. Gentleman can get up and make a remark like that in favour of unofficial action. I should have thought that people who claim even a passing acquaintance with the trade union movement would be prepared to say that unofficial action should not be supported, but, to be frank, I never thought that the hon. Gentleman would take that view.

Mr. Janman: Does my hon. Friend agree that the vast majority of the British people are sick and tired of having to suffer at the hands of those who choose unofficial action, particularly in the public sector, and that the vast majority of the British people are thankful that at long last the Government have decided to do something about the problem? Does he agree that the attitude of Opposition Members in Committee, who continually opposed the progress towards this change in the law, is to be condemned and means that they are totally unfit to form a Government?

Mr. Nicholls: My hon. Friend is entirely right. If anyone wants evidence of the fact that Labour is the striker's friend, as it always has been—[HON. MEMBERS: "Disgraceful!"]—he could do much worse than read the reports of what was said in Committee. As hon. Gentlemen have just admitted, it is quite disgraceful.

Mr. Wallace: The Minister referred to the crumbling citadels of Socialism in eastern Europe. Does he accept that some of those citadels crumbled because of the type of unofficial action that the Government are making unlawful?

Mr. Nicholls: That was a question of remarkable puerility, even for the hon. Gentleman. It would be interesting for anyone who thinks that the alliance might live again to examine the hon. Gentleman's voting records and see how many times he had to side with the Opposition in Committee.

Women Workers

10. **Mr. Leighton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what further steps the Government are taking to develop child care facilities to ease the path of women into employment.

Mr. Howard: The provision of child care facilities is primarily a matter for employers. Ministers have recently taken a number of practical initiatives to encourage the development of good quality child care provision.

Mr. Leighton: That inadequate reply will cause disappointment in many parts of the House. Does the Secretary of State understand that child care is an idea whose time has come, because the overwhelming majority of new entrants to the labour market will be women? We shall recruit them only if we take the right steps now. The Government should not have a hands-off policy—standing back and leaving it to everyone else—but should take the responsibility for creating a comprehensive nationwide system of child care. That will not come cheap, but the Government should bear the largest burden because they will recoup in extra income tax, national insurance contributions and value added tax much of the money that they would have spent on a child care system.

Mr. Howard: I agree with much of what the hon. Gentleman said about the importance of making provision for women who wish to return to work. The labour force survey, which was published at the end of last week, shows a dramatic increase in the number of women at work and is evidence that women are returning to work in ever-growing numbers. However, I do not think that, on reflection, the hon. Gentleman would suggest that the Government should assume responsibility for the wide-ranging measures to which he referred. That is primarily a matter for employers, who are increasingly recognising their responsibilities.

Mr. Rowe: Does my right hon. and learned Friend accept that a high proportion of women who return to work are employed by small companies which are incapable of providing the type of child care facilities that women need? Will he assure us that his Department is studying the whole range of possibilities, such as vouchers and other mechanisms, by which such women can be attracted back? There is already an excellent precedent in the employment training facility.

Mr. Howard: I note what my hon. Friend says. I am sure that employers are looking increasingly at precisely the type of facilities to which he referred. However, the primary responsibility must be theirs.

Mrs. Mahon: Is not the local authority the best provider of child care? It knows what local people want. If local authorities were given the resources, they would be the best provider of child care. That would stop kids being dragged about in the early hours of the morning on buses and other forms of transport. Why does not the Minister accept his responsibilities as a member of the Government? If it could be done during the war, why cannot it be done now?

Mr. Howard: I am afraid that I cannot share the hon. Lady's views about the omniscience of local authorities. Therefore, I cannot agree with her suggestion.

Mrs. Peacock: Will my right hon. and learned Friend confirm that more women are working in this country than in any other European country? Although many of those jobs are part time, which the Opposition deride, does he accept that many want part-time work because it fits in with their family responsibilities?

Mr. Howard: My hon. Friend is absolutely right on both counts. I take some comfort from the Select Committee's recent report on part-time work. It paid particular tribute to the record of my Department, which makes part-time work available to virtually everyone who is appropriately qualified to do the job in question.

Health and Safety

11. **Mr. Andrew F. Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment when he last met the director-general of the Health and Safety Executive; and what was discussed.

Mr. Nicholls: My right hon. and learned Friend met the director-general of the Health and Safety Executive, together with the chairman of the commission, on 31 January for a discussion on the work of the commission and the executive.

Mr. Bennett: Does the Minister accept that there are still far too many accidents at work, and that, tragically, far too many people are still killed at work? What steps will the Health and Safety Commission take to protect in particular the increasing number of part-time workers who have great difficulty in making representations to their employers about their working conditions, if they are dangerous?

Mr. Nicholls: The first part of the hon. Gentleman's question was entirely right. I am sure that that is accepted on both sides of the House. As for the Government's contribution to the funds that are needed, during the past three years we have met the HSE bill in full. The HSE's consultative document relating to those who work on multi-contractor sites goes a considerable way towards addressing the hon. Gentleman's concerns.

Sir Dudley Smith: Is my hon. Friend aware that during the past 20 years there have been significant improvements in health and safety at work in this country and that we compare favourably with all other countries, particularly the advanced ones? Is he further aware that if we become too draconian, that can eventually be counterproductive? Will he please tell that to the director-general?

Mr. Nicholls: My hon. Friend is right to remind us that standards are a great deal better than they used to be. However, they could be a great deal better in certain industries. I have in mind the construction industry and the self-employed. I am sure that my hon. Friend agrees with me that a great deal more needs to be done.

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Lloyd.

Mr. Tony Lloyd *rose*——

Mr. Loyden: Why have the promises that were made to the docks industry——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I called the hon. Member for Stretford (Mr. Lloyd). I shall have to give the hon. Member for Liverpool, Garston (Mr. Loyden) another chance.

Mr. Lloyd: It was a small piece of ventriloquism, Mr. Speaker.

When the Secretary of State met the director-general of the Health and Safety Executive, did he discuss the lack of new personnel to monitor the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations, the lack of specialist health and safety inspectors and the lack of a proper framework within which to do the health and safety work that the Minister says he wants to be done? That is not happening.

Mr. Nicholls: My right hon. and learned Friend has had wide-ranging discussions with both bodies. If the hon. Gentleman was trying to say, yet again, that a mere increase in the number of inspectors will automatically lead to an automatic decrease in the number of accidents, he would be disguising the fact that the responsibility for dealing with health and safety is ultimately the responsibility of those involved—both employees and employers.

Mr. Sayeed: Will my hon. Friend confirm that the Health and Safety Executive has been granted all the resources that it asked for, for this year and for the next two years? Does not that give the lie to the Labour party's propaganda?

Mr. Nicholls: I repeat to my hon. Friend what I said a moment ago in relation to the public expenditure survey over the past three years. Under this Government, spending in real terms is at least as good as it was under the previous Government. Opposition Members sometimes make the mistake of believing that all those problems could be solved by the mere expenditure of money. It is a beguiling notion. It would be good if it were true, but it is not.

Disabled People

12. **Mrs. Margaret Ewing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what proportion of the registered disabled adult population are currently in *(a)* full-time and *(b)* part-time employment.

Mr. Eggar: I regret that comprehensive information on the employment status of registered disabled people is not yet available. A study commissioned by my Department will provide comprehensive information about the numbers and characteristics of people with disabilities in the labour market.

Mrs. Ewing: We shall all be very grateful when those statistics are available. Does the Minister accept that previous surveys showed clearly that unemployment among disabled people—reaching about 19 per cent. in 1988—is much higher than among able-bodied people? Is not there a need to introduce programmes to educate employers into recognising that one disability does not mean general inability, so there should be discrimination to ensure that disabled people are offered posts for which they are qualified?

Mr. Eggar: The hon. Lady made some good points. I thank her for her recognition of the need for a

comprehensive analysis. There have been surveys, but, with regard to the type of job, the type of disability, and so on, they have been partial. We have decided to delay publication of the consultation document on the review, to enable us to take account of the study that is being carried out. That will be to the benefit of everybody who is interested in disability.

Mr. Bowis: Will my hon. Friend do what he can to remove the uncertainty that hangs over training establishments, such as the SHARE community, year by year? Without training, so many people cannot benefit from the job opportunities that are available to able-bodied people.

Mr. Eggar: Obviously, my hon. Friend understands how we make money available for training on a year-by-year basis. That is necessitated by the way in which my Department is funded. If my hon. Friend wishes to draw a particular point to my attention, I shall be very happy to meet him to discuss it.

Unemployment, Cornwall

13. **Mr. Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the latest unemployment rate in Cornwall; and what was the average figure in Cornwall in 1979.

Mr. Eggar: In January 1990 the rate of unemployment in the county of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly was 10 per cent., compared with an average of 9·7 per cent. for 1979. Those figures are not adjusted to take account of seasonal influences or changes in coverage.

Mr. Taylor: The House may be aware of the recent announcement that one of the two remaining tin mines in my constituency and in Cornwall—the Wheal Jane tin mine—is to be closed. This is a matter mainly for the Department of Trade and Industry, which has been funding the mine. However, I hope that Employment Ministers will make a special effort to help with, and take into account, the employment problems that may arise in that immediate area as a direct result of closure, if it goes ahead, and as a result of spin-off losses.

Mr. Eggar: I am very sad to hear about those closure plans. I visited the mine, which, I think, is just outside the hon. Gentleman's constituency, some years ago. I understand what the hon. Gentleman is saying. However, I have to say that over the past year the fall in unemployment in his constituency has been sharper than the fall generally in the United Kingdom.

Health and Safety

14. **Mr. Strang:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he will make a statement on the Health and Safety Commission and Executive's annual report for 1988-89.

Mr. Nicholls: The report of the Health and Safety Commission and Executive was published on 26 February. Latest provisional statistics for 1988-89, published in the report, show an apparent levelling off of major injuries, which we very much welcome. But the number of fatalities, which include those from the Piper Alpha disaster, and high or increasing injury rates in particular industries demonstrate that there is not room for any relaxation of effort by industry to improve standards.

Mr. Strang: In view of what the Minister said earlier, does he accept that no Opposition Member is suggesting that there is a direct, hard and fast relationship between the number of factory inspectors and the number of accidents? However, the report shows an unjustifiably high number of fatal accidents—something which was commented on at the press conference last month. Does the Minister accept that factory inspectors do very important preventive work, which improves the situation? Surely the Government must look at that again and take an initiative to increase the number of factory inspectors.

Mr. Nicholls: I can agree with a great deal of what the hon. Gentleman says. If he looks at the changes over the past two and a half years, he will accept that there has been a relatively late but welcome conversion to the proposition that mere inspector numbers do not automatically produce a decrease in accidents. Yes, inspectors have their place and, yes, that is why the HSE has been funded, but they are not the whole story.

Mr. Ian Bruce: As a result of the HSE report, has my hon. Friend found out whether the displaying of notices in all workplaces, giving the address and telephone number of the HSE, has ensured that employees and employers alert the HSE to many more cases of concern? Has my hon. Friend's Department looked in offices in the Palace of Westminster and seen how few seem to display those notices, which appears to be against the law?

Mr. Nicholls: I accept my hon. Friend's point about getting over to people the idea that there should be greater awareness of health and safety legislation. My hon. Friend asks me to pass judgment on a legal matter relating to the Palace of Westminster. I am tempted, but I shall decline.

Training and Enterprise Councils

15. **Mr. Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many corporate plans were submitted by 5 February and how many training and enterprise councils he anticipates giving approval to by 2 April.

Mr. Howard: Thirteen prospective training and enterprise councils have submitted their corporate plans and they are currently being considered. I am not prepared to speculate on the number that will begin operation on any particular date.

Mr. Hughes: The Secretary of State will be aware that many other hon. Members and I welcome the setting up of training and enterprise councils, but he will be aware also that they will be judged by their success. Will their corporate plans include targets for the number of traineeships, for the number of additional qualifications and for the reduction in the number of unemployed people as a result of the TECs? Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman realise that 50 per cent. and more of the work force has had no training? Does he agree that, unless that percentage is substantially reduced, any change in structure will be a failure, as many other initiatives have been?

Mr. Howard: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for his welcome for the TECs. I agree that they will be judged by their success. Not only will they be set targets, but a part of their income will depend on an assessment of their performance, and that is one reason why I am so confident that they will be a huge success.

Low Pay

17. **Mr. Wigley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment when he last met representatives from the Low Pay Unit; and what was discussed.

Mr. Nicholls: My right hon. and learned Friend has not met representatives from the Low Pay Unit.

Mr. Wigley: Does the Minister accept that those who are on low pay, many of whom are in the old industrial valleys and rural areas of Wales, are the very people who will be hardest hit by the poll tax? Those families will get no benefit from rebates. Will the hon. Gentleman take up this matter with the Chancellor of the Exchequer to ensure that, at the very least, the position of those people is safeguarded in that they will not be brought within the tax rate by the non-indexation of tax allowances?

Mr. Nicholls: As the hon. Gentleman says, there is a community charge rebate system. Some 7·5 million people will benefit from a rebate of up to 80 per cent. Obviously, everyone, including the Government, will watch with great interest how the scheme develops in practice.

Engineers

19. **Mr. Rathbone:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what steps he is taking to meet the demand for qualified engineers.

Mr. Eggar: It is a primary responsibility of employers to ensure that they attract, develop and retain qualified engineers. My Department, through the Training Agency, is taking action that will encourage employers to take a stronger lead in improving the supply of skills in industry, including engineering.

Mr. Rathbone: That action must be welcome. What liaison does my hon. Friend have with the Engineering Council to further its good work?

Mr. Eggar: I recently had the pleasure of discussing matters with the chairman of the Engineering Council, Sir William Barlow. The measures that we are introducing, including TECs, recognition of the important role of employers in defining vocational qualifications and our various initiatives to encourage business and education partnerships, will all help to improve engineering skills.

Health and Safety

20. **Mr. Allen McKay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the Health and Safety Commission's annual report 1988-89.

Mr. Nicholls: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply I gave some moments ago to his hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh, East (Mr. Strang).

Mr. McKay: Does the Minister agree that the greates. asset to industry is its work force and that the health and safety of that work force is of paramount importance? Is the Minister satisfied with the number of health and safety inspectors, and with what is he doing to increase the powers and numbers of health and safety inspectors?

Mr. Nicholls: I accept what the hon. Gentleman said in the first part of his question and I pay tribute to the work of the inspectors. However, we must both accept that a mere increase in the number of inspectors is not the whole answer to the question, although it is a valuable contribution.

PRIME MINISTER

Engagements

Q1. **Mr. Gwilym Jones:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 13 March.

The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher): This morning, I had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House, I shall be having further meetings later today. This evening, I hope to have an audience of Her Majesty the Queen.

Mr. Jones: Does my right hon. Friend agree that it is an outrage for Members of this honourable House to incite others to break the law?

The Prime Minister: Yes, I totally agree with my hon. Friend. It is a negation of democracy and an appalling example to all young people, whom we urge to obey the rule of law, for without that, there can be no order. I welcome the condemnation by the right hon. Member for Islwyn (Mr. Kinnock) of the violence and of the 31 Opposition Members who have said that they will not obey the law. Those are his words and we now wait for him to follow them up with action.

Q2. **Mr. Home Robertson:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 13 March.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Home Robertson: We in Scotland—*[Interruption.]*—if the right hon. Lady does not mind my borrowing that phrase—are still waiting for the answers to many of the questions from which she ran away when she visited our country last week. Do she and her hon. Friends recall that 11 out of 21 Scottish Tory Members of Parliament lost their seats in 1987, largely because of the poll tax? As she managed to make the draw for the semi-finals of the Scottish Football Association competition a week before the qualifying matches took place, would she now like to draw the next batch of losers on her own Back Benches before she herself bales out?

The Prime Minister: I should like the right hon. Member for Islwyn (Mr. Kinnock) to take action on the 31 Opposition Members who are refusing to pay the community charge and to know from the hon. Gentleman whether he himself believes in upholding the law.

Mr. Onslow: If my right hon. Friend needs reassurance, which I doubt, may I assure her that last Sunday's press reports of polls and plots against her were absolute poppycock? *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order.

The Prime Minister: I thank my right hon. Friend—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. The House wants to hear the Prime Minister's reply.

The Prime Minister: I thank my right hon. Friend. I did not believe the reports anyway and thought that the usual source near to No. 10 Downing street, who dismissed them as bunkum and balderdash, got it absolutely right.

Q3. **Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 13 March.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Cohen: Will the Prime Minister respond to the report of the Policy Studies Institute, which showed that nearly 3 million households owed £2 billion by way of personal debt? As the poll tax will mean payments of 33 per cent. more than the rates cost last year and will represent an even larger burden on many families, and as mortgage rates are sky high and rents set to rise by 20 per cent., is the right hon. Lady aware that the Government are plunging people deeper and deeper into the red? Is she further aware that the British people are showing how fed up they are with being bled white and blue?

The Prime Minister: Nonsense. It will not have escaped the hon. Gentleman's notice that the rates of income tax are far below any that reigned in Labour's time in office, that they are now 25p in the pound as the standard rate and 40p in the pound as the upper rate. I remind the hon. Gentleman that if community charges are very high, that is the fault of Labour councils——

Hon. Members: What about Tory councils?

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister: It is—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. The House must not be disorderly. We must hear the Prime Minister's reply to supplementary questions.

The Prime Minister: It is quite clear that it always costs more under Labour.

Mr. Allason: Does my right hon. Friend think, given the Banking Acts' requirement that fit and proper people should hold banking licences, that the brothers Fayed should hold a banking licence at Harrods?

The Prime Minister: That is a matter for the regulatory authorities, not for me. The regulations are clearly laid down. How the law is applied is a matter for those authorities. How a prosecution happens is a matter for the Attorney-General, who answered questions on that matter yesterday.

Mr. Kinnock: With that last answer, the whole House will have noticed the right hon. Lady's choosy view of law and order——

Hon. Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinnock: Will the Prime Minister give an assurance that, despite the continued rise in retail sales, the Government will not resort to higher interest rates yet again?

The Prime Minister: My answer to the right hon. Gentleman's first comment is that I should have thought that he would know that prosecution is never a matter for politicians—*[Interruption.]* He does not even know that. The day when a politician could institute prosecutions, the rule of law would end. The prosecuting authorities are independent and they are not politicians.

As for the figures of retail sales, which are up 2 per cent. on this time last year, I should point out that the previous year they were up by 4 per cent. and the year before that they were up by 8 per cent. So there is a steady progression downwards and therefore interest rates are working.

Mr. Kinnock: The Prime Minister should check the figures. This time last year the rise was 2·2 per cent., which is less than it has been in the last month. Does she not yet realise that her high interest rate policies are not controlling demand but are increasing inflation? That which she said would cure inflation is actually causing it. Will she admit that and not take a course that will add to the problems and make matters worse?

The Prime Minister: No. Retail sales this year are 2 per cent. above what they were this time last year. Last year they were 4 per cent. above what they had been the previous year, and the previous year the figure was 8 per cent. So there is a steady progression downwards in the growth of retail sales. There is no other way of getting inflation down than by increasing the price of money. If the hon. Gentleman reads what previous Labour Finance Ministers said, he will see that they took the same view.

Mr. Kinnock: Has not the Prime Minister grasped the idea that her policies are failing to manage demand? They are increasing inflation, decreasing manufacturing investment and clobbering every home buyer in the country. How is that helping to reduce inflation, which is an objective shared by all sensible people but not fulfilled by the Prime Minister and her policies?

The Prime Minister: But I thought that the right hon. Gentleman was complaining that demand in regard to retail sales is still pretty high. He cannot have it both ways. Either he is saying that people have no money, or he is saying that they have rather a lot, to make the retail sales higher than a year ago. In any case, we do not take lessons from the right hon. Gentleman on inflation, which rose under the previous Labour Government to 27 per cent. —a record for this century.

Mr. Churchill: Will my right hon. Friend spell out the consequences of any campaign of civil disobedience, as advocated by certain Opposition Members? Would not that starve local authorities of resources, thereby leading to tens of thousands of job losses in local government, and furthermore to the curtailment of services for the elderly and disabled? Is that what the Labour party wants?

The Prime Minister: My hon. Friend is absolutely correct. If people do not obey the law and pay their community charge—which is the fairest charge that we have ever had for local authorities, and is far fairer than the Opposition's alternative—the consequence will be that there will not be enough money for teachers or for

community care to look after old people and children. Such people would be wilfully damaging those whose interests they claim to represent.

Q4. **Mr. Tony Lloyd:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 13 March.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Lloyd: Is the Prime Minister aware that doctors in Manchester have now gone on record as saying that patients are dying because of a lack of intensive care beds? Those beds are not available because the authorities do not have the money to pay the trained staff. The Prime Minister normally gives us a long lecture at this point. Will she simply say what she intends to do to ensure that my constituents and those of my colleagues in that area do not die because of the lack of beds?

The Prime Minister: I can only say that more money has been made available by the taxpayer for the Health Service this year than ever before. This year, an additional £2·4 billion will be available, and next year there will be a further £3 billion. Altogether, that amounts to some £39 a week in respect of every family in the country. We look to regional and district health authorities to use that money well. We note that the great majority of them are able to do so, and provide services that most people find excellent.

Mr. Maples: Will my right hon. Friend find time today to congratulate the Labour-controlled council in Barking and Dagenham on having set a community charge of £280, which is just £2 over the Government's suggested figure? As that part of London is represented in the House by two shadow Cabinet members—one the chief spokesman on the environment—is not that an excellent example of what can be achieved, for them and us to present to other Labour-controlled councils?

The Prime Minister: My hon. Friend makes his point effectively. It is possible to live within the Government's guidelines for spending, and some Labour-controlled councils are already doing so. That only shows up the rest as deliberately trying to overspend to make it difficult for their residents.

Q5. **Mr. Fearn:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 13 March.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Fearn: With 2 million more people in debt and 400,000 people two months in arrears in rates and mortgage payments, and with the divorce rate almost doubling, does not the Prime Minister recognise that she is crucifying the women of this country and family life?

The Prime Minister: No. Far more people are in owner-occupied houses now than 10 years ago and there are more women with jobs now than there ever have been. Separate taxation for married women will be introduced on 1 April, again for the first time, and that will be welcome to many people.

Q6. **Mr. Bowis:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 13 March.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Bowis: Has my right hon. Friend had time to read the report of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, which links satanic practices with child abuse? Will she do everything in the Government's power to support the police and the child welfare agencies in stamping out such loathsome practices?

The Prime Minister: I saw the reports on the NSPCC report in the newspapers this morning. All hon. Members will be outraged that children may be sexually abused for the purposes of perversion or pornography, and everyone will be equally anxious to stamp that out. We have increased the penalties for child cruelty and we have tightened the law on child pornography by making possession of such material an offence. Tackling the problem remains a priority for the police, but we need evidence, and if people have evidence of cruelty to children they should not hesitate to place it before the police so that action can be taken as quickly as possible.

Arts Funding

3.30 pm

The Minister for the Arts (Mr. Richard Luce): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a statement about the structure of arts funding in England.

In December 1988 I commissioned a study of the system which exists for funding the arts in England through the Arts Council and the regional arts associations. My object was to ensure that we have the best funding structure for the arts in the 1990s.

The review was conducted by Mr. Richard Wilding, formerly head of the Office of Arts and Libraries, who presented his report to me in September 1989. Copies were placed in the Libraries of both Houses. I thank Mr. Wilding for his excellent work, a deep analysis of the problems and their possible solutions.

Following receipt of the report, I initiated an intensive period of consultation during which I received more than 6,000 written responses, had discussions with all interested parties and met several delegations of hon. Members and regional representatives.

I asked Mr. Wilding to pay particular attention to the following objectives: coherence between the national funding bodies and the regional arts associations in the formulation and delivery of policy; strengthening accountability for the public money spent by the regional arts associations; improving structures for the handling of business; considering the administrative cost of the whole system so as to get the best value for the arts.

Working on the basis of Mr. Wilding's recommendations, I have taken broad decisions that combine greater devolution with strengthened accountability.

First, I look to the Arts Council to formulate a national strategy for the arts and to monitor its operation throughout the country. The council will retain overall responsibility for strategic issues such as training, education, research, touring, innovation, broadcasting and international affairs. The Arts Council will continue to fund the national companies and some other organisations.

Secondly, I have decided that there should be a further shift in grant-giving responsibilities from the Arts Council to the regional arts associations. The associations will be responsible for most clients, although as the devolution process takes shape I shall need to be satisfied that it will both maintain and enhance standards of excellence throughout the country.

Thirdly, devolution to the regional arts associations will be accompanied by greater accountability for the larger sums of public money at their disposal, through a system of forward planning and budgeting under the direction of the Arts Council.

Fourthly, it will be important to have strongly based and well-resourced regional arts associations to deal with their enhanced responsibilities. The statistics show clearly that Merseyside Arts and Lincolnshire and Humberside Arts are, in terms of budget, population and the number of local authorities in the region, considerably smaller than the other 10 regional arts associations. I have, therefore, decided that, with effect from April 1991, Merseyside Arts should merge with North West Arts, Humberside should join Yorkshire Arts and Lincolnshire should become part of Eastern Arts.

I fully acknowledge the specific and unique cultural identity of Merseyside and the vital role that Merseyside Arts has played in the regeneration of the area. A regional arts office will be maintained in Liverpool for the foreseeable future, although Manchester will be the new regional headquarters.

Lincolnshire and Humberside Arts has also been a tireless promoter of the arts in its area. I shall ensure that satisfactory arrangements are made for the future well-being of the arts in Lincolnshire, and to preserve its cultural identity.

There will also be other boundary adjustments. The new regional arts associations will become regional arts boards. The chairman should be elected by the board and I have not accepted the recommendation that local authority councillors should be debarred from the chairmanship.

I recognise and welcome the important role of local authorities as funders of the arts, and I have decided they should have substantial representation on these new regional boards, provided it is less than a majority.

The Arts Council should have no more than 20 members. The number of regional representatives should be increased from three to five to reflect the enhanced role of the regional arts boards. Its decision will also be assisted by a newly established consultative body consisting of the chairman of the Arts Council, the chairmen of the Scottish and Welsh Arts Councils, and, if he so wishes, the chairman of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland.

Fifthly, the Crafts Council will remain an independent body. It should explore with the Arts Council ways of achieving closer co-ordination and co-operation to prevent duplication of effort. I am inviting the Crafts Council to reassess its corporate strategy in the light of my announcement.

Sixthly, I have set out more clearly defined roles for the British Film Institute.

Lastly, we should aim for the overall changes to be completed by April 1993. I am establishing a steering group to be responsible for implementing the changes. This group will report to me. I am pleased to announce the appointment of Mr. Timothy Mason, at present director of the Scottish Arts Council, to manage these reforms.

I have set out all these arrangements in more detail in a letter to the chairman of the Arts Council, a copy of which I have placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Mr. Mark Fisher (Stoke-on-Trent, Central): We warmly welcome the Minister's announcement of a major devolution of power and responsibility from the Arts Council in London to the regions, but where is the new money, where is the investment, with which to take advantage of the opportunities which the Minister has quite correctly and positively created today?

Devolution is an essential step towards providing a structure for the expansion of the arts throughout this country in the 1990s, but it will be realised only if the Minister can back his structural alterations by showing similar courage and foresight in providing money.

The Minister has demonstrated that he has listened to the 6,000-odd representations that he has received from all over the country and to the, I understand, nearly 200 hon. Members who have written to him and with whom he has had meetings. We wish that more Ministers would listen so constructively to representations made to them, and we wish that more Ministers would take such an interest in

devolving power from the capital to the regions. We commend both those initiatives to his right hon. Friend the Prime Minister. She might well learn from the right hon. Gentleman.

We welcome the new strategic role for the Arts Council, but we have to ask how radical a devolution it is to be. We note that the Arts Council will retain the national companies and some other organisations. Will the Minister tell the House today how many other organisations, and which ones? Will it include the orchestras, Opera North, the English Stage Company and others? Does he accept that if he lengthens the list too much he will weaken the positive move towards devolution that he has announced? He has a difficult job there, and I think that the House needs to hear more from him on that.

We regret that the Minister has not had the courage to follow the logic of his devolutionary statement and allow all the regional arts boards to be represented as of right on the Arts Council. If he is serious about regional devolution, why will there be only five regional members out of 20 on the Arts Council? How will those five be determined, who will choose them, and why, if he is giving them more power, does he not trust the regions to have a voice and act in the national interest when they are represented on the Arts Council? Will there be an inner cabinet with this new consultative body that he is setting up? Will he tell the House rather more about the consultative inner group that he mentioned?

We are extremely enthusiastic about his belief in strongly based regions and we noticed that he said that they should be well resourced. We, of course, concur with that. They are not well resourced at the moment. Is he intimating that there will be new money?

I think that my right hon. and hon. Friends from Merseyside will require a great deal more from the Minister than the kind words and the cuts that we have had this afternoon. Will he explain and justify further his thinking behind picking out Merseyside and Lincolnshire and Humberside as the only areas that should be axed? Will he give positive reassurance to my hon. Friends and others about the local roots and contacts with companies in Merseyside and the expertise and skills in that regional arts association? Will he ensure that there are no job losses and that the structure can maintain the excellent cultural life of Merseyside and of Lincolnshire and of Humberside?

We are delighted that the Minister has given assurances that councillors will be eligible, as they should be, to be chairmen of regional arts bodies. We recognise that the important role of local authorities has been mentioned by the Minister. Will he say more about that? Does he join us in believing that the real expansion in the 1990s in our cultural life will come through local authorities? If so, how does that square with the poll tax?

On timing, we believe that this may be too slow. Will the Minister consider ways of speeding up the process, and who will bear the cost of the changes? It would be wrong to devolve and then ask the regions to bear all the costs for that decision. The regions will welcome the decision, but they should not bear the cost.

The House will note that there were two omissions from the Minister's statement. One is the mention of tiers, of which Mr. Wilding made great play. Will the Minister join us in confirming that the tier structure will not feature in his plans? What has happened to the federal structure to which Mr. Wilding referred?

This is an important day for the arts. The Minister has made a brave and good start on a framework for the arts in the 1990s, but he knows that new funding is needed not only for the national companies, which are acutely in deficit, but for the new opportunities that he has created in the regions. There is demand not only from the West Yorkshire playhouse and the Lyceum in Sheffield but from theatres in Cumbria and galleries and art centres all over the country. Will the Minister recognise that the poll tax could damage greatly what he is attempting to do in the regions? Will he take that on and fund arts at local government and regional level? If so, he will have the support of the whole House.

Mr. Luce: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman, if I understood him aright, for his general support for the statement on the structure of funding for the arts into the 1990s and into the next century. It is very important for it to be coherent and to get the right structure so that it commands the confidence of the arts world and of Parliament.

On the hon. Gentleman's point about devolution, does he remember that just before Christmas he was generous enough to congratulate the Government on the 24 per cent. increase in the next three years in the total amount of financial support for the arts? If that is not a commitment by the Government to the arts, what is? That is a substantial commitment against the background of three-year funding which has been introduced for the first time.

On the scale of devolution, if, when the hon. Gentleman has time, he studies the letter which I have sent to Mr. Palumbo, the chairman of the Arts Council, he will see the broad guidelines that I have set for devolution. A copy of that letter is in the Library. Broadly speaking, I accept the recommendations of the Wilding report, but I also ask that we should consider the possibility of further devolution. I have extended the number of years before which it must be implemented to three to give time to assess it. It will be up to Mr. Mason, who is managing the reform, to recommend which of the main parts of the Arts Council, which are centres of excellence in the regions, would be suitable for devolution. But I would want to be reassured that they remain centres of excellence and that nothing was done to undermine that.

There will be 10 regional arts boards, and five representatives will serve on the Arts Council. I am anxious not to have a large Arts Council. For that reason I decided that membership should be limited to 20. I hope and believe that the regions will feel that they are well represented.

I am conscious of the important role that Merseyside and Lincolnshire have played in the arts over many years. There is a strength and a cultural identity in both areas. I am aware of that and I am asking the manager, Mr. Mason, to make absolutely sure that in any transitional period they do not suffer in any way and that their cultural identity is properly acknowledged.

I have decided that the tier system recommended by Mr. Wilding is not the right way to proceed because it would lead to confusion. The hon. Gentleman referred to a federal partnership. I am looking for a partnership between the Arts Council and the regional arts bodies. They will be accountable to the Arts Council and they will have to account for the expenditure of taxpayers' money, but they must work in partnership.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. Before I call Back Benchers, I remind the House that we have an important day ahead of us, with 43 new clauses and numerous other amendments to be debated. I ask hon. Members to ask single questions rather than multiple questions.

Mr. Toby Jessel (Twickenham): Is my right hon. Friend aware that the continued independence of the Crafts Council will be most warmly welcomed? Does he foresee increased regional control leading to more local accountability? Will the balance within each region be fairly ensured? For example, in Greater London, will there be a sanction to ensure that outer London is not treated worse than inner London from an artistic and cultural point of view?

Mr. Luce: I believe that I have taken the right decision about the Crafts Council in that it should be independent. The role of the Crafts Council in relation to craftsmen is slightly different from the role of the Arts Council in relation to artists. The Crafts Council has a hands-on role. However, I am anxious to ensure that resources are not wasted and that there is proper co-operation between regional arts and the crafts organisations.

I will summarise the regional arrangements for my hon. Friend. The basis of my announcement is that, on the one hand, there should be more devolution and responsibility in the regions, while, on the other, there should be an effective system of accountability for the use of taxpayers' money for which the Arts Council will hold ultimate responsibility to me and, through me, to Parliament. That is the basis of the system that I am advocating. Greater London Arts is responsible for the Greater London area and its job is to ensure that the arts flourish in all parts of London.

Mr. Robert Maclennan (Caithness and Sutherland): How will the strategic role of the Arts Council be strengthened, particularly in its co-operation with the regions, if only a quarter of the members of the new Arts Council are to be drawn from the regional arts associations? Who will elect the regional arts boards? What additional funds will be made available to local authorities for their work in that area?

Mr. Luce: The local authorities already play an important role in supporting the arts. That role varies and is patchy in some areas, but it has increased over the years. Fifteen per cent. of the overall resources of the regional arts boards—as they are now to be called—presently come from local authorities. I want them to play an important role, although their members must be under the majority of the board.

With regard to the Arts Council and the appointment of five regional arts representatives, I am anxious that the members of the Arts Council should remain small in number and not more than 20. Theirs is a strategic job. They must look at the national picture—whether that is Scotland, Wales or the whole of England—and take decisions on that basis. Therefore, representatives should cover a cross-section of interests in the country, both in the arts and in the non-arts areas, and ensure that they consider things in the broadest possible sense. However, I believe the regional arts bodies will find that by having five representatives their interests are taken fully into account.

Mr. Timothy Raison (Aylesbury): I congratulate my right hon. Friend on another excellent series of decisions. In view of the concern in Buckinghamshire about our having to belong to an extremely large Eastern Arts region, will Bucks go to the Eastern region or elsewhere?

Mr. Luce: In my letter to Mr. Palumbo I said that as Eastern Arts is taking on Lincolnshire, I did not think that Buckinghamshire should become part of Eastern Arts. Bucks is part of the East Midlands area at the moment, but I have asked Mr. Mason to consult Buckinghamshire to see whether it wants to be part of the East Midlands area or part of Southern Arts. I am grateful for my right hon. Friend's support.

Mr. Robert Sheldon (Ashton-under-Lyne): The House will have received the right hon. Gentleman's most welcome statement with pleasure. However, is he aware that if he is to achieve a diffusion of the strength of the arts in London into the regions, he will need to develop the strength of the regional boards? As my hon. Friend the Member for Stoke-on-Trent, Central (Mr. Fisher) has said, that will need money. I know that the right hon. Gentleman is providing some money, but more will be needed.

Is the right hon. Gentleman further aware that one of the great strengths of which he ought to be able to make use when approaching the Treasury is that Britain is the centre of the arts for the English-speaking world? That is an enormous strength. People come to this country not because of our weather or necessarily because of the type of people that we are, but because of the strength of the arts. If we can spread that strength through the regions, that should provide the right hon. Gentleman with a marvellous claim that he can present to the Treasury in due course.

Mr. Luce: I am grateful for the right hon. Gentleman's support for the broad thrust of the announcement. Of course, I acknowledge the important role of the arts in this country—I have said that time and again. I should have thought that the right hon. Gentleman would accept that a 24 per cent. cash increase over the next three years is a substantial commitment by the Government to the arts in this country. I hope and believe that that is the case.

I agree with the right hon. Gentleman that it is important that the regional arts boards should be robust and strong and able to manage a wide range of arts activities, from important centres of national excellence to local community arts. At the moment, they handle £30 million-worth of resources and will have a considerable further shift. That is why it is important that their boards should represent a cross-section of interests.

Mr. Malcolm Thornton (Crosby): May I, too, congratulate my right hon. Friend on his decision, which will be widely welcomed in the arts world and provide a satisfactory framework for the future? However, is he aware that there will be some dismay on Merseyside about the fact that we appear to be losing our identity in the north-west? Will he assure us that the office that will be established in Merseyside will protect not only the funding that Merseyside Arts receives but the excellent innovations of and the unique place that Merseyside Arts has in this country?

Mr. Luce: I am grateful to my hon. Friend and am sensitive to the point that he has just made. Over the years,

I have paid many visits to Merseyside and have seen the arts in that area and the work of Merseyside Arts. As I said in my statement, I entirely accept that there is a clear and distinct cultural identity in the Merseyside area. If Merseyside Arts were to continue as it is, it would be too small an organisation to manage the large-scale devolution that is taking place. However, because I believe that it is so important to have strong arts on Merseyside, I have acknowledged that there should be a regional office, which will have considerable freedom, working with North-West Arts. I hope that that acknowledges my hon. Friend's important point.

Mr. Robert N. Wareing (Liverpool, West Derby): Notwithstanding that answer, does the Minister realise that to the people of Merseyside his announcement will look like devolution in reverse? They will be concerned to ensure that the regional office is staffed as well as Merseyside Arts is staffed at present. Will the Minister assure us that there will not be any redundancies? Will Merseyside be assured of proper representation on the North West Arts board?

Mr. Luce: On the latter point, it will be exceedingly important that those organisations integrate and work closely together. I believe that there can and will be advantages to Merseyside in being part of that larger organisation while preserving its own identity through a strong regional office.

It would be wrong and misleading of me to suggest that there will not be any redundancies. At this stage, it is not possible exactly to determine the scale of staffing. There will have to be intensive discussions between Merseyside Arts and North West Arts to decide how they will work effectively together. Overall, we should not lose sight of the importance of the possible benefits to be derived from a bigger organisation.

Mr. Barry Porter (Wirral, South): I am obliged to my right hon. Friend for making the case for Merseyside and its unique position in the arts. I have tried to follow all his arguments about administration, but I am more interested in the Liverpool Playhouse and the Everyman theatre. Perhaps my right hon. Friend will be able to help me about the representations that he has received. While the reorganisation is taking place and the balance of power shifts to Manchester, will the Liverpool Playhouse and the Everyman theatre continue to exist, or are we to have the "Terry Dicks memorial desert"?

Mr. Luce: As my hon. Friend knows so well, the arts in Merseyside are wide ranging and strong. They range from the national institutions—the national museums and galleries to which I gave national status three or four years ago—to the wide range of performing arts, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic orchestra and the excellent theatres and playhouses. The range of arts activities on Merseyside is strong and important, and I acknowledge that. How they are funded is a matter, now and in the future, for the regional arts associations to work out in conjuction with the Arts Council. I am convinced that the important role that Merseyside plays in the arts will continue to be acknowledged.

Mr. Eric S. Heffer (Liverpool, Walton): Many of us believe that the right hon. Gentleman is doing as good a job as Minister for the Arts as anyone could do under the circumstances of the Government. Nevertheless, we are disappointed at his decision not to agree that the Merseyside Arts Association should be the basis of the regional arts body. When we met him he agreed with us —and he said it again today—that Merseyside has a special and, as it were, peculiar position in the arts, based on years of great artistic activity. It has a special role to play. After a time, once the district office has been running for a while—clearly the decision will not be reversed—after, say, two or three years, will he reconsider it to see how it is functioning and whether it could be upgraded again to a regional arts body, as we on Merseyside believe that it should be?

Mr. Luce: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for the way in which he approaches the problem. I sought to take on board the strong views that he and his colleagues expressed to me about cultural identity. I believe that the new arrangement will not undermine the strength and importance of the arts in Merseyside. Of course, I undertake to watch developments closely. I shall ask Mr. Timothy Mason, the manager of the reforms to take into account the views that the hon. Gentleman expressed. I believe that by close co-operation between the regional office on Merseyside and North West Arts we shall find that the Merseyside area will not suffer.

Mr. Patrick Cormack (Staffordshire, South): My right hon. Friend will be aware that the positive and thoughtful way in which he has responded to a constructive report has been widely welcomed. Does he accept that there will be continuing anxiety on two issues? The first is regional representation on the Arts Council. Will he take steps to ensure that there is a rotating system so that all the regions in turn are represented on the Arts Council? Secondly, does he recognise that there is still anxiety about the future of our great national companies, especially the Royal Shakespeare Company?

Mr. Luce: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his continual support of the Government's work in the arts. I shall take his two points in turn. I have thought carefully about regional representation on the Arts Council. It is a difficult balance to strike, but the number of regional arts associations has been reduced from 12 to 10. It is reasonable to say that half of those—five—should be represented on the Arts Council. How they are selected is a matter that I am discussing with Mr. Mason, the new manager of the reforms. It will be a matter of the associations devising a system that enables them to elect either an alternative chairman or other suitable representatives, if they so choose.

I confirm that the national companies will remain firmly the responsibility of the Arts Council. That is right for them. They will receive an 11 per cent. increase in the coming financial year. Their role in this country remains exceedingly important in maintaining the highest standards of excellence.

Mr. Norman Buchan (Paisley, South): It may be helpful if I congratulate the Minister on appointing Tim Mason from north of the border to advise on the consultative body. Obviously, I welcome the regional and devolutionary emphasis, but devolution requires a national strategy. It is not sufficient merely to devolve; there must be a national strategy. Are the boards to be development boards? Will they be a rather more hands-on body involved in the development of the arts? None of this will

[Mr. Norman Buchan]

be possible, not even the new structure, unless money is available. The boards may have their bones, but where is the meat? That is what is required.

Mr. Luce: On the hon. Gentleman's last point, I must reiterate that there is a propensity to ignore that there will be a 24 per cent. overall increase in the arts budget in three years. The Arts Council will get a 22 per cent. increase. In cash terms next year it will be 12·5 per cent., which is £20 million. That is a substantial increase in the Government's commitment to the arts. I attach great importance to the financial and management strength of the regional arts boards. As I say in my letter to Mr. Palumbo, it would be right for them to be incorporated. They should move in that direction because it will strengthen them in the important range of tasks that they must fulfil.

Mr. Quentin Davies (Stamford and Spalding): Despite the compelling logic of my right hon. Friend's proposals, does he recognise that there will be genuine anxiety? He will understand the anxiety in Lincolnshire. I am grateful for his assurance that Lincolnshire's cultural identity will continue to be respected. Will he go further and give the essential, explicit reassurance that there will be no net loss of resources to Lincolnshire as a result of the introduction of the new system?

Mr. Luce: I appreciate the anxiety that my hon. Friend has expressed. Obviously, it is important that we preserve the cultural strength of the arts throughout Lincolnshire. For that reason I said in my statement that I would ask the manager of the reforms to embark on discussions with the arts association in Lincolnshire, Eastern Arts, to work out a system that ensures that we preserve its cultural identity and strength of funding. I see no reason why Lincolnshire should in any way lose out. As part of the bigger organisation, Eastern Arts, in the long term Lincolnshire does not stand to lose; if anything, it stands to gain.

Mr. William Ross (Londonderry, East): Although the Unionist party welcomes devolution from the centre to local bodies, as it will mean that local cultural traditions will be strengthened and enhanced, we are anxious that there should be a strong fertilisation at the centre so that we do not all drift too far apart. In the light of that, why is the Minister allowing the chairman of the Northern Ireland Arts Council to attend, or not attend, the consultative body at his whim? Surely he should have to attend in the same way as the chairmen of the Scottish and Welsh arts councils?

Mr. Luce: I appreciate the hon. Gentleman's point about the need to ensure that there is a national approach and strategy on the arts. For that reason I decided that there should be a consultative body consisting of the chairmen of the Scottish and Welsh arts councils as well as the chairman of the Arts Council of Great Britain. The Arts Council of Great Britain does not fund directly the Northern Ireland arts, so I used a slightly different form of words. It is my wish and hope that the chairman of the body in Northern Ireland that looks after the arts will participate in the consultative group.

Sir David Price (Eastleigh): On behalf of those of us who represent the arts in the south of England, may I thank my right hon. Friend for listening to our representations and not merging South East and Southern Arts, as Richard Wilding proposed? Will he confirm that in his future model he sees the regional arts associations extending deep down into the community and working closely with the counties and all other district and borough councils in their area?

Mr. Luce: I confirm that in the 1990s I look to the regional arts boards, as they are to be called, to play an increasingly important role in strengthening the arts in co-operation with the local authorities. To achieve that, it is right to reduce the number from 12 to 10. That will provide both more scope to strengthen the boards of management and for a cross-section of people to be representatives—people from the business community, voluntary bodies and the arts—to ensure that the boards are as robust as possible to cope with what will be a great firing of and expansion in the arts as we approach the turn of the century.

Mr. Andrew Faulds (Warley, East): May I simply congratulate the right hon. Gentleman most warmly on this admirable new projection of policy? What an excellent Arts Minister he has become. But is he aware that some of us were proposing somewhat similar arrangements and responsibilities for the regional areas in the early 1970s and 1980s but we were, unfortunately, prevented from pursuing those matters by lack of vision of a couple of our leaders?

Mr. Luce: I shall leave it to the House to draw its own conclusions from the hon. Gentleman's remarks. I appreciate the strong support that he has given to the announcement, given his well-known and well-established interest in the arts.

Mr. Tim Devlin (Stockton, South): Is my right hon. Friend aware that in the Northern region there will be a huge sigh of relief that Northern Arts is not to be merged with Yorkshire, although from the outset that was the most unlikely prospect among all the regional arts associations? Is he also aware that the real strength of the proposals is that there will be greater accountability for regional arts associations, there will be a much-strengthened structure for regional arts bodies and that, as a result of the Wilding report, the pressure put on Northern Arts means that a new arts strategy has been brought to Teesside?

Mr. Luce: I am grateful to my hon. Friend, who takes a keen interest in the arts. I stress that, while devolution is taking place, accountability back through the Arts Council will be more coherent and consistent than the way in which it operates at present. That will give the Arts Council a singularly important role in accounting for a national strategy for the arts and ensuring that it works in partnership with regional arts associations to benefit the arts in Britain as best it can.

Mr. Giles Radice (Durham, North): I congratulate the Minister on listening to our representations about Northern Arts. Can he assure the House that the new regional authorities will have new money commensurate with their new responsibilities?

Mr. Luce: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman. The scale of the shift in resources from the Arts Council to the regional arts associations will flow from the decisions that I have taken, and it will be for Mr. Mason, the manager

implementing the reforms, to determine over the next three years, which is the time span that I have given for devolution. I expect a substantial shift in the number of clients away from the Arts Council to the regional arts associations, while the Arts Council will gain great strength for its strategic role. As far as money is concerned, I can only repeat that overall resources to the arts will increase by 24 per cent. in three years.

Mr. Neville Trotter (Tynemouth): I congratulate my right hon. Friend on combining the new strategic role for the Arts Council nationally with an ever-increasing role for arts bodies in the regions. I add my congratulations to him for listening to the views of people in the north-east who insisted that we should retain an independent identity through the successful Northern Arts. Can he confirm that there will be no change in the boundaries of Northern Arts?

Mr. Luce: I am grateful to my hon. Friend, who has robustly made his views known to me for a number of months. I have taken his views and those of many other people seriously, and I have come to the conclusion that it would not be right to adjust the boundaries of Northern Arts, because it is a clearly identifiable area, and it should remain as such.

Ms. Joyce Quin (Gateshead, East): I welcome the fact that the Minister ruled against the proposal to merge Northern Arts and Yorkshire Arts as it was resented in both regions. In future, under the system of regional representation on the Arts Council, will the Minister bear in mind the suggestion about rotating positions on the council? Will he ensure that no region is unrepresented on the Arts Council for more than a year at a time?

Mr. Luce: I shall take into account the views that the hon. Lady has expressed about the system of rotation, which still has to be worked out. I did not want to lay down dogmatically precisely how it should operate, but I think that something can be worked out that will make sense.

I am grateful for the hon. Lady's views on Northern Arts and Yorkshire Arts. Despite my decision, I hope that there will be closer collaboration between the Northern arts board and the Yorkshire arts board.

Mr. Tim Rathbone (Lewes): Does the Minister accept that, from the point of view of my constituency and the south-east, everything that he has said and the reassurances that he has given mark him as the Minister who has made the most positive announcement in the House at any time since the Conservative party returned to power?

Mr. Luce: As it comes from my hon. Friend, I take that as a very nice compliment.

Mr. David Clelland (Tyne Bridge): The Minister's statement will be widely welcomed by people in the Northern region, with the possible exception of his hon. Friend the Member for Stockton, South (Mr. Devlin), whose conversion we also welcome, since originally he was in favour of a mega-region for the north. Does the Minister acknowledge the contribution made to the arts by local authorities in the area? I refer in particular to the metropolitan borough of Gateshead, with its policy of providing art in public places, and the city of Newcastle, which boasts some of the finest theatres in the country. However, will the Minister consider specifically the present per capita basis for the distribution of Arts Council grants, which seems to me to work against regions such as the north?

Mr. Luce: I have paid a number of visits to the Newcastle area and to Northern Arts. I very much appreciate the work that is going on there. The collaboration between Northern Arts and the local authorities is strong and effective and produces excellent results for the arts. I am grateful to local authorities for the role that they play. Support for the arts throughout the country does not require vast sums of local authority money; often it requires only modest sums. Through collaboration with the regional arts associations we can see what benefits that brings.

Per capita support for the arts in the Northern region is a matter for the Arts Council. It has to decide how to distribute the money, taking into account the overall support per capita for the population of the area, as opposed to the rest of the country, and other factors, including the strength of the arts in the area.

Mr. Richard Alexander (Newark): I join hon. Members in welcoming my right hon. Friend's statement, but I ask him to look yet again at regional representation. Does he not realise that those authorities that have no Arts Council representation will resent the fact that no one is batting for them? Would it not be possible to avoid that resentment by providing five additional seats? It would avoid rotation, elections and the sort of thing that my right hon. Friend has described.

Mr. Luce: I appreciate my hon. Friend's point. However, there is already a system under which, by means of a kind of electoral college, there are three representatives from the regions—one from the northern area, one from the midlands and one from the south. That has been operating fairly effectively and fairly well for two or three years. I am expanding that mechanism to ensure that instead of three representatives there are five. It will be possible to work out a sensible formula. I want the size of the Arts Council to remain modest. Such bodies can become too large and cumbersome. In this way I believe that we shall ensure that the regions are well represented. However, I shall think about my hon. Friend's point.

Mr. Gerry Steinberg (City of Durham): I genuinely welcome the proposals, unlike some hon. Members who seem to have changed their minds. I congratulate the Minister on taking notice of the representations regarding Northern Arts and the courtesy that he extended to us when we met him. It must be the first time that a Minister has taken notice of representations.

I welcome the decentralisation of arts and local government involvement. The Minister referred to resources. I urge him to keep a constant eye on resources, in particular for Northern Arts so that it does not find that it is without the funds that are necessary to make a success of decentralisation.

Mr. Luce: Yes, of course—to the extent that there is a considerable measure of devolution. The amount of money that follows devolution will have to be discussed by the Arts Council, the regional arts associations and Mr. Mason, who will be implementing the changes. Those factors will be taken seriously into account.

Mr. John Bowis (Battersea): May I add to the beatification of my right hon. Friend by welcoming warmly his announcement, particularly in relation to the Crafts Council and also devolution?

May I ask him to work with Mr. Mason, when dealing with the new opportunities in regional arts at local level, to ensure that the environment being created, as well as being good for artists, provides new opportunities for people to participate? On the question of ethos, will he ensure that there is an open-door policy so that more people may enjoy and benefit from the arts?

Mr. Luce: My hon. Friend is right. In this context, I reaffirm the objectives of the royal charter of the Arts Council and, in turn, the objectives of the regional arts boards: to promote interest in the arts in this country, to improve access, and to ensure the highest possible quality. We are referring to all levels of activity in the arts—from the community level, right up to the national centres of excellence. This is an important opportunity to reaffirm that, as we look to the 1990s and to greater public interest in the arts, there will be a very important and significant role for the regional arts boards.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I draw attention again to the pressure of business. I know that today's business is exempted, but if hon. Members wishing to ask questions will be brief, I hope to call all of them.

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): I will award the Minister five out of 10 for the structural changes. However, I repeat the question: where is the beef to back up the structural change? The Minister has talked about 24 per cent. over three years. Of course, to gauge its usefulness, that will have to be set against inflation and the effect of the poll tax. Is the Minister aware that virtually every local authority in London is setting a budget that involves cuts in expenditure on arts and leisure activities? What monitoring is being done to ensure that the Greater London arts association, which will have the greatest concentration of clients, will not inherit a major arts crisis?

Mr. Luce: I cannot be precise about the budget of the Greater London arts association, but I think that it is about £9 million. The association gets a larger share, in absolute terms, than any other regional arts body.

In answer to the hon. Gentleman's point about the resources that are available, I would point out that two factors have to be taken into account. One is the overall budget for the arts—I have mentioned the figure several times—and the other is the shift of resources that will go with devolution. The latter must be a matter for discussion and negotiation between the Arts Council, the regional arts boards and Mr. Mason, who is implementing these plans. In the absence of agreement on what sums of money should be transferred from the Arts Council to the regional arts boards, it would not be right to take decisions about devolution to these bodies.

Mr. Brian Sedgemore (Hackney, South and Shoreditch): While welcoming the devolution proposals, may I ask whether the Minister's statement means that the main philosophical and artistic thrust of the proposals contained in the "Glory of the Garden" and the Cork report have been entirely abandoned? In that regard, will more money be available to the Royal Shakespeare Company to enable it to keep its doors open at the Barbican in November?

Mr. Luce: I do not think that this undermines the "Glory of the Garden" policy of the middle 1980s. The purpose of that policy was to set up regional centres of excellence to attract interest. I take as an example the Plymouth area, where the Royal theatre has created a great deal of interest and has attracted support from Cornwall and Devon for the setting up of regional centres. That is important. In my view, not all centres of excellence should be in London. Although this city must remain a great cultural centre, we should have centres of excellence throughout the country. Glasgow—the cultural city of 1990—is an example. National bodies such as the Royal Shakespeare Company will remain the responsibility of the Arts Council, which must make the final judgment. The success of the Royal Shakespeare Company is there to be seen. The company has taken some difficult management decisions. There has been quite a lot of debate in the House on this matter, and I know that the Arts Council attaches great importance to the company's work.

Mr. Chris Smith (Islington, South and Finsbury): The Minister will be aware that the Sadler's Wells theatre, which is known nationally and respected internationally, currently faces severe financial difficulties. He will know also that, by indirect arrangement, it receives funding from the Arts Council. It is possible that, under the new arrangements, that funding will be endangered. Can the Minister give me an assurance that he will do everything he can to ensure that Sadler's Wells not only survives but thrives?

Mr. Luce: I will draw to the attention of the Arts Council chairman the views that the hon. Gentleman has just expressed about Sadler's Wells, which has played a long and important role in arts in London. I realise that a number of changes are taking place. For instance, Sadler's Wells Royal ballet is moving to Birmingham. That is not necessarily a bad thing for the arts as a whole, as Birmingham, too, is a great and increasingly important centre of excellence.

Mr. Martin Flannery (Sheffield, Hillsborough): As a member of the Select Committee on Education, Science and Arts, I have questioned the Minister many times, and I have always thought that he shows a civilised approach to the arts. The right hon. Gentleman is trying to instil in us his confidence about money, and I hope that it is justified. As he knows, I come from Sheffield, in South Yorkshire. The rejuvenated Lyceum theatre, of which I am a director, will open, I hope, in December. It is the only theatre in Britain outside London designed by the architect responsible for it. The region is an arts area. I should like to know whether the people who join the Arts Council from the regions will be elected or picked and how the regional boards will be instituted.

Mr. Luce: I warmly welcome the role that the hon. Gentleman plays in the arts in Yorkshire. He will have noted that the new playhouse for Yorkshire opened in Leeds last week. It will have an important role for the arts in that area.

I am giving some thought to how the representatives from the regions will be chosen. I think that the mechanism will provide for twinning of the 10 regional

associations into five pairs, which between them will select a representative for their area for a defined period. The representative posts will rotate and, after another period, the associations will have to choose another representative. That representative may be the chairman of the regional arts association or someone else who is considered equally appropriate.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): On Timothy Mason, is not Scotland's loss his gain? What policy funding conclusions are raised by the case of my constituent, Lizzie, the 340 million-year-old early carboniferous reptile found near Bathgate? Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the Geologists Association has contributed £10,050 from its fund, easily the largest contribution it has ever made? By what mechanism will the Government help funding for geological specimens in this position and stop their export?

Mr. Luce: The Scottish Arts Council has done an outstanding job for many years. It has been under Mr. Mason's leadership as director for many years. There are many centres of excellence in Glasgow, Edinburgh and many other parts of Scotland.

As for Lizzie the lizard, which I think is the best way to encapsulate her title, I have asked the Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art to look at this case and to recommend whether such objects should in future be included under the control system.

Mr. Frank Haynes (Ashfield): The Minister gets no congratulations from me today. In his statement, he has failed in his ministerial duty to the arts generally. He has tried to cool the pressure from the regions by giving them this and that and giving them a committee on which to serve, but no additional money is made available. When he made his previous statement we argued with him about additional money. The amount available does not keep pace with inflation. We shall have to keep the services going and improve them. The Minister can stop making statements such as he has made today. That is why I say that I do not congratulate him. He has not done his job properly.

Mr. Luce: There is nothing new in that; the hon. Gentleman has not yet congratulated me on anything, but I do not resent that.

I think that the hon. Gentleman is a little confused. He does not seem quite to have grasped the fact that I am shifting more strength and resources to the regional arts associations. I should have thought that he would welcome that news for his area rather than despise it. I should have thought that he would welcome the fact that we are increasing resources for the arts overall by 24 per cent. in the next three years. Instead of despising that news, the hon. Gentleman should encourage the flourishing of the arts which we will see in the 1990s, thanks to the Government's commitment.

Mr. Fisher: Apart from my hon. Friend the Member for High Drama and Great Acting—my hon. Friend the Member for Ashfield (Mr. Haynes)—the Minister has received and earned the praise and congratulations of the whole House on almost all he has said today——

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): No.

Mr. Fisher: He has received congratulations on almost everything he has said today. As my hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Hillsborough (Mr. Flannery) asked, how will the regional boards be elected—that is, the regional boards themselves rather than the representatives on the Arts Council? Will the Minister give some thought to the effect of the shift of resources to the regions? The regions with many Arts Council clients will benefit disproportionately. There will be a need to address the imbalances that arise from that. The Minister will be congratulated generally by the arts world on his statement. He has set up a structure today on which the next Labour Government will be keen to build in the 1990s.

Mr. Luce: The hon. Gentleman has been generous in his remarks, and I am grateful for that. I shall give fair and serious thought to his points about the amount of money against the background of the shift in responsibility for various clients to the regional arts association.

Each regional arts board will elect its own chairman, who must ensure that the board—which must not have more than 24 members—will represent the range of interests in the arts, whether arts people, local authority representatives, business men or people from voluntary bodies. I want the range to be as broad as possible so that the boards can do an effective job for the regions.

Points of Order

4.26 pm

Mr. Ken Maginnis (Fermanagh and South Tyrone): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. In the light of the decision today by the Irish Supreme Court to reject this Government's application for the extradition to Northern Ireland of the Maze escapers, Finucane and Clarke, and as we must deduce that the real reason stems from the Irish Republic's legal claim to jurisdiction over Northern Ireland, as confirmed in the McGimpsey judgment a few days ago, the logical consequence of which is that the Irish Republic could not extradite to territory that it now deems to be its own, has the Attorney-General said to you, Mr. Speaker, that he intends to make an early statement to the House on this serious matter?

Mr. Speaker: The Attorney-General has not made such an application to me, but I note that the hon. Gentleman has the Adjournment debate tomorrow night. I am certain that, especially if he were to let the Minister know as a matter of courtesy that he proposed to raise this matter, he would receive an answer.

Mr. Tim Devlin (Stockton, South): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. In the light of today's pronouncement by Congressman Kennedy of the United States legislature that Irishmen are unlikely to receive a fair trial in this country, will there be an opportunity for us to debate whether Cubans, Mexicans or black people receive a fair trial in the United States?

Mr. Speaker: That is not among my many responsibilities. I am sure that, with a certain amount of ingenuity, the hon. Gentleman will be able to raise the matter in order, perhaps in an Adjournment debate.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. It will not have escaped the notice of all hon. Members and perhaps people outside the House that today we had 55 minutes on an undoubtedly important statement, according to those who made contributions. However, it is certain that it was not very controversial. I hope that if there is another controversial item, such as the House of Fraser report, you might consider, Mr. Speaker, that half an hour is not sufficient for a matter concerning fraud in the City.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Gentleman has raised this matter before. I do not give reasons for my decisions on these matters. However, I want to point out again to the hon. Gentleman and to any others who are interested that I have to take into account the pressure on business later in the day. When we had the statement on the Harrods affair, there was an important debate which had to end at 10 pm and in which many hon. Members wanted to participate. Many of them have subsequently written to me regretting that they were not called. Today we have exempted business, which can go on until any hour. I therefore allowed the statement today to range, which seemed reasonable in view of the time available later.

BILL PRESENTED

Hare Coursing (Abolition)

Mr. Harry Cohen, supported by Mr. Robin Corbett, Mr. Gerald Bermingham, Mr. Tony Banks, Mr. Jeremy Corbyn, Mr. Eric S. Heffer, Mr. Doug Hoyle, Mr. Gerry Steinberg and Mr. David Hinchliffe, presented a Bill to make hare coursing illegal: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time on Friday 30 March and to be printed. [Bill 97.]

Political Parties (Income and Expenditure) Bill

4.30 pm

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): I beg to move,

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to provide for a limit on the amount of money which may be spent by or on behalf of a political party during the period of a general election campaign; to require companies to establish a political fund from which all political donations shall be made; to provide for a ballot of shareholders and employees before a political fund is established; to ensure an entitlement for each shareholder to an additional dividend from the company in lieu of any donations to which such a shareholder has objected; and to require political parties represented in the House of Commons to publish reports and accounts.

I am proposing in my Bill some limited measures, including a limit on the amount of money that a political party can spend nationally during a general election campaign. That must make sense when there has been, rightly, a tight restriction on what may be spent in a constituency on behalf of a candidate. We are all aware of what happens—*[Interruption.]* Perhaps I may have the attention of the hon. Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Mr. Beaumont-Dark)——

Mr. Speaker: Order. It would be helpful if the chat across the Chamber, between the Front Benches below the Gangway, ceased. Let us listen to what the hon. Member for Walsall, North (Mr. Winnick) has to say.

Mr. Winnick: We know what happens if there is an overspend. The candidate and agent involved can be made to appear before the High Court and, in such circumstances, a successful candidate can be disqualified. On the national scene, a party can spend without limit and thus undermine the established concept applying to candidates. The rule applying to candidates was brought in to ensure some equality between those standing for election to this House. In other words, the fact that one has considerable money should not entitle one to spend as much as one likes on the local scene.

The situation is, however, different nationally. At the last general election my party spent some £4 million. The Tories spent £14 million during the three weeks of campaigning, and they had much more cash available had they been in doubt about the outcome of the election.

If my proposals are accepted, an initial sum could be agreed and it could be updated from time to time. That applies now to the expenditure of candidates; the Home Secretary proposes in an Order in Council that the sum be increased. As a starting sum, I would suggest £4 million nationally for a general election campaign. If my Bill gets a Second Reading, I would be willing to listen to all the arguments in Committee and, being a charitable person, would be willing to increase that figure if an adequate case for doing so were made out.

I am also anxious to make changes in the method by which political donations are made by companies. I want to establish equity between trade unions and companies. For nearly 80 years, from 1913, unions had to establish by ballot a political fund before any donations of a political nature could be made. In recent times the Conservatives have, as we know, legislated to the effect that such ballots must take place every 10 years. Ballots were held and all trade unions with political funds re-established the right to have them, and a few unions that did not previously have funds held ballots, won the day and established political funds.

The situation with companies is totally different. The board of a company may simply decide to make a political donation. There is no ballot, no political fund and not even consultation with shareholders and employees. It is a mockery to insist that trade unions must be tightly controlled over political funds whereas companies can make donations in that way.

It may be argued that at annual general meetings of companies shareholders can protest about what is being done, but a former Law Lord said:

"It sometimes happen that public companies are conducted in a way which is beyond the control of the ordinary shareholders. The majority of the shares are in the hands of two or three individuals. These have control of the company's affairs. The other shareholders know little and are told little. They receive the glossy annual report. Most of them throw them in the wastepaper basket. There is an annual general meeting, but few of the shareholders attend. The whole management and control is in the hands of the directors."

That was said, in the giving of a legal judgment, by Lord Denning, who cannot be accused of any pro-Labour bias.

The way in which companies conduct their affairs reminds one of the way in which the Conservative party organises its internal affairs. I suggest that companies must hold a ballot of shareholders, plus employees who have been with the company for longer than 12 months. Let them decide whether a political fund should be established. If it was, provision would have to be made for those opting out—as anyone in a trade union can, rightly, opt out from political donations if he wishes.

We are talking not about peanuts—£200 or £400—but about rather larger sums. In 1988 alone Taylor Woodrow donated £111,000, P and O Steamship Company £100,000, Allied Lyons £95,000, United Biscuits £85,000, Hanson Trust £80,000, Whitbread £76,000, Consolidated Gold Fields £75,000, Trusthouse Forte £61,000, Hambros £61,000, British Airways—once privatised—£50,000, General Electric Company £50,000 and Trafalgar House £40,000.*[Interruption.]* A number of my hon. Friends are asking me about certain brothers. I have looked through the list, and I concede that I cannot find the House of Fraser, but who knows what may happen next year? They may make a handsome contribution to the Conservative party.

It is not only companies that donate the money that I have mentioned. Tory front organisations—the British United Industrialists, the Industrialist Council, Aims for Industry and the Economic League, which carries out a policy of victimisation against active trade unionists—all receive large sums from companies where no ballot on political donations has taken place. That is totally wrong and unfair.

I believe—and it is contained in my Bill—that all parties represented in the House should publish full accounts of their finances. My party has always done that. However, that is not the case with the Conservative party. Labour Members are not the only people who say that. I had never heard of the river companies until the story appeared in a national newspaper. They are organisations that were set up after the war to secrete funds from companies to the Tory party. Peter Hardy is a prominent dissident and a member of the Charter movement [HON. MEMBERS: "Who?"] If Conservative Members have not

[Mr. Winnick]

heard of him they may have heard of Eric Chalker. They are both campaigning for greater openness and democracy in the Tory party. Peter Hardy—who is no less a Conservative than are Tory Members—said:

"we have long suspected the party has hidden reserves in secret bank accounts . . . The almost obsessive secrecy of the party organisation combined with the total lack of accountability of the party treasurers makes the Tory Party a soft target for its opponents."

When I last spoke on that subject I said that I was not sure whether the Conservative party or the Communist party in the Soviet Union was less democratic. That was four or five years ago. Given the changes on the Soviet scene, I think that the Soviet Communist party is at long last beginning to become a little more democratic. As we near the end of the 20th century it is about time that the Conservative party became fully democratic, published its accounts and made itself accountable in the way that all political parties should.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. David Winnick, Mr. Tony Banks, Mr. Terry Davis, Mr. Don Dixon, Mr. Harry Ewing, Mr. Derek Fatchett, Mrs. Maria Fyfe, Mr. James Lamond, Mr. Rhodri Morgan and Ms. Marjorie Mowlam.

POLITICAL PARTIES (INCOME AND EXPENDITURE)

Mr. David Winnick accordingly presented a Bill to provide for a limit on the amount of money which may be spent by or on behalf of a political party during the period of a general election campaign; to require companies to establish a political fund from which all political donations shall be made; to provide for a ballot of shareholders and employees before a political fund is established; to ensure an entitlement for each shareholder to an additional dividend from the company in lieu of any donations to which such a shareholder has objected; and to require political parties represented in the House of Commons to publish reports and accounts: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 20 April and to be printed. [Bill 98.]

Points of Order

4.39 pm

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The House is about to consider the important National Health Service and Community Care Bill. It is enabling legislation in so far as it provides district health authorities with the right to let contracts and extends the principle of privatisation that has been introduced in recent years.

One aspect of the Bill that is causing concern to millions of people is how the public can be assured that Members of Parliament with a pecuniary interest in the privatisation of contracts will not vote in the Divisions that will take place during the next two and a half days.

In 1982, when the Lloyd's Bill was considered by the House, Mr. Speaker Thomas allowed a number of points of order on the rights of Members of Parliament to vote on that private Bill. This is a public Bill, affecting 52 million people in Britain. There will be votes and we are dealing with privatisation contractorisation. As you know, Mr. Speaker, we are required——

Mr. Speaker: I think that I have the drift of the hon. Gentleman's point of order.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: There are two kinds of interest. First, there is sponsorship by trade unions whereby Members personally receive nothing from the unions but where money is paid to constituency parties to run surgeries to help people in need of advice, in the same way that citizens' advice services are run. Secondly, there is a payment made direct to Members which they can use for their own private purposes and which derives from their being a consultant or a director of a lobbying company or a company directly involved in private health care. These are important matters for the general public.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman never uses one word when 10 will do. Will he kindly come to the point, please?

Mr. Campbell-Savours: I am explaining this because the public have been grossly misled about what constitutes pecuniary interest.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I can answer the hon. Gentleman without hearing any more. This is a matter of public policy, and the hon. Gentleman well knows the rules because he is a member of the Select Committee on Procedure. He knows that any hon. Member who participates in a debate and who has an interest should declare it, whether he is a trade union member or has any other interest. But on matters of public policy it has always been the practice for hon. Members to cast their vote.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: That is not my point of order.

Mr. Speaker: Well, what has the hon. Gentleman been saying to me for the past 20 minutes?

Mr. Campbell-Savours: I put it to you, Mr. Speaker, that, of the 52 million people out there, 30 million understand exactly what we are doing in the House tonight. They demand that Members of Parliament who receive money directly from private health care should not be allowed to vote in our Divisions tonight and tomorrow, and they look to you, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I must interpret the rules. I have already stated what they are, and that is what will happen today. If the hon. Gentleman wants the rules changed, that must be done in a different way. At the moment I am bound by the rules.

Mr. Max Madden (Bradford, West): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. Between 20 and 30 Conservative Members are directors or shareholders of or advisers to companies which will undoubtedly supply goods to the trusts that the Bill establishes. During the next few days we shall be debating legislation which seeks to make fundamental changes in the structure and organisation of the NHS. It suggests the formation of self-governing trusts. Therefore, I ask you to reflect upon the unique situation created by the Bill whereby those hon. Members could be held to have a direct pecuniary interest in the public policy that is being debated in the legislation.

Mr. Speaker: Order. We debated the matter at some length last week when the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) drew my attention to the fact that I had limited the time allowed on a statement so that it could be fully debated. The House will have to decide on any change that there may be to the rules, but at the moment I repeat that any direct interests should be declared by hon. Members on both sides of the House, but hon. Members may vote on any matters of public policy. Let us get on with the Bill.

Orders of the Day

National Health Service and Community Care Bill

As amended (in the Standing Committee), considered.

[The following Reports and Minutes of Evidence of the Social Services Committee are relevant: Eighth Report, Session 1988-89, resourcing the National Health Service: the Government's plans for the future of the NHS (House of Commons Paper No. 214-III); Second Report, Session 1989-90, Community Care: Future funding of Private and Voluntary Residential Care (House of Commons Paper No. 257); Third Report, Session 1989-90, Community Care: Funding for local authorities (House of Commons Paper No. 277); Minutes of Evidence taken on 17th, 24th and 31st January 1990 (House of Commons Papers Nos. 148-i, 173-i and 194-i); and the Government's Reply to the Eighth Report of Session 1988-89 (Cm. 851).]

4.44 pm

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: I shall take a point of order on the new clause that we are about to debate.

Mr. Skinner: You referred, Mr. Speaker, to the debate that lasted almost six hours on the hon. Member for Winchester (Mr. Browne). The public had a good view of it because it was on television, certainly on some channels. As a result, people heard an hon. Member saying, "I'm awfully sorry that I didn't put this firm and this money in the register."

My hon. Friend the Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) raised a point of order on the Bill that we are about to debate. The people who are watching television will think that it is a bit strange that we are debating the shifting of money from the public to the private sector, lining the pockets of trusts and the Tory Members who are involved in those trusts, yet this quaint little cock-eyed place, the House of Commons, will do nothing about it. They will find that odd.

Mr. Speaker: Order. We had a full debate on the matter last week. I do not know whether the hon. Gentleman was not called due to the shortage of time.

Mr. Skinner: No, I did not put my name down. I tried to catch your eye, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps the hon. Gentleman should have sought to be called in order to make those points. However, I repeat that the House knows that Mr. Speaker has to interpret the rules as they are.

Mr. Edward Leigh (Gainsborough and Horncastle): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. Is it not ironic that the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours), who is about as easy on the ear and as original as a neeedle stuck in a gramophone record, is the one member of the Standing Committee which considered the Bill whose election expenses are paid for by a Health Service union?

Mr. Speaker: If they are, no doubt the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) will declare that.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. We must get on.

Resolved,

That the National Health Service and Community Care Bill, as amended, be considered in the following order, namely, new Clauses, Amendments to Clauses 1 and 2, Schedule 1, Clause 26, Schedule 5, Clauses 3, 4, 28 and 5, Schedule 2, Clauses 6 to 11, Schedule 3, Clauses 29 to 31, Schedule 6, Clauses 12, 35, 13 to 17, 32, 18, 33, 19 and 20, Schedule 4, Clauses 34, 21, 36, 22, 37, 23, 38, 24, 25, 27, 39, 52, 40, 53, 41 to 43, 48, 44, 51, 45, 49, 46, 47, 50 and 54 to 56, Schedule 7, Clauses 57 to 61, Schedule 8, new Schedules, and Amendments to Schedule 9 and Clause 62.—*[Mr. Kenneth Clarke.]*

Mr. Campbell-Savours: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Will you confirm that I, like every Labour Member of Parliament who might be sponsored, receive nothing personally from a union either as income or expenses? Despite the fact that the rules state clearly that hon. Members can vote on these matters, you have a discretion, in the light of public concern, to advise hon. Members not to vote in the Divisions that will take place during the next two and a half days, so will you please do so?

Mr. Speaker: Order. I cannot answer the hon. Gentleman's first question. I have no idea what remuneration he may receive as a result of being sponsored by a union.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Nothing.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I draw the hon. Gentleman's attention to what the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) said last week in relation to sponsorship by a union.

Mr. Campbell-Savours *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am not having any more.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: You, Mr. Speaker, have just ruled——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I have not ruled. I am saying that I do not know.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: The Register of Members' Interests shows the position. May I ask you, Mr. Speaker, to withdraw your statement that you have no idea?

Mr. Speaker: I take the hon. Gentleman's word for it. I have no responsibility for the personal declarations that are made in the register. That is not a matter for me. The hon. Gentleman has declared his interest.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: You are compounding the confusion, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Will the hon. Gentleman please sit down so that we can get on with the debate?

New clause 74

SPECIAL HEALTH BOARDS

'In section 2 (Health Boards) of the 1978 Act—

(a) in subsection (1)—

(i) after the words "Secretary of State" there shall be inserted the word "(a)"; and

(ii) after the words "Health Boards" there shall be inserted—

"and

(b) Subject to subsections (1A) and (1C), may by order constitute boards, either for the whole of Scotland or for such parts of Scotland as he may so determine, for the purpose of exercising such of his functions under this Act as he may so determine; and those boards shall, without prejudice to subsection (1B), be called Special Health Boards.";

(b) after subsection (1) there shall be inserted the following subsections—

"(1A) An order made under subsection (1)(b) may determine an area for a Special Health Board constituted under that subsection which is the same as the areas determined—

(a) for any other Special Health Board; or

(b) for any Health Board or Health Boards constituted by an order or orders made under subsection (1)(a).

(1B) An order under subsection (1)(b) may specify the name by which a board constituted by the order shall be known.

(1C) The Secretary of State may by order provide that such of the provisions of this Act, or of any orders, regulations, schemes or directions made under or by virtue of this Act, as apply in relation to Health Boards shall, subject to such modifications and limitations as may be specified in the order, so apply in relation to any Special Health Board so specified."; and

(c) in subsection (2), for the word "(1)" there shall be substituted the word "(1)(a)".'.—*[Mr. Michael Forsyth.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Michael Forsyth): I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

Mr. Speaker: With this it will be convenient to take Government amendments Nos. 266 to 268.

Mr. Forsyth: The new clause and the amendments are important as they allow the Secretary of State for Scotland to set up a special health board in Scotland. Those powers do not exist in Scotland, and I should explain to the House why my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State would like to have them. This arises out of the review that we have undertaken of health education in Scotland —a review carried out on the Secretary of State's behalf by Touche Ross—and a report that has been produced on the incidence of coronary heart disease in Scotland.

Although in Scotland we spend about 25 per cent. more per head on health than is spent in England, we still have very high levels of coronary heart disease and lung cancer, and life expectancy is still lower in Scotland than it is south of the border. The Government have made health education and the promotion of good health part of their priorities for the Health Service in Scotland. Following the reports that have been made to the Government, it has become apparent that there is a need for a body in Scotland with the status and standing to ensure that our health promotion policies are given the centre-stage position that is required.

At present, health education is the responsibility of the Scottish Health Education Group, which is part of the Common Services Agency. The Secretary of State would

very much like to create a new body that would be a special health board with responsibilities for health education and promotion throughout Scotland. That body would have as its purpose the implementation of a policy statement of priorities in health education and would be responsible for achieving the targets set by central Government. It would work closely with health boards.

It is for those reasons that we are proposing the new clause and the amendments. It is our intention to establish the new body and to have it set up and working by 1 April 1991. It is essential that we move with speed. The Public Accounts Committee has drawn attention to the need to focus our health education programmes more effectively, and I accept the advice given and the criticism made in the past. Having said that, I believe that we have made great progress in health education. I make no criticism of those who have worked so hard to achieve that in the past.

I hope that the new clause and amendments will be welcomed on both sides of the House. This is a positive step forward. It is an attempt to meet the SHARPEN priorities, which we set out more than a year ago, in which health promotion and education were given a centre-stage position. I have considerable pleasure in commending the new clause and amendments to the House.

Mr. John Maxton (Glasgow, Cathcart) *rose*——

Mr. Barry Porter (Wirral, South): Declare your interest.

Mr. Maxton: The hon. Member for Wirral, South (Mr. Porter) has asked me to declare my interest. I can tell the House that I am a member of the Management, Science and Finance union, but I receive no sponsorship for elections from that union and am not a sponsored member of it. I am not sponsored by any union except very indirectly, I suppose one might say, through the new clause, as the money for my expenses comes from the Labour club, and drinking and smoking provide a lot of its income. But that is another matter.

I think that everybody must welcome this new clause, but the problem that we have with it is that it makes no reference to health education. It is a broad, general clause dealing with special health boards in Scotland. It gives the Secretary of State powers considerably wider than those of health education. Opposition Members are suspicious that it is being done in this way, especially as the new clause was put down on Friday, which meant that the Opposition had no opportunity to table amendments to make it specific to health education. That arouses our suspicions about the Minister's intentions.

The Minister's problem in Scotland is that no one trusts him. He may have the best intentions in the world about this legislation and the new clause, but the people of Scotland, particularly when he takes such wide powers, simply do not believe him. They always look for ulterior motives and other things for which he intends to use such powers.

Increasingly, people in Scotland distrust not only the Minister's intentions, but his competence. One can only assume, as the Prime Minister stayed at the hon. Member's house for the night that she was in Scotland, that he was the person who advised her on her whole trip to Scotland. If he can create that sort of public relations disaster, we have every right to distrust his competence in anything at all, particularly since the Prime Minister went to Ibrox to make the draw for the Scottish Cup. If hon. Members wonder why this is relevant, I will tell them exactly why. Until last year the Scottish Health Education Group sponsored the Scottish Cup; therefore the Prime Minister and the Minister had a direct interest at that time, although they have not now. To advise the Prime Minister to go to Ibrox in connection with the draw for a cup in which Rangers Football Club is no longer involved really takes a bit of beating and could cause considerable distress to many football supporters in Scotland. Her performance on television was appalling. That she should describe herself as a Scot by saying "we in Scotland" all the time takes a bit of believing.

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North): The hon. Gentleman, with his interesting ancestry, is trying to lay claim to a Scottish background and history. He should remember that some of us are real Scots.

Mr. Maxton: I do not know whether the hon. Member can make the claim that I can, that both his mother and his father were born in the constituency that he now represents. If that does not make me a Scot, I do not know what does.

The Minister's intentions and competence in this matter make us a bit suspicious and I think that we ought to ask him to explain why he is taking broad powers instead of specific powers. Why did not he simply table a clause to set up a new body in Scotland to deal with health education? What else will he use these powers for? The House is entitled to answers to those questions.

I still do not understand, even from what the Minister said, what exactly will be different in health education compared with what was done by the Scottish Health Education Group, for which I have a very high regard. I criticised it in an article that I wrote in *The Runner* magazine in Scotland because it did not sponsor enough running but sponsored football. However, a lot of its work in health education led the field not just in Scotland but in Britain, and in some cases in Europe; it was very advanced.

Mr. Walker: I did not have the opportunity to read that article, but I am sure that it was interesting, because I have enjoyed reading other things that the hon. Gentleman has written. Does the hon. Gentleman believe that, when one writes articles and is paid for them, one should make a declaration in speeches in the Chamber, particularly if an article has been on Health Service matters?

Mr. Charles Kennedy (Ross, Cromarty and Skye): No, definitely not.

Mr. Maxton: The hon. Member for Ross, Cromarty and Skye (Mr. Kennedy) may have an interest to declare. For myself, if the hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) knew anything about *The Runner* magazine in Scotland, he would know that it runs on a shoestring and does not pay contributors anything, so I did not get paid for the article.

Mr. Kennedy: The hon. Gentleman should bear in mind that that may be the story he was told when the magazine got his copy.

5 pm

Mr. Maxton: That is always possible. However, I know the people who run the magazine and I think it fair to say that they do not have any money. That is taking us rather wide of the new clause.

The Scottish Health Education Group has done good work in Scotland. In his brief speech, the Minister did not give us reasons why the group should disappear and a new body should be established. We need to know more about the relationship between a new health board and the other health boards in Scotland in regard to health promotion.

I shall give one example from my area—the "Good Hearted Glasgow" campaign run by the Greater Glasgow health board. I do not know how effective it is, but it has done well in publicity. Whether it has stopped large numbers of people smoking or eating foods with high cholesterol is another matter. In that respect there is a question mark over health education. Certainly we need to know whether such a campaign would be taken over by the new health board or would remain with the Greater Glasgow health board. If it is taken over by the new health board, where is the division in responsibility? The "Good Hearted Glasgow" campaign is not just about advertising and education; it is also about the provision of screening of blood pressure and so on, particularly of men of a certain age. Will the Greater Glasgow health board continue to do that while the new board takes over publicity? I hope that the Minister will give us more information on that.

When I first read the new clause, before the Minister kindly told me exactly what he intended, I wondered whether it had a relationship to the new Health Service executive which the Minister suddenly announced last week. Does he intend giving the new executive legislative standing by creating a special health board which would have power over all the other health boards in Scotland? That suspicion still remains. The Minister may set up such a body, but I am not sure that it would have great legislative standing under this legislation or under the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978. Does the Minister intend to use the new clause later to give that body powers?

The clause is broad enough to allow the Minister to explain to the House exactly who he intends to appoint to the new executive body, how much each will be paid for being a member, what contracts they will have, and the terms of the contract. We have grave suspicions about the body, as we have about Mr. Cruickshank, the chief executive of the Health Service in Scotland. We do not believe that the Health Service can be run as a private business like Virgin Records. It should be run for the benefit of the health of patients in Scotland.

I hope that the Minister will say more about the health education side, how it links with the other health boards and how it will help education in Scotland to have the new body as opposed to the existing arrangement. Will he also say more about the new Health Service executive?

Mr. Bill Walker: I congratulate my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary on bringing forward the new clause. He will recollect that in Committee the hon. Member for Ross, Cromarty and Skye (Mr. Kennedy) and I tried to introduce amendments to the Bill. Because we were not as astute as my hon. Friend and his advisers, we were unable to come up with an amendment that was technically able to do the job. We put down an amendment which gave us the opportunity to speak——

Mr. Michael Forsyth: It was discourteous of me not to say, in introducing the new clause, that the hon. Member for Ross, Cromarty and Skye (Mr. Kennedy) and my hon. Friend the Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) raised the matter in Committee, when I undertook to bring forward amendments. The genesis of the new clause and the other amendments was in that debate. I apologise for not having said that when I introduced them.

Mr. Walker: I thank my hon. Friend for his intervention. I gathered that that was the logic behind the new clause.

That brings me to the point behind the interesting contribution of the hon. Member for Glasgow, Cathcart (Mr. Maxton). He will have realised that the hon. Member for Ross, Cromarty and Skye and I had difficulty in Committee because, if we had made the amendment too narrow, it would have been out of order. We were grateful to the Clerk of the Committee for his assistance in framing an amendment to which we could speak.

I am pleased that the new board will be able to determine policy. Because of the special health problems in Scotland there should be a positive approach to the promotion of health care. I hope that the new clause will receive support on both sides of the House because we are all united on the prevention of health problems.

The meandering of the hon. Member for Cathcart through Ibrox was an interesting way to consider the promotion of good health care. We should encourage more anticipation in sport. The approach of the hon. Gentleman to health care is a splendid example; I give him that.

Mr. Maxton: Almost the only criticism I have of the Scottish Health Education Group is that for so many years it sponsored professional footballers in Scotland and did not put money into activity sports such as running and amateur football, as it should have done.

Mr. Walker: I do not disagree with the hon. Gentleman; we should do more to assist amateurs in whatever activity they are involved. Like me, the hon. Gentleman is a great believer in the fact that we can prevent illness by looking after our own bodies, by exercise, and so on.

Because the hon. Gentleman wandered into Ibrox to talk about public relations exercises, perhaps I may refer to the best public relations flop last week when the leader of his party missed the boat to Dunoon. The chap who caught that boat was not the Leader of the Opposition but the vice-chairman of the Conservative party, myself. If it were a question of missing boats, I might draw the attention of the hon. Gentleman to the early-day motion about that, but I would probably be ruled out of order, so I will not refer to it. I am responding to the hon. Gentleman's meandering into Ibrox park. I would never have dreamt of going into Ibrox park until the hon. Gentleman did so. Because of that I had to respond.

This important debate was delayed because of points of order. The reaction of some Opposition Members to a fairly straightforward question, touching a fundamental aspect of the new clause, that when people earn money writing articles——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. The hon. Gentleman should address himself to the new clause about special health boards.

Mr. Walker: The new clause has been the subject of many interesting articles. I hope that you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are not suggesting that it is wrong for me to refer to them. The hon. Member for Cathcart made his view clear about the support for professional football of the body that the special health boards will replace. If it was in order for him to do that, it must be in order for me to draw attention to the many articles that have appeared in the Scottish media on that matter. I cannot believe that you are suggesting that I am out of order in drawing attention to those articles.

Many of the authors of those articles are hon. Members and they have been commenting in those articles and have been paid for them. Perhaps the hon. Member for Cathcart would like to consider who is writing those articles. He should read the *Glasgow Herald* from time to time and he might recognise the names of the authors of articles in that paper. The new clause is very important because it will provide the machinery in Scotland to deal with important aspects of health care.

Mr. Robert Hughes (Aberdeen, North): The only part of the Minister's speech with which I could possibly agree was the reference to the importance of health education. That is hardly surprising since my knowledge of health education was gained when I was convenor of the health and welfare committee of Aberdeen town council. The health officer at the time was the formidable Dr. I. A. G. MacQueen, who was one of the foremost protagonists of health education and the role of the health visitor.

I do not intend to discuss health education at length save to say that when the Health Service was reorganised in Scotland and we moved from the old regional hospital boards to the present health boards there was a great deal of concern that the removal of responsibility for health education from local authorities to the new health boards would lead to health education being subsumed under a huge area of responsibility. We were afraid that it would lose its importance and that the focal point would be lost.

I do not want to criticise the Scottish Health Education Group, but I suspect from the Minister's remarks that there is need for a higher profile, a greater focus and more attention to be given to health education. Over the years, health education has clearly not had the impact that we hoped it would have. The health of the nation is not determined simply by the hospital service or by general practitioners. It is certainly not determined by politicians. The health of our nation is determined by good social and housing conditions.

It is incongruous that we spend a great deal of money on unhealthy practices such as drinking and smoking. If we have to declare an interest in either of those pastimes, I must admit to partaking occasionally of the liquids that come from the vine and the rye and I occasionally indulge in tobacco. I hope that that does not prevent me from participating in the debate.

A good life style and good living habits should be encouraged at an early age and health education is extremely important. I would not quarrel with any of the Government's proposals to improve health education. However, I wonder why it is necessary to have such a portmanteau provision as new clause 74.

As the Minister said, the new clause sets up special health boards. However, it states that the Secretary of State

"may by order constitute boards, either for the whole of Scotland or for such parts of Scotland as he may so determine, for the purpose of exercising such of his functions".

The Secretary of State is taking power here not just to set up special health boards to deal with health education or with HIV; he can also set up boards in particular parts of Scotland.

5.15 pm

I hope that the Minister does not believe that the new clause will weaken the comprehensive role of the existing health boards. There has been much discussion and argument about the functions of the new health boards. It was decided that they should cover the widest possible spectrum covering primary health care, secondary health care and community care.

We know that community care is to be removed. Will there be a special health board to deal with community care once it disappears to local government? That would seem to be inconsistent, but it might be a possibility. Will there be special health boards in local areas? Will there be special health boards in local areas to deal with specific functions? Does the Minister believe that if a particular health board is recalcitrant about privatisation—and I regret to say that Grampian health board is enthusiastic about privatisation——

Mr. Michael Forsyth *indicated assent.*

Mr. Hughes: I can see the Minister nodding and smiling, but we will return to that point later.

For the purposes of this new clause, if a health board decided that it would not pursue privatisation for particular services, does the Minister have the power under the new clause to establish a special health board to deal with those areas that he wants to privatise? He must give us a clear answer on why he needs special local health boards. He gave no reasons in his opening remarks. It is not good enough to table such broad sweeping new clauses without providing a clear explanation of their meaning.

I want now to consider the Health Service executive. I assume that the Minister has legislative authority over that, although he is not taking such powers in the new clause. What is the legislative purpose of the new Health Service executive? Will it be a special health board under new clause 74?

We need to know how much the executive staff will be paid. I have seen estimates that they may be paid as much as £50,000 a year. What binding contracts will be provided? Anyone thinking of taking up such a contract must be aware that if he is appointed arbitrarily with an arbitrary contract, he will be subject to arbitrary dismissal if there is a change of Government.

The Minister cannot provide five-year or 10-year contracts believing that they will tie staff down, because there will have to be compensation if the executive is disbanded if there is a change of Government. I hope that no one will take such a job under the illusion that he has a fat, juicy contract with £50,000 a year and that he will get compensation if we decide that the executive will not exist after the next general election.

The new clause looks innocuous and it would appear to be a reasonable tidying-up measure. Most uncharacteristically, the Minister introduced it in such a modest and

[Mr. Hughes]

moderate way that it is hardly surprising if we wonder what is going on in his little mind behind his smiling, bland little face. We need more explanation before we accept the new clause, although I emphasise that we support entirely the idea of giving health education a much higher profile and more new money.

Mrs. Maria Fyfe (Glasgow, Maryhill): I begin by declaring an interest in that I am sponsored by the Transport and General Workers Union, although not a penny of that money enters my pockets. It is spent campaigning against Conservative policies in Maryhill—and that is an easy job.

I want more information from the Minister on the proposals for special health boards and health education than he has so far troubled to give us. The Minister has not said anything about how the membership will be decided. We must remember the way in which the composition of the local health boards has been changed over the years, so that more and more people of Conservative persuasion seem to serve on them while fewer and fewer of Labour persuasion are chosen. That makes me wonder how these boards will be chosen. Might trade unionists who are involved in health education find a place or two on them?

What are the Minister's plans for choosing women to serve on the boards? Very few women serve on the public bodies in Scotland—boards of various types—over which the Minister has some influence or control. The proportion is tiny. Women chair only one or two. Generally speaking, those in which women participate in any great extent relate directly to things that are seen as women oriented. I also wonder about the resources that the new health education board will have——

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I may have misheard the hon. Lady, but is she suggesting that very few health boards are chaired by women? If so, she could not be more incorrect. If the hon. Lady checks, she will see that a number of health boards are chaired by women, for example, Lanarkshire and Forth Valley. The most recent appointment that we made—in Forth Valley—was bitterly criticised by the Labour party, but it was another example of another woman being appointed to a health board. Others, such as in Fife and the Western Isles, are also chaired by women.

Mrs. Fyfe: If the Minister had been listening to what I had been saying, he would have heard me refer to public bodies in general, across the whole spectrum. Few women serve on or chair such bodies. Of course, I do not simply want there to be more women—I want more women of progressive views to be involved, who will want to do something for their communities. Clearly, not all women fall into that category—as is only too obvious in this place.

The Minister has not spelt out whether the new boards will have more or fewer resources than the present health education body. I hate to suggest this to the hon. Gentleman in case I am putting ideas in his mind, but has he any thoughts about the bodies being funded by the commercial interests that would benefit from increased health education, such as Outspan and Jaffa? Who knows, perhaps this is the first time that that has entered the Minister's head. I hope that I have not given him a new idea.

I do not see the point of leaving it up to the new boards to determine their priorities and targets. I should have thought that medical advice on the major problems confronting us would be the best way in which they could decide their priorities.

We have enormous health problems in Scotland. Indeed, the Minister identified the problems of heart disease and bronchitis from which we know that Scotland suffers especially. There is not much point in advising people that their housing conditions are unhealthy when they can do precious little about it. Will the Minister run a course in health education for his hon. Friend the Minister for Housing and Planning so that they can do something about achieving the major improvement in people's health that would result if they were removed from the damp-ridden housing that is wrecking their health?

Problems such as drug abuse are widespread in parts of Glasgow. I know that useful work had been done on that, but I should like to know whether special funding will be provided for it. Quite apart from the horrific impact on people's lives if they themselves are abusing drugs and on those of their families, drug abuse creates extremely unpleasant living conditions for their neighbours and those who live in the vicinity. Children in parts of my constituency find needles lying in untended grass on wasteland.

Many health education issues need our attention. I am arguing for women to be involved in the boards not simply on the grounds of sexual equality, but because many health matters affect women especially. Women tend to be greater users of the Health Service, both in their own right and because they bring their children to the surgeries. It would be a pity if we did not ensure that women are involved in those bodies in appropriate numbers, and not only in the tiny minority that is the case now in most of the different boards that operate in Scotland. Obviously, I want women of progressive views to be involved, and not too many Conservative women.

Mr. Archy Kirkwood (Roxburgh and Berwickshire): I welcome this important new clause. Any idea that was cobbled together by my hon. Friend the Member for Ross, Cromarty and Skye (Mr. Kennedy) and the hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker)—an unholy alliance if ever I saw one—must be worth supporting, but perhaps that is going too far.

Since being elected to the House, I have tried to take a particular interest in preventive medicine in its broadest sense because I believe that moving health care in general in the direction of prevention is an entirely good and proper thing, and health education is an important element in that.

The only reason why I am dragged to my feet now is to ask about the independence that the new body will enjoy. I do so because some worrying parallels could be drawn with the situation that arose in 1986 when the right hon. Member for Sutton Coldfield (Sir N. Fowler), the then Secretary of State for Social Services, abolished the health body that was then independent of the Government and established a new Health Education Authority. That provides a parallel with the contents of the new clause. I do not need to remind the House that real misgivings were voiced at that time. When the right hon. Gentleman introduced that change in 1986, he said that he was doing so to deal with the special problems of AIDS. Everyone

supported the move for that reason. However, it subsequently became clear that the Government were using undue influence and bringing to bear departmental methods of working and priorities in a way that was not possible before, when the previous English and Welsh body had more independence from Government Departments.

There is a great deal of value in any health education body having an element of independence. If such a body is to be successful, it must operate in areas that are difficult for any Government because they embrace, for example, dietary provision and nutrition. That immediately involves a confrontation with the direct commercial interests of the food industry. I fully accept the difficulties of that. We have had arguments about sugar and about cholesterol-free diets around which many commercial interests have been built up. Similarly, we must confront the difficult area of alcohol abuse in terms of, on the one hand, what is good for the population's health, and, on the other, what is good for the industry that is supplying liquor of all sorts. There are also similar problems with the tobacco industry, about which I have been concerned for some time.

Any health education body worth that description will have to look closely at the impact of the produce and the products that such commercial enterprises are purveying to the public. If that body is under direct Government guidance and control, that puts the Government in a difficult position. I hope that that matter has been properly addressed and that the things that went so badly wrong in 1986 when the Department in England took over the previous health education body for England and Wales are corrected for Scotland in the future.

Following that train of thought one step further, I hope that the voluntary sector will be able to interface closely with the new body that the Minister is setting up. I also hope that funds will be made available so that it can undertake work in some of the sensitive areas with which the Government find it difficult to cope, such as AIDS. I pay tribute to what has been done north of the border in that area. An awful lot more needs to be done. It is valuable to establish a health education authority to look at the specific Scottish aspects of the development of the disease. I am grateful that the Minister is nodding his assent.

I fully understand that for any Government advertising campaigns are necessary to confront the problem adequately. It is difficult for Government Departments to do so. There is a value in having pressure groups and voluntary groups that can work alongside AIDS sufferers and HIV positive patients in a way that Ministers, officials and civil servants never could. That is no criticism of them; it is simply recognising reality. I hope that the new body will have a wide scope, flexibility and independence and will be free from the influence of the Minister's Department. If not, he will be wasting his time and the body will not succeed.

It would be helpful if we could be given a steer about the amounts of money and the resources that might be available to the authority. Is it likely that there will be new money or will budgets have to be trimmed to give the new health education authority an acceptable budget with which to work? I hope that the Minister will consult widely —I mean widely, to the extent of consulting the voluntary sector—before he puts together the membership of the new body. That, too, is crucial. I agree with the hon. Member for Glasgow, Maryhill (Mrs. Fyfe) that we must have more women on all such bodies. We must have a spread of membership to embrace all the difficult matters that must be dealt with if the body is to succeed.

I welcome the initiative. The body has great potential for confronting some of the difficulties that are peculiar to north of the border, such as coronary heart disease and short life expectancy, to which the Minister referred. The body can do so only if it is genuinely free of day-to-day Government interference and control.

5.30 pm

Mrs. Margaret Ewing (Moray): I shall be brief because many of the points that I should have made have been touched upon by other hon. Members. The Minister has shown an administrative commitment to the establishment of the boards and we are asking for details to flesh out the ideas behind them. A great deal of importance should be attached to who the members of the boards will be and what budget will be available to them.

We all recognise the great importance of health education. One point that has not been touched upon by other hon. Members is how the boards will interface with our education system. We all recognise that a great deal of health education work has been undertaken in our primary and secondary schools. We owe a great debt to many teachers, particularly physical education teachers, who, through their classes, have made youngsters aware of the implications of diet and habits for their health. Many parents have told me that they have stopped smoking because such an impact has been made on their children during lessons at school that the parents feel guilty and give up the habit. Perhaps I should have some children who could come home and give me that lesson because, like the hon. Member for Aberdeen, North (Mr. Hughes), I admit to particular vices.

It is important to know how the health boards will tie in with our education system, and use the expertise that is already present in our schools and the information that the Scottish Health Education Group so readily supplies to them. We want that to continue and to be expanded. It will be interesting to hear what interface the Minister has in mind.

Mr. Kennedy: As the Minister was either generous enough or grotesque enough to give me joint B-film scripting accreditation on the new clause with the hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker), it seems appropriate for me to say a few words. My hon. Friend the Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood) described that partnership as an unholy alliance. I hope that the House understands that on these Benches we can speak about that term with particular insight.

I echo the question put to the Minister on the structure that he has chosen. The hon. Member for Aberdeen, North (Mr. Hughes) said that, like so much else in the Bill, the new clause opens up fairly wide-ranging powers. Under various clauses, we have heard time and again that the Secretary of State is taking powers unto himself. More often than not, we are told, "Don't worry because he does not intend to exercise them." Some of us fear that from time to time those powers will be exercised. We should never ascribe to this Health Minister some of the mean motives that might be in the hearts or minds of other Health Ministers, but the successors to his office may want to use those powers in a different way. What safeguards are there?

[Mr. Kennedy]

The hon. Member for Glasgow, Cathcart (Mr. Maxton) referred to prevention when he spoke about sport. The Health Minister is also responsible for sport in Scotland. He wears two hats. I repeat the point made earlier in this short debate, that over the century the greatest contributors to better and healthier living have been improved housing, water supplies and working and environmental conditions. In that context, and without straying beyond the parameters of the debate, I hope that the Minister will recognise that there are slightly wider social obligations, in terms of broader Government social policy. Much of that resides with the Secretary of State for Social Security. We shall go on to one aspect of that later. Those obligations must be borne in mind as well as worthwhile and valuable initiatives such as the Minister outlined.

Like the two other smoking sinners, and as the third member of that triumvirate in the House, and with national no-smoking day almost upon us, such is the extent to which I am moved by the Minister that I shall have a real go this year to kick the habit once and for all.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I am delighted that, even before the new clause has been accepted by the House, we have at least one convert in the hon. Member for Ross, Cromarty and Skye (Mr. Kennedy). If the House accepts the new clause and amendments, when we lay down regulations to establish the new health boards in Scotland responsible for health education, the hon. Gentleman will be able to give us a full report on the progress that he has made in the intervening period.

The hon. Gentleman was kind enough to raise the matter in Committee when I was considering the report that we had received from Touche Ross and the advisory council. The hon. Gentleman said that the Secretary of State was taking more powers. The new clause and amendments do not give the Secretary of State more powers. They enable him to delegate his powers to new bodies. In that sense, the new clause does not increase the Secretary of State's powers but merely allows him to set up bodies that will act as his agents. That is the constitutional position of the health boards. I pointed that out when we first discussed competitive tendering in Scotland.

Mr. Maxton: Perhaps the Minister will tell the House in what other circumstances he expects the Secretary of State to use the power to delegate responsibilities. For what reasons would he do so?

Mr. Forsyth: If the hon. Gentleman is patient, I shall come back to the point that he raised. I was simply responding to the points raised by the hon. Member for Ross, Cromarty and Skye.

The hon. Member for Ross, Cromarty and Skye also said that housing, water supplies and so on were important for public health. I agree, but he will recognise that both those areas are the responsibility of local government, not central Government. There is certainly much room for improvement in both areas and in local government. No doubt people will take the opportunity in respect of water supplies on 3 May.

The hon. Member for Glasgow, Cathcart (Mr. Maxton) raised several points. He asked why there was no reference in the new clause and amendments to health education and why they were widely drawn. To be perfectly honest, when we were contemplating what steps we might take it struck me as remarkable that the Secretary of State for Scotland could not delegate his powers to new bodies that he might constitute, as my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Health can south of the border. We discussed the matter in Committee and it seemed appropriate that we should give the Secretary of State those powers.

I am surprised that the hon. Member for Aberdeen, North (Mr. Hughes) thinks that there is some Machiavellian plot involved in my moving the new clause. There is nothing sinister or underhand going on. The powers in the new clause and amendments mean that the Secretary of State would have to come to the House to make regulations which would be subject to negative resolution. Therefore, the House would have every opportunity to consider the arrangements in respect of this new health education body.

The hon. Member for Cathcart was suspicious and, in line with the hon. Member for Aberdeen, North, suggested that this was all part of putting the management executive, which we have established in the NHS, on a statutory basis. We do not require these changes in the law to establish the management executive. We have been able to do so. Mr. Cruickshank, the chief executive of the NHS, is a civil servant, not a political appointee. I was distressed to hear what the hon. Member for Aberdeen, North said. I take it that he was not speaking for his Front Bench when he suggested that members of the management executive, who are being recruited to get the best possible deal for the patient, would not enjoy job security under a Labour Government. In that respect they would share the fate of many thousands of fellow Scots, if that is what he sought to imply.

Mr. Robert Hughes: We must get this exactly right. What is the status of the new executive body? Will the individuals be appointed under normal Civil Service terms and conditions? If so, that is another matter. However, if they are to be appointed on individual binding contracts with high salaries, we need to be told. There is a big difference.

Mr. Forsyth: The hon. Gentleman is absolutely right. The appointment of people on fixed-term contracts which are performance related is different. It is also desirable and important. The chief executive of the Health Service certainly is appointed on that basis, as are the general managers of the health boards. That is a great step forward and I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will welcome accountability of those whose function it is to hold the Health Service accountable for the targets which are set in the interests of patients.

Mr. Maxton: All of us would be interested to know exactly who the Minister has in mind for these jobs. The newspapers have said that the chief medical officer for Scotland will be one person on the executive. Who will the others be? I appreciate the Minister's remark about Mr. Cruickshank because he was appointed against the Minister's wishes. The Minister wanted Mr. Laurence Peterken from the Greater Glasgow health board. Is not this a back door through which the Minister can put Mr. Peterken on the executive?

Mr. Forsyth: What the hon. Gentleman says is completely untrue. The appointment of the chief executive

was made in the normal way, on a recommendation from the Civil Service Commission, and was approved by Ministers. The hon. Gentleman should not make such comments unless he is sure of his facts. He is wrong.

The management executive has nothing whatever to do with the new clause. It has come into the debate only because the hon. Member for Aberdeen, North asked me to give an assurance that we do not intend to create a special health board, which is the management executive. I am happy to give him that undertaking which I hope means that we can now leave the matter behind us and look forward to a better managed, better run Health Service. I know that Opposition Members are opposed to that——

Mr. Maxton: Nonsense.

Mr. Robert Hughes: Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Forsyth: In a moment. The *Official Report* will show that the hon. Member for Cathcart said that we cannot run the NHS like a business, and a business is run in a businesslike manner. A Health Service run in that way will be better able to meet the needs of the patients and those who send us to the House.

5.45 pm

Mr. Robert Hughes: The Minister should not be allowed to get away with the statement that Labour Members do not want the Health Service run in a businesslike manner. It is utterly untrue. In all the years I have been involved in the Health Service, whether as a councillor, a member of the regional hospital board or a Minister, we have always been anxious to ensure that it is run properly and we get value for money. That is different from what is happening now. The Health Service is being run not on businesslike methods, but to put business the way of the Minister's friends. The way that it has been prostituted for his political ideals is a disgrace.

Mr. Forsyth: If the hon. Gentleman is arguing that the Labour Government ran the Health Service well, he will forgive me for pointing out that they presided over a cut in the hospital building programme and a cut in nurses' pay of more than a quarter. The contrast with our record could not be clearer. He may not wish me to go over what is certainly ancient history, because it is so long since we had a Labour Government, but perhaps I may remind him of the Labour party's attitude to the appointment of business men to take charge of Health Service management. It opposed that on the grounds that business men were not appropriate. Yet business methods and a businesslike way of running the Health Service are in the interests of patients.

Mr. Martin Flannery (Sheffield, Hillsborough) *rose*——

Mr. Robert Hughes *rose*——

Mr. Forsyth: I have been good in giving way and I should make progress, but I give way to the hon. Member for Aberdeen, North.

Mr. Hughes: The Minister should be reminded that the Labour Government set up a special commission to look into nurses' pay. That was done thoroughly. I remember a business man in Aberdeen who was appointed by one of the Minister's predecessors to be vice chairman of the then North-East of Scotland regional hospital board with a view to making it more business-efficient. He became chairman of the finance committee. Within a year he said, "What are those so-and-sos who used to be friends of mine doing to my Health Service?" Business men who are appointed know what is happening. The Health Service is not being run properly in the interests of patients, and the Minister should stop pretending that it is.

Mr. Forsyth: If the hon. Gentleman is saying that everything is not perfect in the Health Service, I agree. That is why we are introducing the Bill and providing for the service to be run in a more businesslike way. If he thinks that it is any consolation to nurses that when his colleagues were in government they set up a commission into nurses' pay, he does not live in the real world. The Labour Government cut nurses' pay by a quarter whereas we have increased it by——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. This is a long way from the new clause before the House. I hope that the Minister will return to it.

Mr. Forsyth: I apologise, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if to speak of the good news in the Health Service is to stray from the new clause.

The hon. Member for Cathcart asked about the "Good Hearted Glasgow" campaign. I appreciate his kind comments about it. It is a good example of a health board being involved in health promotion and doing it extremely well. That sort of campaign would not be threatened in any way by the creation of a new body with national responsibilities for health promotion, as he claimed. We intend to have a national policy statement about health education for which the new body will be responsible. The health boards will work with the new body to achieve that. We particularly want to place more emphasis on the prevention of coronary heart disease. The campaign in Glasgow and that in my own constituency, which is run by the Forth Valley health board, are excellent examples of what can be done in that area.

Mr. Tom Clarke (Monklands, West): Since this seems to be a rather rushed affair, and since the Under-Secretary has referred to the important subject of health education, will he tell the House what consultations he or the Secretary of State have had with people responsible for health education at the moment?

Mr. Forsyth: I do not think that the hon. Gentleman was here at the beginning of our deliberations and he therefore missed what I had to tell the House——

Mr. Clarke: I was here.

Mr. Forsyth: I am surprised, because I told the House that we had asked Touche Ross to carry out a review of health education policy in Scotland. The company spoke to nearly all the interested parties in health education and produced a report which is now in the Library. I commend it to the hon. Gentleman. It sets out Touche Ross's recommendations, which reflect the views that were given as it went around Scotland speaking to interested groups. The report recommends the establishment of a special body, although not of the kind that we are discussing. Having commissioned those reports, we should proceed with all due speed to ensure that the body is up and running by 1 April next year.

My hon. Friend the Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker), who is no longer in the Chamber, raised a

[Mr. Forsyth]

number of important issues. As the hon. Member for Ross, Cromarty and Skye said, we should give him and my hon. Friend credit for having raised the matter in Committee.

The hon. Member for Moray (Mrs. Ewing) asked me about the detailed nature of the body, who would be appointed and other such matters. Assuming that the amendments are passed, that will be decided by the House. There will be an opportunity to discuss the issue in the House, if the hon. Lady cares to ensure that, because the new clause provides for powers to make regulations which will be subject to negative resolution. I have no doubt that we will get a great deal of advice now that we have made our policy clear.

The hon. Lady also highlighted the importance of health education in schools, and I entirely agree. We shall expect the new body to strengthen links with education authorities and schools. When I was Education Minister I was particularly conscious of the great work that is being done in our schools, particularly on drugs and AIDS, and all credit is due to the education authorities involved in that.

The hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood) asked me about independence—*[Interruption.]* Not the kind of independence with which the hon. Member for Moray is concerned. That seems to be becoming less fashionable, if recent polls are to be believed.

The hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire asked me about the independence of this body. It will be active as the agent of the Secretary of State. I agree that there are times when it is helpful for Ministers to be distanced from some of the campaign that is necessary on a health education fund, for the reasons that the hon. Gentleman outlined. There will be a national policy statement and it will be the job of the board to give effect to it and obviously that will be at arm's length.

I heard what the hon. Gentleman said about the nature of the board, and the composition of chairman and members, and I shall ensure that people with the talent and ability to provide the best possible service will be recruited to the body—as we have done with all the health boards.

The hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire also asked me about resources that will be deployed. If he looks at the Touche Ross report in the Library, he will see that credit is given for the increasing resources that have been provided. The report points out that this area may have been under-resourced in the past. That was a problem not of funding but of structure. We are determined to commit resources to health education because it is one of our priorities.

The hon. Member for Glasgow, Maryhill (Mrs. Fyfe) asked me about women appointees. I think that we have done extremely well in appointing women to health boards—not because they are women, but because they had the talent and expertise required—and they have done extremely well. The hon. Lady also asked me about funding for drug abuse. She will know that we have made available considerable additional resources to deal with the problems of drug abuse and AIDS. In the space of a little more than a year we have doubled resources. I hope that the hon. Lady will recognise the progress that has been made.

I sense that, having given those assurances to Opposition Members, there may be some support across the House for our proposals. The strengthening of health education is a key link in achieving our objectives for a better health service and better health care in Scotland. I hope that I have been able to persuade the House to support the new clauses.

Mr. Tom Clarke: I do not think that the Minister should be surprised if some hon. Members feel that we should take up some of his remarks, albeit briefly.

The Under-Secretary of State said that he was not sure whether I had been listening to his remarks about the Touche Ross report, but I do not think that he was listening to my intervention. I clearly asked whether people involved in health education had been consulted. He gave no evidence that they had been consulted on the conclusions and the recommendations of the report. Therefore, there is a great temptation for Opposition Members—perhaps because of the Minister's speech—to have greater doubts about the new clause.

In all honesty, perhaps the only redeeming feature is that the hon. Member for Ross, Cromarty and Skye (Mr. Kennedy), who was positive at all times in Committee, made some contribution to the new clause. I hope that he and the House will not mind when I say that the Opposition—having heard the Under-Secretary's particularly vague explanation in response to my hon. Friend the Member for Aberdeen, North (Mr. Hughes), who asked a direct question about the legislative purpose of the boards—will judge the Government's real intentions when we deal with the regulations.

I am not convinced that the new clause represents the answer that all hon. Members would wish for in creating a broad strategy for the Health Service in Scotland, and for the major thrust necessary to deal with heart disease, respiratory conditions and the problem of an earlier mortality rate than elsewhere in the United Kingdom. The Minister did not convince us that much time had been devoted to real consultations on health education. I hope he will not mind if I return to the painful subject of what was once the responsibility of the Scottish Film Council. I think he is now able to distinguish that organisation from the Scottish film library. It works closely with the health education unit, which deserves to be congratulated on the way that it has promoted the campaign against AIDS and drugs. The Opposition want to be absolutely certain that the quality of those campaigns will not be diminished but will increase. We are not convinced, by any stretch of the imagination, by the Minister's arguments. Some of us are worried, in view of his speech, that there he was, sitting on the roof of St. Andrew's house feeding the vultures and coming up with even more crazy ideas about what he will do with the Scottish Health Service.

Notwithstanding the Minister's weak arguments, we shall not oppose the new clause. However, we shall look carefully at the regulations that will be laid before the House.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause read a Second time, and added to the Bill.

New Clause 1

PRESERVED RIGHT TO INCOME SUPPORT

'(1) The Secretary of State shall, in respect of every person specified in Section 40 and who is in receipt of Income Support on the date on which Parts III and IV come into force:

(a) determine whether the appropriate amount of income support for that category of residential or nursing care is adequate to meet the charges levied by the residential care home or nursing home; and where it is inadequate establish the difference between the appropriate amount of income support and the charge; and

(b) pay to that person an additional amount of income support representing the figure determined in accordance with paragraph (a) above except that no such payment shall be made in respect of any proportion of a charge which an adjudication officer considers to be unreasonable, having regard to the nature of the premises and of the services provided; and

(c) by means of annual adjustments, maintain the value of the amount described in paragraph (b) above by reference to an index reflecting the average movement of charges made by proprietors of relevant premises.

(2) In this section:

"relevant premises" has the same meaning as in section 40. "appropriate amount of income support" has the same meaning as in paragraph 5, 6 and 7 of Schedule 4 to the Income Support General Regulations 1987.'.—*[Mr. Robin Cook.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

6 pm

Mr. Robin Cook (Livingston): I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

Before I turn to the substance of the new clause, I intend to make two comments on why the Opposition have chosen this as the first of the Opposition new clauses to be considered on Report. The Opposition deliberately chose a community care topic to be debated first. The Bill is the response, such as it is, of Ministers to the Griffiths report on community care and their response to the explosion in the numbers of the very elderly which, during the next decade, will be a major challenge to the health and social services.

The clauses on community care are to be found at the very end of the Bill. We were anxious from the moment that we saw the Bill that those clauses should not be ignored. It is a measure of the success of our strategy in Committee—a success that has been much appreciated by voluntary organisations—that we were able to pace our Committee debates in such a way that four days were spent on debating those clauses. We were equally determined that community care and the needs of the elderly should not be forgotten on Report. It was partly for that reason that we chose to debate new clause 1 at the start of our debates on Report.

I am sure that it has not escaped Ministers' attention that there is a second reason for the Opposition having chosen first to debate new clause 1: this is an issue which unites both sides of the House. I stand at the Dispatch Box under the novel burden of speaking to a new clause that has attracted the signatures of more than 30 Conservative Members. I respect their support, in return for which I shall seek to be as non-partisan as it is possible for me to be. I may have to compensate later tonight for that non-partisan spirit, but on this occasion I shall endeavour to curb my enthusiasm.

It is understandable that so many Conservative Members should want to support our attempt to provide justice for the people who are referred to in the new clause. Ironically, Conservative Members represent more social security claimants than do Opposition Members. They represent constituencies in parts of the country that tend to have more private residential care homes. I doubt whether there is a single Conservative Member who does not know of at least one constituent in his her constituency who falls into the trap that is addressed by the new clause. The trap catches elderly residents who entered private residential care homes or private nursing homes after being assured by the Department of Social Security that it would meet the charges through income support. Now, however, they find that they are being short-changed on income support and that they have no means of bridging the gap.

During the last two months I have seen and heard of so many such cases that it is difficult for me to select only one for the purposes of illustration. However, I shall share with the House the experience of Mrs. Renninson, who appeared with me at a press conference last week. Mrs. Renninson's father experienced a stroke at the age of 86 and had to go into residential care. He was admitted to a home that was able to cope with his needs. However, from the moment that he entered the home he faced the familiar problem that the charges increased faster than the increase in income support. Four years later, at the age of 90, he was put out of the home by the owners. Seven weeks later he died. The discontinuance of familiar surroundings is one notorious way in which death among elderly people can be precipitated. However, we cannot tell whether in this case death was associated with a change in surroundings; we can only make a reasonable presumption.

When Mrs. Renninson spoke to the press conference she said that she felt that it was a mercy that death occurred after her father's second stroke because he really did not know what was happening to him. As I listened to Mrs. Renninson, I thought how amazingly reasonable and calm she was, despite all that she had been through.

I am bound to ask how we, as a legislature, can have permitted circumstances in which elderly men and women —too confused and too disoriented to know what is happening to them—are evicted from residential care homes because the benefit that they receive, in the name of this House, is not sufficient to keep a roof over their head.

That case occurred in the constituency of the Minister for Health, who is responsible for community care. In fairness to the Minister, Mrs. Renninson told me that she appreciated the support that she received from the Minister during the years throughout which she struggled to meet the fees at the home. As Mrs. Renninson expressed it to me, the Minister had written many letters of support to her, but unfortunately she was trapped because of the way in which the regulations are framed.

The new clause provides the House with an opportunity to change the regulations. It would help many people who are in the same position as Mrs. Renninson's father. Study after study throughout the past two years has confirmed that the present level of income support for those in private residential care is hopelessly inadequate to meet the fees. Only last month, Counsel and Care for the Elderly

[Mr. Robin Cook]

published its latest survey which showed that, of the homes it had investigated, only one in three charges fees that are within the income support limits. When it looked at homes in the London area, out of the 132 homes that it surveyed only seven charged fees that were within the income support limits.

The British Federation of Care Home Proprietors says that the average shortfall is £40 a week. The Independent Hospitals Association says that the average shortfall is £60 a week. That shortfall is calculated on the basis of typical weekly expenditure per resident. It makes no allowance for capital borrowing and it allows only £14 a week for the food of each resident. When I referred to that figure in Committee, perhaps in an unfortunately partisan spirit I asked how many Conservative Members could feed themselves for a week on £14. In the non-partisan spirit in which I move the new clause, I ask my hon. Friends how many of them could feed themselves for a week on £14.

Lest it be thought that the shortfall that the figures represent includes an excessive and unreasonable profit for the homes, let me consider the case of those residential care homes in the private sector that do not seek to make a profit. The National Federation of Housing Associations has made a survey of 500 homes. All of them are provided by voluntary organisations or housing associations. All of them are organisations that the Government seek to foster. In none of these cases is a profit, excessive or otherwise, being made. Few of the 500 homes came up with charges within the limits for income support. In most cases they were £30 above the limit, and, in one fifth of cases, more than £60 above the limit.

Counsel and Care for the Elderly has sent to a number of hon. Members examples of the cases in respect of which it has been asked for assistance. I should like to refer to two or three of them. The first demonstrates beyond any argument how even organisations that do not seek to make a profit cannot run their homes within the limits set by the Department of Social Security. Let me cite the case of Mrs. B, aged 95. In 1985 Mrs. B moved into a voluntary nursing home run by an order of Roman Catholic nuns. Over the past five years the nuns have been faced with escalating costs, and the fees of this non-profit-making home are now £275 per week. Mrs. B is therefore unable to meet the full charge out of her income support. Her daughter is retired and is unable to make up the shortfall. Six charity funds have now been persuaded to make long-term grants, leaving the retired daughter to make what is described as a manageable contribution to top up the social security. This is a home run by nuns—people who patently do not seek to make an excessive or unreasonable profit, people who have themselves taken vows of poverty, yet who, within the limits set by the Department of Social Security, cannot make ends meet. I should like the House to note how many charities had to be approached in order that the gap might be bridged.

Let me refer to another case history that has been supplied by Counsel and Care for the Elderly. It relates to a woman of 92 who has been in a private nursing home in Sussex for four years. She is confused and requires heavy physical care. The fees of the home have increased steadily, and there is now a shortfall of £90 per week. As in the other case, this lady's only daughter is retired. Nevertheless, she contributed her entire state pension to try to meet the amount by which income support fell short of the fee. That situation cannot be maintained for long. Currently, Counsel and Care for the Elderly is negotiating with 10 separate charities to meet the top-up. It says that if all 10 can help, Mrs. V will be able to remain in the home.

What makes many of these cases so perverse is that they involve elderly people who were placed in private residential care by NHS hospitals desperately anxious to recover the beds that were being occupied. Time and again those people, having been placed in that care, are left in an impossible financial situation. Just before coming to the Chamber I received, by fax, from the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux, details of the latest case. It involves an elderly lady who is in need of full-time nursing. She is incontinent and is unable even to feed herself. She has been in a private nursing home for a number of years. The home has now asked her son to remove her because it is no longer prepared to tolerate the loss that it sustains by way of the difference between income support and the fee that it charges. The irony is that neither the son nor the lady herself was responsible for her being in the nursing home in the first place; a local NHS hospital put her there without consulting the son because it wanted access to the bed that she was occupying.

6.15 pm

As this matter was debated by the Select Committee, we have the advantage of the Committee's report, which came out last week. It confirms every point that was put to Ministers in the Standing Committee on the Bill. In particular—and I found this startling—the report confirms that the Government themselves admit that income support levels do not meet the needs of many of those in private residential care. It quotes Ministers as having said that 58 per cent. of people in private residential care in receipt of income support are paying fees that are within income support limits. Therefore, even on the basis of the Government's own figures, two out of five of those in private residential care are faced with fees that are outside income support limits.

I have to say to the Secretary of State for Social Security, whose presence for this debate I welcome, that, given his knowledge that 42 per cent. of those people are now faced with charges that exceed income support levels, it is impossible to believe that the uprating this year or last year turned on a careful calculation of what it would take to meet a reasonable fee.

As the House will be aware, the uprating that was announced last autumn will take effect next month. I remember the figure particularly well—it is £10—as at that time I was shadowing also the Minister who will reply to this debate. I can tell the House how the right hon. Gentleman arrived at that figure. He did not do so by measuring the fees and by doing a careful calculation of what was needed; it just happens that £10 is the round figure nearest to 5·4 per cent. of the £190 that was the previous limit for care in private nursing homes. This is the standard application of the uprating, across social security, to these levels, although that uprating is hopelessly out of touch.

Last year, for instance, private nursing homes had to meet the cost of the nurses' pay award. This year they have to meet the additional burden of high interest rates. These place a particularly heavy burden on those homes that borrowed in order to get into business. The Select Committee's report quotes the Minister as having said that

it was never intended that fees should be met in full. In other words, it was never intended, and apparently never claimed, that income support levels should be measured against the fees of homes. I put it to the Secretary of State and to the Minister of State that, as a simple statement, that is just not true.

The original basis on which income support was made available to people moving into private residential care was that of the regulations on board and lodgings, under which local social security officers were empowered to meet the full reasonable cost of accommodation. There is no suggestion there that it was not intended that those payments should not meet the full cost of private residential care. Let me put to the Secretary of State what, in a sense, is a more important consideration: that statement not only is not true in history but is a novel principle in social security law. The whole function of income support is to meet the full subsistence needs of those in receipt of it. After all, they are broke. They have no other means of subsistence. If it were otherwise, those other means would be deducted from the income support entitlement.

That prompts a question to which a straight answer from the Secretary of State would be appreciated by many people: if he and the Minister of State are now saying that it is not their intention that the full reasonable charges of these homes should be met through income support, who is it intended should make up the balance? Who should absorb the shortfall? Will it be the homes? Are they expected to make a loss as a condition of accepting as residents people who are on income support? I can tell the Secretary of State what their response will be. Indeed, there are two possible responses.

Mr. Andrew Bowden (Brighton, Kemptown): As the hon. Gentleman will know, I put my name to the new clause. I put this question to him in good faith so that I may be able to think through the point that he is making. I am sure he agrees that, under the old system, there was gross exploitation by a proportion of nursing home owners. in the sense that they increased their rates knowing that the individuals concerned would have only to apply to the DHSS, as it then was, to have the shortfall automatically made up. We are now in a new situation. I understand completely the points that the hon. Gentleman is making. However, I ask him quite genuinely how he thinks this problem should be overcome. It seems to me that there are two possible solutions: either there should be a blanket increase in all levels, or either the DHSS or the social services departments of county councils should be allowed to assess cases and make a proportionate increase to meet the costs. Which is the best path to go down—or does the hon. Gentleman have an alternative?

Mr. Cook: The hon. Gentleman makes a rich intervention and it will take me a little time to respond to it. On his point about the genesis of the situation, I do not wish to introduce a partisan note, but if it were possible for us to go back to 1980, we would not have wished to start out on the path that the Government followed. We would have preferred the large sums that were made available through the social security budget for private residential care to be channelled into local authority residential care, which would have meant that we would not now face our present difficulty.

Ministers made the deliberate decision to subsidise the expansion of private residential care through social security provision. The resultant expansion cannot have come as a surprise to them, because the policy was intended to achieve that expansion. I accept the point made by the hon. Member for Brighton, Kemptown (Mr. Bowden); indeed, the Opposition criticised the consequences. Some homes came into existence at that time with, let us be frank, an eye to the main chance, to take advantage of the new bonanza.

I would not necessarily criticise the 1985 system to introduce flat-rate payments for people in private residential care, although I believe that they should have been subject to regional variation. I criticise the fact that, since 1985, those flat-rate payments have been uprated in such a meagre and unrealistic way that they have precipitated a major crisis among those in receipt of those allowances.

To follow the point raised by the hon. Member for Kemptown, and letting all that go as water under the bridge, how do we get out—if that is not a hopelessly mixed metaphor? Perhaps I should say, how do we get up-river from where we are? As the hon. Gentleman said, there are two alternatives. The alternative proposed in my new clause, to which the hon. Gentleman has added his name, is that we should oblige the Department of Social Security to carry out a realistic evaluation of what charges are reasonable. The new clause gives protection and gives the Department the right to refuse to make payments where the charge is unreasonable and to pay the money to the resident.

I am not immediately attracted to the alternative of empowering local authorities to top up the amounts. Every other clause on community care imposes additional burdens and liabilities on local authorities. The Opposition doubt whether those local authorities will achieve the necessary finance to discharge them. I should be hesitant about passing on to those local authorities the additional expenditure of meeting that top-up. I can warn the hon. Member for Kemptown about the immediate and predictable consequences of such a change: the Secretary of State for Social Security would never uprate those limits again and the burden would fall on local authorities. That is why I chose the path followed by the new clause. I hope that I have responded to the points raised by the hon. Member for Kemptown without jeopardising his support for that approach.

To return to my previous remarks, I was posing to the Secretary of State this question: who does he expect to meet the top-up payment if Ministers no longer intend to meet the full bill? Is it the home? Is it expected to absorb a loss? If so, the home can make two responses. First, it can reduce the facilities that can be made available to people on income support, and that is already happening. A study carried out last year by a firm of financial analysts discovered that only 11 per cent. of homes providing private residential care were willing to provide single rooms for residents on income support. Virtually 90 per cent. now provide only shared accommodation for such residents. Those homes have drawn to our attention the fact that two-tier accommodation is emerging in the private residential sector. The National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux refers in its briefing to many hon. Members to its information that there are homes where residents on income support receive inferior meals compared with other residents. I cannot believe that any

[Mr. Cook]

hon. Member would knowingly wish to have a public policy that resulted in that tasteless, undignified and damaging discrimination.

The second response that a home can make is simply to go bankrupt, and a number of homes are contemplating making that response. In Standing Committee, the Minister of State was good enough to say that she was tremendously impressed by the work of the Anchor Housing Association for the Elderly. I do not know whether she has had an opportunity to study the Select Committee's report, but it contains the evidence that that association provided to the Select Committee. The Anchor Housing Association said that its shortfall was £30 a week per resident and pointed out that in 1988-89 the association lost £250,000 on its residential care schemes, which, as the association said, was

"a loss it cannot, as a charity, continue to sustain".

If it is not the homes that have to absorb the top-up amounts, will it be the relatives? I put it to the Secretary of State, who knows social security law as well as any other Member, that the liability to pay the fees is a liability on the resident, not on the relatives. In any event, often those relatives are elderly. We are talking about residents of private residential care homes who are in their 90s. It is in the nature of people of that age that their sons and daughters are themselves retired. As hon. Members will have seen from the briefing circulated to them, NACAB knows of at least one retired pensioner couple, in Cheshire, who have been obliged to take part-time employment solely to pay the top-up on the fee charged for their mother's accommodation.

Sir Dudley Smith (Warwick and Leamington): Does the hon. Gentleman agree that one of the tragedies of the problem is that, however severely incapacitated, the elderly person may live on for 10 or more years? I know of someone who lived on for 17 years. Even if the relatives have reasonable funds, they can soon be dissipated and they could be in penury.

Mr. Cook: The hon. Gentleman makes a fair, although infelicitously expressed, point. There is no doubt that one of the great stresses felt by relatives with an elderly parent in this position is that they have no idea how long it will continue, so they have no idea whether they will have any savings left. They do not even know whether their savings will last long enough to keep their relative in private residential care. When their savings are gone, who will meet their liabilities when they in turn require private residential care?

I come to the last possibility in terms of who fills the gap. Are the residents expected to make up the balance? If so, how? By definition, they are people who have no income of their own, except for the £10 a week that they are allowed for personal expenses. Although it is contrary to social security law, many of these residents do not receive even that miserable personal allowance; it goes to fill the gap on the fee, leaving those residents with no money for telephone calls home, stamps and toiletries and even, for some, no money to purchase the incontinence pads that they need but now cannot obtain on prescription.

Ministers have a wonderful phrase to describe what will happen to people in those circumstances under the Bill. It is said that they will have "preserved rights". There is no security in having preserved rights that will leave people unable to afford toothpaste or incontinence pads. The reality is that for "preserved rights" we should read "excluded rights". The only provision in the Bill that affects those people is clause 40, which is in the Bill with only one purpose—to exclude those people presently in private residential care from the new arrangements to take effect from April 1991.

There is a real danger that those people will become the forgotten people. Local authorities will have no powers to make the top-up, the Department of Health will have no duty towards them and the Department of Social Security, which plainly regards them as imposing irritating costs on the social security budget, wants to be shot of them as fast as possible.

I hope that the House will not be bought off by the formula that the Minister of State put to the Committee when we debated this matter. The Minister drew attention to clause 40 on the basis that

"there is scope for making a regulation power to provide for people who otherwise would be homeless or suffer severe hardship in the ultimate circumstances."—[*Official Report, Standing Committee E*, 13 February 1990; c. 866.]

In other words, it would be possible to contemplate regulations that would protect the position of those people at the moment of eviction.

That proposal does not address what happens in the years leading up to the moment of eviction. We are talking about people in their 80s or 90s. We cannot ask them to sleep easily in their beds on the basis that there may be regulations to cater for them at the point of eviction when the home finally boots them out. Moreover, such a regulation would be entirely pointless because the bizarre result of clause 39 and clause 40, read together, is that if the home evicts a resident and that resident qualifies for assessment by the local authority, qualifies under assessment as being eligible for residential care and is placed by that local authority in another residential care home, he becomes a new resident under the Bill at that point and will qualify for top-up.

We are creating a ludicrous message to send out from this House to the owners of private residential care homes. We are saying to them, "If you are reasonable, if you absorb the loss, and if you do not evict the residents, we shall not help. But if you are unreasonable and evict that resident, we shall intervene and meet the bill." I cannot think of a more confused or hopelessly limited response to the problem.

The truth is that that response is intended not to meet the problem but to defuse the political pressure to solve the problem. I urge the House not to be defused. I can guarantee Conservative Members plenty of opportunities for partisan votes in our proceedings on the Bill. They will have the opportunity to redeem themselves in the eyes of the hon. Member for Derby, North (Mr. Knight) before the night is out. I beg them to vote not to please the hon. Member for Derby, North on new clause 1, but to assist their constituents. I commend the new clause to the House.

Miss Ann Widdecombe (Maidstone): I am grateful for the opportunity to take part in the debate, which concerns the most vulnerable of our constituents. The Government are to be congratulated on their recognition that the present position is unsatisfactory. If they had not recognised that, they would not have brought about the courageous and welcome changes in their implementation

of the Griffiths report and in the Bill. However, in saying that the proposals will relate only to elderly residents who come into private residential homes in future, the Government have eliminated from their wise and humane reforms all who are currently in such homes and who are having to suffer the unsatisfactory position that has led the Government to make changes in respect of future residents.

The hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) has quoted several of his constituents and I suspect that we shall hear many specific cases tonight. I have raised the issue on many occasions, as has my hon. Friend the Member for Romsey and Waterside (Mr. Colvin), who deserves the thanks of the House for the persistence with which he has raised the matter over the past year. We have raised the topic in Adjournment debates, in Consolidated Fund debates, in the inquiry held by the Select Committee on Social Services and in many other convenient fora. I record my gratitude to my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Social Security for her many letters to me in response to a particular problem with one of my constituents. That problem is not solved and cannot be solved under the present circumstances. Although I have quoted the case of Florence Smith so frequently that she has become almost a byword to describe such a situation, I have many other cases.

It is a question not only of the problems of our immediately suffering constituents, but of the effect that lack of recognition of the problem to the point of being unwilling to solve it will have on future provision for the elderly. It has been estimated that we need to provide about 40 new beds a week if we are to be able to take care of the ever-increasing number of elderly people by the end of the century. That means that there must be an incentive, and not a disincentive, to the homes to expand and to build them in the first place.

There have been two principal reasons for the immense distortion between the charges being levied by the reasonable homes—I set aside for the moment the unreasonable homes—and the level of income support. First, there has been an immense rise in interest rates which means that any home that has new property attached to it, or is a new property itself, is having to pay immense sums to service the capital investment. The owners have to pass on those sums, which is not greed or unscrupulous profiteering, but basic business sense such as the Government normally applaud. Secondly, there was a welcome and wholly justifiable rise in the pay of nurses the year before last, when the average rise was 15 per cent. Once again, that charge has to be passed on in our nursing homes.

It is significant that some of the homes that have managed to depress their charges artificially are those where the proprietor is herself a qualified nurse and can, therefore, take on many of the duties that would normally fall to other staff. However, if she is also to take on more residents—as she must if we are to meet our target for caring for the elderly—she will be unable to carry that burden indefinitely. That means that she will have to employ qualified staff at an ever-increasing cost, which also has to be passed on.

Other distortions have been caused by regional variations. An established home with no new building in the north-west, for example, may be able to cope and set a charge within the level payable under income support, but there is no way that that can be done in areas where property is vastly more expensive, such as the south-east, and where the home is new. It is not insignificant that many Conservative Members who first started to draw attention to the problem have come from areas where property is expensive.

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman (Lancaster): Is my hon. Friend aware that even in the north-west it is extremely expensive for charities such as the Abbeyfield Society, in which I have a particular interest, to build extra care homes, service the debt and run them?

Miss Widdecombe: My hon. Friend is right and I was not suggesting that the problem did not exist in other parts of the country. While the problems in the south-east are extra acute, we must examine the issue on a nationwide basis.

I shall rehearse again the case of Florence Smith. She is aged 93 and until January 1989 was happy in a residential home, where she could afford the charges. Her income support more or less matched them and there was no problem. Then, like many elderly ladies—many of them much younger than 93—she developed specific nursing needs and could not be accommodated in a residential home. She was transferred to the Poplars, a reasonably priced nursing home in my area. Having telephoned my constituency to check on average charges, I assure the House that the home's charges are most reasonable. It is well respected, well known and a much sought after home. In other words, it is not a ruthlessly profiteering establishment. Florence S ith was moved there and it immediately became apparent that the total benefits payable to her would not cover the costs involved. At that stage the gap was about £10 and was manageable by her daughter. But her daughter depends on a pension, so as the gap grew and the £10 became a larger sum, the pressures on the daughter increased.

The Florence Smiths of this world remain in such homes largely because the homes subsidise them. There must be a limit on how long we can expect the better homes to go on doing that. Somebody entering a home at the age of 93 may have six or seven years left, and the relatives are faced with the problem of meeting the ever increasing gap in payments. That is bad enough. But for somebody aged 70 with nursing needs and with perhaps 20 years to spend in a home, the relatives face an extremely worrying prospect.

I could detail other cases, such as that of a professional, quite well-off couple who faced great problems. The wife developed Parkinson's disease, the husband could not look after her at home and there were no children able to help. Eventually she was moved into a nursing home. The husband took responsibility for that decision and he has run down his capital to the point where there is nothing left. What is to happen to that lady? The benefits available to her do not cover the charges.

Last Saturday a lady told me that her father was terminally ill. Generous income support is available to the terminally ill and that lady has put her father in a home where the charges are eminently reasonable. Indeed, they are on the low side for the area. Yet those charges are not covered and the gap is £50 a week, which is a lot of money. The lady in that case is of working age, and told me that she would be willing to go to work to keep her father in

[Miss Widdecombe]

that home for the last two or three months of his life. Unfortunately, she must also care for a sick son, so she must stay at home and cannot go out to work.

The new clause poses the basic question of who pays. There is no answer to that question in any of the provisions that the Government have suggested. They have acknowledged the problem and have taken many courageous decisions, and we are grateful for that, but all hon. Members have in their constituencies cases such as that of Florence Smith and they know that there will be more of them with the passage of time. In other words, the problem will grow in magnitude and certainly will not go away.

What happens if nobody pays? The Florence Smiths of this world fear what will happen to them if they are turned out of their homes. I do not paint a terrible picture of people being turned out of homes and wandering the streets with nowhere to go, but a sick elderly person in that situation, who either has no relatives or whose relatives cannot cope, will have to go into hospital. It is not even a cost-effective option to transfer people from homes to hospitals.

The Government's policy of closing the larger mental hospitals with the aim of getting people cared for in the community is jeopardised by the situation I am describing. The sick elderly will be returning to hospital, from where nobody will be able to discharge them because there will be nowhere else for them to go. That will put an enormous strain on the Health Service and on the individuals.

6.45 pm

Mrs. Alice Mahon (Halifax): Is the hon. Lady aware that we have lost from the NHS about 6,500 beds in which many of the elderly people about whom she is speaking used to be accommodated? It is not realistic to suggest that returning the sick elderly to hospital is an option because there are so few long-stay beds available. I worked on a geriatric ward in the early 1980s. At that time the Government encouraged the practice of lists of private homes being put up in wards so that relatives could read them and consider putting their elderly folk into homes. There are no beds available in the NHS to take people on a long-term basis.

Miss Widdecombe: I accept that the option is limited, but the fact remains that if someone is evicted from a home, that person must go somewhere, and if he or she is sick and has nursing needs, the inevitable end is a hospital. I accept that that will put immense pressure on the limited facilities that exist.

We must also consider the problem of unreasonable fees. The Government are right to say that, whatever system is created, we must not encourage homes to increase their fees by £20 the instant income support is increased by £20. The Government are right to fear that happening. That is why the proposal in the new clause—that an adjudication officer should be able to refuse to pay any part of fees that appear to him to be unreasonable—should take care of the situation.

The problem of fees is bound to arise with new residents. Nobody is saying that a contracting authority, when taking a certain number of beds in a home, will say, "No matter what you charge, we will go on paying it." There must be a system by which authorities can negotiate reasonable charges. That process will establish what is a reasonable charge and, once established, it can be applied to existing establishments. So, because of the Government's proposals, the bogy of the unreasonable charge will be less real than it may have been in the past. That will certainly be the case after April 1991.

The new clause provides an adequate solution, and while the Government may complain about its wording, its aim is right. If we do nothing, the most vulnerable of our constituents will suffer greatly. Homes will have no incentive to build and expand when such developments should take place. Undue pressure will be placed on hospital services, which are already highly pressurised.

While I support the Government totally in their general aims in the matter, I urge hon. Members to support the new clause and thereby protect existing residents, whose situation, we are told, will remain the same. In other words, it will remain grossly unsatisfactory, a grievous worry to them in their declining years and a growing burden for their relatives.

Mr. Frank Field (Birkenhead): I support the remarks of my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) and the hon. Member for Maidstone (Miss Widdecombe). There are honourable reasons why many of our constituents find themselves in the land of limbo. I refer to our desire to offer our older citizens a better deal than they got in the geriatric wards of the past. Such a better deal appeared to be offered by many of the residential and nursing homes that sprung up.

In the same spirit in which my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston moved the new clause, I do not wish to spend time drawing attention to the number of times that Opposition Members begged the Government not to go down that road—or, when they were going down it, not to have a gatekeeper to prevent expenditure from expanding, whether people needed to go into residential care or not. As the hon. Member for Maidstone said, we are now in that position, and must address ourselves to the question of what to do to protect some of our most vulnerable constituents.

It is important to underline that we are discussing this matter tonight because there was a genuine agreement on both sides of the House that the geriatric ward was not the most desirable place for people to end their days. Nevertheless, it is also important to remind the House, and people outside, that when we were offering the alternative there was never any question that families would have to foot bills, let alone large bills.

There has been a significant change in what I regard as the rights of citizenship. We are talking about people who may have been through two world wars; many of them have never been unemployed, and they have paid all their rates and taxes. One of the benefits that they thought would result from the contract struck with the state was the certainty that, if they needed to go into hospital or have nursing care, they or their relatives would not be faced with a bill. Now we discover that, because we wanted to offer them a better deal and because hospitals thought that it was a way of cutting costs, they and their families will face the sort of charges that the hon. Members have mentioned.

Giving evidence to the Select Committee on Social Services last week, a witness from the Alzheimer's Disease Society said that families faced a deficit of £90 per week. As was pointed out by both the hon. Member for

Maidstone and my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston, the deficits are growing. The Government must acknowledge that there are now pressures from the National Health Service, which will make the position worse. The Committee also heard evidence from clinicians who look after the Acton hospital in west London, which has a £1·5 million deficit. Some of those clinicians feel that the authorities are rushing into a scheme with the private sector in the hope of closing all the geriatric beds, because even under the current Government terms—which in the long run may prove unsatisfactory to the families of patients—as a result of closing its geriatric beds, the hospital will be able to halve its deficit. The picture painted by my hon. Friend the Member for Halifax (Mrs. Mahon), of those beds no longer being there when the ambulances bring people back, is a reality.

Mr. Ian McCartney (Makerfield): A constituent of mine was informed that her aged mother had only three or four months to live, and that the consultant required the bed. She was not given a choice, and her mother was placed in an old people's home. Owing to nursing care and her own abilities, that old lady was still alive 18 months later. However, the fee in the home was more than £60 per week in excess of the family income.

My constituent must now work part time, and she is assisted at the weekend by her son. The doubly incontinent 87-year-old woman is now cared for at home because the old people's home could not continue to keep her: the family could not meet the £60 per week deficit. Their family life has been destroyed, and they are distraught. There is no possibility of their finding care or respite in the public or private sector, because that facility has been denied to them.

Mr. Field: I am always pleased to give way to my hon. Friend, especially when he takes me on to my next point.

We have now entered a new phase: there is no individual test of income on the recipient, but in respect of many families we have returned to the hated household means test. When Ministers appeared before the Select Committee, they made it plain that they would not tolerate that when the new scheme came into existence, and we applaud that. However, those who are already caught in limbo will continue to have a household means test applied to them.

The examples given by my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston and by the hon. Member for Maidstone show that even families that want to make up the difference often cannot, because they are pensioners themselves. What shall we do about them, and also to prevent the position from deteriorating? As my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston said, once the new scheme is in operation we know perfectly well what decent owners of nursing homes will do. They will arrange swaps: ambulances will move between homes, because once an ambulance touches down in a new home the person will be a new resident, and the fees will be paid in full. We can decide tonight whether that is desirable, and whether the Government should be building that into the Bill. The hon. Member for Maidstone asked what would happen between now and the time when the new reform is implemented—and beyond, for those who are caught in limbo. Those residents will face eviction when their families have been broken by the cost of trying to make up the shortfall in fees, or when the owners face bankruptcy because they can no longer continue cross-subsidising—either from other tenants or from their own reserves.

Mr. Anthony Beaumont-Dark (Birmingham, Selly Oak): I, too, am a sponsor of the new clause. Does the hon. Gentleman agree that one of the arguments of those opposing the new clause is that we are asking for a blank cheque—that anything goes, and that anything that is asked for should be granted? Does he further agree—given his very proper record—that all that those who support the new clause are saying is that it should be costed out? Of course, the state should not be penalised, but for goodness sake let us not penalise those in the homes, and throw them on the scrap heap.

Mr. Field: I am pleased that I gave way to the hon. Gentleman, as his remarks take me on to my next point.

I recall a statement that was made by Ernest Bevin. He said, "When looking at a motion, do not bother to read the text; see who is moving it." Let me point out to Conservative Members, who may be worried about the new clause giving a blank cheque, that the name of the hon. Member for Maidstone is on the motion. The hon. Lady would not be proposing any solution that was in the nature of a blank or open cheque. Both she and my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston have tackled that argument head-on. We are not pretending that, if we signed a blank cheque, all those who provide private residential or nursing care would behave honourably to the taxpayer: the sad fact is that they would not. Therefore, built into the new clause is the important proviso that the costs should be covered if they are reasonable. It is not for us to decide whether they are reasonable; that is for an adjudication officer appointed by the Department of Social Security.

The new clause does not create a blank cheque. We are not just throwing money at the problem. We are targeting it and we are discriminating in the help that is to be given. I hope that people will be mindful of the gains that have been made. We have moved away from the situation where many of our older constituents could expect care, freely given, in the hospital to a much better quality of care in many of the residential nursing homes in our constituencies. Our constituents went there thinking that their fees would be paid in full, but a growing number, almost half of those on income support, are not having their fees paid in full and, increasingly, families cannot meet those fees.

We have a chance tonight to ensure that that system does not continue and to deal some justice to some of our older citizens who have paid their rates and taxes during long and often distinguished lives in order to ensure that they do not face a summary eviction or a crude attempt to beat the Government at their own game by moving them around in ambulances. I hope that the House will agree with the arguments put so well by my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston and the hon. Member for Maidstone and will accept the new clause.

7 pm

Mr. Michael Brown (Brigg and Cleethorpes): I apologise to the hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) for being unable to hear his opening remarks, but I was interested in the comments by the hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field). However, I am not convinced about the new clause. They, along with my hon. Friend the

[Mr. Michael Brown]

Member for Maidstone (Miss Widdecombe) and others who have signed the new clause, do not see the new clause as a blank cheque, but it would allow benefits for people in private old-age pensioner homes to be uprated to whatever a home charged.

We should be aware that a large variety of private nursing homes offer many different standards. There are those that offer poor standards and there are those that offer all sorts of luxurious standards. My family live in west Sussex, so I recently had the opportunity to visit one of the cream of the nursing homes on the south coast, the costà geriatrica. It was a wonderful home with superb standards. All its residents were offered a glass of sherry every morning. *[Interruption.]* I make no complaint about that. It is important that all private homes should aspire to the best service for the prices charged. But we must acknowledge that there will always be homes that will try to row in behind the standards set by the most expensive homes. Even the most expensive homes will have residents in receipt of the full benefits paid by the Department of Social Security.

It may not be obvious in the new clause, but we are in danger of writing a blank cheque. How on earth will the Secretary of State be able to provide the resources for the individual adjudication that the new clause invites?

Miss Widdecombe: I must ask my hon. Friend, with courtesy, not sarcasm, whether he understands what is being proposed. How will the Secretary of State determine between those variable charges for new residents? If he can do that for new residents, he can do it for existing residents.

Mr. Brown: I cannot accept what my hon. Friend says because the private sector offers a variety of services.

The Secretary of State for Health (Mr. Kenneth Clarke): I am not sure which Secretary of State is being referred to, but I can assure my hon. Friend that this Secretary of State for Health has no intention of leaping in to try to decide what is a reasonable charge for each person under the new arrangements. We all accept that the new arrangements are a big improvement on the arrangements that we shall be glad to see the back of, as the hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field) said, but under them the local authority will have to assess an individual's needs for residential care and will then have to negotiate with a home that is acceptable to that client what the local authority is prepared to regard as a reasonable contract. That is not the same as addressing each existing resident in whatever home of whatever quality he or she might be in now. I share my hon. Friend's confusion, because that point has been slicked over in all the speeches so far.

The new clause cheerily says that there should be no payment beyond that which is reasonable, but how on earth is the Department of Social Security's adjudicating officer meant to decide what is reasonable? Does it mean reasonable for that resident, reasonable for that home or reasonable on the costs of a particular proprietor? My hon. Friend is being barracked, but he is making a good point. He should not give way to interventions that imply that my Department or the Department of Social Security is in any position to answer the questions posed by the new clause.

Mr. Brown: I am grateful to my right hon. and learned Friend. I share his view that there is an element of confusion within the new clause. There is an element of a blank cheque in it. I should be the first to acknowledge, as the tone of interventions from a sedentary position suggest, that there may well be within the arena of private nursing homes those who are unscrupulous. It is those very unscrupulous owners of old-age pensioners' private homes whom the new clause will aid and comfort. If we want to introduce some decent common standards——

Mr. Robin Cook: Since the hon. Gentleman is making a speech that hon. Members can use as a clothes-peg on which to hang our queries, let me put it to the Secretary of State through the hon. Gentleman that he is fearful that the new clause will make it difficult for the local adjudication officers to establish what is reasonable or unreasonable. But it is admitted that every local authority will have to establish that for its area under the new arrangements, so what is to prevent the Secretary of State for Social Security and his local officers at least meeting what the local authorities define as reasonable?

Mr. Brown: I would not envy any Department of Health or Department of Social Security officer in the task that is being suggested by the hon. Gentleman. I simply see a black hole or a bottomless pit that would ultimately prevent value for money being obtained for the taxpayer or the patient in private rented homes.

Mr. Frank Field *rose*——

Mr. Jerry Hayes (Harlow) *rose*——

Mr. Brown: I have given way generously to hon. Members on both sides of the House and I shall not give way any more because many hon. Members wish to speak.

Notwithstanding the assurances that have been given, the new clause creates a black hole. Much taxpayers' money will be wasted and that will not ultimately benefit residents in private homes. As has been acknowledged, some unscrupulous people run such homes and they will be the first to take advantage of the loopholes in the new clause.

Mrs. Mahon: I feel somewhat alarmed. I expected that tonight we might get all-party support for the new clause, because it is a very good clause. We are talking about large numbers of increasingly frail, elderly people. I should like the hon. Member for Brigg and Cleethorpes (Mr. Brown) or some of his hon. Friends who will be opposing the new clause to tell us what is to happen to these elderly, often very sick, people. What policy will the Government put forward to take care of them?

We referred in Committee—and I do not say this in any flippant sense but because the hon. Member for Maidstone (Miss Widdecombe) and others mentioned it—to the Florence Smith gap that applies to every constituency in the land, and increasing numbers slot into it.

I have just looked at one or two statistics. In west Yorkshire, the average gap for a normal residential care home for the over-65s—not the very elderly—is £24·19. The gap for a nursing home is £19·59. That is the average, and I know that it is much higher in other areas. A constituent came to my surgery whose mother was in an ordinary residential home for elderly people. She was caught in this gap. The proprietor was not the decent kind of person that we would all wish to see in charge of such

homes but was quite unscrupulous. When my constituent, who was the only daughter, went to see her mother, she was locked out because she had said that she could not meet the difference in cost. Eventually she had to be moved. The daughter was subjected not only to the worry of finding somewhere cheaper for her mother but also to harassment by the proprietor. I suggest that such treatment will increase, and that there will be evictions.

What will the Minister do about these elderly people, because proprietors will not go on funding the gap? If we do not get evictions, will we experience the other kind of home that we have all heard about? Will we move back to the 10-bedroom situation, where neither the residents nor the people who see them in the home get any satisfaction?

I want to concentrate briefly on the Government's response to the problem so far. I hope that it will be different tonight. I am an eternal optimist.

The Government's response in Committee was to accept that there are problems. It was said in Committee that there were many bleeding hearts among Government Members, and that is true; there was a lot of sympathy about these problems. The Government described the existing system as being not satisfactory and then proceeded to ignore it. If the hon. Member for Brigg and Cleethorpes is anything to go by—and he has taken the Government line—they intend to carry on ignoring the situation. Even worse, Social Security Ministers suggest that people who are unable to meet their fees should turn to the National Health Service. There will simply not be the beds available.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field) said, we tried to get rid of care in the geriatric hospitals because we thought that care in the community was better. Is it seriously suggested that we should go back to the philosophy of the very long stay bed? I hope not. I do not want to see any more geriatric beds closed down; the British Geriatric Society says that that process has gone much too far and that we need more beds for geriatric patients, either long or short stay. To suggest that as an alternative, as Social Security Ministers have, is to fly in the face of the philosophy that we are all supposed to support.

Apart from anything else, there will not be any beds available. In fact, my own district health authority, because of the cuts imposed upon it as the cash allocated to it is not sufficient, is faced with the necessity of closing beds across the whole spectrum of disciplines, and one of the options is to take another 15 geriatric beds out of service. I think that that will become the norm.

I return to the major question that Ministers must answer tonight. They must tell us what they intend to do with the large numbers of elderly people who will be very anxious indeed, the ones who are still mentally able to grasp what is happening. As for the others, their relatives and the people who care for them will be desperately anxious. The Minister must tell us tonight, if he will not support this new clause, exactly what message he has for the thousands and thousands of Florence Smiths. There is all-party support for this new clause, and I hope that the Minister will not let us down.

7.15 pm

Sir Dudley Smith: For some strange reason, Leamington Spa, which I represent, seems to be the mecca for old people. I believe that I have more residential homes in my constituency than even Bournemouth, and even more perhaps than my hon. Friend the Member for Brighton, Kemptown (Mr. Bowden). I suppose that it is because we are in the heart of England, but anyway the numbers have increased greatly in recent years.

I agree with every speech made in this debate so far, with the exception of that made by my hon. Friend the Member for Brigg and Cleethorpes (Mr. Brown). I congratulate the hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) on his moderation on this occasion, and the case that has been predicated is unassailable. I know that there are considerable difficulties in finding the right form of words to get this problem tackled by the Department of Social Security, but I have absolutely no doubt that it must be tackled. This is a modern phenomenon caused by the fact that people are living longer. As we approach the next century it will become a critical matter and one which will have to be tackled whichever party is in power.

All of us who represent areas in which there are elderly people know only too well the sad and sorry stories of aged people, many of them incontinent and perhaps slightly deranged, who live on for 10 or even 20 years. Many of them have savings when they first go into a home, but gradually their savings dwindle because they have to pay for the growing gap between their income support and the cost charged by the homes.

I have seen many cases of families faced with an enormous moral dilema: should they try to help their mother or father to sustain what good quality of life there is in a residential home, or should they give up? These people are often of very modest means and may well be in early middle life, with young children. As every hon. Member knows, it is a very expensive time for families. Or they may be getting on themselves and perhaps reaching pensionable age, at which time every penny of their own savings will count for their own retirement. Are they to divest themselves of all their savings to help a mother or father, only to find that they finish up in a similar situation?

Therefore, this problem demands a very careful look by the Department of Social Security. Otherwise we shall end up, as I think the hon. Member for Birkenhead intimated, with large numbers of geriatric wards which will be very unpleasant compared with the residential homes which we have today and the numbers of which have expanded in recent years. Surely we cannot as a society face such a situation. We cannot allow old people to suffer the great indignity of being kicked out and moved around until a billet can be found for them. That would not be tolerated, and it would put an extra strain on the hospital system.

We must work out something far better than we have at present. I support the idea that we must be able to get the income support to cover the vast majority of the fees which are charged. At the same time we have to evolve a system whereby the homes concerned charge a reasonable sum for the people staying there. We must curb exploitation and sustain those who are managing, sometimes at a disadvantage to themselves, because they are able to cut corners. They are conscious that they need to support their inmates of whom they are quite fond; for them it is not just a commercial proposition.

I hope that the Minister will give us some assurance, because we shall not be able to get the new clause carried —[HON. MEMBERS: "Why not?"] I am being realistic. We want an assurance that the Government have taken note of the concern of hon. Members on both sides of the

[Sir Dudley Smith]

House. I hope that he can satisfy us that the safety and well-being of thousands of old people will be safeguarded by the Administration because it is a growing problem.

Mr. David Hinchliffe (Wakefield): I find it difficult to be as charitable about the Government's record as some of my hon. Friends, including my hon. Friend the Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field), whose work in the Select Committee on Social Services I respect very much. I also find it difficult to accept what I can only describe as the bleating from the Government side. The Government are directly responsible for the shambles because of the policies that they have pursued over the last 10 years. They need to be reminded of that.

The Government have failed adequately to fund alternatives to institutional care. They have failed to take account of the demographic trends that have led to a huge increase in the number of people over the age of 85. They have cut back on the resourcing of domiciliary care, which is the alternative to institutional provision. At local authority level they have slashed the rate support grant which has had a direct impact on the provision of home helps, meals on wheels and other preventive services. They have also slashed Health Service preventive spending.

I give as an example a case with which the Secretary of State for Social Services is familiar. Recently he took part in a Yorkshire Television programme which featured the case of a constituent of mine, Mike Frobisher. That man is in care now, directly as a result of the fact that health services in Wakefield have been cut by the Government. Twice a week someone came along to help him bath; that was cut to once a week. He was affected in many other ways. Respite care in the local hospital was reduced. Finally, his wife collapsed. As the Secretary of State is aware, Mr. Frobisher is now in a home where he has to manage on 5p per week. That is all that is left for him to live on when everything else is taken into account. He does not have any spending money apart from that.

Alongside the cuts there has been an explosion in free market care which has been generated deliberately by a Government committed to market forces. The result is that we have hundreds of thousands of cases such as that of Florence Smith. The floating of open-ended income support arrangements has led to an increase in private residential care. There has been talk of blank cheques, but we have had those already. That is why there has been a huge explosion in private residential care that is not appropriate to the vast numbers of elderly and disabled people. A total of £5 billion a year is involved. It is big business now. Some people are making vast amounts of money in the private sector out of elderly, dependent people.

What concerns me most is the way in which the Government have created an institutional climate. There is an institutional vision of what is needed for old people. I do not believe that institutional care is the answer for elderly and handicapped people. There are alternatives, but the Government have slashed them and have forced people to enter institutional care, which is completely inappropriate.

The problems that people face in the community are horrendous. In many instances their problems are only beginning when they enter care because they cannot meet the fees. In Committee the Government said that existing residents will have a preserved right to income support. That is fine, but what about the future of non-assessed residents who end up in institutional care on the basis of their capital resources, who spend those resources and have to apply for income support? The Government have failed to consider that category. I understand that they may be covered by upratings in income support, inadequate as they are.

The Association of Metropolitan Authorities estimates on the basis of DSS figures that there is a £40 a week gap in residential care payments and about £60 a week in nursing home payments. What happens to people when they cannot pay the fees? In a recent report the Select Committee on Social Services said that many elderly persons will face eviction if the Government's policies are implemented as they stand. When I moved an amendment in Committee on security of tenure, contracts for residents and the prevention of eviction, it was resisted by the Government. So the Government are prepared to accept that because of the free market a proprietor may say, "I am sorry; it is hard lines that you cannot meet what we are charging. You will have to leave. Get on your bike. We are not prepared to continue caring for you."

What are the options for such people when they cannot meet the fees? We all have such people in our constituencies. In most instances it is a matter of begging or borrowing. They may ask voluntary organisations for assistance. Many people are assisted by voluntary organisations which are in great difficulty because of the number of people whom they have to fund. Many elderly people are forced to go cap in hand to relations to ask for a supplement of £20 or £30 a week. That is not acceptable.

When I asked the Minister for Social Security about the problem in November he could see nothing offensive in relatives helping those in homes with fees. I find it offensive that people have to go out to earn money to supplement payments for relatives. That is simply not on, particularly when the elderly people have paid national insurance and taxes all their lives. Some of them are 90, 95 or even 100.

We should also take into account the feelings of the elderly and handicapped people who have to beg and borrow from relatives to supplement their income. When they have saved up all their lives, how do they feel when they find they can no longer look after themselves financially? It is appalling that the Government are prepared to allow them to seek help from relatives. Many elderly people still have pride. We should respect it. We should say that it is inappropriate for them to be subsidised by their relatives.

At my previous surgery a man was desperately concerned about his inability to meet the fees for his adult son in a private home. He and his wife were worried that the fees were increasing beyond what they could pay. His wife was seriously considering volunteering to work in the home to offset the increase in fees. These people are not young. They have a handicapped lad of about 29. They have gone through hard times. Even though their son is in care, they still have to worry about meeting the fees.

If people cannot afford the fees, they have the choice of going down market. They can go into a home which does not have sherry on offer. Surely the offer of a glass of sherry should not figure in the evaluation of care in a home. After I had spoken at a meeting last Friday night, a lady came up to me and said, "I am in the private sector. Come to my home. We have bone china." She told me that the residents got a drink of whisky, I think it was, before

they went to bed. That was her advertisement of the care in her home. I suspect that description of care. That is not the care that I would want if I ended up in a residential home. That is not a way of evaluating the quality of care.

Age Concern has expressed anxiety about how the income support problem is forcing down standards in many homes. There are lower levels of care and people are having to move from single rooms to shared rooms simply because the resources are not available.

Mr. Peter Griffiths (Portsmouth, North): Does the hon. Gentleman agree that one of the least acceptable solutions to the problem that he has described is that residents who cannot meet the costs in registered homes will be moved into unregistered homes with three or fewer guests where there is no inspection of the services on offer?

7.30 pm

Mr. Hinchliffe: I hope that Conservative Members were listening to that very valid point. The Opposition were concerned about that, which is why we pressed in Committee for the registration of smaller homes. What the hon. Gentleman described is happening now. I hope that the hon. Member for Portsmouth, North (Mr. Griffiths) will be in the Chamber later when we discuss the new clauses on the registration of smaller homes. I am sure that Conservative Members as well as Opposition Members are concerned about that.

Many of the people who can no longer pay private sector fees are now forced to look to local authorities to provide residential care. Clause 37 excludes local authority homes from the new funding arrangements and places them at a clear financial disadvantage. Local authorities are getting rid of direct provision because they can no longer afford to offer the provision by part III accommodation. As well as people being passed on to part III accommodation, that accommodation at local level is now disappearing.

The Government must address the problems that have been raised by hon. Members on both sides of the Chamber. New clause 1 attempts to deal with the consequences of what can be described only as the Government's free market experiment with care. If the Government see fit to leave the provision of welfare in the hands of market forces—as they clearly have done over the past 10 years—if they are not willing to develop clear alternatives to institutional care in terms of prevention and keeping people out of care, and if they believe that the institutional model is the only major response that society can give to the needs of handicapped and disabled people, the least that they can do is ensure that when people end up in institutional care or are forced into it because of the lack of alternatives, those people can live their lives in financial security and not worry daily and weekly where their fees will come from.

Mr. Andrew Rowe (Mid-Kent): I will be astonished if the Government accept the new clause. With the best will in the world, there is no way of preventing charges rising universally to meet income support levels. It is perfectly clear that the supporters of the new clause have no desire to write a blank cheque. However, it will be impossible to avoid that consequence. If it happens, it will shrink other budgets which will be needed to care for the vulnerable. In the end, the effects will filter through the system so that the new community care system, which we are so anxious to see succeed, will be put at risk.

It would, however, be foolish and wrong to suggest that there is no problem. Therefore, what are we going to do about it? There are some strengths in the present position. The number of people in the category about which we are concerned is finite and known. After the Bill is passed there will be no increase in that number. The new customers under the new system will be covered by a contract that will not allow public services to renege on their responsibility to those people. We are concerned tonight with a number of people, many of whom did not have a serious contract except in so far as if they paid the bill, or it was paid, they would receive care. I can understand and applaud the desire of Health Ministers not to overload social service departments, which will already be heavily burdened, by giving them responsibility for that particular group of people.

In parenthesis, I must state that homes are at great danger at the moment. We must consider the stock of places that exist at the moment. It is all very well for the hon. Member for Wakefield (Mr. Hinchliffe) to refer to the private sector for making vast amounts of money. With the exception of a tiny handful of fortunate, skilled or highly selective proprietors, the exact reverse is the case. The hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) and others have said that many homes are vulnerable. As my hon. Friend the Member for Maidstone (Miss Widdecombe) stressed, those homes have large debts to service. Proprietors have told me with great force that they are very worried about how long the new local authority assessment procedures take to supply them with replacement customers if their customers die or move out of their homes. There may be too big a gap to fund and proprietors will be vulnerable.

Mr. Hinchliffe: With regard to the hon. Gentleman's point about the profitability of the private sector not being very high, can he explain why, if that is the case, a great number of companies of national renown are moving into the private care sector? Such companies include Stakis plc, the amusement arcade business Kunick plc, Buckingham the international disco and leisure complex company, Vaux plc, Boddington's brewery and Ladbrokes. Are those companies moving into the sector because there are no profits to be made?

Mr. Rowe: It would be foolish to imagine that there are no profits to be made. However, I believe that where profits are to be made, they can be made only in most cases by companies large enough to weather the difficult periods as well as the relatively easy periods.

The hon. Gentleman is aware that many small and medium-sized homes have been started by people from the highest possible motives. Homes have been started by people who could not find appropriate care for their children so they decided to set up a home to cope with their children and with others as well. The impression that is sometimes given by Opposition Members that we are talking about a sector into which people move only because they can make profits by exploiting the vulnerable is wrong.

Mr. Frank Field: Will the hon. Gentleman answer his own question: what should the Government do?

Mr. Rowe: I am sorry. I was distracted slightly by interventions. I had intended to discuss that now.

Central to any solution to the avowed problem must be a predictable budget which can be foreseeen and provided for. That is why I am completely against any suggestion of a blank cheque.

Mr. John Battle (Leeds, West): Does the hon. Gentleman accept that the Government have already given a blank cheque in housing to the private landlords because they are committed to paying housing benefit at whatever level? If that is the case in housing, why can there not be funding in care as well?

Mr. Rowe: I do not want to pursue that avenue too far. The hon. Gentleman should be careful about suggesting to Treasury Ministers that there are blank cheques anywhere.

Given that there has to be a discernible, predictable and finite budget to deal with what is, after all, a predictable and finite number of people, Ministers might profitably consider two elements. First, perhaps there could be a regional differentiation in the amount of income support that is available for this purpose. That is a crude measure, but it is better than giving a United Kingdomwide level of support because there are discernible differences in different parts of the country. Like my hon. Friend the Member for Lancaster (Dame E. Kellett-Bowman), I am not suggesting that one can make a crude division between north and south or east and west, but it is possible to make a division between areas where prices are relatively low and areas where they are far higher, as in my area. Nor is it unreasonable to consider the debt burden relating to the age and capitalisation of such a home.

When it comes to assessing individuals, the Government have a precedent to hand. The independent living fund has been a substantial success at making a whole range of difficult and sensitive decisions. Perhaps providing an organisation at arm's length with a finite budget and saying, "You take over the difficult issue of assessing people for the additional support", may be a help.

Finally, the new clause as drafted is manifestly flawed because it cannot come into effect until next year which, for many of the people with whom we are concerned, will be too late. Therefore, although I am opposed to the new clause, I advise Ministers that they must come forward with some concrete suggestions about how we can meet the needs of the most vulnerable people in our community.

Mr. Alfred Morris (Manchester, Wythenshawe): The speech made by the hon. Member for Maidstone (Miss Widdecombe) was a most powerful and, I hope in its effect, an influential contribution to this important debate. I am glad to note her return to the Chamber.

Much of my parliamentary life has been spent trying, both as a private Member and as a Minister, to improve residential and community care for frail elderly and disabled people. If we are to ensure humane standards the essential principle is that, in every case of need, the right care should be available in the right place and at the right time. Otherwise people in special need are left in despair, as happens in so many cases now when residential care fees cannot be met. The relatives share that despair.

After a decade in which the financing of residential care was shifted, in an unplanned and officially unpredicted way, on to the social security budget, the Government are returning in this Bill to the old system of local authority sponsorship. Although there were always tough negotiations between local authorities and voluntary organisations, the old system is now acknowledged to have been the best method of ensuring both value for money and special provision for those with special needs.

The new clause seeks to protect those who are trapped in the system that is now being discarded, which has proved to be a Procrustean bed. In the original format, which was introduced by the right hon. Member for Brent, North (Sir R. Boyson), payments were practically open-ended and costs expanded rapidly. A series of panic measures were introduced to cut the costs, but national yardsticks have proved just as insensitive as the old Greek bandit who either stretched his guests or cut off their limbs to fit the accommodation provided.

The new clause is concerned with those whom our modern Procrustes in the Department of Social Security has maimed. Almost half the residents on income support do not have their full costs met, as my hon. Friend the Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field) said in oral questions on 5 March. In response to my subsequent question, from the Opposition Front Bench, asking the Minister at least to

"ensure that income support payments keep pace with the charges agreed by local authorities for new residents"

the right hon. Member for Chelsea (Mr. Scott) appeared to misunderstand the question, which he failed to answer, and he referred to extra resources for community care. No extra resources are being provided for existing residents. Moreover, in Committee Ministers resisted the imposition of any duty on local authorities to assess current residents for a possible return to care in the community.

Later amendments are concerned with rights to residential community care, where it is needed and desired. In reply to my question on 5 March, the right hon. Member for Chelsea referred to the

"perverse incentive for people to go into residential care"—[*Official Report*, 5 March 1990; Vol. 168, c.574.]

But the Government seem determined to swing the pendulum too far the other way, in that there is now often a perverse ministerial insistence on sweeping under the carpet the needs of people for whom such care is a vital necessity.

7.45 pm

Very old and frail people, who have been in residential care for several years and who have grown accustomed to the idea that this will be their last home, need the assurance that the Government will continue to meet their costs until the day they die. The attitude of Ministers is causing extreme distress, not only to residents, but to their relatives, who are often poor and disabled themselves, and who are approached to make up the difference between fees and benefits. That piles handicap upon handicap for the very needful people this new clause seeks to help.

The record shows that I was one of those who repeatedly warned the Government where the policy that they are now discarding would lead. In the spirit of the speech made by my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook), however, I am not concerned tonight to say "I told you so." Give or take the speech made by the hon. Member for Brigg and Cleethorpes (Mr. Brown), there has been scant controversy in the debate.

The new clause is eminently fair. It has strong all-party backing and the House should accept it. I sense deep and widespread unease on both sides of the House about the

problem that the new clause seeks to resolve. The only proper way to give effective expression to that unease is in the Aye Lobby tonight.

Mr. Bill Walker: I shall be brief, because many other hon. Members still want to speak. The Government would be unwise to accept the new clause as it stands. That is not to say that there are not problems, because it would be foolish to pretend otherwise. There may well be regional variations and differences that need to be considered positively, sympathetically and constructively, but that does not mean that we should put on the statute book legislation that may have an open-ended commitment.

When my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State replies to the debate, it would be interesting if he could give some idea of the likely envisaged costs of implementing the new clause, if that has been worked out. We are usually told that we should be prepared to understand the commitment that we are entering into. Being a canny Scot, I do not want us to enter into open-ended commitments for which the taxpayers will be required to pick up the tab. As I have said, I believe that we would be wise to look at the problem, bearing in mind the regional variations that may exist.

In that context, I must declare an interest because I have many such homes in my constituency. Obviously, therefore, lots of patients are my constituents. Many such homes have been opened recently and, as far as I can tell from the visits that I have made—and I still have quite a number to visit after already visiting a substantial number—the patients appear, in the main, to be well looked after.

One must acknowledge that problems exist in some areas. It would be foolish to pretend otherwise. Another factor that must be considered is the variation in input costs. One thing that has struck me on my visits to different homes is that some homes are more expensive to run than others. The people who pay are those who pay for the patient, or inmate, depending on what one wishes to call them, but in any case those who are staying in the home and are not part of the team that operates the unit. People pay through taxpayer funding, whether partially or totally. The House and the Government must look carefully at the matter and deal with it positively and constructively. I am not prepared to vote for the new clause as it is drafted.

Mrs. Audrey Wise (Preston): With one exception, everyone acknowledges that there is a problem. I even saw the Secretary of State for Social Security nod when his hon. Friend the Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) said that there was a problem. So at least we have reached first base on the matter.

Some possible solutions which have asserted themselves among some Conservative Members would not be acceptable. The hon. Member for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe) acknowledged that there are problems. He seemed to finish up by suggesting that in some areas—such as his—more money was required. Any suggestion that a solution could be found by providing more money for the south-east would not find wide favour.

The hon. Gentleman also suggested that we could take some comfort from the fact that the problem is finite and is not growing. But it will grow for a little while. I understand that the present system will operate until April 1991. All those entering homes before April 1991 will be in the position that we describe. The current number of people claiming income support and living in residential homes is 176,000, a considerable number. They do not all have relatives, but some do. If we add their relatives, that makes a large number of people who are exercised by and worried about this problem.

Clearly cost is a pertinent question. Why are the Government so coy about it? They must be fixing their special income support level by reference to some calculation of costs, unless they simply pick it out with a pin. They must have some method of deciding how much they will give. Do they say, "We shall give 60 per cent. of the average", or "We shall give 90 per cent. of the average"? What do they regard as the average? What do they regard as the range? They are surprisingly coy on the matter.

In a parliamentary answer on 24 January, the Department said:

> "When taking decisions on increases, we took account of a wide range of information on costs and charges in homes. This primarily came from the Department's own local office returns, independent research and detailed representations from outside bodies,"—[*Official Report*, 24 January 1990; Vol. 165, c. 1029.]

Outside bodies which have an opinion on and knowledge of the matter all say that the Government have got their figures wrong.

The Government should look with kindness on the Select Committee's recommendation to

> "immediately commission a rapid independent investigation of the costs of residential care and nursing homes. The results of this research should be published."

That is the key point. The Government should have the research done and should publish the results. Then we can all see whether the true picture is one of profiteering, we shall have a much better idea who the profiteers are, and we shall see the extent of the burden being tackled in examples such as that given by my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook). He referred to the problems faced by a group of Roman Catholic nuns in running their residential home. If independent research were carried out and published, the whole discussion would be on a much firmer footing.

No Opposition Member wants to make life easy for profiteers, in particular those who profit from the needs of the elderly. It is astonishing to us that some Conservative Members invoke profiteering as a reason for leaving elderly people without sufficient resources to meet bills which may well be legitimate. If people are profiteering, there are probably other things wrong with the home. Clearly such people are in the business for the wrong reasons. There should be a means of tackling that problem. Perhaps that could be explored later when the House considers matters of quality.

In view of the representations made by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations and others, I am not willing to say that all homes overcharge. I do not believe that that is the case, nor do the Government make that case. They do not make any case on costs. They simply produce a figure and then upgrade it by £10 without publishing any groundwork or justification for it.

These are serious matters and they will have serious results. The Minister for Social Security believes that it is in order for relatives and charities to be a central part of funding care for the elderly. However, that has not been the intention of the House. Relatives may not be able to afford to contribute. There may be no relatives. Surely charities raise money for purposes other than to take on

[Mrs. Audrey Wise]

the burdens which should rightly belong to the state and to us all. It is unacceptable to say, "Let relatives and charities pay."

If, despite their best efforts, an elderly person's relatives cannot pay, the result may be that he or she cannot have residential care even if it is the most appropriate type of care. Community care may become forced community care by relatives who cannot afford the extra fees to make up the income support. Relatives will be left to do the caring without proper back-up from the community.

This is not a proper community care Bill. I do not wish to make too many waves in this all-party atmosphere, but to leave five days between the publication of a White Paper on community care and the tagging of clauses on to the Bill is fraught with dangers. I cannot understand why, after 15 months of blank silence between the publication of the Griffiths report and the Government's response, the Government went to the other, equally undesirable extreme of acting with precipitate haste and producing something which has not been properly thought out.

There will be other anomalies with regard to relatives, as the Select Committee pointed out. The relatives of people entering residential care after April 1991 will suddenly face fewer burdens. Suddenly it will be all right for them to say, "We cannot afford it." The Government will tell local authorities that it is their job to pay for care. Is that the difference? After April 1991 the local authorities will have the responsibility. Do the Government not mind giving local authorities extra tasks, however difficult they claim those tasks to be?

I am sure that you are aware, Madam Deputy Speaker, although Tory Members may not be, that the shortfall which is affecting individuals and their relatives will also affect local authorities. We shall have an opportunity under a later clause to explore the dangers and problems that will arise. At present we are looking at the effect of the shortfall on the unfortunate individuals who are termed "protected". One hon. Member, I am not sure on which side of the House, called them "excluded", and that is a much truer description.

8 pm

The possibilities range from eviction. The Select Committee on Social Services does not go in for extravagant language, yet we contemplate elderly people, some of whom are frail, facing eviction. They will not be protected against it.

Mr. Frank Field: When at the beginning of her speech my hon. Friend gave the figures, I calculated them on a constituency basis. She is right to say that not everyone will be evicted, but everyone risks eviction. There are about 160 residents per constituency in that category. In my constituency, that means two full streets. If we talked about two full streets of residents in every constituency risking eviction, the atmosphere of this debate would be even more tense than it is.

Mrs. Wise: I thank my hon. Friend for that apt picture. In case anybody thinks that we are trying to overstate the case, I point out that, according to the Government, not all the 176,000 are unable to meet the costs from their own resources. The Government say that a majority can meet the costs from their resources. That majority turns out to be 58 per cent. If, instead of my hon. Friend's two whole streets, I was terribly generous and suggested one whole street not just of people but of frail, elderly people who risked eviction, even on that modest evaluation, we and they still face a worrying situation.

Mr. Michael Jack (Fylde): The hon. Lady's remarks may be a little unnecessarily harsh, particularly on those who run private rest homes. I know from constituency experience of many elderly people whose condition has deteriorated and who need much better nursing care than the rest home can provide, yet the owners of the homes feel a deep obligation to them. They are caring people who look after their elderly residents. Although they need more money to do so, they keep them on the same premises and do not throw them on to the streets.

Mrs. Wise: The hon. Gentleman has misunderstood my point completely. I am not blaming the owners of the homes. From the beginning I have said that those who profiteer and are unsuitable should be dealt with in some other way. My concern is with the wide range of homes such as those described by my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston—for example, the homes of the Roman Catholic nuns. I fully agree with the hon. Gentleman that the owners may wish to provide care, but, however keen they are, they cannot do it on fresh air. Presumably they must pay wages and buy food, and many other costs are involved. I am not discussing the intentions of the owners or those who run these homes. For the purposes of this debate I am prepared to accept that they are all splendid. The fact is that they cannot run a home without money.

In a way the hon. Gentleman has reinforced my point, although he did not intend to do so. He has added a whole new category of desperately worried people—those who try honestly, legitimately and properly to care for elderly people and provide them with a home. Whether they are in the private sector or the voluntary sector, they cannot do so with the sort of shortfall which has been described by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations and which is regularly described by our constituents. It is not often that the hon. Member for Maidstone (Miss Widdecombe) and I are found on the same side, but, whether we like it or not, the inescapable facts of this issue drive us together. It is a remarkable cross-party experience.

Ms. Dawn Primarolo (Bristol, South): The Government are taking us towards this disaster deliberately, and they know it. My hon. Friend mentioned a figure of 168,000 people. In a letter to me on 8 January the Under-Secretary of State for Social Security gave me the Government figure of 176,000 people in residential care or nursing homes claiming benefit. Therefore, although the Government expect the number of people who need income support to continue to grow, they deny them help.

Mrs. Wise: I thank my hon. Friend for that intervention. Indeed, the interventions have been extremely helpful to me.

The universality of our experience across different types of area is unusual. I can describe it in Preston where, generally speaking, people do not have much spare money with which to pay the shortfall on behalf of their elderly relatives, however much they desire to do so. We have heard of it in Kent where costs are higher, so although people may have more resources, they find it proportionately difficult. The Secretary of State for Social

Security needs to do more than simply acknowledge the problem. He should accept this solution on offer to him or, failing that, outline an equally comprehensive and satisfactory one.

There are other likely consequences. Homes, whether for good or bad reasons, may, in an attempt to cover the shortfall, pay wages to staff which are too low. That would have bad effects not only on the staff but on the people for whom they care. It may affect the quality of staff whom they can recruit. That is undesirable. We want our elderly people to be looked after by people who are properly paid.

Mr. Hinchliffe: My hon. Friend makes an important point about staffing arrangements. Last week I attended a meeting of the all-party personal social services committee when a representative from the British Association of Social Workers said that in Liverpool 16-year-old girls employed in old people's homes were changing catheters of men and women alike. They were untrained and were being paid about £1 an hour. I am sure that my hon. Friend will share my anxiety about what is going on in the private sector.

Mrs. Wise: I think that anxiety is too mild a word. The right word is horror. If that is the road down which people are travelling, it is a disgrace—a blot on the House—because the House bears the final responsibility for ensuring that there are adequate resources. When we have ensured that, we can follow it up by ensuring that there is adequate quality of care resulting from those resources. We cannot say care properly but do it without the proper resources; that is impossible.

As has been graphically and dreadfully illustrated by my hon. Friend the Member for Wakefield (Mr. Hinchliffe), there will be skimping and the use of unsuitable and unqualified staff—probably overworked staff as well. Overworked and underpaid is not a good recipe for proper care.

Sir Anthony Grant (Cambridgeshire, South-West): If they can get the staff.

Mrs. Wise: That is a valuable point. Of course not everybody would be willing to undertake care in such an unsuitable way, and not everybody would be willing to be driven into jobs for which they were unsuited, despite the best efforts of the Conservative party.

Mr. Allan Rogers (Rhondda): The hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, South-West (Sir A. Grant) asked whether one would be able to get people to work in such situations. There is no difficulty in getting people to work in the many regions of the country which still have high unemployment and where people—especially women—are forced into low-paid jobs because there are no other jobs available for them.

Sir Anthony Grant *rose*——

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): Order.

Mrs. Wise: I had better acknowledge that intervention and then I shall give way to the hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, South-West (Sir A. Grant).

Sir Anthony Grant: In some areas—mine in particular—nursing homes have enormous difficulties in getting staff to help those poor old people. Much as they would like to do so, they cannot go down to Wales to recruit them. It is very sad.

Mrs. Wise: That is another illustration of the universality of the experience. Although the emphasis is different in different areas, there is a problem. I think we are on common ground and without resources it is impossible to get properly trained staff who will give the proper quality of care. I do not want people who run residential and nursing homes to have the excuse of lack of resources. I want to be able to come down on them like a ton of bricks if their care is unsuitable, but I fear that the Government are putting us in a false position.

As hon. Members have pointed out, there will be two tiers of residential care. In fact, it seems that that already exists, as hon. Members have pointed out. I do not want people to be accused of dumping elderly relatives if they enter a residential home with that accusation being true because those homes are dumps. People will face bills that they cannot pay or tasks that they cannot undertake in their own home or they will have to dump relatives, and that is an intolerable choice.

Surely we can manage to get some cross-party support on the matter. I fear that some Conservative Members are shielding themselves from the arguments by not coming into the Chamber. I hope that those Conservative Members who are acquainted with the arguments, and who are here tonight, will pass on the message.

This issue could give the Government more problems. I shall give the Government a little advice, because if this works out well and our suggestions are accepted the Government will get the credit. The Government usually get the credit in the end for any extra payments or extra care that come from the state. Therefore, given the general context in which the Government are operating, I should have thought that, in self-defence, the Secretary of State for Social Security would positively welcome the new clause.

If he does not welcome it, and if it is rejected, I am driven to the conclusion that this is due to the extra burdens they intend to force on to local authorities. If more money is made available for the individual to meet the costs, more money will also have to be made available for local authorities to meet the costs. If the new clause is rejected against all the excellent advice given to the Secretary of State by his hon. Friends, I fear that that will be the reason, and it is a disreputable reason.

Sir George Young (Ealing, Acton): My hon. Friend the Member for Maidstone (Miss Widdecombe) spoke for me and I suspect for a large number of my hon. Friends when she made a moving speech describing the problems that face Florence Smith, and the many others throughout the country like her. I am always amazed at the sacrifices that so many families make to keep an elderly relative in their home. Those sacrifices go way beyond what might be legitimately expected.

8.15 pm

I welcome two decisions that the Government have taken in this broad area. First, they are quite right to have a cut-off point on 1 April next year, and to say to local authorities that the new Griffiths regime for care in the community should apply to new residents and claimants only from 1 April. That strategic decision was justified

because there was no way in which local authorities could have coped with existing residents if they were to get the new structure going.

Secondly, the Government were right to prevent local authorities from topping up existing residents, because if they had done so it would have been a drain on the inevitably limited resources for getting the new care in the community package going.

We are all agreed that there is a residual problem of resourcing residents who are "protected" and who will continue to look to the DSS for income support to pay their bills. There will be new claimants, because anyone in a home at the moment who is not claiming because he has his own resources but who runs out of resources in the future will have to look to the existing DSS regime for help and not to the local authorities. It is not the case that the number of claimants is finite. There can and will be new claimants as existing residents run out of resources.

One issue has not been adequately raised—the pressure on housing associations, charities and organisations that run homes. Servite House in Ealing is an example. It recently closed an excellent home in Ealing simply because it had to make such huge inroads that it could not afford into its own reserves to keep it going. Hon. Members who have met housing associations and other charities know of the pressure on their resources caused by the present regime. It is a matter not simply of people digging into their own pockets to keep the structure going, but of private and voluntary organisations digging into limited reserves to keep things going. There is a limit to how long that can go on.

Another issue that has not so far been mentioned is that next year there will be a transfer of resources, in regard to income support, from the DSS to the local authorities. Under the new regime local authorities can buy contracts with homes. That transfer of resources will be based on existing income support levels. If that is the basis of transfer, local authorities will get inadequate compensation with which to get the Griffiths regime going. It would be disastrous to under-resource the new structure—in which I have great confidence. It is not simply a matter of getting it right for people who are in homes at the moment. The figure that will be used will reflect how much of the resources—ring-fenced or otherwise—will be transferred to social service departments to get the new package going. I hope that we can avoid the risk.

There will be some difficulties with the solution advocated in new clause 1. I am not wild about adjudication officers going round to decide whether a tariff is right. Nor am I particularly enamoured of the regional variation solution put forward by my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe). The solution that I like has been touched on in the debate, and lies in part III of the Bill.

As from 1 April next year local authorities will be inviting all the organisations that we have been talking about to tender for contracts. When that happens, the organisations will have to put in a price. They will state the fee that they will charge if the local authority wants to continue to place people in a residential or nursing home. The local authority will either agree that that is a fair price and place a contract with them or it will reject it. That price could be used by the Department of Social Security to validate the payments that are made to those on income support. It is a price that the home believes to be fair; it is a price that it will have used in the bid that it made to the local authority; it is a price that the local authority believes to be fair because it will have agreed it when it placed the contract. Given that it is satisfactory both to the home and to the local authority, I see no reason why my right hon. Friend's Department cannot say, "We shall uprate income support for residents in that home to the agreed level."

That would avoid the problem of having two classes of resident in one home: one resident on income support, who perhaps receives an inferior standard of service, and another resident who entered the home under a new contract that was negotiated by the local authority at a higher price and who is offered a higher standard of service. I feel that that problem will arise if we do not do something about it. It would be avoided if income support were uprated to the agreed contract price that had been negotiated between the local authority and the home.

If my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State were to say that he could not agree to new clause 1, for whatever reason, but that he was minded to go in the direction that I have outlined by validating prices that had been negotiated, I should be happy to vote against new clause 1.

Mrs. Rosie Barnes (Greenwich): I shall try to speak briefly; the argument was made—game, set and match—in the first three speeches. I pay credit to hon. Members on both sides of the House for sticking to the facts and making a convincing case.

We are talking about elderly people who, by definition, will die in the next few years. However, others will come along who need income support as their incomes decline. Much of the debate has focused on the blank cheque element of the proposals. We are talking about a finite number of people, but a dangerous blank cheque will be involved if we do nothing about them. Where will they go if, as we suspect, some are evicted from the homes in which they live? They will go into hospital. However, they will not go into geriatric beds, because there are not enough. They will go instead into acute beds. The National Health Service needs those beds. They are in heavy demand for all kinds of treatments.

Apart from the cost implications of elderly people occupying those beds for, perhaps, years, there is also a political implication in terms of waiting lists. Many hospitals could tackle their waiting list problem far more effectively if some of the beds that are now occupied by elderly people could be released. At the moment, however, there are no satisfactory alternative placements. If more of those beds are to be occupied on a long-term basis, the House ought to bear in mind the political implications of such a blank cheque.

We should also consider the implications for those whom we should subsidise if the new clause were accepted. Some hon. Members have suggested that we are offering a golden opportunity to those who wish to make a quick buck out of the elderly. A few may do that. However, I have read carefully the representations that were made to me by the voluntary bodies and I am not convinced that the majority of the homes involved would do that. The National Care Homes Association told the Select Committee that seven out of 132 nursing homes and one third of residential homes charged fees that were in line with social security levels but that two thirds of the homes for the elderly could not cover their costs by means of income supplement. The National Federation of Housing Associations said that income support levels had not kept

pace with the true cost of care. These are not the Rachmans or people who are making vast profits out of the elderly. They are trying to supply a genuine service at cost, but they find it increasingly difficult to achieve their objective.

The new clause would redress the imbalance. Reference has been made to avoiding exploitation by the appointment of an adjudicator. I listened with interest to the suggestion that there may be a better method of assessing what is the fair rate for a particular home. However, I should have to consider the implications for residents who may be in homes which do not have contracts with local authorities and which would fall foul of that suggestion.

After 1991, new residents will not have to contend with the problem. Their full fees will be covered. However, we are referring to about 100,000 most vulnerable people whose needs will not be met. They have to turn to local authorities, charities and their families to make up the shortfall. We are referring to the very elderly, many of whose relatives are also elderly. The point was brought home to me recently when I visited a geriatric ward and was introduced to a very elderly man and then to his daughter who occupied a bed in the same ward. Those who are well into their 80s or 90s have children who are between 60 and 70 years of age. All that they can be expected to do is to cope with their own problems and to make financial provision for their own future without having to take responsibility for their elderly relatives.

To do nothing is not an option. If continuity of care for these people is to be assured and if they are to have peace of mind, the new clause must be passed. It will provide security for the most vulnerable members of our society. Without such a change, the omens are gloomy. The National Council for Voluntary Organisations conducted a number of in-depth interviews with a variety of organisations that revealed some of the highly unsatisfactory measures that already have to be taken. They include the closure of homes in order to cover losses, or a policy change so that only those who are able to pay the fees are admitted—inevitably at the expense of those who are in the greatest financial need—inability to attract staff because of low wages, development plans deferred or scrapped, inability to carry out maintenance, refurbishment or the upgrading of buildings so that there is a more appropriate environment for residents, and a general reduction in the quality of life for residents.

It is abundantly clear that such cuts and measures, at a time when the number of elderly people in our midst is increasing and will continue to increase, are highly undesirable. I shall not detain the House any longer; other hon. Members are anxious to speak. The case for the new clause has been made convincingly.

Sir Anthony Grant: I, too, will be brief. Nearly all the arguments have already been deployed. Nearly all of them go against the Government, I regret to say, and in favour of the broad principle in the new clause. The hon. Member for Greenwich (Mrs. Barnes) summed it up admirably. I agree with nearly every word that she said.

I put my name to the new clause not because I am wedded to every single detail or because I think that it is a perfect piece of drafting. Drafting is never perfect. We have all been around long enough to know that if the principle can be accepted the Government will find a way to meet that principle. I was moved to put my name to the new clause because of an experience in my constituency. It contains a number of excellent private nursing homes, and one of them highlights the problem. The Weald nursing home looks after a number of very elderly people whose elderly children come to see them. Those people are admirably cared for by the proprietors who have dedicated their lives to the problem. They have provided them with a wonderful service. That home was expanding. Indeed, I opened an extension for it a few years ago.

The problem is quite simple: the elderly residents came in on the basis of income support, but that support has not kept pace with inflation. There is now a shortfall, and these people are unable to obtain a top-up to rectify the situation. As a result, unfortunate elderly and worthy people are in danger of being moved out. However, because the proprietors are very compassionate they go to great lengths to avoid that. They move residents into other accommodation. They squeeze them in. They make economies here, there and everywhere, and in some cases almost subsidise residents. In this day and age, that cannot possibly be right. It cannot be right that people who have lived honourable lives should find themselves in such an undignified, worrying and anxious position.

8.30 pm

The new clause may be defective in some way, but I do not accept the "blank cheque" argument. Nobody wants a blank cheque to be provided. As I understand the situation, however—and I am open to correction—it will be possible to have restraint in the case of new residents. If that is the case, why on earth can it not be applied to existing residents? If there is a problem, I cannot conceive of its being beyond the wit of the Government, with all their resources, to find ways to ensure that solving it does not involve signing a blank cheque.

I hope that the Secretary of State will say that he realises that there is a problem. Perhaps he will say that, for some reason, the new clause would be ineffective. Perhaps he thinks that the suggestion of my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, Acton (Sir G. Young) is a better one. In any case, he should tell the House that he will deal with the problem. Perhaps he could urge withdrawal of the new clause, on the clear understanding that the Government will produce something along the lines of this principle. I am bound to tell my right hon. Friend that, if that is not done, I will find myself in a great dilemma. I have been a loyal supporter of the Government for many years.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Oh.

Sir Anthony Grant: It would not be the first time I had rebelled, nor would it be the last. I do not like to vote against the Government. I believe that, in this Bill, they are, in general, doing the right thing, but if I do not receive a reasonable assurance from my right hon. Friend I shall feel inclined to vote against them.

The Minister is a compassionate and sensible man. We often come across Ministers who are sensible but not compassionate, and Ministers who are compassionate but not sensible, but this Minister is both compassionate and sensible. I know that he will take on board, with all their weight, the arguments that have been put before him on behalf of very worthy, decent people, who have a right, in the twilight of their years, to live in reasonable peace and dignity, without anxiety.

[Sir Anthony Grant]

If we do not get a reasonable response, what shall I do? I suppose I could go home—that would be one solution—or I could abstain. Instead, I will listen very carefully, and with an open mind, to what I hope will be a reasonable, compassionate and sensible response from my right hon. Friend.

Mr. McCartney: I am a member of the Select Committee that went into this matter on numerous occasions—since it was first brought to attention in 1987. What we are discussing tonight is a problem that has been building up for seven years. As a result of deliberate Government policy in 1983 to expand the private sector and to introduce market forces into the area of care of the elderly and of other specific groups, resources were unleashed in an unplanned way. That led to limits being set at local level for board and lodging, for residential care, and for nursing home care. In different areas the limits for residential care could vary between £51 and £215 per week, and for nursing homes between £80 and £290. In one financial year—1984—the effect was such that the Government tried to put limits on the activities of local social security offices. Indeed, by September 1984, they had restricted the ability of the Department to make decisions at local level. In those 12 months the Government unleashed forces with which, for the past seven years, they have been unable to cope. I refer both to the financial situation and to the unplanned and unstructured way in which the sector developed.

In 1985 that system was scrapped. Over the next two years the Select Committee on Social Services received evidence—first in a trickle, and then in an avalanche—about the growing gap between the cost being met by the Department and what a resident or his family had to pay from his own resources. During the same period local authority provision grew by 4 per cent. annually, whereas in the private sector the rate of growth was 350 per cent. More than 40 per cent. of all residents in board and lodging, residential care or nursing homes are in the private sector. At a time of such massive explosion, although there was an average of 4 per cent. growth in local authority provision, in many areas there was actually an absolute loss of provision, by way of homes being taken into the private sector or as a result of closure, or by reason of local authorities' joint arrangements with health authorities to operate exclusively in the private sector.

During that period I was a member of the Social Services Committee and of the planning committee. The avalanche of planning applications was such that special arrangements had to be set up between the social services committee and the planning authority to monitor the quality and nature of applications. At the same time, the social services department, with the health authority, set up an allocation system to deal with bed allocation. Consultants at Billinge hospital refused to accept frail elderly patients both from the private sector and from the local authority. There was a tit-for-tat arrangement, and I believe that it continues. If someone in part III or part IV local authority accommodation—even at that intensive nursing level—was incapable of being sustained by the local authority, the health authority would accept him back into its care if the local authority could accept someone from an acute bed in return. Bearing in mind the reduction in the number of beds, that is not always possible.

Some months ago I visited a local authority home where an elderly lady who had been refused admission to Billinge hospital was being cared for by staff who were on their day off. Those staff members worked in shifts. They were the only people who were prepared to accept responsibility for that frail elderly lady. That is the position in which we find ourselves because of the unplanned explosion of market forces in health care.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Preston (Mrs. Wise) said, irrespective of political views, what we have heard from both sides of the House today drives us to ask what we can do to extricate ourselves from this morass. The Minister, whether he accepts or rejects the new clause, owes it to the House and to all those involved in community care to state precisely what his intentions are. I pressed the Minister for Social Security many times to advise us what the Department would do to protect residents from the problem of eviction. He ignored those opportunities to clarify the Government's position.

This matter has been treated with cynicism. We are talking about a finite group, many of whom are elderly and frail. Some people believe that, if we wait four, five or six years, most of those elderly people will die, and the problem will die with them. If that is the conclusion of advisers to the Department, it is totally unacceptable. For every elderly frail person in a private residential home, there is at least one elderly frail person at home trying to cope financially or socially.

Many of the people who see me about their parents are themselves either pensioners or are coming up to pensionable age. Many people have mentally or physically handicapped relatives at home and have seen their parents die. The brothers and sisters are left to cope with the handicapped person. The problem is passed on from generation to generation. If we do not accept the new clause, we shall pass on the problem of caring financially and socially not only to parents but to grandchildren. That is unacceptable in social and economic terms.

Like other hon. Members, I could tell horror stories about what happens to our constituents. Families find themselves in serious financial problems, some needing £10 or £15 a week and others needing £60 or £70 a week. Unbelievable sacrifices are made by people individually and collectively to maintain the family in the home, but they are driven to suffering illness and to seeking expensive respite care or other assistance from a local authority or the NHS.

The proposed system in the new clause is not only financially fair to those who will benefit from it but in the medium and longer term will be much more cost effective to the Government in terms of the votes of money to the local authority, the NHS or the Department of Social Security. Given the total votes to those three organisations involved in community care, it would seem far easier to provide, as the new clause does, a consistent means of maintaining financial assistance to those who will remain in residential or nursing home care. The new clause is a genuine attempt to find a way through a serious and increasing problem in the private sector.

I have been a Member for only a short time, but I know that hon. Members are usually in conflict and that some can take what I say or leave it. Whatever region we come from and whatever political party we represent, the same

problem arises. We are driven inexorably to the same possible solution. Even if the Government will not say that they are wrong, we hope that they will accept, just as they did in evidence to the Select Committee, that a serious problem exists. I hope that, because of practical debate on an all-party basis, for the first time since I became a Member we have come up with a solution that is acceptable to our constituents and in terms of the Government's financial targets.

8.45 pm

Many families look to this debate for not only a financial solution but a solution to the long-term care needs of those families. I should like the Minister to investigate one matter involving Springfield home in Wigan. It is a local authority home which, as a result of negotiation, last year moved into the voluntary sector because of an agreement between the local authority, the care organisation and residents. At the time of the transfer, there were negotiations as to which residents could apply for and receive attendance allowance at the higher or lower rates. In about September, agreements were reached on specific residents. I understand that, in the past few weeks, the Department decided that residents who came under the control of the local authority before last August were no longer eligible for the allowances, which have now been withdrawn. That is astonishing and unacceptable. I ask the Minister to investigate that as a matter of urgency.

Hon. Members have seen such transfers take place in their areas on the basis of additional allowances being made available to assist the people in those homes. If that is not to be Government policy, it will have serious effects in terms of the transfer arrangements and the financial requirements of the residents. For those reasons, I ask the Minister to accept the new clause.

Mr. Peter Griffiths: Some of my hon. Friends invited me to sign my name to the new clause. Although I said that I had considerable sympathy with it, I declined to append my name. I felt that it was desirable to have a debate on the subject and for my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State to know that there were those who had not made up their mind about how to vote before hearing what was said.

The position that I should like to describe has been well rehearsed by hon. Members—including the hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) and my hon. Friend the Member for Maidstone (Miss Widdecombe)—who have said that the problem will exist not just between now and April 1991 but will continue for those who are either already in residential homes or who will need to turn to income support to meet their costs.

A city such as Portsmouth, which I represent with my hon. Friend the Member for Portsmouth, South (Mr. Martin), has particular problems. Portsmouth is the second, or perhaps third, most densely populated area in this country. Land and property are extremely expensive. Until a few years ago, it was a low-wage area, dependent on the Navy, the dockyard and the women's clothing industry. Many of the elderly who live in residential homes did not enjoy the high wages and salaries that younger people in Portsmouth can enjoy because of the high-tech industries. If they made savings, as many did, they did so out of pitifully low wages. They assumed that they would be able to look after themselves in their old age as far as possible, but they believed that if their savings fell short of the amount necessary to meet their needs—they would, of course, be sorry if that happened—they could carry on living reasonably comfortably and in reasonable dignity. They did not have especially high demands. They have moved into residential care, often initially at their expense, and paid the costs, only to find later that they have had to turn to income support to meet the costs of their continued residence.

The difficulty is that the costs are high in a city such as Portsmouth. As I have said, it is an extremely densely populated city and property is expensive. We now have the problem of high interest rates, which make it difficult for the owners of homes to expand and to carry out repairs. We also have higher wages than we had before, which means that to find the high quality of staff required is an expensive business. It is not the case that there is a one-off shortfall between the rates that are paid by income support and the charges in the residential homes, but that there is a growing shortfall. It has grown over recent years and shows no sign of ceasing. That problem must be addressed.

There are always hard cases, and the most extreme case may not be the most suitable to use in developing an argument. However, I want to mention briefly one case which, I should have thought, would commend itself to the Government. It is the case of a maiden lady who spent her lifetime caring for her parents and kept them out of care by looking after them. When she became too frail to look after herself living alone—she has no children, of course—she moved into residential care using her savings. She intended to look after herself and such self-reliance commends itself to the Government. I also find such self-reliance extremely commendable. That lady made proper provision. The trouble was that, as the years passed, her savings dwindled. In the end, her savings fell below the level at which she could turn to income support.

There is a gap between the income support payable and the fees. No one could say that the fees in that home are unreasonable. They are the fees that this lady chose and she was willing to spend her life savings on them. It is not likely that they are excessive or unreasonable. They are the fees necessary to maintain the service in that home. However, this lady can no longer pay. The owner of the home is allowing her to stay there. In fact, he is accepting that she pays less than others in the home, which means that his business is damaged. He could not do that for a steadily increasing number of people. The next stage is that those in the home who are paying their own way from their savings have to pay a little bit more to cover the costs of those who are drawing income support, which means that their savings are going down faster than they would have done otherwise. They are moving towards the same position that this lady is in at a rate that they did not anticipate.

That is a case in which there is need for a clear-cut approach to the problem. I asked the former Under-Secretary of State for Social Security, my hon. Friend the Member for Fareham (Mr. Lloyd), what was the position in this lady's case. He said that, unfortunately, income support did not meet the total cost of residential care. I wrote back and said, "I know that, but what is the old lady to do?" I am sorry to say that the answer was, "Are there no charities that could be found to help?" Was it suggested that the old lady should find a charity or that I should go round looking for charities to support my elderly constituent, who had made every effort after a lifetime of caring to look after herself? Such a solution will not do.

[Mr. Peter Griffiths]

That old lady may stay in that home until she dies. If the numbers of such people increase, they will have to be moved from one residential home to another. I hope that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Security will answer me later. Is it reasonable that if someone has expended all his savings at a particular home in which he was prepared to meet the costs, assuming that his savings would last his lifetime, and if he lives rather longer, he should, in the twilight of his life, be moved out into less suitable accommodation, which he would not have chosen for himself? Is that what my right hon. Friend is suggesting? If it is, it will not do any more than the suggestion that I should look for a charity. We need something better than that.

I do not suggest that the new clause is the only way to deal with the problem. There may be other and better solutions. I realise that there is a problem that if, in effect, we increased the resources available to the Department of Social Security clients in residential homes, charges might rise, which would place an unreasonable burden on those trying to pay for themselves. I can see that there is a difficulty, and I understand that it is not a simple matter, but a complex problem.

My right hon. Friend tonight does not have to accept the new clause, but he must accept the responsibility. I do not mind how he discharges that responsibility as long as he tells me tonight what I should say at the weekend to the proprietor of the residential home about the old lady. "You are to go on looking after her, come what may, out of your own pocket. You are to charge everyone else in the home a bit more. You are to put the old lady into cheaper and less satisfactory accommodation or go back to your Member of Parliament and tell him to look for anothercharity." Are those the solutions? If they are not, what is the Government's way of dealing with the problem? If it is convincing, I shall vote against the new clause tonight. However, unless there is an answer to those questions, I shall go into the Lobby in favour of the new clause, which will be the only thing that I can do in good conscience.

Mr. Kennedy: The speech of the hon. Member for Portsmouth, North (Mr. Griffiths) neatly, elegantly and beautifully encapsulated the practical and the moral dimensions of the problem. I hope that he will forgive me for not responding to his speech in particular. There have been three other contributions from Conservative Members that I found of particular interest.

Listening to the flow of this debate, only one or two rocks seem to have resisted the general current from hon. Members of all parties. I am reminded of a social security debate a few years ago. Some hon. Members will remember it and may have participated in it. The then Secretary of State was introducing a social security review. One controversial nugget was how child benefit would be dispensed—in the wage packet or directly to the mother.

There was an important debate that night in which every voice on the Government and Opposition Back Benches was of one view, and at the end of the debate the Secretary of State had to bow to pressure. He promised to re-examine the issue, and in due course, in another place, the proposals were amended. That was a sensible and welcome victory for Members in all parts of the House. I hope that much the same will happen tonight because the measured, reasonable and constructuve tones of the majority of speeches demand that a change be made.

9 pm

The hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, South-West (Sir A. Grant) echoed my feelings when he fastened on to one of only three arguments that have been adduced against the new clause by Conservative Members. That argument is that we would be signing a blank cheque. Like the hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, South-West, I do not buy that idea—if one can buy a blank cheque—because, as the hon. Member for Maidstone (Miss Widdecombe) pointed out, if there can be a definition for one category of people, there is no reason why another category cannot be defined. The problem can be overcome.

The second argument was advanced by the hon. Member for Brigg and Cleethorpes (Mr. Brown), who thought that the clause would open the way for unscrupulous proprietors to ratchet up prices at the expense of the public purse. The few Conservative Members who support that argument are on thin ice because normally when we debate provision for the elderly there are exchanges between Labour Members, who are instinctively hostile to the private sector and would like to see social care provided in the public sector, and Conservative Members, who regard that as a pathological outlook and are critical of those on the Left who do not like private provision.

Perhaps I should make my position clear. I believe that it is inescapable, indeed essential, that we have a mixed economy in welfare, given the clear demographic trends in Britain. Conservative Members are on a hiding to nothing in saying that the new clause is defective because unscrupulous private profiteers would cause a strain on the public purse by trying to corrupt the system.

The same Conservative Members, when debating in other contexts, accuse Labour Members of being hysterical in complaining about private provision. They can argue one way or the other. They cannot invoke one side of the argument for one set of conditions and appeal to the other side of the argument for a different set of conditions. While I would not seek to defend the Socialist outlook, because I do not concur with it——

Mr. Campbell-Savours: The hon. Gentleman should join us.

Mr. Kennedy: The hon. Gentleman is older and greyer than I, but I suspect, from his choice of party, that he may not yet be wiser. We live in hope for him.

The third argument adduced by Conservative Members is always trotted out. It is that the drafting is indelicate and that technically the new clause would not meet the situation. I agree with the hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, South-West that where there is a will there is a way. We are not pushing the new clause in its present state. If the Minister accepts the spirit of it, and promises to introduce an amendment to achieve its purpose, we shall be satisfied. I hope that the Minister can pledge—even if he cannot accept the new clause as drafted —that the spirit behind it can be incorporated into the legislation at a later stage. I also hope—this refers to our initial discussions in Committee—that, when there is no legislation to be considered, a fresher, more detached, view

will be given to social policy in terms of the split between the Department of Social Security and the Department of Health.

There was much frustration in Committee because we felt that we were tilting at absent friends—the Ministers at the Department of Social Security. The Bill is being sponsored by the Department of Health. I am not sure that the split makes any sense any longer. I hope that, after the Bill is out of the way, fresh consideration will be given to which is the best all-encompassing sponsoring Department for a crucial and growing area of social provision and social policy.

Mr. Roger Sims (Chislehurst): The arguments on this vexed matter have been compellingly presented by Members on both sides of the House with remarkable unanimity. Because of that, and because I spoke on the matter in Committee, I do not intend to detail them again. However, I must express my surprise and disappointment at the Government's failure to deal with the problem.

The Government have accepted that there is a problem and have built it into the White Paper and the Bill so that those who enter the system from April 1991 will not be affected. It is extraordinary that they apparently propose to do nothing about those already on income support. I say "apparently" because that appeared to be the evidence that Ministers from both Departments gave to the Select Committee, and it is also what emerged in Standing Committee. It is not as if that is a new problem that has suddenly arisen; it has existed for a year or more. I have corresponded with the Department about cases in my constituency for at least that long.

An important point was made by my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, Acton (Sir G. Young). The money at present allocated to income support will—for new entrants after April—be allocated to local authorities to use as they think best. If that money is inadequate now, it will be inadequate then. Surely funding will be the basis of whether the proposals in the Bill succeed or fail.

The evidence is there in abundance. We all know the results of the research carried out by a variety of organisations, which have presented us with the facts and figures. It appears that the only place where research is thin on the ground is at the Department. It may have the material, but apparently it is reluctant to offer it to us. I invite Ministers to examine the Select Committee report, in which we have analysed the evidence and the inevitable conclusions.

To those figures, I will add two from my constituency, which is part of the suburbia to which the hon. Member for Ross, Cromarty and Skye (Mr. Kennedy) referred. The limit for income support there is £163. The charges for homes in my constituency vary from the lowest shared rooms at £185 to others at £280. I am referring not to luxurious places, but to houses that offer people a reasonable, fairly basic standard of accommodation.

The other case to which I wish to draw attention involves the Cheshire home in my constituency. Its administrator says:

"we are . . . fortunate in that a few Local Authorities, in spite of the regulations, have . . . agreed to 'top-up'. . . This still leaves us with two residents for whom there is a shortfall of £84·86 per week (the difference between our current fee . . . and the DSS maximum of £258)".

That current fee is audited by the local authority. In any case, one would hardly expect a Cheshire home to overcharge. As a result, the home is losing nearly £9,000 a year in income, and that clearly cannot go on.

Not all people in residential homes are in difficulty. Some have their own capital from which they can pay fees. Some find themselves on income support but the family can bridge the gap, and that may not be unreasonable if they are a family of some means. But, alas, some families simply do not have such means. As we have heard, they have to scrape round charities finding £10 here and £10 there to fill the gap. Yet others simply have no family and no other source of income. Therefore, as in the case of the Cheshire home to which I have just referred, they have to be subsidised.

Surely those are the poeple whom we should be trying to help. If we do not do so now, after April 1991 there will be two classes of resident in residential homes—those who have recently entered whose costs will be fully met by the local authority, and those who entered before April 1991 who will be subject to the social security rate of benefit as it is now and presumably will be then. That problem must be addressed not in April 1991 but now. The problem exists now and will continue to do so.

It is the Government's policy not to dish out resources willy-nilly but to target help where it is most needed. If the debate has done nothing else, it has demonstrated that those are just the people to whom the help should be targeted. I cannot believe that it is beyond the wit of man or woman to devise a scheme to ensure that that is done.

I have no doubt that when my right hon. Friend the Minister replies he will say, as others have, that for all sorts of reasons the clause is defective. But if all that he can offer us is that he will bear in mind what has been said at the next uprating, that will not be good enough. The next uprating will not be announced until October to take effect the following April. In telling us that the new clause is unacceptable, I hope that he will be able to tell us what the Government intend to do about the matter. If he cannot do so, I shall have no alternative but to support the new clause.

Ms. Primarolo: The quickest and simplest solution to the problem that we are debating would be for the Government to stop the move towards private homes and to provide such services within the NHS and the social services. We would not then need to work out a formula for a top-up payment for someone receiving income support.

On a number of occasions, I have written to the Department of Social Security and the Department of Health about the problem that we are debating and their answers would be amusing if it were not for the tragedies behind them. The first time I wrote was November 1989 in response to a letter that I received from Bristol Old People's Welfare Incorporated on the upgrading that had been announced. They were complaining about the increase of £10. They pointed out that out of 175 residents they had 80 who relied on income support, and that in 1987 their loss was £35,000, in 1988 it was £83,000, and in 1989 they expected it to be £100,000; and that as a charity they could not afford to continue to draw on their resources and therefore would have to close some of their places.

9.15 pm

The Minister's reply was, first, that he was sorry to hear about the difficulties facing the charity. Secondly, he was sorry that it felt that the £10 was ungenerous. But then he went on to say of the £10:

"This is an indication of our appreciation of the difficulties facing some people in homes and is a clear statement of our commitment towards helping those who need care and funding of community care."

He went on to say:

"It is our policy to target the available resources to where the need is greatest and where such targeting would prove most effective."

It comes back to the point that my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) made in opening the debate. If these people are on income support, they have no other money. Therefore, how could targeting be any more effective than by giving it to the very people who have nothing? The Minister said:

"It was never the intention from the introduction of income support that it would meet the cost of all the fees".

He went on to say:

"other methods of topping up"—by relatives, charities and other sources—"—[*Official Report*, 27 November 1989; Vol. 162, c. 422.]

are essential to this part of the system.

We have heard about relatives and about the difficulties with charities. Perhaps the Minister will tell us what the "other sources" are, because those people on income support do not have any other resources; that is why they are on income support.

Mrs. Mahon: I can assure my hon. Friend that when we had the first wave of elderly people being moved out of long-stay hospitals into the private sector there was no hint whatsoever that there would be any shortfall between the income of the elderly people and the cost of the home.

Ms. Primarolo: I agree with my hon. Friend. In fact, such a role for charities and relatives was never made explicit, either, at the beginning of the introduction of this policy.

I turn briefly to the case of the chronically sick, who also come within this clause. I shall use the example of a constituent because it demonstrates the utter disaster zone of the Bill. This woman—I will not name her, for personal reasons expressed by the family—is 48 years old and is suffering from Huntington's chorea, a tragic and unpleasant disease for anybody, let alone somebody so young. Her husband gave up work in 1986 in order to care for his wife and their 13-year-old daughter in the home rather than have his wife in hospital.

Unfortunately, the disease has progressed and even with respite care, which the family has had to use frequently, the husband is incapable of providing the intensive nursing care which his wife needs. Dearly as he loves her, there is no way he can afford to provide that care. His wife is currently in a hospital which is due for closure. She is in an acute bed which is not satisfactory for her treatment. In addition, the hospital is outside the district health authority region in which the woman resides. She is a resident of Bristol and Weston district health authority which is in the final stage of opting out as a district health authority.

The hospital's advice to the husband, who is unemployed, is to seek a suitable nursing home for his wife. There are no public sector nursing homes in Avon. She can go only to a private home. The husband has gone to 16 private nursing homes. Because of the intensity of the nursing that she requires, only one will accept her. She has to get out of hospital but she cannot go home and the only private nursing home which will accept her wants her to pay £320 per week. Her total entitlement to benefit is £235 a week, which leaves a shortfall of £85. The husband has been round an untold number of charities and has finally been able to reduce the deficit to £45. The family cannot get the woman into a nursing home because it cannot find the £45. What are we doing to the so-called care of the vulnerable chronically sick through the Bill?

I wrote to the Department of Social Security and also to the Department of Health from who I got interesting replies. I was told again that the policy of the DSS was to direct available resources where they were most needed, that there was no provision in the National Health Service for providing nursing care and that it had never been the intention to fund all care from social security. The Department of Health told me that the National Health Service has a responsibility for providing continual nursing care and medical care for people in need of full-time care. However, it is for local health authorities to determine the level of care. Our district health authority is on its way out of the integrated NHS.

The Department of Health also told me that if the woman was in a private home she could not be moved, but she has not got into a home yet. The recommended course was to see the family general practitioner who is obliged to provide all the necessary medical evidence to patients, including referral to a hospital for care, if needed, and is medically responsible for that care. If necessary, the Department said that the woman should be admitted as an emergency case. That would mean that she would go straight back into an acute bed in the NHS simply because the Department will not make up the shortfall through income support. I cannot believe that the entire retinue of civil servants in the Department of Social Security and the Department of Health cannot work out a solution to this dreadful problem.

I have an offer to make to both the Secretary of State for Health and the Secretary of State for Social Security. If they feel unable to persuade their civil servants and to help them to reach a certain conclusion and so bridge the gap on income support, if my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston does not jump at the chance, I will help those civil servants to find a way of solving this disgusting and tragic problem. Anyone who claims that the problem cannot be solved is ignorant of people's ability to solve problems. Either Ministers have the political will to solve the problem or they have not. Voting in favour of the new clause is a solution to the problem.

Mr. Roger Gale (Thanet, North): My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Security is aware that a need exists which must be met. The Government's provisions to meet the requirements of the Griffiths report and the Bill go a long way—and a brave way—towards meeting the needs for the future. I believe that the provisions will work. That leaves my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State to face the needs of today.

To some extent, I believe that we are the victims of our own success and that may be a happy circumstance. The residential care of the elderly has improved dramatically over the past 10 years. We inherited a shambles and a system in which the standard of care was bad in many cases. The facilities were poor and not infrequently the management of homes was greedy or corrupt.

The Registered Homes Act 1984 did much to improve the position and the financial provisions made by the Government have solved many of the problems and cured much of the greed that existed earlier. Although the present system is by no means perfect—I speak from experience in my constituency—we have many residential and nursing homes in which the facilities are excellent and the standard of care is very good. In those homes the standard of training is also good and school leavers are no longer thrown straight into the deep end without training. In my constituency the Thanet technical college provides excellent care training.

There have been many improvements, but they have all had to be paid for—and they have all been paid for—by the proprietors of homes. Inevitably, the fees in those homes now reflect necessity and not avarice. As my hon. Friends have heard tonight, many residents in those homes cannot now meet the legitimate financial needs of the proprietors.

My hon. Friend the Member for Maidstone (Miss Widdecombe) in her excellent speech referred to many of the problems and I do not propose to repeat them. Many of us believe that it is right that children should make some provision for their elderly parents. However, in many of the cases about which we are concerned, the children are not 30, 40 or 50-year-old working people, but 60 and 70-year-old children keeping 80 or 90-year-old parents—such is the level of care that is being provided. That is why in some respects we are victims of our own success. That gap must be met and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Security must find a way of meeting it.

I listened with great care to my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe) and I agreed with a great deal of what he said. I believe that the new clause is flawed and I do not believe that it meets the needs that nearly every hon. Member who has spoken tonight agrees exists.

The awards should not be inconsistent with contracts awarded to new entrants under the new scheme. There are still homes that provide an inadequate standard of care and existing contracts may well be of a lower quality than that demanded for the award of new contracts. It would be bizarre if bad homes were protected at the expense of good ones.

My hon. Friends the Members for Mid-Kent and for Chislehurst (Mr. Sims) referred to the priority of need. We have a tremendous priority of need in Kent for the care of the physically handicapped and the mentally handicapped young. My hon. Friend the Member for Chislehurst referred to the problems that are faced by the Cheshire homes and to their inadequate resources. Given that I am told that young people in need of considerable care represent a cost to those homes of between £350 and £400 per week, it is clear that the Cheshire homes are running at a considerable cost, as is borne out by the Strode Park Foundation for the Disabled, which has a youth unit in my constituency.

9.30 pm

The funding is inadequate and that gap must be made up. However, I would not wish that gap to be made up from the funding that will be made available to local authorities in the next few years because inevitably the resources that are needed for other areas of care will be depleted to meet the needs of the present.

I also listened with great care to the speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, Acton (Sir G. Young). Of all the proposals that I have heard in three and a half hours in the Chamber, my hon. Friend's proposal struck me as the best. I repeat what I said at the beginning of my speech: the Secretary of State has taken on board and recognised the needs of the future. That is reflected in the Bill. It is essential that he now recognises the needs of the present. Therefore, I hope that he will pay particular attention to the suggestion of my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, Acton.

Mr. Jim Cousins (Newcastle upon Tyne, Central): In every sense of the term, it is far too late for us to be trying to interest the Government in a whole range of possible solutions. The opportunities for that lie further back down the track. We are now faced with the start of a new and complicated system of which the matter that we are discussing forms an important part.

I do not identify myself with those hon. Members of all parties who have tried to entertain the Government with a range of possible solutions to this difficulty. Although it is teasing, I do not find it tempting to see the hon. Member for Ealing, Acton (Sir G. Young) in action because he is never a man to back up against a wall without first designing several different doorways. I identify myself much more strongly with the hon. Member for Chislehurst (Mr. Sims) who said clearly that now—tonight—when the Secretary of State replies to the debate is the time at which there can be an answer. We cannot go on debating a clear, obvious and substantial problem without having a definite answer on the table.

It is right and proper that the Government should find the answer themselves, because the problem with which we are wrestling is largely a creation of the Government's policies. The hon. Member for Thanet, North (Mr. Gale) referred to the position when the Government came into power, when there were 12,000 claimants on what was then supplementary benefit, but which is now residential care and nursing home support. In 1984, that figure had risen to only 40,000. However, the figure is now in excess of 180,000 and the number is rising rapidly. That has not happened by accident. It has happened as a result of a clear, conscious, definite and decided policy. In 1984 that policy substantially increased the levels of supplementary benefit—now income support—to encourage that trend and from then on rolled down the number of long-stay hospital provisions in which such people were then located.

The magical "perverse incentive" that has been mentioned as increasing those numbers does not exist. What has driven those numbers up is the Government's own policy of closing down long-stay hospitals and—more importantly—of preventing people from entering them because they were no longer there to be entered. That policy may well have had its good aspects, but tonight we are dealing with some of its unfortunate and bad consequences. What has happened has been as a result of the Government's clear policies and the Government must now find an answer to the difficulty that they have created.

We are talking not only about the 180,000 people who are dependent now on income support for residential care and nursing home provision but the several tens of thousands of people who, by April 1991, will be in that position. Conservative Members and several of my hon. Friends, including my hon. Friend the Member for Bristol,

[Mr. Jim Cousins]

South (Ms. Primarolo), spoke about the wave of transfers into dependency on income support as the shift out of the NHS sector gathers enormous speed.

In my city at least five different schemes will transfer many hundreds of people from NHS care into dependence on income support by April 1991. We are talking about not only the 200,000 who are dependent now but the extra tens of thousands who will have been put in that position by April 1991.

I agree with the hon. Member for Ealing, Acton on one point. Residential care rates under income support will be the basic building blocks of the funding of the system after April 1991. All the difficulties of the present system that we have debated tonight will be exported into the new system. That is why the matter is urgent and why it is proper for the Government to come up with some definite answers to a problem that is massively important in human, financial and institutional terms and that they have created.

An interesting factor lies behind the problem. We have seen the creation of a whole new industry of providing care to people who are dependent on income support. As little as five or six years ago it was a cottage industry but since then we have seen one of the most massive industrial rationalisation schemes that the Government have carried out. The voluntary sector mobilised itself to provide huge numbers of additional places to take advantage, as they thought, of residential care income support rates, only to be disappointed. We have heard tales of woe from Anchor Housing, Cheshire homes and other agencies. They are all true. Charities moved into the provision of such care thinking that the 1984 income support rates would be the basic building blocks of the new system only to find that in the years after 1984 the rates did not keep up with inflation.

We now find ourselves in grave difficulty. The Minister must find an answer to the problem. When he replies, he must say clearly how he intends to pitch the new scales that will come into force in April 1991 for people who are dependent on income support now. That flow of funds will be the stream that carries us on to the system of community care after April 1991.

The matter is important and urgent. We have seen an enormous industrial rationalisation in human care and the generation of a big business out of a cottage industry. I doubt whether the provision of care should be big or business, but that is what we have come to. Tonight, not to start a new debate that will rattle on for the foreseeable future, but to close the existing debate, the Minister must be definite and talk specifics about levels of funding, not only for the 200,000 people who now depend on income support but the whole rafts of other people whose futures will depend on it.

The wave of stress and anxiety about the figures is enormous. In 1989 the range of scales under income support went from £140 to £255. Payments were pitched to the individual average claimant at £120. In other words, average claimants do not depend entirely on income support. They have not reached the crisis point, but their savings are being bled through the means testing of the income support system. They demand answers and want rescue The ocean of anxiety that they represent must be drained and that cannot be postponed any longer.

Mr. Jack: I have been listening carefully to hours of this important debate. Nobody can ignore the issue which my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State needs to address in his remarks.

New clause 1 is not precisely the solution to the problem, nor is a return of the whole private care machinery to the public sector, as Labour Members have suggested. I am encouraged in that view by the statistics for Lancashire. In the county council budget debate on the community charge, it was made clear that if the council's part III accommodation were offered to the private sector, 38 per cent. of it would not pass the county council's own care standards of inspection.

I reject new clause 1 because of a case in my constituency. A rest home was upgraded to nursing home status and went from an income support level base of fees to one geared to income support, because it knew that the people in the rest home could afford to pay those fees and no more. Down the road somebody thought that he could do better, so he upgraded an old rest and nursing home to a high quality one and put it on the market at £330 a week. It will not surprise hon. Members to hear that the market, if one can call it that, quickly made it clear that it would attract too few residents, so the price came down to £300 a week in an attempt to attract more people.

We have heard about differentials. That is one of £60. I have visited both establishments and I am still left wondering which one—the former rest home providing an excellent standard of individual care for £240 a week or the new luxurious nursing home which charges £300 a week—is better and should be supported.

Miss Widdecombe *rose*——

Mr. Jack: I reluctantly decline to give way because I want to finish in a few moments.

The matter is a deal more complex than simply needing additional money for the existing system of income support. In all sincerity I would not for a moment dispute that we need to consider the adequacy of some of those rates because costs vary. It is not just a case of tightening the system.

Labour Members who understand the income support system will realise that if elderly people adjust their financial circumstances in advance of going to a rest home, their family may be the beneficiary of a large sum and they may end up being able to claim income support. If we are to make the best use of the large sums rightly invested in income support, my right hon. Friend in reaching a conclusion must look further than simply the straightforward rate for the job. Income support anomalies create difficulties. If one of two elderly friends who bought a house together goes into a nursing home and seeks income support because as part-owner of the house his capital is tied up, he cannot get that much-needed benefit. I urge my right hon. Friend to encompass such cases when he comes to a conclusion.

Nobody would for a moment dispute the excellent job done by private rest and nursing homes, but already there is a big difference in the price charged. For example, one person in my constituency who runs a rest home has been innovative in order to improve business potential and has developed a domiciliary care service. That adds greatly to services and to his cash flow and it improves the work that he does. It means that he can maintain care for people in his rest home at a rate equal to what they can get on

income support. I ask my right hon. Friend to reconsider the rate. To those hon. Members who are seduced by the simplicity of new clause 1, I say that the issue is not as straightforward as they imagine.

9.45 pm

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones (Ynys Môn): I have sat throughout most of the debate and have heard the almost unanimous view of hon. Members on both sides of the House that something must be done about a group of people who find themselves in great difficulty. Many hon. Members have said that they are a particularly vulnerable group of elderly people.

What has been remarkable about the debate is that there is no political divide in the House, as both sides agree that this is a major problem which the Government must resolve. The old adversarial system of politics in the Chamber has been put to one side in a remarkable way. We have been able to set aside that style of politics because we have an unanswerable case for the Government and they must come up with a solution. The case is unanswerable because no hon. Member from either side of the House has resorted to the safe haven of trading statistics. Whenever we have an empty case which we cannot support we seek refuge in statistics, but no hon. Member has done that tonight.

We have all had personal experience of constituents coming to us with problems, and we know that the Government must find a solution. Some Conservative Members have agreed with the principle behind new clause 1, but they are not happy about the wording, as it could lead to what some hon. Members have described as a blank cheque. Those Conservative Members have offered their own solution to the problem, and have suggested an answer different from that contained in new clause 1, but that clause has not been drafted to be perfect in every dot and comma. I accept that the clause could be amended. However, the House needs to give the Government a clear message tonight that something must be done. Unless the Government accept that, a group of elderly and vulnerable people will be devoid of assistance.

The will of the House is clear. Conservative Members who agree about this issue, but do not agree with every dot and comma in new clause 1, should realise that the only way to keep pressure on the Government is to vote for new clause 1. I am convinced that the Government will have to bow to that pressure.

The Secretary of State for Social Security (Mr. Tony Newton): Until recently, I had not expected to find myself once again confronting the hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook). He was kind enough to say that it was a pleasure for him but, in the circumstances of the debate, I am not so sure that it is a pleasure for me.

We have certainly had an important and worthwhile debate, and I shall seek to respond in like fashion. I always look for common ground in an issue of this nature, and today the common ground is that the present system of income support limits is less than perfect, to put it mildly, for supporting the provision of residential and nursing care.

Since 1985, the system has sought to reflect variations in the needs of defined categories of people, but it has no mechanism or capacity to assess—in a medical or social work sense, as is often required—the needs and circumstances of an individual. As a consequence of that, and of the high level of such payments by comparison with what is often available in terms of other forms of support, for example, in the home, it is widely held to have been inconsistent with the drive towards care in the community to have created some scope—some people would say more than some scope—for exploitation and to have left very considerable room for doubt whether the resources involved were being used to best effect.

The Government's clear acknowledgement of the unsatisfactory nature of the system—which in my case goes back many years to my earlier experience as a Social Security Minister—led to the proposal contained in the community care part of the Bill: that from April 1991, for new cases, the social security entitlement should be confined to the usual income support and housing benefit entitlement and that beyond that it should be the task of local authorities' social services departments or social work departments to assess an individual's care needs and to provide support for those needs in what is judged to be the most appropriate way, whether by paying for care in a residential care or nursing home or by paying for care in the person's own home. That approach is also, I believe, common ground.

The difficulty that we all face—particularly by me in the context of this debate—is the classic one for politicians on many political issues of getting from where we are to where we should like to be. The Government's judgment, which again is widely shared, is that it is not practicable to undertake a complete switch from one system to another at one particular point in time and that the change must be carried through in a phased and manageable way.

There are two main reasons for that judgment. The first is the one on which most stress has been placed: the huge burden that would be imposed on local authorities if the assessment process had to be undertaken not only for new cases but for nearly 200,000 existing cases, which could well make the whole thing unworkable. The second reason, which is certainly not to be dismissed or minimised, is that it was not thought right to withdraw existing entitlements to income support from those who are already in residential homes, with all the uncertainty that that could involve, especially in circumstances where it would be possible for local authorities to assess such people as not needing to be in a home at all. There is broad agreement that for those two reasons it was right not to attempt a wholesale switch at once.

Unless that basic judgment is challenged—which it has not been throughout the debate—there is an inescapable need to run the two systems side by side, despite the fact that that must entail some problems. What I and my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Health intend to do is to ensure that, to the best of my ability, both systems operate effectively.

The new clause is directed towards one aspect of those problems—the future basis of income support payments under the existing system to those who will have preserved entitlements. I say at once, fairly and squarely to the House, that I cannot advise it to accept the new clause. It contains two main elements: first, that any gap between the income support limit and the actual charge should be measured and then met. I shall turn in a moment to the apparent safeguard. The second element is that the amount then defined should be increased according to an index of the average by which those charges are subsequently increased.

[Mr. Tony Newton]

There is an attempted safeguard. I acknowledge that my hon. Friend the Member for Maidstone (Miss Widdecombe) and other hon. Members have attached some weight to it: that payment could be withheld in respect of some part of the charge that is held by a social security adjudication officer to be "unreasonable", having regard to the nature of the premises and the services provided. That is a judgment which social security adjudication officers do not have, and could not sensibly acquire, the training or the knowledge to make. It involves social work skills and assessment skills of a kind that are outwith the ordinary operation of the social security system. Even attempting to make it work would entail imposing a burden on local authority social services departments. It would be essential to use their advice on a large scale, and that would multiply their problems in implementing the new system.

Mr. Frank Field: Has not the hon. Member for Ealing, Acton (Sir G. Young) given the answer? Adjudication officers will not act in a vacuum. Running parallel to their decisions will be local authority market decisions about private homes. In deciding whether a rate is reasonable, it will be possible to look at all those decisions. The hon. Member for Maidstone (Miss Widdecombe) has provided a formula which, with that back-up, would work.

Mr. Newton: That is a helpful and entirely reasonable comment, as I should expect from the hon. Gentleman. Indeed, later in my remarks I shall come to the very constructive contribution of my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, Acton (Sir G. Young). The very way in which the hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field) framed his remarks implies acceptance that, certainly as things stand, social security adjudication officers do not have the capacity to make judgments——

Mr. Field: But not in a vacuum.

Mr. Newton: I have told the hon. Gentleman that I will come to that point. He knows a great deal about how the social security system works and about the training and skills of adjudication officers. I do no more than make the point that, as things stand, they do not have the capacity to make the judgments that that apparent safeguard would entail.

Anybody who doubts that might look back at what happened when we had a system rather similar to that proposed in the new clause. I refer to the period before 1981 and running up to 1985, when adjudication officers were responsible for establishing what was a reasonable charge in each local office area. Let me take from the list two examples that are particularly striking. In the case of charges thought to be reasonable for nursing homes, there was a variation from £296 in Leytonstone to £140—less than half—in Romford, which is just down the road.

In the case of residential care homes in East Anglia, there was a variation from £90 in Bury St. Edmunds to £177 in Colchester. Manifestly, that reflects the extent to which adjudication officers found it impossible to make judgments of the sort envisaged in this new clause.

Mr. Field: The figures that the Minister has just quoted are impressive, but they are irrelevant to this argument. We are not moving back to the system that pertained in the period up to 1985; we are moving to a system under which local authorities will have to negotiate care packages from the private sector. Adjudication officers, in deciding whether a rate is reasonable, will be able to consider what the market will bear.

Mr. Newton: I should be grateful if the hon. Gentleman would let me do what I have already undertaken to do. I have said that I will come to that point later. In the context of the debate and of my response to it, it is sensible for me to comment on the new clause as it stands and to convey my clear sense—this view has been reflected in the speeches of at least five of my hon. Friends—of the substantial degree of open-ended commitment which would raise costs all round.

Perhaps it is simply an oversight on the part of the authors of the new clause—I have no wish to rest my case on technical drafting—but no provision is proposed to take account of whether it is reasonable for the accommodation, however elaborate and expensive, to be provided at public expense.

In my judgment, there would be three principal effects were the proposal, in the form that it takes in this new clause, to be carried into law. First, and most obviously, there would be an immediate transfer to the taxpayer of a large amount of expenditure that is currently undertaken privately. That would by no means be only the private expenditure undertaken in the circumstances that concern my hon. Friend the Member for Maidstone. The system that we operated until 1985 has been criticised by hon. Members and the Social Services Select Committee in earlier reports. At the time of the change to national limits specified by categories of home, it was specifically made clear that the Government did not think it right to set the limits at a level that would cover all charges in all homes. The package introduced unique provisions in relation to what was formerly supplementary benefit——

It being Ten o'clock, the debate stood adjourned.

Ordered,

That, at this day's sitting, the National Health Service and Community Care Bill may be proceeded with, though opposed, until any hour.—*[Mr. Greg Knight.]*

Question again proposed, That the clause be read a Second time.

Mr. Newton: Those provisions which are unique to what was supplementary benefit and is now income support allow relatives to make payments in support of residents in such homes without the amounts being immediately knocked off their income support. In any other circumstances, a payment of, say, £50 a week would immediately reduce income support by £50 a week.

I do not want to place too much weight on this point, because I am conscious of the sort of cases that concern hon. Members. Those provisions were introduced specifically in recognition of the fact that there would be cases where either relatives or, perhaps even more often, charitable bodies would wish to make payments to support someone in care beyond what the state could be expected to provide. In recent weeks, that has been acknowledged by some people from charitable bodies in conversations with me. As I said, I do not want to place too much weight on it, but I need to make it clear to the House that part of the topping up does not have the character attributed to it by some hon. Members, although of course part does.

I suspect that there would be almost universal agreement on my next point. Throughout the past 10 years, what the Department of Social Security pays has

been a powerful influence on the prices charged. The immediate effect of the new clause would be to drive up prices all round, to the disadvantage not least of local authorities seeking to negotiate care packages under the new system. That risk cannot be dismissed, given the Laing and Buisson survey—to which little reference has been made, somewhat to my surprise—which shows a bunching of minimum charges in homes at, or just above, the level set by the DSS. That has been the tendency throughout the lifetime of these arrangements. The new clause would aggravate that position and would bid up prices, to the disadvantage of those paying privately in such homes—of whom there are more than 100,000—and of local authorities in bargaining under the new system.

Dame Jill Knight (Birmingham, Edgbaston): Does not the new clause put the power to judge in the hands of the Secretary of State?

Mr. Newton: No, it does not. It puts the power to judge in the hands of adjudication officers—

Mr. Frank Field: The power is in the hands of the Secretary of State.

Mr. Newton: The hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field) knows that the entire social security system has been set up to protect adjudication officers from being told what to do by the Secretary of State, and the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) knows that, too. That is the essential safeguard of the independence—if one likes, the judicial role—of those making decisions in the social security system.

Thirdly, I have little doubt that the new clause, as it stands, would greatly reinforce, especially in the latter part of this year, all the so-called "perverse incentive" effects of income support arrangements, notably attracting into homes people who might be better cared for in the community. I also suspect—I direct this point to Opposition Members, including the hon. Member for Wakefield (Mr. Hinchliffe)—that the new clause would tend to aggravate still further the extent to which some local authorities seek to shed some of their existing responsibilities on to the social security system. I suspect that such an outcome would not be welcomed universally by the Opposition, although there might be two views about it in some other quarters.

As I said earlier, anyone who doubts such risks need only look at the experience in the early 1980s, when we had a system of local office limits set by adjudication officers, varying as I have described. Between 1979 and 1984—the hon. Member for Newcastle upon Tyne, Central used the figures to make a slightly different point—expenditure on supplementary benefit in this respect rose 20 times, from £10 million to £200 million, while the number of people being helped rose little more than three times, from 12,000 to 40,000. There has been widespread criticism of exploitation of the system by home owners, which was echoed by the Select Committee on Social Services in the 1986 report. I do not believe that any hon. Member wants to go back down that path, which is the risk with the new clause as it stands.

Mr. Field *rose*——

Mr. Newton: I shall come to the hon. Gentleman's point.

Although I cannot recommend the new clause to the House, that is not the same as declining to recognise the concern expressed by hon. Members of all parties or as being unwilling to seek to offer some clear assurance of our determination to fulfil our responsibilities to those with preserved income support entitlements.

Before I comment on my approach to the future increases of income support limits, I want to make two important points about two aspects of the Bill which were discussed extensively in Committee, and about the powers that my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State proposes to take under clause 40. They are important in judging the balance of policy in this area.

First, as the House knows, my right hon. and learned Friend's intention under clause 40 is to bring forward regulations that will enable local authorities to top up preserved entitlements—as they may now, and in some cases do—for people under pensionable age. Their ability in that respect will be extended to people in nursing homes. That power will, as now, extend to people over pensionable age if the authority concerned had been topping up for two years or more before they reached that age.

Secondly, my right hon. and learned Friend also intends to ensure, through an amendment to this Bill—I know that this subject was the topic of considerable discussion in Committee—that local authorities will continue to have the role that they have always had, and which applies in the present system, to act as providers of last resort for those over pensionable age by making places available in their own residential accommodation to those whom they judge would otherwise be made homeless. I stress that not because I suggest that it answers the concerns tonight, but because it is relevant and answers the concern expressed elsewhere—which I share—that, as a result of inadvertence in drafting, an important part of the rights of those already in homes was being altered in an unintended way by the Bill: that is, the withdrawal of the right to be accommodated in part III accommodation should the need arise. It is important to ensure that that right is preserved.

Mrs. Elizabeth Peacock (Batley and Spen): Will my right hon. Friend tell the House what the many of us whose constituents are at the stage where they could be turned out, and whose relatives have no more money and whose local authority has no accommodation, are to tell them?

Mr. Newton: I hope I made it clear that I was raising the point because it has been important in the context of the discussions on this matter as a whole, but that I was not presenting it as an answer to the concerns that have been expressed, and I was about to touch on the social security points that have been made in the debate.

Before departing from my comments on the Bill, I should say—this has been the subject of considerable discussion here and in Committee—that my right hon. and learned Friend has asked me to underline his firm commitment to monitoring carefully future developments on the use of the power under clause 40. The House will know that that is a wide power and that it was inserted in the Bill in consultation with me. It gives a great deal of flexibility to respond, should experience show that further steps are needed in respect of action by local authorities.

[Mr. Newton]

I have deliberately put those points first because I recognise that the focus of the debate has been about, and the request to me by Members in all parts of the House has been for me to recognise, the importance of the social security dimension of the problem.

I assure the House—I do so with more than conventional strength—that I have listened carefully to what has been said in almost all of the debate and that I can give a number of undertakings which, I must point out, do not constitute specific commitments about what financial limits will be in place, for example in April 1991, and about the spirit in which I shall approach that difficult task in the light of the important points that have been made in the debate.

As hon. Members—certainly the Chairman of the Select Committee, my hon. Friend the Member for Eastleigh (Sir D. Price), and others who play an important role in that Committee—will be aware, the Social Services Select Committee has recently produced an important report containing a number of points, not least on the need to improve the quality and quantity of information on which decisions about social security entitlement in this area can be based.

The hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) will acknowledge, in the way in which he normally approaches these issues, that that difficulty has faced successive Ministers and Social Services Select Committees for some time, and not only in respect of the information that we gather through the social security system, which is dependent on the accuracy—not always to be guaranteed—of the information from private and voluntary homes, especially perhaps the former.

In some ways, the Laing and Buisson report, to which I and others have referred, revealed the difficulty. The response rate was only 18 per cent., and it left a number of question marks over the validity of the information as a whole. There is also the problem, in assessing precisely what information one requires and how best to get it, that many homes do not cater for residents or potential residents who are likely to be dependent on Department of Social Security payments. So there are difficult issues as to precisely about which homes one needs the information on which to base realistic judgments concerning social security entitlement.

Having said all that to demonstrate the difficulties that have faced us, I should say clearly that I accept that we need more and better information, and when I respond to the Select Committee, as I hope to do before long, I shall make specific proposals to meet the suggestion in one of its recommendations on that front.

Mr. Frank Field: I am sure that not only the Select Committee but the whole House is grateful for the right hon. Gentleman's assurances about his desire to collect better statistics. Taking collectively our elderly constituents who are not having their fees paid in full—this was stated earlier in the debate—each hon. Member has the equivalent of two whole streets of people facing eviction. These are frail, elderly, often confused old people. Although we are grateful that in future we shall have better statistics, we want answers from the Minister about what we should do with those 160 on average elderly people whom each of us has in our constituencies facing possible eviction.

Mr. Newton: I understand the hon. Gentleman's point; he made it in his speech. The new clause, however, relates to the position after April 1991. For the hon. Gentleman to suggest that I can respond now to a suggestion about a regime to be set up in 12 or 13 months' time lacks the reasonableness that I expect from him. I am seeking to show, as clearly and as forthcomingly as I can, how I propose to respond to the concern that is reflected in the new clause—to which I am properly directing my attention—about the position after April 1991.

10.15 pm

Mr. Michael Colvin (Romsey and Waterside): In bracketing nursing care homes and residential care homes together, my right hon. Friend has not addressed the special needs of nursing homes. In the past four years there has been a welcome increase of about 50 per cent. in nurses' pay, which constitutes about 60 per cent. of the direct operating costs of nursing homes. In that period Government support has increased by 17 per cent., while the direct operating costs of nursing homes have increased by 39 per cent. There is a 20 per cent. shortfall. Does not my right hon. Friend think that he should make special provision for nursing homes, although he may not fully meet what we want for residential care homes?

Mr. Newton: I acknowledge the need to examine the particular circumstances of certain types of home. If my hon. Friend's memory is long enough—we go back to a period when I was the Minister for Social Security—he will remember that that problem was clearly acknowledged in 1985 and 1986 by substantial increases in the limits for nursing homes. That means that in the past five or six years—since the present arrangements started—there has been a significant real increase in help for nursing homes. That is not to say that I will not examine the special case of nursing homes. I give my hon. Friend that clear undertaking.

Mr. Patrick Cormack (Staffordshire, South): To use my right hon. Friend's words, there is a significant and real problem that is widely recognised. Can he hang the phraseology and accept the principle?

Mr. Newton: I am not absolutely clear what the principle is. Is my hon. Friend asking me to accept the principle of the new clause—that we should measure the gap between what a home is charging and what income support is available without regard to the factors that I have mentioned, including whether it is reasonable to expect accommodation to be provided at public expense, regardless of how elaborate it may be? That is what the new clause says, and for that reason I cannot give my hon. Friend the simple answer that he obviously wants.

Mr. Cormack: I am not seeking to trip up my right hon. Friend; I am merely trying to help him. There is a problem that is widely recognised and broadly identified in the new clause. There is a principle there that can be accepted. Can my right hon. Friend say unequivocally that he accepts it, and that in another place a Government-devised clause will be introduced to meet the essential points that have been made repeatedly during this debate?

Mr. Newton: Several of my hon. Friends have made suggestions relating to the possibility of greater geographical variation of limits. More particularly, there has been the suggestion referred to several times by the

hon. Member for Birkenhead, adverting to an important speech made by my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, Acton, that it may be possible, using the information that will become available as a result of practical decisions and negotiations by local authorities after 1991, to reflect what I think my hon. Friend wants, which is income support limits that he would regard as more realistic than those which he is looking at today.

Sir David Price (Eastleigh): Does my right hon. Friend accept the conclusion in the Select Committee's report that

"the problem is basically an expression of present inadequacies in the level of social security benefits. It is not caused by the plans in the White Paper, but it will be exacerbated by them"

so it is open to an immediate solution?

Mr. Newton: As I said, the new clause is directed at the position after April 1991. Therefore, my comments are properly directed principally to that end. In the course of considering the uprating of the income support rates following the £10 increase that is about to come into effect, which I announced in the uprating statement last October, and in looking ahead at future upratings which have been the focus of concerns expressed in the debate, I shall look at—again I use the phrase with more than conventional force—the points that have been made about geographical variation and, in particular, at the comments of my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, Acton.

Geographical variation already applies to London. I looked at the matter carefully in the course of making the decision last October about the uprating that is about to come into effect, and I was predisposed in its favour. However, I came to the conclusion that there was no sufficiently safe basis for drawing geographical distinctions in the way that some people have urged, not least for the reason that has been echoed in the debate—that the apparently common sense presumption that costs are likely to be higher in the south-east than in the north-west did not appear to be borne out entirely by the information that we had at our disposal. Without a secure basis for drawing up such distinctions, I thought it best to put the £100 million of additional resources into the rates generally.

My reservations at that time about geographical limits have been reflected in some of the comments in the debate. I shall look seriously at the scope for greater geographical variations, which might be particularly important to some of my hon. Friends from Kent and Hampshire, for example, but I am much more attracted to the suggestion of my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, Acton that we should make greater use of something that could be dealt with on a rather more localised basis—I doubt whether it could be used in each local DSS office area—which is what local authorities will negotiate on individual cases rather than with actual homes.

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: We understand that my right hon. Friend is a compassionate man, but does he accept that this is not just a matter of regional variation? We are not talking about statistics; we are talking about people. Does my right hon. Friend understand the point that was made at the beginning of the debate about whether, if people are not being exploited—I hope that there is a way of checking that—the Government are willing to protect them, or do people have to go into old-fashioned geriatric wards? If my right hon. Friend can answer that, we shall know which way to vote.

Mr. Newton: My hon. Friend has asked me a question that I can answer in reasonably straightforward terms. It is certainly our wish to protect the kind of people who have been the focus of so much concern in this debate. The cause of my unwillingness to accept the new clause as it stands is that it would not enable me to fulfil the other half of what my hon. Friend has pressed upon me, which is to prevent exploitation in some circumstances, including exploitation of the very people whom we are seeking to help.

I said that I wished to say a word or two more about the suggestion of my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, Acton, endorsed by the hon. Member for Birkenhead, about using the additional information that will become available from 1991 onwards. It must be acknowledged that there will not be much information around in advance of 1991. There are, of course, a number of uncertainties about precisely how the new system will operate in this respect with local authorities. From my conversations with, for example, leaders of the Association of Directors of Social Services, and with some of the charitable and voluntary bodies, it is clear that thought is being given to and discussions are taking place on negotiating in certain circumstances on a national or regional basis rather than leaving the negotiation to individual local authorities. So we would have to take account of that. It might be helpful in some ways, but it does not lend itself straightforwardly and simply to the sort of proposition that the hon. Gentleman was urging on me.

Equally, there may well be people in homes in which local authorities would not choose to place people, in which case that would not give us the sort of information that is required. Again, it is a complicating factor in the point that has been pressed on me. There is the possibility that some local authorities will negotiate packages of care and contracts that are not directly comparable with the arrangements under income support.

I mention those points only to show that it is not possible for me simply to say snap to the proposition urged on me at this moment, but that does not detract in any way from my undertaking to seek, in considering how we are to carry out uprating and respond to the concerns that have been expressed from all parts of the House, to use the better practical information that will arise, as the hon. Member for Birkenhead has stressed, from the workings of the new system.

Mr. Rowe: Will my right hon. Friend also undertake that in that important survey of the information as it becomes available he will include a regular survey of the number of places in residential homes that remain available? At present there is serious danger that the introduction of the new system and the shortfall that we have been discussing will lead to an incomparably rapid closure of very large numbers of homes.

Mr. Newton: I am not sure that I accept the latter part of my hon. Friend's suggestion, but I can certainly respond with a clear-cut yes to the first part of what he said.

Sir George Young: My right hon. Friend has been most helpful in outlining a possible solution. Does he have the powers to pay income support to residents on the basis that he has just outlined? If he does not, is he prepared to amend the Social Security Bill to give himself those powers?

Mr. Newton: My hon. Friend refers to the basis that I have just outlined. I have indicated some convincing reasons, I think and certainly hope, why the simple proposition that income support limits shall be based on what local authorities pay in particular homes is not one to which I can readily assent in quite that form, for the reasons that I have given. We have extensive powers to set limits. My intention would be to use those powers in a way which made use of the sort of information to which my hon. Friend has referred. If on further reflection in the aftermath of the debate—I shall certainly do some further reflection—I come to the conclusion that there is an additional power that I could sensibly take to assist us in dealing with these problems in the future, I would be prepared to seek the appropriate amendment to the Social Security Bill.

It is in the nature of the changes on which we are embarked, with widespread agreement on the objectives, that no one can be certain a year ahead of all the circumstances at the time, but I hope that what I have been able to say in explaining to the House why I cannot accept the new clause has shown our readiness not only to acknowledge legitimate concerns but to do everything to meet them, consistent with the aim we all share, which is the best interests of people in these homes.

10.30 pm

Mr. Robin Cook: I am conscious that the House wishes to come to a decision and I shall make my response to the debate brief. We have had a full debate since I initiated it some five hours ago. Many hon. Members have addressed the House. I think that those who have been present throughout would agree that the debate was without party spirit. In my concluding remarks I shall try to address the matter again without party spirit, as I sought to do in my opening remarks.

Before turning to the Secretary of State's speech, may I say that I was impressed time and again by the way in which so many hon. Members who addressed the question with the open mind came back to the same two difficult questions posed early in the debate by the hon. Member for Maidstone (Miss Widdecombe).

The first question is, if we say that it is right and proper that there should be a gap between income support payments and the charges levied by residential care homes, who do we say should meet the gap and pay the extra? It cannot be the residents, because they are on income support. By definition they have no means themselves to meet the gap. I noticed that the Secretary of State did not reply to that question which has lingered throughout the debate. I pose it to him again. Who does he imagine will fill the gap if he does not? Is it assumed that it will be the relatives? If so, what is assumed to be a reasonable contribution from relatives, who are themselves frequently pensioners? It is a question to which local authorities would like to know the answer, because from April of next year they will accept the responsibility for new residents. Are they expected to look for a contribution from relatives in the way that we seem to be implying in the Bill?

The second question that ran through the debate is very simple. Those same local authorities are expected from April of next year to negotiate payments to private residential care homes for the residents who will enter the homes from that date. It is assumed that they will be capable of negotiating presumably reasonable charges which will not result in exploitation of the public purse or unreasonable profits for those running the homes. Although it is assumed that local authorities will be capable of doing that from April of next year, we are told there is no way in which the Department of Social Security can achieve the same in relation to those who are already in private residential care homes. If the Department of Social Security cannot do it, what is to stop the Department using as its local benchmark the figure that local authorities can negotiate, using block contracts? Or are we seriously being asked to accept a position which may exist from April of next year in which the local authority payments may be higher than the income support levels being paid to private residents living in the same residential care homes, and unable to meet a payment which the local authority accepts as reasonable?

I want to respond to some of the Secretary of State's replies. It would be unreasonable not to begin by saying that he addressed the House with his characteristic urbanity and frankness which I remember. I remind him that a telling speech was made by the hon. Member for Chislehurst (Mr. Sims). He said that it would not be enough to ask us to wait for an uprating in April 1991, which is more than a full year away.

I have read the submissions from the many voluntary organisations that have written to hon. Members on both sides of the House, and it is clear that by April 1991 thousands of elderly people will have faced eviction from residential care homes because they cannot afford the fees. The Secretary of State referred to safeguards. What safeguards can he offer to the House? What comfort can he offer to people who face the prospect of eviction within the next 12 months? [HON. MEMBERS: "What would you do?"] I have moved a new clause that is drafted to address the matter. If hon. Members want to do something about it, they should support the new clause.

Mr. Newton: The hon. Gentleman would not want to mislead the House. The new clause is directed towards producing something that will happen in April 1991.

Mr. Cook: I was going to address the points about my new clause later, but I will deal with them now.

I am aware that the new clause is not a thing of beauty or great perfection. In my many years in this House moving from the Back Benches behind the Government to the Opposition Front Bench, I have never produced an amendment or new clause that did not turn out to be technically deficient in 15 different ways. *[Interruption.]* The Secretary of State for Health has been uncharacteristically silent throughout the debate. It would assist our proceedings if he remained silent until it ends. I aspire to exchange places with the Secretary of State for Social Security because, if that were to happen, some day I might be able to move an amendment that was not technically defective.

I am prepared to consider the issue of the commencement date. If safeguards are lacking and my safeguards are not sufficiently tightly worded, I am perfectly content to amend them; all those details can be addressed in another place. We are not concerned now with a Committee stage, line-by-line examination of the new clause. We are concerned now with whether the clause should be added to the Bill. That brings us to the issue of principle.

The Secretary of State did not simply ask the hon. Member for Chislehurst to wait until April 1991. I noted carefully the two points on which he was specific about what he might do in April 1991. To be fair to the Secretary of State, he is always candid, although his candour may not always help him. He was frank and there were only two specific points on uprating next year which he is willing to look again.

The right hon. Gentleman's first assurance was that there would be more information. I would be the last person to resist more information. However, we know enough to reach a judgment on the issue. Over the next three days hon. Members will hear me say that on many occasions. I have received more material and briefings from so many organisations about new clause 1 than about any other. We do not require more information; we need action to resolve the problems.

The second point that the Secretary of State offered to consider was geographical variation. With his characteristic candour the Secretary of State was frank and admitted that we are not dealing with a problem that is confined to any one region. It is found in virtually every region. My hon. Friends the Members for Halifax (Mrs. Mahon), for Newcastle upon Tyne, Central (Mr. Cousins) and for Makerfield (Mr. McCartney) all addressed the House passionately about cases in their constituencies. I fear that those problems would not be addressed by a new regional variation. If we are to resolve this problem, we must look not only at Kent and Hampshire, but across Britain.

That brings me to the remarks that passed between the Secretary of State and his hon. Friend the Member for Staffordshire, South (Mr. Cormack). When the hon. Gentleman intervened, the Secretary of State said to him, "What is the issue of principle?" The issue of principle on which the new clause stands is the principle as it affects those many elderly people, now numbering 100,000 or so, who entered residential care on the clear understanding that the state had undertaken to provide them with the income support to meet the charges of those homes and to meet their subsistence while resident in such a home. The issue of principle is whether the House is willing to renege on that commitment and on its contract with those people on the basis that we never said—although we never denied—that it was intended to meet the full charges of those homes. To me that is an important issue of principle because it touches on the integrity and the probity of our standing as a House, willing to respond to the needs of our constituents.

It was said by the Minister—and spectacularly by the hon. Member for Brigg and Cleethorpes (Mr. Brown)—that if my new clause was passed it could result in some exploitive landlords, providers of luxurious accommodation, ripping off the public purse. The hon. Member for Brigg and Cleethorpes held up the spectacle of us, through the new clause, subsidising owners of private care homes who wake up their residents with a glass of sherry every morning. I could accept the argument that there is a danger of our subsidising exploitive and luxuriant accommodation if only a minority of homes were unable to get within the income support limits. However, the truth is that the great majority of homes cannot live within the income support limits. Never mind the profit-making sector, some homes run by voluntary organisations, which are not making a profit, exploitive or otherwise, cannot get within them.

In my opening speech, I drew the attention of the House to the case of a home that is run by nuns, with a vow of poverty, who cannot get within the income support limits. No morning sherry in that case, I suspect. If one looks across the broad swathe of provision, it is patent that the present income support levels are wholly unrealistic.

The Secretary of State warns us against making an open-ended commitment, but I warn him of the open-ended commitment that will result if we do not pass the new clause or something like it. I advise the Secretary of State for Health that I am referring to the open-ended commitment of the NHS to take back the people who might be put on the streets from the private residential care homes. I cannot imagine a more expensive or a more open-ended commitment than that.

Mr. Barry Porter: I have followed the arguments of the last half or three quarters of an hour with care and understood every question that has been asked, but I have not understood one answer. Am I to understand—perhaps either the hon. Gentleman or someone else could tell me—that there is a danger, a probability or a certainty that some old people will be removed from their present accommodation? [HON. MEMBERS: "Yes."] If that be the case, how can anybody support it? *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Cook: If my hon. Friends will permit me to continue, it has been in my mind to mention to the hon. Member for Wirral, South (Mr. Porter) that under the rules of procedure only I could respond to his question, but I am beaten to the punch. Hon. Members of all parties know that many people, including their own constituents, face precisely that risk.

May I conclude with this point, which I address to Conservative Members as they make up their minds about how to vote? I am confident that, if we carry the new clause, Ministers will move rapidly to correct in the other place any imperfections of drafting. I am not equally confident that if Conservative Members support the Government in the vote on the principle of the new clause, they will move equally rapidly to solve the problem. This is the chance that the House has to tackle the problem. This is the chance that we have to do justice to those constituents who, through no fault of their own, find themselves in a distressing, desperate financial crisis to which there is no end in sight. I urge the House not to lose that chance.

Question put, That the clause be read a Second time:—

The House divided: Ayes 256, Noes 253.

Division No. 113] **[10.44 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane	Bell, Stuart
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*	Bendall, Vivian
Allason, Rupert	Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Allen, Graham	Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Alton, David	Bermingham, Gerald
Anderson, Donald	Blair, Tony
Archer, Rt Hon Peter	Blunkett, David
Armstrong, Hilary	Boateng, Paul
Ashdown, Rt Hon Paddy	Boyes, Roland
Ashton, Joe	Bradley, Keith
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*	Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*	Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*	Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Barron, Kevin	Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Battle, John	Buchan, Norman
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony	Buckley, George J.
Beckett, Margaret	Caborn, Richard
Beith, A. J.	Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*

Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Colvin, Michael
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Cormack, Patrick
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Eadie, Alexander
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Gardiner, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Gordon, Mildred
Gould, Bryan
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Hayes, Jerry
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hoey, Ms Kate *(Vauxhall)*
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howells, Dr. Kim (Pontypridd)
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Ingram, Adam
Irving, Sir Charles
Janner, Greville
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kennedy, Charles
Kilfedder, James
Kirkwood, Archy
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Loyden, Eddie
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum A.
McFall, John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
Maclennan, Robert
McNamara, Kevin
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliot
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Patchett, Terry
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Price, Sir David
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Rathbone, Tim
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Reid, Dr John
Richardson, Jo
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Sillars, Jim
Sims, Roger
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Smith, J. P. *(Vale of Glam)*
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Speller, Tony
Squire, Robin
Steel, Rt Hon Sir David
Steinberg, Gerry
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Turner, Dennis
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Wells, Bowen
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Widdecombe, Ann
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Wolfson, Mark
Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Worthington, Tony
Wray, Jimmy
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mr. Ken Eastham.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amery, Rt Hon Julian
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Staml'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fishburn, John Dudley
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Sir Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Gregory, Conal

Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Hague, William
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hind, Kenneth
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Rt Hon Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
McNair-Wilson, Sir Patrick
Madel, David
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, Rt Hon John
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Redwood, John
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Rt Hon Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Rt Hon Ian *(Herts N)*
Stokes, Sir John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Thatcher, Rt Hon Margaret
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thurnham, Peter
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Rt Hon William
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Walker, Rt Hon P. *(W'cester)*
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wheeler, Sir John
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wood, Timothy
Yeo, Tim
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Alastair Goodlad and
Mr. Tony Durant.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Motion made, and Question put, That the clause be added to the Bill:—

The House divided: Ayes 219, Noes 246.

Division No. 114] **[11.01 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allason, Rupert
Alton, David
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashdown, Rt Hon Paddy
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Bendall, Vivian
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Cartwright, John
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Colvin, Michael
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Cormack, Patrick
Cousins, Jim
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Day, Stephen
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Gardiner, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Gould, Bryan
Graham, Thomas
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Henderson, Doug
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Hinchliffe, David
Hoey, Ms Kate *(Vauxhall)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howells, Dr. Kim (Pontypridd)
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Ingram, Adam
Irving, Sir Charles
Janner, Greville
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kennedy, Charles
Kilfedder, James
Kirkwood, Archy
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum A.
McFall, John
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
Maclennan, Robert
McNamara, Kevin
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John

Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliot
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Patchett, Terry
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Rathbone, Tim
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Reid, Dr John
Richardson, Jo
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Sillars, Jim
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, J. P. *(Vale of Glam)*
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon Sir David
Steinberg, Gerry
Stott, Roger
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Widdecombe, Ann
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Wolfson, Mark
Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Allen McKay and
Mr. Frank Haynes.

NOES

Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amery, Rt Hon Julian
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fishburn, John Dudley
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Sir Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Gregory, Conal
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Hague, William
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hind, Kenneth
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
Madel, David
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moss, Malcolm
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, Rt Hon John
Pawsey, James
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Redwood, John
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Rt Hon Nicholas
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Rt Hon Ian *(Herts N)*
Stokes, Sir John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Thatcher, Rt Hon Margaret
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thurnham, Peter
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard

Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Rt Hon William
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Walker, Rt Hon P. *(W'cester)*
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wheeler, Sir John
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilshire, David
Wood, Timothy
Yeo, Tim
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Alastair Goodlad and
Mr. Tony Durant.

Question accordingly negatived.

11.15 pm

Mr. Robin Cook: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The House has found a characteristic parliamentary device to express its view on the principle at stake while rejecting the flawed new clause. I invite the Secretary of State for Social Security to respond by agreeing that the Government will take on board the decision of the House on the matter of principle.

Hon. Members: Answer.

Mr. Newton: As the hon. Gentleman will realise, given that the Bill is the responsibility of my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Health, I thought it sensible to have a word with him before responding. The House declined to add new clause 1 to the Bill. The new clause concerns social security, which explains my response to the debate. I repeat what I said in my remarks at the end of the debate. I sought to acknowledge the concern expressed by hon. Members of all parties, which was manifestly reflected in the vote. It will be reflected in our consideration of what we shall do in the light of what I said at the end of the debate. I sought to suggest the ways in which we should move forward. I think that the hon. Gentleman will recognise that I cannot go beyond my undertakings given during the debate. They will be reflected faithfully in the light of the outcome of the debate.

Mr. Cook: Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. It is only fair to concentrate the mind of the Secretary of State for Social Security at this stage with the warning that the House will want to return to the matter at the Report stage of the Social Security Bill. I assure the right hon. Gentleman that we shall be considering the new clause again to ensure that on that occasion it will be a less flawed new clause which the House may be inclined not merely to give a Second Reading to, but to add to that Bill if there is no further Government action in the meantime.

New Clause 2

NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE (SCOTLAND) ACT 1978: QUALITY CONTROL COMMISSION

'After section 7 of the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978 there shall be inserted—

"*(7A) Quality Control Commission*

There shall be established a Quality Control Commission for the Health Service in Scotland. Its members including the chairman shall be appointed by the Secretary of State following consultation with Health Boards, local authorities, the CBI in Scotland, the Scottish Trade Union Congress and such other bodies as he considers appropriate. Its responsibilities will include:—

(a) establishing the standards that shall be met by Health Boards in carrying out its functions.

(b) carrying out investigations from time to time to ensure that such standards are being met.

(c) where any services have been put out to competitive tendering, ensuring that the standards of that service are maintained.

(d) where such services are not maintained, to instruct the Health Board to take such action as they consider necessary.

(e) to investigate complaints from patients in regard to the Health Service, and take such action as seems appropriate.".'—*[Mr. Maxton.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

Mr. Maxton: I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): With this it will be convenient to take amendment (a), in line 11, leave out from 'time to time' and insert 'annually.'.

Mr. Maxton: It may be convenient for the House if I tell the hon. Member for Moray (Mrs. Ewing) that I am happy to accept amendment (a).

Following the controversy over new clause 1, and knowing the generosity of the Under-Secretary of State for Scotland, the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth), and the uncontroversial nature of new clause 2, I am certain that we shall not have such a vote again and that the Minister will be happy to accept the new clause. That will save the House and the Government considerable inconvenience.

The Minister has shown in the past 10 days that he is happy to establish new quangos in Scotland. He set up the new National Health Service management executive under Mr. Cruickshank last week, and earlier today he established new special health boards in Scotland. As he is merrily setting up quangos all over the place in Scotland, I feel certain that he will set up one more, as proposed in the new clause.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The hon. Gentleman is wrong to describe the NHS management executive as a quango. It is a management executive within the Scottish Home and Health Department, being part of that Department. It is not a quango. The previous new clause did not set up a body, as the hon. Gentleman suggests; it gave the Secretary of State power to set up such bodies.

Mr. Maxton: As usual, the Minister is splitting hairs. I accept that the earlier new clause gave the Secretary of State power to establish special health boards, but I understand that in a written answer this afternoon he made it clear that he intends to use that power to establish a special health board in Scotland for the purpose of carrying out health education. Whatever one may call it, it will be a quango. It may require the laying of an order under the negative procedure to bring it into being, but he intends to do that.

If the new management executive is to be appointed by the Scottish Home and Health Department from its employees, it will be a Civil Service body and not a quango. But he does not propose that course. He intends to bring in people from outside to be on it. In other words, the Minister is splitting hairs by contradicting me. In any event, I am sorry that he took so seriously what was intended to be a mild joke. Perhaps at this hour he has lost what little sense of humour he has.

The new clause is important, although perhaps not in its detail and technicality, because in the past 10 years we have experienced dramatic changes in the NHS in Scotland and in the demands made on it. Some of those demands have been outwith the control of the Government, such as the demographic changes throughout the nation which have resulted in fewer births at one end of the scale and many more elderly people at the other. Those changes have put strains on the NHS.

The dreadful new disease of AIDS is already causing problems in the Lothian health board area and will undoubtedly cause increasing problems to all the health boards in Scotland. Dramatic technological breakthroughs have given hope to many, but they are expensive both in terms of the operations involved, such as transplants, and the long-term costs in caring for the individuals who undergo such treatment.

In addition, there are the changes over which the Government have control. Particularly worrying to us are the changes that the Government have already initiated and those that will occur as a result of the Bill. We have had ever-increasing rises in prescription, dental and optical charges, with charges now for the testing of eyes and for limited dental treatment. In addition to changes affecting drugs on prescription lists, we have suffered the harsh and hasty imposition of the share formula in Scotland, with cuts in spending in the two largest health board areas, Glasgow and Lothian.

We have had the introduction of general managers and the privatisation of many NHS services, all of which have

caused patients and health boards great problems. Now we face the opting out of hospitals, fund-holding general practices, the internal market, indicative budgets and the need to ensure that the community care provisions in the Bill are properly implemented. At the same time, the Government are actively encouraging private medicine in Scotland, a concept that is foreign to the Scottish medical scene and is blurring the line between the public and private sectors.

Health boards, emboldened by the Minister's support, are seeking to extend privatisation well beyond the ancillary services: into radiography, laboratories, pharmacies, medical records and even kidney dialysis—and, of course, care for the elderly. Given such enormous developments and changes, it is essential that the quality of services should be monitored, and that quick and effective action should be taken to deal with any problems.

The Government constantly claim that all the changes in the Bill are designed to give patients a better and more responsive service. As a Glasgow Member, I find it hard to see how cutting funds for the Greater Glasgow health board year in, year out can improve services in a city with the unenviable reputation of having the worst urban health record in western Europe.

It is for the Government to prove their claims to the Scottish public. They are always giving statistics to show that they are spending more on the Health Service, that Glasgow and Lothian are the best-funded health authorities in Britain, and that more is spent per head on health in Scotland than anywhere else in Britain. I am sure that the Minister will give us the same statistics tonight that he has given us throughout his career as Health Minister. The problem is that no one in Scotland believes him: patients, doctors, nurses and other Health Service workers all think that the service has worsened since the Government came to power, and that the changes in the Bill—and the privatisation of services—will only make matters worse.

The new clause would establish a quality control commission for the Health Service in Scotland. I have given way to the popular Government norm of Government appointment, although I believe that it should be a matter for consultation with certain bodies. The commission will be empowered to establish certain defined qualities for each service, and to ensure that they are observed. Above all, if a service is privatised or put out to competitive tender, the commission will be able to monitor quality and ensure that it is improved if necessary. If the service fails to meet the previous standards—or the standards laid down by the commission—the commission will have the power to instruct the health board to end the contract and introduce in-house staff.

The Health Service in Scotland is no longer an integrated whole, and once the Bill goes through it will be even less so. It will not be possible to plan for the different components to work together informally to ensure that help is provided in the areas that they cover. Hospital cleaners and caterers—and, perhaps, radiographers, laboratory assistants, technicians and even those who work the dialysis machines—will no longer be responsible to, and the responsibility of, the management of their hospitals. Instead, they will be responsible to, and the responsibility of, other managers who may not even reside in the United Kingdom, let alone Scotland. International companies will be running many of the privatised concerns. Such people cannot be seen as part and parcel of a Health Service team that is running a hospital in the way that they have been in the past.

If the Bill is enacted, we shall have opt-out hospitals and fund-holding practices. The Health Service will work on a contract basis. The opt-out hospitals will still be funded by the NHS and related to it by commercial contracts, but they will not be part and parcel of an integrated Health Service. Their facilities will be available to the Health Service but they will be separate from it and will operate quite differently from the rest of the Health Service.

11.30 pm

Even within the Health Service there will be the constant aim to seek contracts between different parts of the Health Service. The relationships will all exist on a separate commercial basis, not integrated and planned in the way that they have been in the past. Therefore, there must be some organisation such as that suggested in the new clause to ensure that the quality of the Health Service is maintained.

We oppose most of the Government's changes to the Health Service and we would like to reverse them. But while those changes are being made, it is essential that we try to maintain quality.

Mr. Kirkwood: I am following the hon. Gentleman's argument closely, and I support the general thrust of his case, but why does he include the CBI in Scotland and the Scottish Trades Union Congress, neither of which organisation I object to, but no health care professionals on the quality control commission? Is that deliberate, and, if so, why?

Mr. Maxton: There are Health Service unions with the necessary expertise within the STUC. The new clause refers to other bodies that the Secretary of State considers appropriate, and that would include the health professionals about whom the hon. Gentleman is talking. I am sure that he has read the new clause sufficiently carefully to see that even though it may not be spelled out.

If the Government genuinely believe in their past reforms and those that they now seek to establish, and if they genuinely believe that those are in the interests of patients in Scotland, they will happily concede at least the principle of the new clause, even if they find fault with its wording. If they do not, the people of Scotland will rightly say that the purpose of the privatisation that has taken place and the other reforms in the Bill is not for the good of the patient or to improve the quality of service but, first, to give profits to large numbers of the Minister's friends and, secondly, to shift the Health Service in Scotland, as in the rest of the United Kingdom, towards a commercial Health Service which will eventually lead to the privatisation of the NHS and to a much greater use of private medicine by most of the population.

If we consider the privatisation of services in Scotland, we are entitled to be sceptical about its so-called advantages. Unlike England, the Scottish health boards were reluctant to go down the road of competitive tendering. In 1983, the then Minister for Health put out a circular asking health boards

"to test the cost-effectiveness of their domestic, catering and laundry services by seeking tenders for these services from outside contractors and comparing them with the cost of in-house services."

[Mr. Maxton]

It also asks boards in appropriate cases to let contracts to private firms.

Because the circular asked the health boards to do that, most—nearly all—simply said no. They did not want to have anything to do with privatisation. Even the Greater Glasgow health board unanimously voted against putting any of its services out to contract at that time. I have never managed to find out how she voted, but one of the then board members was Lady Goold, the wife of the then chairman of the Conservative party in Scotland. Apparently she was opposed to privatisation.

The boards conducted a series of negotiations with trade unions and came to agreements about improving —in inverted commas—the services that were being provided and seeking greater efficiency within the Health Service. However, along came the general election of 1987, the Minister with responsibility for health, John MacKay, lost his seat, and the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State had the difficult job of choosing a Minister of Health from the hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) and the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth). They decided that the hon. Member for Stirling, with all his ideological faults, would be a better Minister than the hon. Member for Tayside, North.

Mr. Bill Walker: I should like to put it on record that the Prime Minister made the right choice.

Mr. Maxton: Just for once I can say with an absolutely clear conscience that I agree with both the Prime Minister and the hon. Gentleman. Whatever the faults of the hon. Member for Stirling, and however difficult the choice might have been, I think that the Prime Minister made the right choice.

I do not intend to raise the matters raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours), but not only is the hon. Member for Stirling an ideologue but he makes no bones about the fact that, prior to becoming a Minister, he had commercial interests in this issue. He has given them up, and I accept that absolutely, but the fact is that his previous business experience and his ideology lead him to believe in the privatisation of the Health Service, particularly of those services that can be put out to contract. As soon as he came to office, there was a drive towards the privatisation of the Health Service in Scotland.

The Minister organised a seminar on 2 October 1987 which was attended by health board general managers and chairmen, representatives of contractors and Scottish Home and Health Department officials. There the two parties were brought together and told, "Come on, we want to see privatisation." The boards' membership had changes, general managers, such as Laurence Peterken in Glasgow, had been appointed who were almost as comitted to privatisation as the hon. Member for Stirling, and the drive was on.

In December 1987, the Minister sent out a letter to general managers stating:

> "As you know, the Minister is very concerned that so little competitive tendering for support services has been undertaken in Scotland,"

and wants things to move faster. It continued:

> "Competitive tendering for support services must be pursued with greater vigour."

The hon. Gentleman always says that it is a matter of competitive tendering, and that includes in-house tendering. That is right, but in the letter he did not say that that was where the health boards had to look first and that they should take greater account of the in-service tenders —far from it.

The letter stated that boards were directed to seek to co-operate with private contractors and specifically asked to explore options informally before tenders were invited, show a willingness to consider more flexible forms of contract, avoid over-complex tender documentation, provide adequate time for contractors to prepare bids and produce monitoring arrangements without being excessively burdensome to the contractor. The Government wanted to find the easy way of doing the job and ensure that it was made as easy as possible for those outside contractors. That is how we went down the road towards the privatisation of services in Scotland.

Since then there has been the contracting out of a fair number of services, but it is still early days to judge all of them. I accept that a few have been awarded to in-house tenders. However, even then it means a reduction in the service provided. To obtain that in-house contract often means cutting the number of people employed and a reduction in wages and overtime. Those employees often have to work shorter hours with considerably less pay. Although the work is better done by in-house teams than outside contractors, because fewer people are doing the work for less money it is less well done than in the past.

It is not simply a matter of whether a floor is cleaned properly or whether the auxiliary services that provide the tea do the job adequately; it is a question whether they are still part of the team. Once services have been contracted out, even to an in-house team, the bond between the workers in the hospital is broken, and that causes problems.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I am listening carefully to the hon. Gentleman's fascinating remarks about competitive tendering. He does less than justice to the in-house work forces in the Health Service in Scotland, which have won three quarters of the contracts. Is he saying that standards are falling? Is he criticising the standards that were set out in the contract—which do not show a diminution of standards? Is he criticising the in-house teams for a failure to perform to the standards to which they committed themselves when they won the contract?

Mr. Maxton: That is the divide between us—the Minister believes that nothing can be done other than on a commercial contract. He cannot understand that people co-operate and work together as part of a team in the Health Service. He believes that everything is about cash and contracts.

Mr. Bill Walker: The hon. Gentleman is most courteous to give way, unlike some of his colleagues— *[Interruption.]* The hon. Gentleman is always courteous. I have listened carefully, but I find great difficulty in relating his remarks to occurrences during the winter of discontent, when all those people with their team spirit did everything that they could to destroy the working of our hospitals. They set out to destroy the Labour Government.

Mr. Maxton: I shall be rude, not courteous. The only mental quality that I have ever found in the hon. Gentleman is that he is much like an elephant—he has an

extremely long memory. All professionals in hospitals, from the doctors downwards, believe that they should operate as a team. Contracting out, whether or not in-house, breaks that bond. If people work for lower wages and with poorer conditions of service, their loyalty to the hospital and to the team is considerably less. They are bound to deliver a service at a certain price. They cannot exceed it.

I know that the hon. Gentleman has spent some time in hospital following an accident. He must agree about the psychological impact of a friendly ward orderly. He is an untrained worker whose job is to sweep up or to pour cups of tea for patients and nurses. He feels that he is part of a team. Because of his loyalty, his impact on the psychology of patients is enormous. I have seen it in operation. When we privatise and bring in the commercial element, we break the loyalty, and the position gets worse.

11.45 pm

The Minister is right; three quarters of the contracts have been won by in-house teams. The health boards have seen what happened in England and Wales when contracts were given to private companies. They have seen the effect and they want nothing to do with them. Many of them have tried desperately to find a way to in-house contracts.

Even with in-house contracts, it is not as easy as the Minister suggests. The general manager may force further cuts. We had the example less than a couple of years ago of the catering staff in the Royal Hospital for Sick Children and the Queen Mother maternity hospital in Glasgow. There was no bid from a private company. The in-house contract cut the cost. The in-house team cut and cut again, and closed certain things. At the end of the day it was told that the contract would not be accepted until there was a further cut in the cost, although that was the only bid. We are talking not about mass catering for a factory but about the complex diets of sick, young children.

We have seen the impact south of the border when private companies have won contracts. Health boards in Scotland are judging accordingly. Health authorities in England and Wales have had to cancel contracts. Already in Glasgow at the Victoria infirmary the cleansing company has been fined more than £3,000 for failing to carry out its contract properly. The general manager of the company said that he should not have to pay the fine because he thought that he was carrying out the contract properly.

After the company had been fined, the health board gave the contract for portering in five hospitals in Glasgow to the same company. The board did not take account of the incompetence already shown in cleansing at the Victoria infirmary. Having seen that the private company was interested only in the profit that it could make, the board gave it further contracts. A friend of mine who works in the Western infirmary in Glasgow said recently that he saw a new porter from the privatised company waking up a patient to find out where the X-ray department was. That is the portering that hospitals are now experiencing.

With low wages there is a high turnover of staff in privatised companies. I shall repeat a story which I told in Committee of two porters in a lift in the Western infirmary. One said to the other, "Why on earth are you working here for these abysmal wages?" The other said, "Because I am more likely to get another job if I have this one than if I am trying to get a job from the unemployed register." The chances were that he would not be long in that hospital, that he would never learn the job adequately and that he would never have great loyalty to the health board or the hospital.

Certainly in Glasgow and in Ayrshire and Arran health boards there will be an extension of privatisation. I am talking not about ancillary services but about core services which are essential to the medical needs of patients. The Greater Glasgow health board is considering putting out to private tender the laboratory services and the testing of samples. Companies will come in and take over those services. They will also take over the pharmacies and the control of drugs in a health board area. That seems to be a recipe for high costs as only one drug company will take the contract. Companies might also take over medical records. I agree that in the Greater Glasgow health board area there is a need to improve the handling of medical records. If someone's medical records are at the Southern general and that person has an accident and is taken to the Western infirmary, it cannot be right that the medical records at Southern general are not available. However, to put medical records, with all their confidential information, into the hands of private companies which are operating solely for profit is totally wrong.

Radiography and X-rays are also to be put out to tender. The Ayrshire and Arran board is considering putting dialysis out to private tender. The care of the elderly is also subject to private tender and many of my hon. Friends will refer to that in greater detail. However, there will be a great deal of privatisation and there will be great changes with the opting out of hospitals.

The Opposition would prefer the Health Service to remain a service based on caring for patients and one that provided the health care that we believe should be provided. We are intent on delivering that kind of Health Service. We do not believe in making the Health Service a commercial operation, although the Minister obviously does. If the Minister insists on following that path, we insist that the care should be monitored in Scotland, and the clause would provide that monitoring.

Sir Hector Monro (Dumfries): I listened to the hon. Member for Glasgow, Cathcart (Mr. Maxton) with great interest. He gave us a broad brush account of the Health Service in Scotland, but did not give us much information about what his proposed monitoring commission would do. When we set out the structure of the Health Service in Scotland under the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1972 we adopted a one-tier system that became the envy of the United Kingdom because England and Wales adopted the two-tier system. It would be a great pity if we added another layer of bureaucracy to a system which, in general, is working very well. With the assistance of the hon. Member for Aberdeen, North (Mr. Hughes), the Standing Committee on the 1972 Act included in the legislation the health councils and the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration. Those are two good checks on failure within the area health boards. It is unnecessary, given those two checks, to have the additional bureaucratic monitoring system suggested by the hon. Member for Cathcart.

Mr. Robert Hughes: Is the hon. Gentleman aware that the number of local health councils has been reduced drastically and they have to cover much wider areas?

[Mr. Robert Hughes]

Therefore, the checks and balances to which he referred so flatteringly have been cut severely and that cannot be good for patient accountability.

Sir Hector Monro: Actually, I was just coming to the health councils——

Mr. William McKelvey (Kilmarnock and Loudoun): Ah!

Sir Hector Monro: The hon. Member for Kilmarnock and Loudoun (Mr. McKelvey) may groan away. I have been speaking for only two minutes. The hon. Member for Cathcart spoke for about 40 minutes. It would be a bit rough for me to have to make my speech in two minutes.

The hon. Member for Aberdeen, North made an important point about the health councils. Their duties are laid down specifically in the 1972 Act and they were to monitor the work of the area health boards. I am afraid that many councils seem to have undertaken operations that are far more extensive and far beyond the scope of what they were originally set up to do and, because of that, they have lost a lot of the influence and power they should have had, as laid down by that Act.

The hon. Member for Cathcart was quiet about costs. Inevitably, it would be expensive if the plans set out in the new clause were to be fulfilled. A fairly effective scientific back-up would be needed to monitor all the schemes that the hon. Gentleman feels are worthy of investigation.

The new clause is a major criticism of the area health boards. Of course, they do not run as effectively as everyone would wish, but, by and large—I can speak mainly of the Dumfries and Galloway health board in my area—they run effectively. As the constituency Member, I deal with that board and, indirectly, with Glasgow, to which several patients from Dumfries have to travel. As my hon. Friend the Minister knows—and will know again tomorrow when he receives another letter—I have some criticisms of the working of the Glasgow board and the staff under its jurisdiction. However, by and large, I should be happy to leave the decision about the quality of the Health Service in Dumfries and Galloway to the area health board itself. After all, that is why its members are appointed. Their prime duty is to ensure that there is an effective Health Service and that the administrative and medical staff provide the highly efficient Health Service to which the constituents of Dumfries and Galloway are entitled.

The Minister knows that I have never been the world's greatest enthusiast for the privatisation of individual aspects of the Health Service or of self-governing hospitals. I very much doubt whether the Dumfries and Galloway royal infirmary will ever become self-governing, but I accept that the procedures for competitive tendering have had an important impact on the Health Service. I have always welcomed the fact that in Dumfries and Galloway the in-house bids have won on each occasion and I have supported the health board to that end. My goodness, many hundreds of thousands of pounds have been saved, which have gone directly to patient care, which is the prime objective of the policy of my hon. Friend the Minister.

The poll that was held in the Health Service last year showed that patients were satisfied with the quality of medical care under the health board. All the proposals in the new clause should be carried out effectively by the health boards themselves. We do not need another monitoring body, which would inevitably cost a great deal of money, without any guarantee that it would show up faults of which the health board was not already aware and for which remedies were not already in place.

The hon. Member for Cathcart rightly praised the Health Service for the team spirit that it engenders. That is right. The medical, domestic and administrative staff must all work together with the common objective of providing the very finest Health Service possible for the patients in the area. From my experience, I believe that that is exactly what happens.

I believe that, because we have the structure provided under the 1972 Act, it would be unfortunate to bring in another layer of management, or—some would say—of interference, when the work is being carried out effectively at present. There are enough checks and there is good administration and effective management. Because of that and because my hon. Friend the Minister channelled additional resources well above inflation into the Health Service this year and last year, we have been able to increase extensively the number of hospital buildings and other facilities during his period of office.

12 midnight

Mr. Kirkwood: I have listened carefully to the hon. Gentleman's argument. He is skirting round the crucial aspect of the change introduced in the Bill. He and I know that in our areas the area health boards provide a perfectly acceptable service. The new clause has been introduced because the new competitive element introduced into a rural area will make quality much more difficult to attain. What representations has he had from his health professionals about whether the new competitive, free market approach in the Bill will affect the local health service?

Sir Hector Monro: The hon. Gentleman is putting into my argument something that I did not argue. I have had extensive consultations and, like all hon. Members, a large mail bag in the past 12 months. Many people were full of foreboding that the Health Service would be a shambles. Here we are 12 months later and the Health Service is rather better than it was 12 months ago. In 12 months' time it will be better still and 12 months after that better still again. Opposition Members are full of forebodings that misrepresent what my hon. Friend the Minister and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State are doing to make the NHS better.

I accept that, as the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood) said, we have good area health boards and good general hospitals. But that does not mean that that is the case throughout the country. Certainly it is not the case throughout the United Kingdom. I hear stories about hospitals in urban areas where a great deal needs to be done. *[Interruption.]* Does the hon. Gentleman wish to intervene?

Mr. Kirkwood: I simply wish to quote to the hon. Gentleman the well-known adage, "If things ain't broke, you don't need to fix them".

Sir Hector Monro: I did not catch the hon. Gentleman's point.

Mr. Kirkwood: There is nothing wrong with the area health boards, so they do not need to be reformed.

Sir Hector Monro: The hon. Gentleman is champing away. He will have plenty of time to speak. I am speaking against the new clause which will make it much more complicated and more expensive to provide a high-quality Health Service. I do not want the change suggested by the new clause. It will not add to the effectiveness and efficiency of the area health boards.

Mr. Maxton: The point is that it is not me or the new clause that suggests change. It is the Minister and the whole Bill that suggest changes. The Minister is suggesting change by privatising the services. All I suggest is a relatively minor ability to monitor what is happening with all the changes.

Sir Hector Monro: No. In the new clause, the hon. Gentleman is creating a completely new structure to monitor what is happening not only now but in the future. That is completely unnecessary. If the area health board is not doing its job, will it need to be monitored by another extraneous body such as the TUC?

Mr. McKelvey: If we had a Select Committee on Scottish Affairs to monitor the activities of the health boards, perhaps the new clause and others would not be necessary. My hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Cathcart (Mr. Maxton) is correct. The new clause has been tabled to compete with the Government's clause. They want to introduce a new health board which has an overseeing role and will be given extensive powers by the Government. If we do not need the overseeing group, we do not need the new health board. It would probably solve the problem if some Conservative Back-Bench Members would get off their backsides and serve on a Select Committee on Scottish Affairs which could consider such affairs.

Sir Hector Monro: The hon. Gentleman could have spent a few hours in Standing Committee to help balance things up. I will not rise to his challenge about the Select Committee. He knows as well as I that all the Select Committee's reports over the umpteen years produced singularly few results, particularly the report on the NHS. [HON. MEMBERS: "Why"?] I do not want to be diverted from the issue before us. New clause 2 is wholly unnecessary, wholly bureaucratic and highly critical of the management of the area health boards, and I am not prepared to accept it.

My final point relates to renal dialysis units and the Minister will know what I am about to say. I think that Dumfries and Galloway will have these units soon. They must be spread much more evenly geographically. It is intolerable for some of my constituents—I accept that they are few in number—to have to travel to Edinburgh or Glasgow weekly and sometimes more frequently for renal dialysis, especially when we consider the cost and discomfort of trailing up and down the A74 to Glasgow or over the Beef Tub to Edinburgh. Even if we could come to an agreement with Carlisle, I should prefer to see a renal unit in Dumfries to serve those west of us through to Stranraer. I have received optimistic notes from the area health board that one will be established, with luck, this year. I should be grateful if my hon. Friend the Minister could add some ministerial pressure.

The new clause is unnecessary and I hope that the Government will oppose it.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: I wish to speak to amendment (a). I am extremely grateful to the hon. Member for Glasgow, Cathcart (Mr. Maxton) for his courteous acceptance of the amendment, which I suspect he gathers would tighten the proposals in the new clause.

My colleagues and I believe that it is essential to have a quality control commission to monitor standards in the Health Service. We shall support the proposed new clause, but we wish to see included within it a statutory right to have an annual review because we are in no doubt that the Bill represents a fundamental push towards private medicine in Scotland. It also moves towards the integration of the private sector with the NHS and the creation of a two-tier system. Additionally, there appears to be a secondary objective in the Minister's intentions, which is to break existing powers within the NHS—organisations such as the British Medical Association, the trade unions, the royal colleges, the health boards and, in England and Wales, the regional health authorities.

The hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) seems consistently to object to the use of the phrase "opting out" and prefers "self-governing". It would be more interesting if he would use self-government for Scotland, not just for schools, hospitals and bus companies, for which he is prepared to push firmly.

Mr. Bill Walker: I am perfectly prepared to agree that if more than 50 per cent. of Scots elected more than 50 per cent. of Scottish Members for a party that wanted independence, we would find it difficult to prevent that. The Scottish National party must get that share of the vote before its members can talk to the House about that.

Mrs. Ewing: I am interested to note that the hon. Gentleman referred to 50 per cent. of Scottish voters. It seems he also wishes to change the normal majority rule which has been accepted as a mandate for changing a Government. I will leave him to think that over, and no doubt colleagues in other parties will wish to discuss in detail with him propositions for proportional representation.

Returning to the issue of opting out, the Bill offers the possibility of a fragmented Health Service in Scotland, in which planned development will be impossible. If money follows patients, one hospital's gain is potentially somewhere else's loss. We seem to be moving towards a competitive, devil-take-the-hindmost attitude with hospitals and doctors touting for patients, as they do in Germany.

I shall give hon. Members some idea of what happens in Germany, because it is one of the most realistic comparisons that we can make. No doubt the Minister will point out that there are no waiting lists and no shortages, and that they do not run campaigns for scanners in the German health service. They spend more and they get more than the NHS—more pacemakers, more bypass operations, more investigations and more drugs. It is a competitive system, and therefore, according to the free-market thinkers on the Conservative Benches, it should provide value for money.

Payment is by item of service in Germany. There is competition between the various health insurance companies—which are non-profit making—and between the different health care providers, such as general

[Mrs. Ewing]

practitioners, specialists and hospitals. There is competition not only between hospitals and between specialists, but between hospital and specialist, and specialist and GP. As a result, the different layers of the service compete rather than co-operate. They are trying to outbid each other and to hang on to the source of finance —the patient—for as long as possible rather than co-operating to ensure the most appropriate treatment.

Communication between hospitals, specialists and GPs is dreadful because each hoards its own information and that leads to expensive, wasteful and sometimes dangerous duplication of investigations, and in some cases to over-treatment. It is a tremendous temptation to pander to the perceived wishes of patients—to give them what they want so that they do not go elsewhere. Doctors hesitate to give unwanted advice in case the patient finds a more agreeable doctor.

The system is wide open to abuse. Health insurance companies, which are also in competition, try to reduce the costs of the system. They have imposed contracts on hospitals and limits on some specialist investigations and have alienated themselves from both doctors and patients.

Within the flashy new hospitals in German towns and cities, and the expensively equipped doctors' surgeries, the atmosphere is unhappy and disillusioned. Patients distrust doctors, suspecting that the commercial interests of doctors and insurance companies are influencing clinical decisions. The doctor is not candid with the patient, doctors and hospitals distrust each other, and everyone distrusts the insurance companies. All are entangled in a vast web of regulations, restrictions and demands. An enormous bureaucracy is required to keep track of the patients as they move about the country, change companies, and change doctors. It also has to cope with changing contracts with hospitals, and with different restrictions, and to try to ensure that there is no fraud.

If that is the kind of health service——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I find it difficult to relate the hon. Lady's remarks to the new clause and the amendment.

Mrs. Ewing: I am trying to exemplify the kind of system that I believe will require monitoring if the legislation becomes law. I am trying to point out the sort of problems that exist elsewhere, why we need a quality monitoring commission as proposed in new clause 2, and why it must undertake annual work. We are being pushed towards the type of health service which the free-market thinkers want, without consultation with those people who are most directly involved.

I have referred to some research undertaken by practitioners in Scotland, by people who are directly involved with the Health Service and who have spent considerable time studying examples elsewhere. My party believes that there should be a comprehensive Health Service which is freely available to all at time of need. We do not seek a two-tier system in Scotland, which would be contrary to the egalitarian ethic which is so important to Scottish life.

The Government are not taking seriously the request that their proposals should be monitored. The hon. Member for Aberdeen, North (Mr. Hughes) has already referred to the fact that the number of health councils is to be reduced. The local health council in Moray will probably be abolished; it will be subsumed within a Grampian health council. Moray is a separate administrative unit of the Grampian health board. A local health council is therefore needed. If local health councils are to be abolished, it is important that there should be a national body to monitor the changes and their impact on the delivery of health care to the people of Scotland.

New clause 2 is worthy of support. No doubt the Minister will reject it. He prefers his own appointees and his own health boards. An organisation such as this, which would be representative of corporate organisations in Scotland and of Scottish public opinion, ought to be enshrined in legislation. I hope that hon. Members will support new clause 2 and amendment (a), which proposes an annual review.

12.15 am

Mr. Bill Walker: The hon. Member for Moray (Mrs. Ewing) has wandered down an avenue that I do not propose to enter. She has compared the Health Service in Scotland with the service that is provided in Germany. I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) that the Health Service throughout much of Scotland is splendid. I can speak with authority only about Tayside, where the service is probably second to none anywhere on this planet. That is quite a statement to make.

The hon. Member for Glasgow, Cathcart (Mr. Maxton) drew attention to the fact that I spent a long time in hospital. Yes, I did, following an accident. However, he has probably forgotten that not long ago I spent some time in a hospital in Dundee, at the same time as the hon. Member for Dundee, West (Mr. Ross). We were in the same ward. He would probably confirm that the quality of service that we received, not because we were Members of Parliament but because we were ill and required attention, was splendid. That does not mean that we do not wish to improve the Health Service. As new techniques, skills and operations become available we want them to be available in our area.

Mr. Maxton: I believe that the hon. Gentleman was in hospital in Dundee in the late 1970s and early 1980s before all the Government's reforms. He has described it as a wonderful service. Why on earth, therefore, has he constantly supported the Government's reforms?

Mr. Walker: The hon. Gentleman's memory is flawed. I was in hospital just before the general election in 1979.

Mr. Maxton: I said the late 1970s

Mr. Walker: I was in a hospital where there were no disputes. That is important when one remembers the period in question. The staff at Stracathro hospital were absolutely splendid and superb. They were not involved in any of the disputes that were taking place elsewhere. I make no issue out of the absence of dispute. I was also in hospital two and a half years ago—not too long ago, by anybody's standards.

The hon. Member for Cathcart repeated in his speech what we heard so often in Committee—his views on competitive tendering, privatised services and in-house tendering. However, the new clause talks about

> "(a) establishing the standards that shall be met by Health Boards in carrying out its functions."

I imagine that all health boards, in carrying out their functions, have to deal with a huge element of what could

be described as clinical activity, yet the hon. Gentleman, in nearly 40 minutes' chat, did not mention clinical standards once. In those very narrow specialist areas, who will monitor standards? The hon. Gentleman and I both know that it is health boards that have the people to do so. As my hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries said, the appointment of people throughout Scotland for that purpose would amount to the creation of an unnecessary tier of bureaucracy.

The hon. Gentleman did not really intend that clinical standards should be covered—at least that is the impression that his observations conveyed to me. Thus, it seems, this new clause, with an amendment in the name of the hon. Member for Moray, is designed to deal with privatisation, competitive tendering and in-house tendering. If that is what the hon. Gentleman intended he should have made his new clause much more specific and much clearer. In fact, the new clause covers every area of activity with which health boards deal. It says that the commission's responsibilities will include

"where any services have been put out to competitive tendering, ensuring that the standards of that service are maintained".

I accept that, but

"carrying out investigations from time to time to ensure that such standards are being met"

is another matter. Those are the words of paragraph (b).

Paragraph (a) says that the commission's responsibilities will include

"establishing the standards that shall be met by Health Boards in carrying out its functions"——

[Interruption.] The point I am making, which Opposition Members find frivolous, is that, according to the way in which the hon. Gentleman has drafted and presented his new clause, this body would monitor every single activity of all health boards throughout Scotland. The cost of meeting the statutory requirements laid down here would be horrendous. If the hon. Gentleman is minded to tell me that that is not what is intended, let me make it clear that it is what the new clause spells out. Paragraph (d) says that the commission's responsibilities will include

"where such services are not maintained, to instruct the Health Board to take such action as they consider necessary".

The hon. Gentleman mentioned pharmacy. It is astonishing to suggest that pharmacists, of all professionals, are unable to do inside hospitals the work that they do in their shops. Indeed, most pharmacy is privatised. Is it suggested that the pharmacy service that we in Scotland enjoy through chemists' shops is not up to standard? That is what the hon. Gentleman is suggesting.

The hon. Gentleman went on to other areas of medical activity, such as X-rays and dialysis. In my view, this new clause typifies the hon. Gentlman's prejudice against anything to do with privatisation or competitive tendering. We saw that in Committee, and it comes through every time.

Mr. Maxton: The hon. Gentleman's idea is that we cannot have an inspectorate to investigate standards. There is no question of every hospital or every element of the Health Service being investigated annually or at some other interval. As with schools, factories and a range of other places in which there are inspectors, it is a question of attempting to ensure that standards are met. I realise that the Government do not like such arrangements. The hon. Gentleman may not like them, but they are there. Why should not arrangements that exist in many other areas apply to the Health Service, too?

Labour Members are not constantly showing their prejudices. The Government not only show their prejudices but impose them against the wishes of the majority of the people in the United Kingdom. They put those prejudices into legislation.

Mr. Walker: I drew attention to the all-embracing, expensive proposals in the new clause because the hon. Gentleman accepted without hesitation the amendment tabled by the hon. Member for Moray which requires this review to be carried out annually. Having accepted the amendment, the hon. Gentleman must accept that he was trying to put into law the requirement to carry out an annual review at all levels in every sector of the Health Service. He now says, "We want to qualify that. We want a system of monitoring on an ad hoc basis." That is exactly what the health boards do now, so we do not need this nonsense.

If the hon. Member for Cathcart says that we all want a Health Service that operates as effectively and efficiently as humanly possible, none of us will argue with him. A statutory requirement to set up a body to police annually every sector of activity of the Health Service in Scotland would be a recipe for printing money, which would have to come from the taxpayer. The taxpayer would much rather the money were spent on new hospitals and on other such provisions. That is exactly what the Government have done, unlike any Government whom the hon. Gentleman would like to see in power.

One must be judged by what one does. The damage sustained to the Health Service under the previous Labour Administration is our only measure of what would be likely to happen in the future. We would end up with an expensive bureaucracy. The money would be better spent on health care. That reasoning lies behind the Government's thinking and that is why I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will throw out the new clause.

Mr. Robert Hughes: I am grateful for the opportunity to take part in this debate, which takes place against a background of changes in the Health Service in the past and those that are about to occur. The hon. Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) said that the Health Service was better than it was 12 months ago and that the dire forecasts of the damage that would be caused by the Government's changes have not been fulfilled. Of course, they have not, because the changes have not taken place. Opting out of self-governing hospitals and general practitioner budgeting have not yet occurred.

Before the current health boards, there were regional health boards and, below them, special hospital boards dealing with children, the mentally ill and other areas. There were different levels of involvement by people in the lay administration of the Health Service. We were worried that under the new health boards far fewer people would be involved in that lay administration. The argument for many of the changes was that the system was too disparate, clumsy and bureaucratic, that too many people were involved, and that there was no proper administration.

I do not pretend that the old system was perfect. I can give ample examples of specialist hospital boards not carrying out their functions effectively. I do not argue that we should return to that system. Many took the view that there has to be lay accountability and the involvement of ordinary people who were not medical specialists, but who

[Mr. Robert Hughes]

had a great interest in the Health Service and were willing to ensure that the different functions in patient care were carried out. There was a strong feeling that that link with the public was being weakened, so the local health councils were brought into being.

12.30 am

People's experience of local health councils varies from area to area. No area in Scotland could say that everything was lovely and that there was a perfect relationship between the local health council and the area health board. Equally, no area in Scotland could say that its local health council was a complete disaster. I shall not be thanked for this by people who have done a great deal of work in local health councils, but I must say that my judgment is that they have not been as effective as they should have been in monitoring patient care and the way in which the health boards have carried out their responsibilities. They have not been particularly effective in discussing with health boards changes and plans for the future. However, it is a retrograde step to cut down the numbers.

As I am sure that the Minister will remind us, after an independent investigation, the proposition was that all local health councils should disappear. It is worth putting on record our appreciation of my hon. Friend the Member for Strathkelvin and Bearsden (Mr. Galbraith) and of the Minister. I know that my hon. Friend the Member for Strathkelvin and Bearsden went to see him to tell him that it was a mistake to do away with all local health councils. We now have a compromise, which is better than nothing, although I have had a letter today from my local health council saying that it is very disturbed that there will be one local health council for the whole of the Grampian region and that there will be insufficient representation for matters to be covered properly.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The hon. Gentleman is being very fair. Will he make his own position clear? The position of the hon. Member for Strathkelvin and Bearsden (Mr. Galbraith), as the Front-Bench spokesman, was that he favoured moving towards having one health council for each health board area, with the possible exception of areas such as the Highlands. The general principle was to move towards one health council per area. I had the impression that the hon. Gentleman did not support that.

Mr. Hughes: In the absence of my hon. Friend the Member for Strathkelvin and Bearsden, I must say that if his position is that there should be, generally speaking, one local health authority or its equivalent to cover the whole health board area, except in remote areas, I respectfully disagree. However, there is no dishonour in that and it is no reflection on my hon. Friend, who, as we know, is unable to be with us in the debate. I am expressing a personal judgment. I am unhappy about the proposition to have only one local health council per health board. Whether we have two is a matter of judgment, so these matters must be considered in terms of individual areas.

I do not want to be diverted down this path for too long, although it is relevant to the debate on the quality control commission but there is a great difference between the city of Aberdeen, which is fairly densely populated and has highly sophisticated facilities at the hospitals, and the constituency of Moray, where the facilities could not be expected to mirror what happens in the inner cities. However, because of the differences of population and psyche between city dwellers and those who live in rural areas, we should have local health councils covering different areas, a different geographical spread and a different range of interests. I hope that, as the matter has arisen sharply in this debate, the Minister will reconsider the matter and where we go from here.

A quality control commission is necessary. The Mental Welfare Commission is already in existence. It oversees the welfare of patients in mental hospitals. The people who have served on that body over the decades have done a splendid job. On the few occasions when I have found it necessary to raise cases with that body, my inquiry has been dealt with fully and I have always been satisfied with the result. It is a comfort to have that commission in place so that complaints about the way in which patients have been treated can be followed up. I understand that the commission does not deal with clinical matters, so that one cannot refer to it complaints about the clinical treatment of patients.

We are moving to the time when patient care will be dealt with at one stage removed from the direct control of area health boards. That will particularly be the case with private nursing care, especially of geriatrics, which normally would have been done as a matter of course by the NHS. That type of activity will gradually be done more and more by private industry.

I wish to relate the details of a case, but I will not give the name of the private nursing home because the circumstances involved have been taken care of and I would not want to malign the present management of the home. A blind constituent raised with me problems concerning the care of the residents and the conditions at and services provided by the nursing home. The health board was aware of the case because complaints had been made directly to the board. The matter was taken up with the owners, who changed the management, and conditions have improved.

In addition, my blind constituent believed strongly that the lack of care of her husband led to his premature death. I raised that serious allegation with the health board and received a letter in reply at the beginning of December saying that an investigating officer would visit my constituent and discuss the issue. I appreciate that grave matters of that sort take time to be investigated. I was not surprised when two months went by and I received no further correspondence. At the beginning of March, when going through my files, I thought it was time I gently prodded to see what was happening.

I wrote in mild terms saying that I had been told at the beginning of December that the issue was being investigated, that I had heard nothing further and that I would like a progress report. I was astonished to receive a letter today, signed pp, for and on behalf of someone else, by somebody in an area unit—not by the chairman or secretary of the board, not by a chief medical officer and not by the area health board manager—saying in four or five lines, in effect, "We can confirm that an investigating officer saw your constituent who, following discussions, is now satisfied. Yours sincerely."

That is not acceptable to me. The health board should at least have had the decency and courtesy to let me know that the matter had been dealt with. I will willingly let the Minister have the letter, which I have not quoted. I am more than pleased that my constituent is satisfied, but the

issue seems to have been dealt with in a ham-fisted way. A serious allegation was raised by a Member of Parliament, who did not receive a proper explanation or even a courteous reply.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: If the hon. Gentleman will let me have the correspondence, I will investigate the matter. I confirm that when Members of Parliament write to health boards, I would expect them to receive a reply from the chairman or general manager of the board explaining the position. It is difficult for me, without knowing the circumstances of the case, to respond, but I apologise to the hon. Gentleman and will follow up the matter if he will give me the necessary correspondence.

Mr. Hughes: I thank the Minister. I have not yet dictated my reply; I was about to fire it off on my word processor, but then I realised that if I did that I would burn out the works, so I decided to wait until tomorrow and dictate it to my secretary. I shall be sending a letter to the chairman of Grampian health board, anyway.

During my investigations and my discussions with the board, I established that, although it has a responsibility to license private institutions and to monitor their general operation, it has absolutely no responsibility for health care in such institutions. The responsibility for health care clearly rests with individual GPs. Although they will of course do their best, we all know what a GP's life is like. Even when a patient is living at home, he or she—from now on I shall just say "he", because at this time of night I shall not remember to say "he or she" each time; I hope that the hon. Member for Moray (Mrs. Ewing) will not take it amiss—does not have time to look at his list and say, "I have not seen Mrs. Smith for a couple of months. I had better see how she is getting on." He has not time to visit private health-care establishments to check on the quality of care; it is up to the management to call in the doctor if it is thought necessary. I feel that there must be a closer check, whether through a quality control commission or through some other machinery.

The control of clinicians and clinical judgment is an issue with which we have wrestled for as long as we have had health legislation. Who controls the medical profession? By and large, it controls itself. I served for some time on the General Medical Council, as a lay member, and I am bound to say that its specialists do an extremely good job. My one quarrel with them is that they always seemed to deal with allegations of negligence less severely than with allegations of sexual misconduct. The GMC being an open forum, the press turned up in droves if there was an allegation of sexual misconduct; they filled the GMC press gallery. If the question was whether a doctor had gone out to visit a child at night, however, they were not so interested. I am not saying that the medical profession was uninterested in such cases, but it seemed to me that it was harder on allegations of sexual misconduct than on those of possible clinical misjudgment. Clinical misjudgment is dealt with, in one way or another, by the medical profession. Lay people find it difficult to deal with. There is a gap at present, which my hon. Friends and I have sought to fill in debates on various health Bills.

Let me cite another case from my constituency. Again I shall not name names, although the Minister will recognise the case from correspondence that he has received from me. My constituent suffered from obesity. She underwent a form of surgery whose medical description I can never pronounce. Essentially, it means that the stomach is closed up for a period, leading to a loss of appetite and consequent weight loss; the operation is then reversed and the patient should be able to function normally. In this case, however, the woman was extremely ill and could not keep food down. When she went to see the doctor and other hospial staff, they all said, "It is psychosomatic. Nothing has gone wrong with the operation; you should see a psychiatrist." That did not help her—indeed, the hospital did not provide a proper psychiatric counsellor. I am advised that that operation should not be done without pre-operative and post-operative psychological counselling so that people know what to expect. All the papers in the case confirm that.

12.45 am

My constituent went through sheer hell. Her weight went down to between 5½ and 6 stones. Luckily, she discovered by accident that the surgeon who had done the operation had moved to another hospital in the Grampian area, so she was able to go to see him. As soon as he heard her symptoms, he said that there was something very wrong. She was examined and it was discovered that the operation has not been done properly. Fortunately—or unfortunately—my constituent is now back to her previous gross weight. However, she went through a difficult period.

Such an investigation can go down only two roads. First, there is the pure investigation within the Health Service. If a patient is dissatisfied with that investigation, the only alternative is to take an action in court for negligence, and that is about the most difficult thing that can be done. First, an independent assessor is appointed. He is a doctor, and I make no complaint about that.

The doctor decided that my constituent was badly advised psychologically, that the operation was done wrongly, and that she should have been examined more carefully when the problem developed. But he still came to the conclusion that there had been no negligence. That very statement immediately cuts out the possibility of an action in court because in such a case the legal aid board in Scotland will not provide legal aid. A particular case sets out the test, but basically it says that there must be a reasonable chance of the action succeeding. As long as an independent medical assessor says that there is no negligence, there is no legal aid, and the case stops.

In that position, all that I could do was to write to the Minister and ask him to set up an independent inquiry because the same operation had gone wrong in other cases in other parts of Scotland. I do not criticise the Minister. He replied courteously and pointed out that this was a highly speculative operation which should be done only as a last resort with the greatest of care and preparation. But he would not set up an independent inquiry.

A patient who is dissatisfied with the Health Service and the in-house medical report and wants the matter to be looked at again has no means of doing so. There is no commission and the Minister will not have an inquiry. What on earth can happen next? This is only one example of dissatisfaction. There are many other examples.

Mr. Bill Walker: The hon. Gentleman will know that the Health Service Commissioner investigates all areas other than clinical judgments. I accept that he cannot comment on that aspect. I spent some years as a member of the Select Committee on the Parliamentary

[Mr. Bill Walker]

Commissioner for Administration and aspects of the case described by the hon. Gentleman seem similar to cases that have come before the Health Service Commissioner, have gone to the Select Committee and have been dealt with in a way with which the hon. Gentleman would be pleased. That is a course that the hon. Gentleman should consider because, if nothing else, the Health Service Commissioner will look at the handling of the administrative aspects of the case and if there has been any maladministration it could well form a ground on which his constituent could decide whether to take action.

Mr. Hughes: I appreciate that the hon. Gentleman is intending to be helpful. I shall certainly look again at the case papers. However, this matter should not go to the Health Service Commission for Scotland because it is outwith its remit. I certainly would not want to give a constituent hope. I do not believe that one should simply palm off a constituent by saying that one is going to send on his complaint to a certain place, and so get rid of the problem. I shall see whether there is a possibility of sending it.

I am sure that all hon. Members could quote other examples involving clinical care, as I could. We should look at this matter. The new clause states that one of the commission's responsibilities would be

"To investigate complaints from patients in regard to the Health Service, and take such action as seems appropriate."

That would cover the possibility of looking at clinical judgment. I would be prepared to allow the medical profession to take part in such an exercise, act as monitor and referee and give guidance.

However, there is a big gap at present. The gap between the perception of patients about how their complaints are examined and the reality of what happens is likely to get wider because the privatisation of the Health Service is moving apace, to the extent that before legislation is passed health boards are examining services which they want to put out to tender.

It is grossly wrong for Grampian health board to be looking at the possibility of a new 60-bed unit which is being built and should be open already. It is to be open temporarily to tide the health board over while it deals with a clinical problem. The full clinical care, from beginning to end, in that unit is to be put out to private tender. Apparently, the board is to consider an in-house offer. I do not know how there can be an in-house offer when there are no consultant psychiatrists, consultant geriatricians, nurses or managers in place, so I do not know how there can be the possibility of an in-house team when there is no in-house team to put in a tender.

My hon. Friend the Member for Aberdeen, South (Mr. Doran) and I went to see the chairman of the Grampian health board, Mr. Kyle. I expected the chief administrative medical officer to be there, not the unit manager. I found that offensive. It was clear that the discussion was driven by the unit manager. Even more impertinent was the fact that one functionary, a paid employee of the health board, not a board member—I could take it from a board member—had the temerity to criticise my hon. Friend and me in public for daring to question the health board decisions before they had been taken. In other words, Members of Parliament are supposed to wait until decisions are taken by bureaucrats, or even the board, and are then brought into consultation. That is quite unacceptable, and that has been made plain to the health boards.

Entire hospitals, as full separate units, will be handed over to private enterprise, with no mechanism for checking what goes on. If the new unit goes over entirely to a private company, who will be responsible for the medical treatment and conduct within the new unit? Will it be a parallel position to that of the private nursing homes that I mentioned earlier? They are licensed by the boards, which have overall responsibility to ensure that they are run reasonably well, but the patients' clinical care will not be the health boards' responsibility.

The Minister must address himself to that issue. If the whole exercise, from consultants to nurses, is done by a private company, who will have ultimate responsibility for the health of the patients and ensuring that their clinical treatment is met absolutely? I would prefer it if none of the new clause was necessary, although there are gaps here and there that should be closed, even within the Health Service, as a matter of public administration. We must look at this issue clearly. A quality control commission would be worthwhile.

Although my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Cathcart (Mr. Maxton) may not have every dot and comma right, the concept is worth pursuing because the Health Service is important. I shall go even as far as to say that, although I do not like large numbers of them, there is a place for business men on the area health boards.

However, the best way to achieve a public Health Service in the best tradition of looking after patients must involve the public in the widest sense. That involvement is shrinking each year and the Health Service is becoming more specialist, both in clinical and managerial areas, which is bad for the development of health care. A quality control commission would go a long way towards mitigating the effects of present practice until such time as we could restore the NHS to the full public ownership, full public participation and full public provision that the people want.

Mr. Thomas McAvoy (Glasgow, Rutherglen): I am aware of the late hour, but I have waited for some time to be called to speak and I hope that my tired and weary hon. Friends will bear with me. They will be even more weary by the time I finish.

A quality control commission for the National Health Service in Scotland would be invaluable, especially as its members would be appointed after consultation with a wide spread of Scottish opinion. It would play a vital role in establishing the standards to be met by health boards. My constituency would provide such a commission with just the circumstances in which to set standards to be met by the health board. The conduct of Greater Glasgow health board in its secret negotiations with Takare plc, involving the privatisation of care for the elderly, has been nothing less than disgraceful.

The necessity for a local geriatric hospital has been recognised by health boards for a number of years. It is intolerable that residents of Cambuslang and Rutherglen should have to go to Cleland hospital for geriatric services. There is considerable difficulty and expense for visiting relatives. A more convenient location would ease the problem, with the added bonus for both patients and

relatives of additional visits because they would be easier to undertake. It is a reflection on Greater Glasgow health board that that indisputable need was not made a priority.

I am aware that the health board had, and still has, difficulties with capital and revenue funding, but the need in Cambuslang and Rutherglen is longstanding and should have been dealt with. I am sure that a quality control commission would ask the health board why, if it was committed to providing care for the elderly in Cambuslang and Rutherglen, it initiated discussions with Takare plc.

I wish to quote from an extract from the Greater Glasgow health board report of its annual meeting with the south east local health council on Thursday 1 May 1986. Mr. Macquaker, the then chairman of the board, "revealed that the Final Cost Limit, £7,845,500 had been approved by the Scottish Home and Health Department." However, the report suggested that there might be a problem because of the revenue consequence of £1,208,445. Therefore, in May 1986 permission was given for the hospital and the capital costs were made available. Yet the board is proposing to take on the revenue costs of 180 beds with Takare plc, with a charge of at least £230 per week, and the signs are that the figure will be considerably higher. That amounts to more than £2 million of revenue at just that one location. Although the board said four years ago that it could not afford £1·2 million, it is giving over £2 million to Takare.

I am

The behaviour of the board should be scrutinised carefully. I am a strong supporter of a quality control commission which would subject the board to a statutory examination of its activities. In its own documents about the proposed privatisation of elderly care at Rutherglen, the board stated that there should be consultation with the local regional council. Yet no attempt was made to consult the regional council, as the major provider of other aspects of care for the elderly, about Takare. That goes against the board's own policy and is an indication——

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I want to be clear about this. Is the hon. Gentleman saying, as the constituency Member for Rutherglen, that he is opposed to a new facility being provided for elderly people in his constituency at no capital cost to Greater Glasgow health board and at less revenue cost than it would cost the board to provide those facilities, even if it was prepared to make the capital available? Is that what the hon. Gentleman is saying?

Mr. McAvoy: As the constituency Member, supported by every community organisation in Cambuslang and Rutherglen, and by all elected Members with the exception of the Liberals, I can tell the Minister that the whole community wants the health board to fulfil its commitment to provide a National Health Service hospital, based in Rutherglen and covering the catchment areas of Cambuslang and Rutherglen.

The Minister talked about finance. I shall deal with the financial aspects of the proposed deal with Takare. It is a bad financial deal for the public, according to information from the chairman of Takare. There are two aspects to my opposition. The whole community wants a National Health Service hospital; in addition, we maintain that this is a bad financial deal for the public.

There is ample scope for a quality control commission to ensure that, when services are put out to competitive tender, the standard of service is maintained. There is a complication. If a quality control commission was supervising the arrangements that might come into being through Takare, it would have to check whether the competitive tendering that resulted in Takare being awarded the contract was legal. No other company was involved. Where was the great principle of competitive tendering about which we hear so repetitively from the Minister? We are told that in the interests of the patient there should be competitive tendering. Not one other company was invited to be involved in the negotiations. The whole thing stinks.

Mr. McKelvey: My hon. Friend and the House will realise that Greater Glasgow health board is not within my constituency; nevertheless, I am an interested Member. I was appalled at the attitude of the board when we went to see it about the privatisation of the laboratory system. I have not seen anything like it unless we go back 30 years in industrial relations. The board was prepared to ride roughshod over the concerns of Members of Parliament and others. My hon. Friend is right. The one thing that might have brought the board into line was a body such as is proposed in the new clause. I have never seen such a Victorian attitude displayed by any authority for the past 30 years.

Mr. McAvoy: I entirely endorse what my hon. Friend said about the attitude of Greater Glasgow health board. In his intervention the Minister sounded like a parrot mouthing the words of Mr. Peterken. However, perhaps Mr. Peterken is the parrot repeating the Minister's words. I accept that the health board's attitude is disgraceful.

Paragraph (d) of new clause 2 allows the commission "to instruct the Health Board to take such action as they consider necessary" if such services are not maintained. That brings me to the standards of care operated by Takare that would come under the authority of a quality control commission.

I welcome and endorse the principle of moving frail and elderly people who do not need constant medical care out of hospitals. However, I have considerable doubts about what conditions will apply. In what condition would a resident have to be in order to be admitted to a Takare development? Home care environment is referred to in the Takare documentation, but that can mean different things to different people. I have visited Takare establishments at Preston, Chorley and Oldham. The matrons at those establishments confirmed that on average 75 per cent. of the residents were stroke patients and 75 per cent. were also incontinent.

Such conditions did not square with the board's statements about sheltered housing being suitable for the kind of resident in the Takare establishments. The board described the Takare model as nursing care—that might be a back-handed compliment to Takare. However, the care that I witnessed in Takare units goes far beyond what can be regarded as nursing care.

The type of patient that would be established at a Takare development at Rutherglen must be clarified. From what the matrons told me and from what I saw, there seems to be some confusion about that. There should be no confusion about the care of the elderly. We are here because of those people and they should be elevated to the highest position in society.

I visited the Takare developments as a lay person. I reported back that, as a lay person, I made no criticism of

[Mr. McAvoy]

the homes provided by Takare. However, I made it clear that I reserved my position on the application of medical and professional criteria.

I managed to get hold of a report of the Forth Valley health board. I think it came in a plain brown envelope. The health board sent a team of professionals to assess the Takare facilities. The report stated that commodes were kept in residents' and patients' rooms and that there were no en-suite toilet facilities. It stated that, as far as possible, the Forth Valley health board's nursing home inspection team was trying to discourage such practices in nursing homes.

The report states that bathing and toilet areas were rather remote from the main day rooms and were lacking in privacy. It stated that there were no showers and only relatively few assisted baths. It made the professional criticism that there was no structured attempt to introduce health promotion measures in the area. The report confirmed something that I recalled. It stated that there seemed to be a higher number of wheelchairs in use than expected. I recall my quandary as I pondered what kind of resident would benefit from such accommodation.

The report also referred to a strong smell of urine in several, but not all, of the units. The team could not ascertain the cause of the smell specifically. It stated that it may have been due to inadequate nurse-patient ratios. I mentioned that in my submission to the consultation process. The staff worked shifts and a professional view would have to be taken of the system to ensure that that care was the best for the elderly people.

The Forth Valley health board stated that there was no attempt at primary nursing or employing a key worker. As a result, most of the nursing care was task-oriented according to professional criteria, and medical records were poorly designed. It stated that there was no organised database, either current or historical, for the residents. However, the really amazing thing comes in the next sentence, which states:

"It is therefore recommended that the Board pursue more detailed discussions with Takare to determine and explore the viability of future joint ventures."

The logic of that escapes me.

I come now to one more sign of the highly political direction that is given to the boards by the Minister. Under para (e) of the new clause, the quality control commission would be well placed to investigate complaints from patients and to take action on them. I am sure that the quality control commission could play a major role in carrying out such investigations to ensure that the standards that have been established are being met by the health boards.

I am also sure that financial criteria would be a key element because we all want value for money, but let us have a close look at this financial involvement. I met an official of the board in September, who roughly outlined the financial arrangements round which the discussions with Takare had centred. When I went down to Takare, I met Mr. Keith Bradshaw, its chairman. Hon. Members might be interested to know that Takare's motto is, "Who cares wins". The House can make what it likes of that.

I spent about eight or nine hours talking to Mr. Bradshaw and his company. He was a lot more forthcoming with information than the board had been. He told me that at that point the discussions with the board had centred round the price of £375,000 for the land. When I pointed out that the district valuer would have to set the price of the land, Mr. Bradshaw said, "I know that, but that is the price round which all the discussions have centred." I asked how he could work out the deal if he did not know the price that he would be paying. He then told me that if the district valuer valued the land at more than £375,000, Greater Glasgow health board would finance the borrowing costs of the capital that would be required to make up the difference.

The Minister said that this is a good financial deal for the public, but the board is financing the purchase of its own land by a private company. That is what Mr. Keith Bradshaw said to me. I have it on record at two public meetings that were held in Cambuslang and Rutherglen when Mr. Cleary of the health board was present. I challenged the board to refute what I had said, but as no refutation was made, I hope that no one will suggest that what I am saying about my discussions with Mr. Bradshaw is untrue.

I shall give the House an example of where the quality control commission could crack down on financial standards. For every £100,000 over the discussion price of £375,000 that Takare would have to pay, the board would allow Takare to load £18,000 per year on to the total cost of the beds in the unit. The health board official told me that, in his opinion as an experienced person, the land might be sold for between £850,000 and £870,000. That is £500,000 more than the discussion price of £375,000. If the board allowed Takare to load £18,000 on to the total cost per unit for each £100,000 over the discussion price, and as £875,000 is £500,000 over the discussion price, we must multiply £18,000 per year by five, which means that £90,000 per year would be loaded on to the price of the beds for ever. Is that a good financial deal for the public? I do not think so.

That land was owned by the royal borough of Rutherglen. It was public land. The former town council sold it only on the basis that the site would be used for an NHS facility for the people of Cambuslang and Rutherglen. I do not accept that that is a good financial deal and nor do the people of Cambuslang and Rutherglen.

We also need the commission to oversee incestuous relationships such as are envisaged in that deal. The board would be the licensing authority for one of its main providers of service for the care of the elderly. Is that right and proper?

If that is good business for the boards, there is also another complication. The boards have stated clearly that if this private company ran into financial trouble and had to close the week after it opened, the board would simply buy the hospital back under the contract at the going market price. If the board has the money to buy back the hospital from Takare at the market price, why not use the capital to build an NHS hospital in the first place? It is clear to me that the board is politically desperate to go ahead with the deal.

1.15 am

The people of Cambuslang and Rutherglen, and, indeed, the whole of south Glasgow, are affected not only by the Bill but by serious proposals relating to services at Victoria infirmary. They are causing a great deal of worry in our area. It is wrong that people should be worried about health.

Every time that I go to a meeting with Greater Glasgow health board, I leave feeling that I have been through 15 rounds with a political opponent. That was echoed by my hon. Friend the Member for Kilmarnock and Loudoun (Mr. McKelvey). The boards are supposed to represent, reflect and work for the good of the public. Nobody should leave a meeting with one of them feeling that way. I would make the same criticism if Conservative Members left a meeting with their Labour health board feeling that they had gone through 15 rounds. That would also be wrong. It has happened more than once with Greater Glasgow health board. But a new day is dawning and each opinion poll that is published makes that clear.

In its haste to push the deal through, the board has run into a few problems with the trading conditions for the sale of the land. There is no doubt that in the absence of a quality control commission, the Minister can do practically whatever he wants. Under his political direction, his political puppets on health boards throughout Scotland and certainly in Glasgow are jumping to his tune.

A quality control commission would have asked Greater Glasgow health board several questions. Why was no company other than Takare involved? Why was a ridiculous price for the land set at £350,000 in negotiations with Takare? Why should the board finance the purchase of its own land? Why was no account taken of the responses to the consultation process, which were overwhelmingly against the proposal?

Mr. Bill Walker: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. McAvoy: I shall make one more point and then I shall give way. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will appreciate the point that I am about to make. The only people who welcomed the proposal in the whole of Cambuslang and Rutherglen were not the local Conservative association, but, lo and behold, the local Liberal association. It saw the chance to obtain a bit of kudos, but its welcome backfired. It will pay the price at the regional elections in May.

Mr. Walker: The hon. Gentleman has presented an interesting financial scenario. Does he think that it could properly be investigated by a body that already exists—the Public Accounts Committee of the House?

Mr. McAvoy: I shall certainly consider that suggestion. I shall consult on it. I assure the Minister that the battle is not over. There is a long way to go yet.

The quality commission would also ask why the board was willing to subsidise a private company to purchase its own land. If it is willing to buy the development back if the company collapses, why not use that money to build a hospital?

I am sure that a quality control commission would do a job for the vulnerable and elderly in my constituency by ensuring the highest standards of care for a generation which deserves them.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I apologise for intervening again. I intervened earlier but the hon. Gentleman did not answer my question directly. I want to be clear about what he wants me to do. Does he argue that the Takare proposal, which will provide a facility for the elderly in his constituency, should not go ahead? Does he want that facility to be provided? Will he answer yes or no?

Mr. McAvoy: If the Minister is asking me what I should like, I should accept his resignation across the Table. I have already made it plain that my community wants an NHS hospital. He can release finance for that to go ahead.

Mr. McCartney: As an English Member, I apologise to my Scottish colleagues for intervening in the debate. I have listened with interest. Yesterday I received an anonymous letter from a representative of private care owners in my area asking me to look into an allegation that a company called Takare was about to get a contract from Wigan health authority, without tendering, to remove mentally ill patients from Billinge hospital in my constituency. I have been asked to investigate why the health authority is involved with a company in relation to such important services without it tendering or consulting. I had no knowledge of the company until this evening when my hon. Friend said that it was alive and well in the Greater Glasgow health board area. It may have some considerable friends at court. Perhaps we can consult about the matter later this morning.

Mr. McAvoy: My hon. Friend's intervention confirms that there is an organised pattern to the company's activities and that arouses concern.

Mr. Harry Ewing (Falkirk, East): Is my hon. Friend aware that at the beginning of his speech the Minister asked whether my hon. Friend was in favour of this facility at no cost to public funds, but after my hon. Friend had given the cost to public funds the Minister dropped that part of his question? It is significant that the Minister changed his question.

Mr. McAvoy: That was noticeable and I am grateful to my hon. Friend for pointing it out. The Minister is blackmailing Cambuslang and Rutherglen in exchange for future facilities. We know the type of facility on offer. There is no guarantee about what type of service there will be or for how long it would be there. We know the NHS in Cambuslang and Rutherglen. Those are the standards and the hospitals that we want. I serve notice on the Minister that the battle is not over.

Sir David Steel (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale): Without in any way endorsing the details of the new clause, I broadly support its intention, which is to insert in the Bill some measure of concern about the future quality of our NHS in Scotland. I am wholly in sympathy with that objective.

Inevitably, each hon. Member who has participated has spoken about the effect on the quality of the service in his or her area and I shall be no different. It is well known that in the Borders we have the good fortune to have a new district general hospital of which we are proud, although it came 10 years after the date when it was first supposed to be completed. As it is the general view in our area that we have a good NHS, there is great concern that the Government have unnecessarily upset the morale, structure and funding of that service.

Although many representations have been made to the Minister since the Government issued the original consultative paper, his reaction has always been that people do not understand our proposals, give them time, it is all part of a propaganda campaign by the British Medical Association and if only they will study our proposals, listen to our speeches and consult, they will agree. All I can say is that at the end of the process, having

[Sir David Steel]

listened to all the speeches and having had a visit from the new business chief executive of the NHS in Scotland, those who work in the service are as worried as they were at the beginning.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *indicated dissent.*

Sir David Steel: It is no good the Minister shaking his head. On Sunday afternoon my hon. Friend the Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood) and I were summoned to a meeting by a representative collection of NHS consultants, administrators, GPs and nursing staff. Their overriding message was that they were deeply concerned that the Bill would lead to the fragmentation of an otherwise wholly accepted, well integrated NHS. It is no good the Minister shaking his head. I was at the meeting and he was not.

Mr. Forsyth: I take the point that the right hon. Gentleman has made about what happened at his meeting, but he said that there was as much concern now as there was at the beginning. That cannot be true, because even the BMA has withdrawn the allegation that it made that patients would not be able to get the drugs that they required because of the proposals. To date I have had 28 expressions of interest from doctors who wish to become budget holders. A number of hospitals—[HON. MEMBERS: "How many? Name them."] Four hospitals have shown an interest in self-governing status. The right hon. Gentleman is wrong to suggest that there is the same concern now as there was at the beginning.

Sir David Steel: I was telling the Minister about the mood of medical opinion in the Borders area. I am talking not about public opinion generally, but about the experience in the Borders, where there is a good Health Service, which we wish to retain as it is.

The Minister says that practices have applied for budgetary status and that hospitals have applied for opting-out, but I challenge him to say whether any of them is in the Borders. I am pretty certain that they are not. Silence speaks more loudly on this occasion.

Mr. Bill Walker *rose——*

Sir David Steel: The hon. Gentleman may have flown over my constituency in Concorde, but I trust that he will allow me not to give way for the moment. I have only just started and I want to spell out some of the anxieties of people in the Borders, since the Minister doubts me. He will have a chance to reply to the debate.

First, all hon. Members who represent Scottish constituencies know that there is no question but that there has always been a different ethos in the National Health Service in Scotland from that south of the border. General practitioners in my area find that as people come from the south, either for employment or to retire, they ask to go on to a private practice list. The GPs look at them and say, "What on earth are you talking about? We don't do private practice". They say that generally in that part of Scotland everyone is treated the same. Those people may have come from a part of England where it is different, but we do not do that in Scotland. Gradually people realise that they can get decent health care without getting involved with private medicine. The medical profession expects that to continue in Scotland. The Bill is driving a coach and horses through that principle.

GPs point out that the Government have allowed a 5 per cent. increase in the cost of supplies and services in the current year, but that inflation in those areas is about 8 per cent. Therefore, there is a cut in the health board budget. The board has not been fully compensated for the funding of pay awards and for the regrading exercise, which has been a long, tedious and time-consuming exercise.

The result is that for the coming year the local area health board is £500,000 short of its budget. It has had to look around for savings to meet that shortfall. The first thing that it is proposing to do—it will cause an almighty row—is to renege on the undertakings which it gave about reopening the cottage hospitals at Selkirk and at Galashiels. That will cause a public outcry. It is no good the Minister saying that there are no cuts in the Health Service, because people can see with their own eyes that there is a difference between the service that the public expects and what it will get because of the shortfall in funding.

When the chief executive met much the same group that I met—or at any rate some of the consultants—he was asked about the future of the gastroenterology service in the Borders. Could he guarantee that it would continue? He said that the service could go if it proved non-competitive. What does that mean? As far as we can make out, it means that if a particular specialty, at present provided as part of a comprehensive Health Service in the Borders region, does not pay its way in accounting terms because there are not enough patients, that specialty might be closed and the patients transferred to Edinburgh. From an accountants' point of view, sitting in St. Andrew's house, that might make sense.

That brings me back to the whole question of the quality of the Health Service. What about patients who have to make a journey of 50 or 60 miles to hospital to be treated? What about their relatives? What about the quality of the service that they have come to expect? It cannot be an accounting exercise; it cannot be thought of just in terms of pounds, shillings and pence, as the Government propose.

Last year the orthopaedic service in the Borders general hospital was estimated to cost £30,000. The outturn was £69,000—more than double. These were mainly hip and knee joint operations. The increase in the demand for such operations has been colossal throughout the last decade or so. Ten years ago hip operations were rare; it was pioneering work. The elderly now expect such an operation to be provided. It is regarded as a facility. As the outturn was £69,000, the health board, due to its straitened budget, said to the hospital, "Next year you must budget for £48,000." If that is not a cut, what is?

1.30 am

In the Government's plans for the Health Service great stress is laid—probably inevitably; I do not quarrel about it—on computerisation. The vaccination programme in the Borders has been computerised. However, general practitioners have been told that the programme must be stopped for nine months because the cost of the vaccine cannot be afforded. What sense does it make to set up a sophisticated programme and then to say that it cannot be used because the vaccine cannot be afforded?

A consultant told me that she had paid out of her own pocket the £100 that was necessary to buy a nebuliser for an elderly patient who could thus be allowed to go home, thereby releasing a badly needed hospital bed in an elderly patient unit. No money was available for that small item of equipment.

These are not fictitious pieces of propaganda, dreamt up by a central organisation; they are complaints by people who are operating the service in the way that the public expect it to be operated. No general practitioner in the Borders wants to move to a system under which he has to limit his practice budget. At the end of a long meeting last Sunday it was said that that was not what any of them had gone into medicine for.

If the Government were to ask people whether they would be prepared to pay more for the Health Service, the answer would be yes. The Government believe that, because expenditure on the National Health Service has inevitably increased, and will inevitably increase, no matter which party is in power, it must be cut, and that more and more of that expenditure should be borne by the private sector. The Government are changing the National Health Service into a national health business. That is not what is wanted.

If we cannot impede the Bill's progress, at least we should insist that some sort of external quality control commission should be added to the new system so that it can assess what facilities the National Health Service is failing to provide. That is what people want to know. The Government ought to remember that this is a service, not a private enterprise profit-making organisation. If they did, they would get back on the right tracks.

Mr. Harry Ewing: I detect some unrest among hon. Members. It is not something for which I apologise. The fact that the debate has continued into the early hours of the morning reflects the concern of Scottish Members of Parliament—particularly on this side of the House—about the direction in which the National Health Service is moving and has moved in Scotland, particularly since the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth) became Minister with responsibility for health in the Scottish Office.

Over the past two or three years, one of the saddest features of the Health Service in Scotland has been the way in which, by and large, we have moved from a consensus approach to confrontation. The one thing that is absolutely certain is that this is doing the Health Service, those who work in it and in particular those who use it, no good at all.

The right hon. Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Sir D. Steel) referred to the Borders district general hospital. I was accompanied by the right hon. Gentleman when, as Health Minister, I went to purchase the cricket ground on which that hospital now stands. We had tremendous problems not only with the purchase of the land but with a certain Professor Trevor-Roper, about whom I still have nightmares.

Sir David Steel: He is now a Lord.

Mr. Ewing: Yes, he is now in another place. I remember well all the restrictions that he placed on the building of the Borders district general hospital.

I mention that only as a means of getting back to a point made by the hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker)—the hospital building programme. It is the only point on which I shall take the hon. Gentleman up. It is the very nature of politics that progammes started under one Government are continued and completed by a succeeding Government. *[Laughter.]* The hon. Member for Tayside, North is laughing. I hope that he will contain himself for a moment.

During the period of office of the 1974-79 Labour Government Monklands district general hospital and Inverclyde royal hospital were opened. North Ayrshire district general hospital could have been opened, but because of a serious defect in the ventilation system of the operating theatres we refused to accept it from the contractors. The biochemistry unit at Glasgow royal infirmary was opened during that period, and the foundations for the major reconstruction at Stirling royal infirmary were laid. The massive expansion at Raigmore hospital at Inverness was begun during the period of the 1974-79 Labour Government. A host of projects that had been started by the hon. Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) were picked up first by my hon. Friend the Member for Aberdeen, North (Mr. Hughes), then by the late Frank McElhone, and then by me. Likewise, projects that had been started by me were picked up by Sir Russell Fairgrieve. The projects that were announced by the hon. Member for Stirling last week will not be opened officially by him; the official opening will be carried out by my hon. Friend the Member for Strathkelvin and Bearsden (Mr. Galbraith). That is in the nature of hospital building.

Mr. Bill Walker: I hope that the hon. Gentleman did not get the impression that I was suggesting that there had been no programmes during the period of the Labour Government. That would have been nonsense. I was making the point that the Labour Government, at the behest of the IMF, had to make savage cuts in their capital spending programme. If the hon. Gentleman is saying that that did not happen, he is contradicting the record.

Mr. Ewing: The hon. Gentleman was not in the House at that time. Let me tell him that at no time—even when the Labour Government went to the IMF—was any Scottish hospital or health centre that was under construction restricted or delayed. If the hon. Gentleman examines the record he will find that my comments are absolutely accurate. The Minister mentions Health Service expenditure from time to time. Sometimes politicians distort the record—I suppose that I am as good at it as anyone else—but if Government Ministers check the record they will find that throughout very difficult times during the period of the Labour Government there was constant growth of 1 per cent. in real terms. All this talk about Health Service spending being cut is rubbish.

But that is not what the new clause is about. I can sense that you are becoming a bit concerned, Madam Deputy Speaker. I am astonished that the Minister seems to be poised to resist the new clause. I wish that this measure were not necessary. The hon. Member for Dumfries has been here throughout the debate, so I do not complain because he is not here at the moment. If he were in the Chamber, he would confirm what happened when he reorganised the Health Service. Three wings—the hospital board wing; the preventive medicine side, which was run not by the Health Service but by the education authorities; and the family practitioner wing—were brought together into a co-ordinated Health Service. That was done by

[Mr. Ewing]

agreement on the Floor of the House, with little whipping on the legislation. The treatment of health care in Scotland occurred through the ages.

The Minister announced last week the setting up of a body above the health boards in order, he said, to impose the Government's policy on them. If that is the purpose of that body, it must be counterbalanced. That would be done by the very body which the new clause would set up. There must be a counterbalance for patients. If one body acts on the Minister's behalf and imposes Government policies where sometimes they would be resisted by health boards, there must be a consumer voice. It would be in the quality control commission that is suggested in the new clause, as amended by the amendment tabled by the hon. Member for Moray (Mrs. Ewing).

I have listened with great interest to hon. Members who have waxed eloquent about the standard of health care in their constituencies. I cannot do the same, but that is not a criticism of the doctors, consultants, nurses or anybody else who works in Falkirk royal infirmary. The problem is the net result of the constant transfer of facilities and services from Falkirk royal infirmary to sustain Stirling royal infirmary in the Minister's constituency. *[Laughter.]* The Minister laughs, but let us see how he laughs off my next remarks.

The ear, nose and throat department was transferred from Falkirk royal infirmary to sustain Stirling royal infirmary. My constituents have to travel many miles from their villages to see their children who are having their tonsils removed or to see their old folk when they are having eye operations. That must be measured in terms of quality control. The quality of health care that my constituents have to put up with must be measured against the inconvenience and trouble to which they have been put because the department has been moved 15 miles along the road to Stirling royal infirmary.

Hospitals are accredited for training purposes by the royal colleges. Stirling royal infirmary is not recognised as a training hospital for consultant anaesthetists because it does not carry out the range of anaesthetic work necessary for people to qualify. The Forth Valley health board is trying to correct the problem, not by getting more patients into Stirling royal infirmary—which could be done—but by transferring work from Falkirk royal infirmary to provide the necessary range at Stirling royal infirmary. Before we know what is going on, facilities will be transferred to Falkirk and our hospital will be downgraded.

My hon. Friend the Member for Falkirk, West (Mr. Canavan) has to tolerate such problems. They should be measured by a quality control commission. Such a commission would be able to prove that we could get more patients into Stirling royal infirmary. I have an interest in that hospital, too, and I have a high regard for it. I had close contacts with it during my 13 years as a Member of Parliament representing a constituency that includes Stirling.

1.45 am

The hon. Member for Dumfries referred to a survey that the Minister commissioned about a year ago, yet the Minister has referred to that survey only once. It covered a host of experience of patients in our hospitals. It covered what they thought of meals, of visiting hours and of the facilities available. One aspect of that survey—the number of patients being referred to hospitals outside their health board area—was very interesting. In each of the health board areas in Scotland, the average was 3 per cent. to 5 per cent. That can be accounted for easily by the need to refer to the specialist centres. No one would argue that we should have such specialist centres in every health board area, but in the Forth Valley health board area the figure was 17 per cent.

The Minister knows better than I do that general practitioners in the landward area, which is the western part of the Forth Valley health board's area—in the Minister's constituency—are referring patients to Edinburgh and Glasgow for general examinations which should be carried out at Stirling royal infirmary. Any treatment arising from those general examinations should also be performed at Stirling royal infirmary. We are talking about measuring quality of service to patients, and about the quality of health care that should be provided to the community. We must take into account whether such health care is there at all. For many years in Falkirk, we have enjoyed such health care provided expertly by good people at Falkirk and District royal infirmary.

I tell the Minister, in the kindest possible way, that we are in no mood to give up that care lightly. The Forth Valley health board's option appraisal is still to be published and the Minister has, in many ways, pre-empted that option appraisal by references to facilities at Stirling royal infirmary, which we shall not debate tonight, but will keep for another time. However, if there is any suggestion that Falkirk and District royal infirmary should be downgraded and that more services should be transferred, thus reducing the service to our people, the Minister will have a fight on his hands.

I found the speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Rutherglen (Mr. McAvoy) very disturbing. I cannot for the life of me think how a self-respecting Minister of any political party could go within 10 miles of a deal such as the one my hon. Friend explained to the House tonight. Even without this debate and even without the new clause on which to base it, my hon. Friend's speech could have stood on its own. He raised a very serious issue. The hon. Member for Tayside, North talks about the Public Accounts Committee examining the matter far better than it would have been examined by the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs. The issue that my hon. Friend the Member for Rutherglen raised is so serious—I do not say this lightly and I am not given to calling for public inquiries—as to require the closest public examination.

Quality control is about the availability of a service. If a service is not available or if it is taken away, we would examine that closely. That is why I shall support my hon. Friends in the Lobby tonight.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: We have had a long debate and it may be for the convenience of the House if I intervene now.

The hon. Member for Glasgow, Cathcart (Mr. Maxton) some hours ago made a number of points when moving the new clause. I echo the remarks of the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood). I too was puzzled by the organisations that the hon. Member for Cathcart suggested should be consulted about the membership of the proposed body. He did not mention the Royal College of Nursing, the British Medical

Association and other professional bodies. That was surprising, given his concern about the Health Service. It was revealing about his real intentions.

I will not respond to all the points that the hon. Member for Cathcart made about competitive tendering, which he insisted on calling privatisation, despite the fact that he acknowledged that three quarters of the contracts had been awarded in-house. I noted his comments about standards. If he was critical of standards, they cannot have been the standards of specification in the contracts. He must have been referring to the execution of the contracts, and I took that to be an attack on the performance of the in-house teams.

The hon. Gentleman said that fines were being levied in respect of some contracts. Given that the whole process of competitive tendering is about defining the level of service required, ensuring that that service is subsequently delivered and implementing the procedures for fining private contractors where they fall below standard, I should have thought that that met the requirements that the hon. Gentleman was putting forward in the new clause for the proper policing of standards in the NHS.

It is not possible to impose fines and take sanctions where contracts are held in-house, which is in by far the majority of cases, but in the light of the hon. Gentleman's remarks I will look again at the procedures that are in place for policing the standards of performance of in-house contracts and the activities of the boards in seeing that that which was promised when the contract was awarded is delivered.

I found it remarkable that in the history that the hon. Member for Cathcart gave of the process by which competitive tendering was embarked on in Scotland at no point did he say that nearly £60 million had been released as additional resources for health boards.

Mr. Brian Wilson (Cunninghame, North): Nobody believes it.

Mr. Forsyth: I answered a parliamentary question—it is available in the Library—which set out all the additional services that the boards had bought with the savings resulting from that process. Simply saying "Nobody believes it" is not a way of substituting for the facts.

My hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro), in an excellent contribution—one of the few which addressed the issue in the new clause—highlighted the fact that the new clause would result in substantial additional costs for the NHS, money that would be diverted from patient care. It could be financed only at the expense of less progress being made on reducing waiting lists and not extending the range and quality of treatment available to patients.

As my hon. Friend pointed out, the whole point of the White Paper proposals and the Bill is to try to bring about a separation between the role of health boards as purchasers and as providers. The role of ensuring the highest standards of quality and policing the quality of service is that of the health boards. The idea that we should set up a new organisation to take over the role of health boards is extraordinary, a point that was also made by my hon. Friend the Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker).

As my hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries said, the NHS today in Scotland is better than it was a year ago, and I agree with him that in a year from now it will be better still, particularly as a result of this measure becoming law.

The hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire, in an intriguing split with his right hon. Friend the Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Sir D. Steel), informed us that his constituency in the Borders had an excellent health board and nothing to complain about. In fact, he interrupted to say, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." Apologies for the grammar, but I agree with the hon. Gentleman. He is right: the Borders has a brand-new hospital and an excellent Health Service. Nevertheless, his right hon. Friend subsequently listed a series of complaints.

My hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries rightly spoke of the importance of dialysis being available within easy travelling distance of patients, while at the same time acknowledging the difficulties of providing such facilities in rural areas. I am happy to assure my hon. Friend that we are keen for progress to be made in that regard. Unlike Opposition Members, we feel that, if it is possible to provide them more cheaply by involving the private sector, it should be done: we have no ideological baggage to prevent us from acting in the interests of patients. The hon. Member for Glasgow, Rutherglen (Mr. McAvoy) smiles. *[Interruption.]* I will deal with his allegations in a moment, but let me ask him for the third time whether he is asking me to prevent Takare from providing that facility in his constituency.

Mr. McAvoy: Let me repeat for the third time what I said. I, as Member of Parliament, and the whole community of Cambuslang and Rutherglen do not want the deal, because of the lack of principle and because of the financial details. Will the Minister confirm, for the first time tonight, what I have said about the financial details of the proposed deal with Takare or will he take this opportunity to tell us the details, in the interests of truth?

Mr. Forsyth: What I will say is that the Greater Glasgow health board's proposals were examined in detail by my officials, who believe that they represent value for money. They required the approval of the Treasury, which —after examining them in detail—is also satisfied that they represent value for money. The hon. Gentleman has made a series of allegations which I shall certainly pursue, but I take if from what he has said that he does not wish to see the Takare facility in his constituency.

The hon Member for Moray (Mrs. Ewing) made a number of points, but she was particularly worried about a reduction in the number of local health councils. The Bill provides for the provision of more than one health council where it is considered necessary, and when the Grampian health board's proposals are presented we shall bear her views in mind.

The hon. Member for Aberdeen, North (Mr. Hughes), who made the same point about health councils, very fairly explained the divergence of view between him and the hon. Member for Strathkelvin and Bearsden (Mr. Galbraith). He mentioned the work of the Mental Welfare Commission. May I add that we also have the Scottish Hospital Advisory Service, the Health Service Commissioner and a number of other agencies, all of which would provide for the functions proposed in the new clause.

The right hon. Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale spoke of the difficulties with his orthopaedic service. I am not familiar with the budget, but it may have

[Mr. Forsyth]

been inflated by the waiting list initiative which has resulted in a considerable reduction. In the Borders, with a new hospital, the waiting list is more or less at base level.

The right hon. Gentleman's example of the nebuliser is precisely the kind of thing that the reforms are designed to change. He explained the frustration of doctors who found that for the sake of £100 they could not get a patient out of hospital. That is ridiculous. The principles of money following the patient and the devolution of management responsibility at hospital level are designed to cut precisely the kind of red tape about which the right hon. Gentleman was complaining.

2 am

The hon. Member for Falkirk, East (Mr. Ewing) said that one Government may commission a hospital but the credit for it will be taken by the Government in power when it is built. This Government have presided over the biggest capital investment programme in the history of the Health Service. The Labour Government cut the hospital building programme. In reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Tayside, North, the hon. Gentleman said that no project that was being built was delayed. What he did not mention was all the projects which were not started and which were delayed because of the Labour Government's incompetence.

Mr. Harry Ewing: Has the Minister got a list of those projects?

Mr. Forsyth: If the hon. Gentleman puts down a parliamentary question, I shall happily reply to it.

Mr. Ewing: Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Forsyth: I have covered the point. If the hon. Gentleman is sure of his position, he should put down a parliamentary question and I shall answer it.

Mr. Ewing: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. The Minister said that there was a list of projects that were stopped or were not started. I asked the Minister for the list and you clearly heard him say that he did not have one. Is that misleading the House or is it not?

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): The Chair hears a number of things during debates, but there has been no breach of our Standing Orders.

Mr. Forsyth: If the hon. Gentleman has found a way of cutting the hospital building programme and maintaining its progress, I would be interested to hear about it because it would be useful not only for me but for other Ministers with responsibility for health.

Mr. Maxton: I thought that the Minister was about to finish. Opposition Members would be interested to have the names of the four hospitals in Scotland that have expressed an interest in opting out.

Mr. Forsyth: I am sure that the hon. Gentleman would like to have the names of those four hospitals and no doubt in due course those names will be available to him.

Mr. Maxton: When?

Mr. Forsyth: In due course, when those who have expressed an interest are content to do so.

Mr. George Foulkes (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley): Will the Minister give way on that point?

Mr. Forsyth: Finally——

Mr. Foulkes *rose*——

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. The Minister is not giving way.

Mr. Forsyth: The hon. Member for Falkirk, East made a serious point about the facilities at Falkirk and Stirling. I assure him that it is central to the aims of our White Paper and to the Bill that health boards should fulfil their function to ensure that services are available to communities which reflect their needs. That is what they have to make a judgment on. I agree that basic essential services should be available to patients within reasonable travelling distance. I am well aware of the distances that people have to travel to Stirling royal infirmary and to Falkirk. Therefore, the hon. Gentleman would do well to see what emerges from the health board before jumping to conclusions.

For those reasons, I suggest that the hon. Member for Cathcart should withdraw his new clause.

Mr. Kirkwood: I certainly have no intention of detaining the House for any longer than I can help. However, the Minister's speech deserves some response.

If the thrust of the new clause is, as I understand it, to try to establish some new standards of quality control in the Health Service, it must be of some interest to the House to know exactly what the response has been to the Bill's proposals from general practitioners who have expressed an interest in the GP budget-holding facility. More importantly, and more immediately, it is important to know a bit more about the details of the hospitals which have expressed an interest—that is all that they can do at present—in the Bill's provisions.

If there were sensible guarantees about the quality of the service that could be provided under the Bill's terms, more hospitals in particular, as well as general practitioners, would be expressing an interest in the proposals for opting out or moving towards self-governing status. It is important for the rest of the debate to know a bit more about the types of hospital which have been expressing an interest in the Bill's provisions so that we can judge whether the new clause is necessary.

The competitive and free-market thrust of the Bill, certainly where it relates to rural areas, requires a cast-iron guarantee of quality assurance if the Bill is to be put on the statute book. If the Minister is not prepared to accept the new clause, he and the Government should be prepared to accept new clause 16. The suggestions it contains have come from the Royal College of Nursing, which set out alternative proposals for advisory boards. In principle, they would achieve the same end as new clause 2 and reflect the interests of health professionals a bit better than that new clause 2 and, in principle, I support them.

The Government are determined to proceed with this new internal market procedure and moving towards more commercial interests being introduced into the National Health Service. I listened carefully to the speech of the hon. Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) and he certainly did not convince me that the health care provision in Dumfries and the Borders requires a new competitive system. If the Health Service in the Borders area is divided into a system of providers, with National

Health Service trusts and opted-out hospitals on one side and health board acquirals, the basis of contracts and the edifice of bureaucracy which that would spawn would not be worth a candle. The improvements, if any, that would be effected would not be worth having. That is true of competitive tendering. The costs involved for a board the size of the Borders health board for doing the specifications for the contracts do not measure up to the savings that can be made.

Therefore, the Minister is unjustified in saying that there is a difference of opinion between my right hon. Friend the Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Sir D. Steel) and me. We both say that the system in place for administering health care in the Borders is perfectly adequate and needs just a little extra money, not a vast amount, to make the present system work that much more smoothly. If the Minister insists on inflicting this new edifice of a free market on rural areas, he risks losing good will, prejudicing staff morale and losing the integration and co-operation between health professionals—and all for the ideological purpose of installing and instituting a free market system.

A system of quality control will be necessary in rural areas if the Bill is passed. For the reasons mentioned by the hon. Member for Dumfries, the only way to avoid the need for the new clause would be to remove the provision in the Bill. The Minister would have the co-operation and agreement of the health professionals in the Borders if he stepped back from full implementation of the Bill and instead introduced a system of pilot studies, on a selective basis over a period, so that we could assess the results. The new clause would not then be necessary. However, if the Minister insists on sticking to the whole system proposed in the Bill, it is essential, especially in rural areas, that there be some system to guarantee quality control.

If the Minister is not prepared to accept the new clause, he should say, first, which hospitals have directly expressed interest in self-governing status, and, secondly, whether he will accept new clause 15 or new clause 16.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Timothy Renton) *rose in his place and claimed to move,* That the Question be now put:-

Question put, That the Question be now put.

The House divided: Ayes 219, Noes 87.

Division No. 115] **[2.11 am**

AYES

Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Staml'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Fishburn, John Dudley
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Hague, William
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hind, Kenneth
Holt, Richard
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Lang, Ian
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Moss, Malcolm
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, Rt Hon John
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Price, Sir David
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Sims, Roger
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Summerson, Hugo
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*

Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, Sir John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Tony Durant and
Mr. David Lightbown.

NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Alton, David
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Battle, John
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bradley, Keith
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buckley, George J.
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clelland, David
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Cousins, Jim
Cryer, Bob
Dalyell, Tam
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Eadie, Alexander
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Flynn, Paul
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fyfe, Maria
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Graham, Thomas
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Haynes, Frank
Hinchliffe, David
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howells, Dr. Kim (Pontypridd)
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Ingram, Adam
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Kennedy, Charles
Kilfedder, James
Kirkwood, Archy
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Maxton, John
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Morgan, Rhodri
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Primarolo, Dawn
Redmond, Martin
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon Sir David
Turner, Dennis
Wallace, James
Wareing, Robert N.
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey

Tellers for the Noes:
Mrs. Llin Golding and
Mr. Jimmy Dunnachie.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Question put accordingly, That the clause be read a Second time:—

The House divided: Ayes 87, Noes 215.

Division No. 116] **[2.23 am**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Alton, David
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Battle, John
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bradley, Keith
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buckley, George J.
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clelland, David
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Cousins, Jim
Cryer, Bob
Dalyell, Tam
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Eadie, Alexander
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Flynn, Paul
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fyfe, Maria
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Graham, Thomas
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Hinchliffe, David
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howells, Dr. Kim (Pontypridd)
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Ingram, Adam
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Kennedy, Charles
Kilfedder, James
Kirkwood, Archy
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Maxton, John
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Morgan, Rhodri
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Primarolo, Dawn
Redmond, Martin
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon Sir David
Turner, Dennis
Wallace, James
Wareing, Robert N.
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mr. Jimmy Dunnachie.

NOES

Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl'ts)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Fishburn, John Dudley
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Hague, William
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David

Hicks, Mrs Maureen (Wolv' NE)
Hicks, Robert (Cornwall SE)
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hind, Kenneth
Holt, Richard
Howarth, Alan (Strat'd-on-A)
Hughes, Robert G. (Harrow W)
Hunt, Sir John (Ravensbourne)
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym (Cardiff N)
Jones, Robert B (Herts W)
Key, Robert
King, Roger (B'ham N'thfield)
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg (Derby North)
Knight, Dame Jill (Edgbaston)
Lang, Ian
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John (Pendle)
Leigh, Edward (Gainsbor'gh)
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lightbown, David
Lloyd, Peter (Fareham)
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
MacKay, Andrew (E Berkshire)
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marshall, Michael (Arundel)
Martin, David (Portsmouth S)
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew (Gedling)
Mitchell, Sir David
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Moss, Malcolm
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David (Taunton)
Nicholson, Emma (Devon West)
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon John
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David (Waveney)
Price, Sir David
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, Sir Giles (Pudsey)
Shaw, Sir Michael (Scarb')
Shephard, Mrs G. (Norfolk SW)
Shepherd, Colin (Hereford)
Shersby, Michael
Sims, Roger
Smith, Sir Dudley (Warwick)
Smith, Tim (Beaconsfield)
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim (Dorset W)
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Andy (Sherwood)
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Summerson, Hugo
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian (Esher)
Taylor, John M (Solihull)
Taylor, Teddy (S'end E)
Thompson, D. (Calder Valley)
Thompson, Patrick (Norwich N)
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townsend, Cyril D. (B'heath)
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Walker, Bill (T'side North)
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles (Bexhill)
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, Sir John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George (Acton)
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Tony Durant and
Mr. Nicholas Baker.

Question accordingly negatived.

New Clause 3

Constitution of Community Health Councils in Wales

'( ) (1) A Community Health Council shall be constituted for each District in Wales and

(a) shall assume in its area, such responsibilities and duties in relation to health matters and services as are undertaken by the existing Community Health Councils;

(b) shall be invited by the relevant county council to participate in the formulation of Community Care Plans as specified in section 43 of this Act;

(c) shall seek to co-ordinate the views of relevant voluntary and charitable groups, the recipients of community care and other health services and their carers, and to convey those views to the appropriate county and district councils, district health authorities, special health authorities and the Health Service Directorate of the Welsh Office as appropriate;

(d) shall monitor the delivery of health and community care services to people in its area, including the complementary provision of social, health and housing services;

(e) shall issue an annual report on its work;

(f) shall receive reports from any Independent Inspection Unit to be established by the Secretary of State as may report on services in its area;

(g) shall issue reports on specific topics from time to time as it sees fit;

(h) shall be authorised to hold joint meetings to consider such matters of common interest within the terms of paragraphs (a) to (e) above as are set out in the notice convening the meeting and may seek to reach a common view on such topics in accordance with Standing Orders agreed by the constituent Community Health Councils and approved by the Secretary of State.

(2) Community Care Services in this section shall be those defined in section 43 of this Act.

(3) Districts in this section shall be co-terminous with the areas served by District Councils in Wales.

(4) Community Health Councils established under this section shall be treated as successor bodies to the existing Community Health Councils under regulations to be established by the Secretary of State.'.—*[Mr. Michael.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

Mr. Alun Michael (Cardiff, South and Penarth): I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

The new clause aims to offer the individual, that is the patient, the consumer and the community in Wales, a real voice in the Health Service of the future. It aims to protect the interests of elderly, disabled and mentally ill people who are to be cared for in the community. It is logical to give the community health council a role in the two parts of the Bill which affect Wales. Health provision and care in the community must be complementary if the new system is to work.

The care in the community proposals need careful monitoring. Otherwise, they may well prove to be a recipe for neglect in the community, which is the genuine fear of all of us who served in Committee. The Government will simply blame housing authorities, social services authorities and the voluntary sector for any failures, although there is grave doubt whether those bodies will be given the resources that they need. Accusations will fly backwards and forwards unless there is a separate local and comprehensive system of monitoring. The CHC has been just such a watchdog in the Health Service and it would be appropriate for the new CHCs to have an expanded role on a more local level to cover care in the community.

The CHC's traditional role in the NHS will become even more important if the Bill becomes law because there will be a need for a local monitoring system to ensure that the Government's promises are kept. Ministers have rejected our criticisms of the indicative drugs budget, practice budgets and the finance-led planning of their new health system. They claim that no patient will lose out, will be struck off the list or go without treatment. If their claims are genuine, they will want the local, effective, monitoring system outlined in the new clause.

I am surprised that the Secretary of State for Wales and his junior Minister have not responded to our suggestion

[Mr. Alun Michael]

that the new clause should be accepted as a positive and constructive measure and written into the Bill without the necessity of a long debate.

The new clause sets out to promote the role of CHCs in Wales in several particular ways, based on the special needs of Wales. First, it would enhance the duties of CHCs to advocate on behalf of the users of health and community care services. Secondly, it would co-ordinate such services and discussions about them, particularly community care, at local level. Thirdly, it would monitor such services from the consumer's view and, fourthly, it would communicate its findings to the users of such services at community level.

I emphasise the nature of special needs in Wales. Wales has different and more acute health needs than England. First, more people in Wales develop chronic conditions than in England, particularly young children. Secondly, the male mortality rate is higher in Wales than in England, particularly for heart disease, cerebrovascular disease, bronchitis, emphysema and asthma. The prevalence of disability in Wales is over 20 per cent. higher than in England—even higher than the most severely disabled categories. It seems that the Government do not adequately recognise that.

Many other statistics prove the point, while the reasons for the relatively poor health of people in Wales are well known. They owe a great deal to the industrial and economic history of the Principality. Those differences in health needs call for differences in health care provision. Proportionally more people in Wales visit their doctor more often than in England—particularly young children and people over retirement age. Fewer people in Wales have chosen to make use of private medical insurance. Fewer elderly people in Wales go to make use of private sector homes in retirement, and others are not in a position to exercise any such choice.

A significantly higher proportion of prescriptions in Wales are exempt from payment by virtue of their recipients' financial circumstances than is the case in England. Some important initiatives have taken place in Wales. Heartbeat Wales, launched on St. David's day in 1985, has already achieved much by working with many sectors of the community, including food retailers, industry and the unions. The Lose Weight Wales campaign and several television series have played their part, but the people of Wales, in many unique ways, rely on their National Health Service.

The new clause is partisan in the best sense of the word. It is a serious attempt to maintain the special relationship between the people of Wales and the statutory provision of health and community care. Before moving on to consider the substantive provisions of the clause, I remind the Minister of the commitment that he made elsewhere that he would report as soon as possible on the operation of the joint Welsh Office—National Health Service working group studying the changeover from the steering committee on resource allocation in Wales—the SCRAW formula, which is currently used to determine resource allocation—to the as yet un-named future formula for Wales. The formula contained in the White Paper "Working for Patients" has already been described by the Chartered Association of Certified Accountants as one which

"emphasises simplicity possibly to the detriment of equity"—

in the same way as the poll tax perhaps. Simplicity to the detriment of equity characterises the Government's proposals for the community health councils in Wales.

The unique health needs of Wales, the wholly different service delivery structure—I remind hon. Members that Wales has no regional health authority—and the huge internal diversity of population density, persuaded preceding Ministers to develop formulae that allowed investent related to Welsh needs, rather than a statistical abstract devised in England. We should ensure that the same is the case in the future. We have already seen how standard spending assessments for social services spending relate to the needs of particular communities. We do not want that disaster to be visited upon the elderly, the infirm and the sick of Wales once again.

At present there are structural differences in the Health Service in Wales because it has no regional authority. The Welsh Office fulfils the function of that authority. Therefore, in many cases the Secretary of State is judge and jury in his own decision-making.

Wales has several community health councils per district health authority at the moment—two in South Glamorgan, and three or four in most other counties—whereas in England there is one per district health authority. That is an inappropriate structure for Wales. The district health authorities in England cover a smaller area than in Wales where, except in Pembroke, the authority covers the whole county.

The Welsh Office proposes to merge the present community health councils into one per district health authority—one for Mid Glamorgan, one for Clwyd, one for Powys and so on. The maximum number of members for a CHC will be the same as at present—24—so representation will be reduced in every county in Wales, and that is completely unacceptable.

The only argument that the Welsh Office has put forward in favour of a single CHC per district health authority is that it would speak with a single voice on behalf of consumers in the health authority area. Colleagues may reflect that the interests of consumers in Merthyr and Bridgend or Rhyl and Wrexham might be best served by having different voices that are attuned to the specific needs of those communities and the people who live in them.

The suggested parallel with England—where there is one community health council per health authority area—is inappropriate because the population per community health council is much greater in Wales, on the present pattern of community health councils, than is the case in England. It would be totally inappropriate and far worse were the Government's proposals to be followed.

The proposal in the new clause is threefold. First, the number of community health councils should be increased to one per district council area in Wales, thus allowing a strong and more local voice to be heard on behalf of communities. Secondly, a mechanism should be created to allow a joint meeting or a representative meeting on a district health authority-wide basis—again, apart from Pembroke, that means on a county-wide basis—to consider matters on which community health councils want to speak with one voice because they believe it to be in the interests of consumers. Such matters could include the location of district general hospitals and common aspects of the 10-year health authority plan, where it is appropriate that communities throughout the county area should come together to debate the structure.

Thirdly, the role of community health councils should continue to cover Health Service matters but should be extended to cover care in the community, including a joint provision that involves health, social services, voluntary and private organisations, housing and so on. That would provide a much stronger voice for the consumer and the community. It would be locally focused and it would be appropriate to the community-based provision for the elderly, the disabled and the mentally ill that the Government claim that they wish to create.

2.45 am

If the Bill becomes law, the district health authorities will be run by a small board appointed by the Secretary of State. None of its members will be representative of the community and accountability will disappear. In Wales, the Secretary of State is also the regional health authority and the person who gives resources to the social services authorities, the housing authorities and the voluntary organisations. For there to be any monitoring, accountability or representation of the consumer and the community, it is vital to have the strong community health council structure that the new clause proposes to enable them to undertake the advocate's role on behalf of the consumer and the community.

The Secretary of State has advocated a reduction in the number of community health councils from 22 to nine, but no argument has been advanced for such a reduction. It is not that the Secretary of State is dissatisfied with their work. He acknowledges that the community health councils in Wales

"have done much and valuable work in monitoring health care provision and in providing advice and counselling to patients and the public at large."

The Secretary of State's declared aim in his review is to "strengthen and focus the community voice."

How could he say otherwise? The active participation of the consumer is claimed to be an essential part of the proposed reform of the National Health Service that the Bill seeks to establish.

The White Paper "Caring for People" speaks warmly in paragraph 5 of the need at local level to focus attention "on formulating strategic and operational plans to increase participation and choice by service users".

There are no practical proposals in the Bill to increase participation and choice by service users. Their participation is reduced and will be virtually removed, unless the Government accept the new clause.

The Secretary of State's consultative paper on quality of care looks forward to the development within the National Health Service directorate in Wales of a "genuinely consumer-oriented organisation." How? The mechanism is not there, unless the new clause is accepted.

The Secretary of State's proposals seek to reduce the number of community health councils and also, by limiting the numbers of members of the reorganised community health councils to the number of members who currently serve on CHCs, to reduce further representation with a consequent reduction in overall community health council membership. My proposal would allow an increase in local representation, yet could allow a modest decrease in the numbers on each community health council. If there is a larger number of community health councils to address the needs of local communities, each can have a slightly smaller membership. They will focus on much more local issues.

We also provide a mechanism to bring people together on a county-wide basis in order to provide a small, representative group—something that, apparently, the Secretary of State wants. Consumer protection is now a recognised social policy objective except, it appears, in the Welsh Office. A wide range of legal measures in both industry and commerce exist to further that objective. Little else, besides the community health councils, exists to cover social welfare. In fact, until the appearance of this new clause in respect of Wales, there were no proposals recognising that need in relation to care in the community.

The report of the panel of inquiry into the future of community health councils, which was prepared by the Association of Community Health Councils, makes the case for the advocacy on behalf of consumers that the new clause seeks to protect. It says:

"The crucial difference between consumers of health services and most other consumer groups which requires an active body working on behalf of the former group is that a large number of them are weak and vulnerable and are highly dependent upon the continued receipt of services. This makes it extremely difficult for them to complain personally without support, or to pursue a complaint when the administrative system is less than helpful as is commonly the case."

That in itself is a persuasive sign of the need to build the new clause into the Bill.

Community health councils are specialists in consumer representation and advocacy. Their independence, accessibility, expertise and experience qualify them uniquely to speak on behalf of patients. Therefore, Conservative Members should have no difficulty in supporting the new clause, which further develops the claimed intention of the Bill—to work for patients. They may be further inclined to support the clause when they learn that, of the total National Health Service 1989-90 budget of £19 billion, only some £7 million is to be spent on user representation. I am sure that they agree—I invite the Minister to say that he agrees—that it is wholly unreasonable that a sum equivalent to only 0·035 per cent. of the National Health Service budget is devoted to what they say is such an important tenet of the changes that they are seeking to bring about. If they do not accept the new clause, it will be difficult to believe that they are serious about that.

The new clause sets out to establish a community health council in each district council area—not in each district health authority area, as the Secretary of State has proposed. Such an arrangement would not only provide for better community representation in respect of health matters, but would better reflect the administrative structure of Wales, its unique geography, and the very different problems that can arise within the boundaries of a district health authority. Paragraphs (b) and (c) of the clause would give effect to such an arrangement.

In the case of Powys, the area is more than 100 miles long from north to south. Consider the variety of communities in Gwynedd. Even in the smallest county—South Glamorgan—the last time a Government tried to have one community health council, the proposal was rejected. That is why we have two community health councils. That is why, in the smallest county of Wales, which does not have the geographical problems of many other counties, a change to one community health council would be totally unacceptable.

Paragraph (c) gives to the community health councils the function of co-ordinating the views of relevant voluntary and charitable groups and of the recipients of

community care and other health services and their carers. Those views would be conveyed to the appropriate county and district councils, district health authorities, special health authorities and the Health Service directorate of the Welsh Office, as appropriate. What Member of Parliament for a Welsh constituency would argue that there is not a need for that function? Which of us has not come across the need for the co-ordination of information and for communication with those services and voluntary organisations?

The co-ordination of those involved in care and service delivery is therefore basic to the new clause and, if the Government's claims are to be justified, should be basic to the Bill. Those two paragraphs ensure that, particularly in relation to community care plans, local needs—and I mean local needs, not just needs on a county-wide basis—are effectively identified, and that resources and services, both formal and informal, are put most effectively to use.

I need not rehearse the arguments, which were put forward and largely accepted by the Government in Committee, about the need for full and effective co-ordination of services. However, I should like to illustrate from my own experience how urgent such matters can be and, thus, underline the main message—that the provision of accommodation for the elderly, the disabled and the mentally ill must be arranged to fit with the community care planning by social services authorities, health authorities and voluntary groups. Housing must be taken into account. The district councils and housing associations in an area must be involved, as well as the county council and health authority functions.

In Committee, many examples were given by hon. Members of cases in which resource allocation and quality of provision were important and flexibility was essential. I spoke in Committee of Colin Griffiths, a constituent, who is now tetraplegic following a tragic accident. He is an extremely courageous and extremely independent-minded young man, something in which his parents support and encourage him. He wants to be as independent as he can be—a desire best illustrated by the fact that he wants to help other young adults who face the same problems and encourage them to fight for an independent and full life and a sense of self-worth. When I spoke to him recently, how he could do that exercised his mind more than how his personal needs could be met.

For Colin Griffiths to have the independence to which his courage entitles him, several factors must be fitted together—appropriate housing and day care, help with mechanical aids, transport and so on. As well as guts, this young man has family, Church and community support with which to tackle his position. Tragically, his circumstances are unique, and not all families and communities can offer the same support to the individual.

We have two responsibilities in this case and in many others involving elderly, disabled and mentally ill people in a variety of circumstances. One is to have an efficient and responsive system of health care and care in the community. The second is to make sure that there is an adequate, efficient and local system, which will monitor that provision, give a strong local voice for the consumer and draw together the different ways of providing for individuals in the community and the community as a whole. That is what the new clause is all about.

I draw the Minister's attention to the comments of the National Consumer Council, which also looks at specific examples. The NCC said:

> "Our recent work with elderly people with dementia and their carers has shown that liaison between health authorities, primary care and social services departments is still, in some areas, poor. This has a detrimental effect on those users who may be in need of help from across the sectors and who would benefit from better and more closely co-ordinated planning."

This demands a mechanism to monitor and review the service provided, and the new clause provides the way to do that in Wales.

It is not sufficient to anticipate a happy and harmonious unregulated relationship developing between the various local, voluntary and health services. It is true that in Wales such co-operation can exist—one thinks of the all-Wales strategy on mental handicap, for example—but there will be new players in the game in future, the private sector providers of health and social care. I am concerned that the Secretary of State seems reluctant in his review to let even the few community health councils that will survive get too close to National Health Service provision.

In the unlikely event of a hospital trust emerging in Wales—I trust that it will continue to be unlikely—the Secretary of State has been careful to point out that a community health council would deal only with a district health authority and not directly with the trust. Moreover, the community health councils would not have an automatic right of access to routine trust meetings or papers. What is the Minister trying to hide? Are such trusts to remain within the NHS, as Ministers keep telling us? In which case, why have this hand-off to the community health councils? If the trusts are to be within the NHS, why should they be accorded such special treatment? There are important functions for the community health councils to undertake.

We come logically to monitoring. Paragraph (d) would ensure that quality is assessed at consumer level. I pay tribute to the high moral tone and the general worthiness of the comments emanating from the Department of Health relating to independent inspection units within districts and the Welsh Office's "Quality Patient Care" document. However, neither mentions the other and both pay little regard to the consumer.

3 am

Let us consider the current position in relation to the work of community health councils. I give the example of North Gwent community health council, the work on which it has reported and its representations to the Secretary of State for Wales recently. It describes its work as follows:

> "Members undertake regular and frequent visits to all hospitals, clinics, day centres, etc., where they talk to patients and their visitors, and see conditions as they are. This is considered to be the most important and productive aspect of Members' work."

That can be multiplied around every community health council in Wales. The community health council continues:

> "if there were only one CHC with 24 members to represent the whole of Gwent, it would not be possible to fulfil these visits, and, indeed, much of the time would be spent in travelling the length and breadth of the County. The geography is such that the County is divided by valleys, most of which with a hospital as well as other health care premises. The distance may not look enormous, but in reality, mileage would be considerable . . . it is considered extremely unlikely that anything like the present levels of visits could be maintained."

Is it really the Minister's intention to reduce that invaluable element in monitoring the Health Service? Will he really refuse the proposition in the new clause that that monitoring be extended to how that health provision

inter-relates with care in the community, such as the social services, housing services and the other services that are needed to give proper provision for people in the community?

The example of North Gwent community health council is not untypical, especially in respect of the independent inspection unit. Do the Government feel entirely happy, despite the arm's length management of such units, that poachers, however reformed, will make the best gamekeepers? The Royal College of Nursing and others have pointed out that the local authority will find itself in a monopoly position on care in the community, with a combination of registration, assessment, procurement and regulatory powers. The community health councils, under the proposals, would provide a meeting place for the noble intentions of the Welsh Office and the independent inspection units of the local authorities, both under the scrutiny of the people who matter most—the patients, the consumers and the community in which they live.

The key point in the communications role of the community health council is as a disseminator of information to people who desparately need accurate and proper information. First, it is difficult to know what services are available. We already see the confusion about that. How does one know that a dog is there if it does not bark? Secondly, it is almost impossible to know what services are available if one does not have direct access to a professional. Thirdly, none of the professionals involved in care in the community has a specific brief to disseminate information and none is required to do so in such a way as to promote access to services. It is only the community health council that can do that. Fourthly, there is after all a proliferation of professionals, all of whom have at best a partial knowledge of the range of services available. Fifthly, most people look for information at a time of crisis. Whether disabled and elderly people receive help depends on their condition, where they live, the structure of the local authority and their luck with professional contacts. We need to guarantee the availability of information as well as services.

The recent report of the King's Fund said:

"Methods of getting information to parents about formal care facilities are very inconsistent. It depends very much on local developments and the interest and enthusiasm of individuals and professionals who want to be involved."

The experience in Wales is that the individuals in the community health councils have that enthusiasm and commitment. With no mechanism in any county in Wales to inform professionals of available services, even carers in regular contact with professionals may be unaware of and, therefore, denied access to support services. They are victims of a vicious circle of mutual ignorance and that applies both to health services and to care in the community.

Paragraph (h) is a serious attempt to meet the apparent need of the Secretary of State for a system once more based on simplicity rather than equity. I hope that he will find the paragraph and the rest of the new clause acceptable. That provision would draw together the community health councils, which would be locally based and well informed about their localities so as to hold joint meetings, and thereby achieve the single voice that Ministers want for the consumer and for communities.

The Secretary of State says that he wants a clear, coherent voice for the consumer. That is a nice idea, but it is not easy to deliver, bearing in mind the danger of oversimplification and distortion. Indeed, it can fairly be said that there is no such thing as a coherent consumer voice. The public at large will always have a variety of views about any topic.

Is it really the role of the CHCs to reconcile those conflicting views, or should they take on the job of ensuring that all expressions of opinion are articulated to the decision-makers in the NHS? Communities will have different interests to be articulated. That is the real meaning of strengthening and focusing the consumer voice. Our proposal in the new clause would achieve that, rather than the half-baked proposal to reduce the number of community health councils in each county.

Strengthening the consumer voice by reducing the number of CHCs in Wales from 22 to nine is a contradiction in terms. There is no evidence that a CHC in a county would give a clearer and stronger focus to the informed consumer voice than does the present pattern of CHCs. Our proposal would strengthen the local element in the representation of the individual and the community.

The new clause would do the job for the Minister because it would strengthen the local community voice and, where needed, create a single voice. It would do what the Minister says he wants to do, and I appeal to him to support it in the interests of consumers and of communities throughout Wales.

Until now, health authorities have been run by committees that drew on a mixture of backgrounds, such as medical experts, people elected by the local councils and people appointed by the Welsh Office. In future, much smaller boards will be running the system with fewer medical experts and no local representatives and with all their members being appointed by the Welsh Office. In Wales, unlike in England, we do not have the regional health authority. In future, the budget, policy-making and appointments—all our health authority functions, and much more—will be in the hands of one Minister and his civil servants and there will be no local representation.

Where is the voice of the consumer to be heard? How will communities such as Penarth, Merthyr and Bridgend express their views about the type of health services that they need? Who will monitor the way in which the elderly are cared for in the community? Who can listen to the disabled and the mentally ill? The answer is nobody—unless the CHCs can be salvaged from the threat that hangs over them and are made local, effective and coherent, as we propose in the new clause.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett (Pembroke): The hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Michael) said, basically, that community health council areas should be the same as district council areas. It is a pity that he took half an hour to say it.

Mr. Ted Rowlands (Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney): We have a national health system, but it is also a local health system, and it is vital for us to bear that in mind. The system originated in local community health care. It was from the valley communities that the notion of a national health system was created. We must make sure that we achieve the right balance between a genuine National Health Service and a local health service.

[Mr. Ted Rowlands]

Since those early days we have developed a complex, specialist service which must now be truly national, in Welsh and in British terms. But there is no reason why it cannot be accountable to the community.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Michael) said so eloquently—despite a brief and nonsensical interruption from the hon. Member for Pembroke (Mr. Bennett)—the community health councils have been extremely effective. I can only speak from my own experience, but our CHC has certainly been effective. Mr. Bryn Williams has been active and supportive, raising money and also, on occasion, exercising vigilance and being critical of the service. The Government's notion is to take the word "community" out of community health councils; but, with respect, the community of Merthyr and the Cynon Valley is not that of Mid Glamorgan or some grander district.

Throughout the Bill's passage so far, we have debated —rightly, in my view—whether patient power, or consumer power, can be increased. Opposition Members reject the idea that it can be increased through the creation of a false or flawed system of competition, which is at the heart of the Bill. In the communities that I represent there will be only one health system: only one district general hospital, only one practice or group of practices , and only one health centre. There will be only one set of arrangements to which those in need can turn. We do not want to create a divisive, competitive system; we believe that the existing system should be made more responsive.

Although we do not need American-style competition between general practices and between hospitals, we cannot be complacent about the current response of the Health Service to people in need. Certainly I am not complacent: I believe that the system must be more sensitive. I want better care and shorter waiting lists for the communities that I represent, and I agree with many of the criticisms. The answer, however, is not to give people the false impression that they can "shop-around"; we need to develop the present system, making it co-operative rather than competitive, and more accountable and sensitive to the community.

In that regard the CHCs have an important role to play. No one is saying that they are perfect; they are an imperfect vehicle to express the views of a community, to pick up its complaints, to apply pressure and at the same time to be active and supportive. The CHC has been described as a local watchdog, but mine is also a great fund-raiser. CHCs have backed the facilities of the Prince Charles hospital, and helped to raise money to produce the finest technology available in the Heads of the Valley. That is one of the major functions of CHCs. We should not destroy their community base. We should develop the system further. I reject the philosophy behind the Bill—the notion that the way to promote patient power is by competition.

As I have said, we need a new regulatory system on behalf of patients, consumers and the community. There is a case for establishing new performance standards at all levels. In a unified Health Service in a community such as I represent there must be standards and performance levels that everyone, from consultants throughout the system, must meet.

3.15 am

The Government have not made that the centrepiece of the Bill because they believe that, in a curious way, competition will deliver that objective, but it will not. The Health Service should be developed by putting more resources into it and it should be made more responsive by establishing new standards and by creating a new regulatory body.

The CHCs could play a vital part in doing just that. The Government's nonsense has no support. The area health authorities, the supposed victims of the CHCs, are against the notion of abolishing them. Whether on the poll tax or education and certainly on health matters and the CHCs, the Government, as always, are on their own. The rest of society rejects them and their proposals.

Mr. Richard Livsey (Brecon and Radnor): The rationale behind the Government's and the Welsh Office's thinking on CHCs is to diminish their effectiveness in representing their areas. The proposal in the Welsh Office's consultative paper that the number of CHCs should be reduced from 22 to nine is a direct threat to their effectiveness in representing community interests to the nine district health authorities.

It is important to realise that just when the district health authorities are to be streamlined into a corporate type body with 10 directors, five executive and five non-executive, the CHCs in Wales are being irreparably weakened. All members of the new district health authorities will be appointed rather than elected, and that tells its own story. The communities will no longer be represented on the health authorities. In those circumstances, the community interest will not be protected.

The reduction in the number of the CHCs from 22 to nine and the consequent increase in the area that each CHC covers will fatally weaken the democratic checks and balances in the Health Service in Wales. At present, individual communities are protected by CHCs and new clause 3 will increase the democratic accountability of the Health Service in Wales. The move to reduce the number of CHCs to nine is a cynical and deliberate attempt to undermine the effectiveness of CHCs and the checks and balances.

In Powys, Brecon and Radnor community health council currently has 24 members and Montgomery community health council has 16. The proposals are for one community health council for Powys with 24 members. If we consider that the size of Powys is such that if it were put on its end it would run from the Severn bridge to Hammersmith flyover, we can appreciate that a community health council covering such a distance would be pretty ridiculous. In addition, the population sparsity in Powys—it is unique in that it is the most sparsely populated area in England and Wales by a long way—makes it extremely unlikely that members of the proposed community health council in Powys will know what is going on 130 miles away at the other end of Powys.

If anything is to happen, the special situation in Powys needs recognition, in that it needs at least two community health councils, as at present. If we were to take the new clause to its logical conclusion, there would be three councils—one for Montgomery, one for Radnor and one for Brecon. That would give us proper community representation.

At present, community health council members are often volunteers. Often they cannot spend much of the

week travelling up and down the area—in our case, Powys. They would find it considerably easier under the structure proposed in the new clause.

I make a special plea to the Minister—I have already made one to the Secretary of State. At the very least, Brecon and Radnor community health council and Montgomery community health council should remain in place and separate. That is the only way of effectively monitoring the community needs of the Health Service in Powys. In the present circumstances, an all-Powys CHC is not on.

I have received representations from both community health councils in Powys. They wish to keep the present structure. They are representative of the communities. Given the spread of community hospitals, it is vital that there is someone from each community represented on community health councils. That most certainly will not be the case under the Government's present proposals.

The new clause advocates a CHC for each district, based on the district council boundaries. That would be an effective counterweight to the new corporate style health authorities proposed in the Bill. As for the functions of the CHCs in Wales, the question is whether the standard of health service in their areas is properly monitored. Their acceptability to the public and their ability to represent the users of service when changes are proposed must surely be embodied in a greater number of CHCs than is presently proposed by the Government. The question is whether those functions can be better carried out if the number of CHCs is reduced, which seems unlikely. It might be administratively more efficient to have corresponding areas of CHCs and health authorities—nine of each—but it will be much more difficult for the remaining CHCs to carry out their tasks.

The Government are also begging the question whether it is the CHC numbers that should be changed, not the health authority ones. That issue should be closely examined. If my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Montgomery (Mr. Carlile) is called, he will make that point. In parts of Mid Wales, patients may have problems with a health authority that diverts resources away from their areas. We know that patients leave those areas for treatment in other areas.

The last function—that of representing local users—will be well nigh impossible. The needs of some local users may be very different from those in other communities in the same area. Because health authorities and family health service authorities' memberships are to be streamlined to exclude representatives of the community, as well as the professions, it become more important, not less, to strengthen CHCs in their ability to do their job. The Welsh Office envisages that local groups will need to be established. That acknowledges the fact that health authorities cover a range of communities. Why not accept that that is the case and have more CHCs—indeed, a CHC for each district? Local groups will not have the clout of fully-fledged CHCs.

It is impossible to escape from the belief that the Government are concerned with quietening voices critical of the way in which the NHS is run. Many of the Government's proposals, such as NHS trusts and contracts, ignore the patient's voice. Reduced numbers of CDCs would be too over-worked and too unrepresentative to be an active and successful patients' champion. Indeed, where hospital closures are proposed, it is vital for those communities that the CHCs based there can make proper representations to the health authority to ensure that the interests of the local community are protected. It is unlikely that that will be possible under the new structure. In fact, it may well be a negation of local democracy in relation to the proposed nine CHCs for Wales. It is not a constructive set of proposals, and it is anti-community.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Wales (Mr. Ian Grist): It may help the House if I intervene at this stage.

Hon. Members have spoken knowing very well that we issued a consultation document in November and have only just closed the list, although representations are still being received. They have come from most Opposition Members and from others, and we shall carefully consider what we have been told. We take the representations seriously and are not trying to ride roughshod over people's views. Of course, we believe in the proposals that we put forward in that document. We shall set them against any contrary views. Many hon. Members who have spoken have already let my Department know their views, so although they are not being repetitious in the terms of the House, they may be in terms of my office.

We do not propose any change in the primary roles of the CHCs, which will continue to monitor the quality of services provided, to comment on issues relating to changing patterns of NHS services—which, the hon. Member for Brecon and Radnor (Mr. Livsey) will be pleased to hear, includes closure or major changes to service—anything that has a bearing on the welfare of patients and, of course, anything that provides assistance to anyone who encounters difficulties with NHS services.

The purpose behind our proposals, which would include the replacement—it has been depicted as the notorious replacement—of the existing 22 CHCs by nine CHCs is designed to strengthen and focus the voice of the CHCs within each district and to allow them to take a more strategic view of the services for which each district health authority is responsible. Currently, four CHCs in certain areas cannot possibly take a strategic view of the health authority's proposals and activities within that health authority's area. We strongly believe that they are too localised.

We have made our proposals in the belief that the new and larger CHCs, not least because they will be better funded, should make a far more effective contribution on behalf of patients—for example, by expanding their work in areas such as patients' surveys and commenting on quality of work.

Mr. Alex Carlile (Montgomery): How can the Minister say that a community health council which covers 50,000 people and 900 sq miles is too localised? What a load of rubbish.

Mr. Grist: The area health authority of the hon. and learned Gentleman is quite small, as area health authorities go. That is why it does not have a district general hospital in its territory; 50,000 is fewer than the number of inhabitants in my constituency. So I would have said that it was localised.

3.30 am

Mr. Michael: The Minister does not seem to be addressing the fact that various communities have different needs. If he does not want to consider Powys, he should take Mid Glamorgan where there are quite a few

[Mr. Michael]

disadvantaged communities. Do not they deserve a voice local enough to focus on their needs? Has he read the new clause to which he is speaking, which offers a way of co-ordinating views at a strategic level within each district health authority area?

Mr. Grist: I think that the hon. Gentleman must have missed my assurance that we are taking the matter extremely seriously and are considering the various points made to us. The points about Mid Glamorgan will be borne very much in mind. He will be aware that there are proposals for the health authority to move its main district general hospital. Therefore, in certain circumstances, with a multiplicity of CHCs, instead of one CHC being responsible for the main district general hospital, wherever it was placed, it would move in and out of different CHCs.

Mr. Michael: The Minister seems not to realise that the health authority will be responsible for the district hospital, and the community health council will be responsible for expressing the views of individuals who live within a specific community. That is what he will destroy if the CHC operates at a county-wide level.

Mr. Grist: Clearly the hon. Gentleman has not appreciated the point that I was making that CHCs are responsible for looking at the delivery of service and the welfare of patients in the hospital structure as well. Therefore, any proposal for closure or major alteration will certainly be of interest to CHCs.

Community health councils should maintain a close link with their local populations. That was precisely why we suggested—it was just a suggestion—that they might choose to establish local working groups on which CHC members might serve, as would other local people. Those would help the CHC to carry out its day-to-day duties.

The proposals contained in the new clause would further fragment the community health council network in Wales. It is ludicrous to suggest having 37 CHCs. The capacity for the CHCs to be able to watch the activities of the area health authority in any strategic sense would be vitiated. I believe that that would damage the interests of patients.

Mr. Alan Williams (Swansea, West): Does the Minister accept that there is a genuine difference of opinion? Will he think in different terms to try to understand the point that we are making? Each of the 38 Members representing constituencies in Wales has to carry out on a much wider scale the sort of functions that are carried out in relation to health by the community health councils. I think it would be regarded in Wales as a step backwards—I suspect that the hon. Gentleman would regard it in the same way—if we said that instead of having 38 Members to carry out that function on behalf of all our constituents we should have only nine Members. There can be no pretence that the people of Wales would be better served or that there would be a more localised service. If the hon. Gentleman thinks in those terms, he will see why we are getting angry. We think that he does not understand the personal relationship available through a community health council which my hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Michael) tried to emphasise.

Mr. Grist: The right hon. Gentleman teases me by suggesting that if we were to follow certain devolutionary principles we might end up with nine Members of Parliament in Wales. That is perhaps worth the consideration of hon. Members. The multiplicity would undermine the ability of the CHCs to take a strategic view of the delivery of health service in their areas and it would complicate the working relationship between them and the district health authorities and the family health service authorities. I am afraid that the new clause would end the existing relationship between the CHCs and FPCs, or the new family health service authorities, as they are to be called.

Even more misplaced is the proposal in the new clause that CHCs should be given a role beyond the NHS in relation to the community care responsibilities of local authorities, including personal social services and complementary housing provision. We have made it clear that in carrying out their community care responsibilities local authorities will have a clear duty to work with health authorities, family health service authorities, housing agencies, voluntary bodies, the private sector and users of services in the development and delivery of community care plans. CHCs will doubtless contribute to that process.

However, we regard as fundamentally misconceived the idea that CHCs should have a statutory role in respect of local authority services. Local authorities are directly accountable to their electorates for the provision of services and they will therefore have the duty of ensuring that users' views about services are adequately taken into account. Indeed, we have made it plain that we shall expect the social services authorities to have in place effective systems for users of services and their representatives to make complaints and representations, as members of the Standing Committee will be aware.

I find unacceptable the idea in the new clause that the CHCs should act as ringmasters for a highly bureaucratic process in attempting what I believe is an impossible task —trying to bring together various voluntary bodies, charitable organisations and others to make them speak with one voice. I do not believe that it is possible to co-ordinate those bodies in the way suggested in the new clause.

As I have said, the formal consultation about the Government's proposals ended on 28 February. We are still analysing the responses. The new clause is flawed in the ways that I have described. It is also untimely with regard to the consultation process that is being undertaken at the moment. I hope that the hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Michael) will withdraw the new clause. If not, I invite the House to reject it.

Dr. Kim Howells (Pontypridd): If the Government were to support new clause 3, they would go some way towards regaining a little of the credibility that they have lost during the Bill's passage. That credibility has been lost largely as a result of the Government's refusal to countenance any extension of consultation with those who use and operate the Health Service.

New clause 3 seeks to align community health councils with district councils in Wales and to create a mechanism that would allow meetings of the community health councils to take place on a district health authority-wide basis. I do not understand the Minister's great horror about that arrangement. The proposal that is currently floated by the Welsh Office is that there should be one

CHC per district health authority. In Mid Glamorgan—the county with the highest population in Wales—that would have drastic repercussions for the level of representation through community health councils. Instead of the present four CHCs, the 535,000 inhabitants in Mid Glamorgan would be allocated only one CHC.

Under the new clause Mid Glamorgan's CHCs would increase to six—one for each of the district councils of Cynon Valley, Merthyr Tydfil, Ogwr, Rhondda, Rhymney Valley and Taff-Ely. That population of 500,000 would be subdivided into communities that would vary between 60,000 and 160,000, each with its own characteristics, needs and existing resources.

The Minister knows that there are currently about 30 hospitals servicing the county of Mid Glamorgan. They are located in Rhondda, Taff-Ely, Ogwr, Merthyr, Cynon Valley and Rhymney Valley. Those areas and the health requirements of their population are by no means identical. Mortality and illness rates frequently tend to be higher in the older communities, in the central mining valleys of Rhondda, Cynon Valley and Merthyr, and in the Cyntwell and upper Rhymney valleys, and often much lower in the areas that are contiguous to the M4.

Within just one of those districts—Rhondda and Taff-Ely—considerable sensitivity has to be exercised in administering the needs of an older and declining population in the north of the district and of a younger and growing population in the southern part of the district. The CHC's role in monitoring the quality of health provision, if organised on a district basis, could be much more sensitive than at present. Certain critical variables in each of those areas could be catered for if the provisions were based on a district model which in some ways are not catered for now. I am sure that the Minister is well aware of the difficulties of people in Mid Glamorgan in gaining access to the hospitals, especially to the new district general hospitals, such as the Prince Charles hospital in Merthyr, the East Glamorgan general hospital in the centre and the Princess of Wales hospital in Ogwr. People in many of the areas that are served by those hospitals do not find them easy to get to.

One role of the enhanced model that we are proposing in the new clause would be precisely to allow the monitoring service to inform the public of the new arrangements affecting the district general hospitals, such as the new one that I hope will be built to serve the Taff-Ely and Rhondda areas. That would allow much more sensitivity and the input of greater local knowledge about access and people's ability to get to those hospitals. In that way, it would become much more of a two-way process. The decisions would not be being made in county hall, which might not be as sensitive as it should be to the peculiar topography and geography of the valleys in south Wales. It is not asking a great deal to ask that the potential of the expertise of local voices should be tapped by any new arrangement. That local voice should not be diminished by making the decisions more remote in terms of the lack of input of local expertise and information. The Minister seems to be over-reacting dramatically to what is simply an extension of consultation and of people's access to those decisions and the way in which they are made.

I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Michael) on the way in which he moved the new clause. He has rightly highlighted and valued something about Wales that is unique—our identification with communities. That is something that we should treasure and look after. I advise Ministers that the new clause does just that.

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: In supporting new clause 3, may I say that we are discussing the important principle of the way in which community health councils can fulfil their primary role as a public watchdog. We are doing so against the background of a Bill that seeks to reduce the accountability of the district health authorities and all the other bodies that will administer the Health Service in Wales. The Minister will be aware of the criticism of Opposition Members in Committee about the way in which the new constitution of district health authorities and family health service authorities was being radically changed to introduce what the White Paper, but not the Bill, calls a more businesslike approach. In other words, they are being changed to make district health authorities run like businesses and to reduce accountability and the representation of local authorities on those bodies. The accountability and the effectiveness of the body would be reduced. The Government cannot have it all ways.

3.45 am

We must make it clear, and the British Medical Association has informed us in its briefing for the debate, that there is widespread opposition to the Government's plans. That widespread opposition must be articulated in a democracy. The people of Wales have rejected time and again the philosophy of change in the Bill. If that is the case, the Government could at least give us an effective watchdog to ensure that the health changes that are being pushed through in the Bill are effectively monitored. That is an honourable argument for Opposition Members to put. There should be an effective monitoring arrangement and system.

The Minister sought to persuade us that, by making each community health council conterminous with the district health authority, he would make them more effective because they would monitor the same area and could make strategic decisions. But the people whom CHCs seek to represent do not see it that way. I inform the Minister, in common with my hon. Friends who have spoken for Mid Glamorgan, South Glamorgan and Powys, that the people of Gwynedd reject the plan for the basic reason that, as my hon. Friend the Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney (Mr. Rowlands) said, community health councils surely must be based at community level to make sense. That is the way that the people of Ynys Môn see it.

I am in the unique position of speaking for a people who live on an island. They know the sense of community that that involves. They reject the principle that their views should be taken into account in a wider context, particularly being an island people. The people of Anglesey are angry that their CHC is to be abolished under the Bill.

We must also consider the geographical areas which the CHCs, as envisaged by the Welsh Office, would cover. We have heard about the problems of Mid Glamorgan, South Glamorgan and Powys, and I can talk about the problems of Gwynedd. It would be intolerable if we had community health councils which sought to represent the views of people on a county-wide basis. What involves people in articulating their views is what happens to them in their communities. It is not what happens at the other end of the

county; it is what happens to their hospital, doctors, friends and relatives. They can empathise with their colleagues and friends within their own villages. They cannot do so with people who live on the other side of the county.

Mr. Grist: Does the hon. Gentleman suggest that patients who go to ysbyty Gwynedd would have to be represented by their home CHC? Or does he think that an overall CHC could better track from home to hospital the complaint or worry of a person from Holyhead who goes to ysbyty Gwynedd? Surely that would be better than if the responsibility were split between two CHCs. That is our argument.

Mr. Jones: I was coming to my next point, which is that the management structure of Gwynedd district health authority is unique in being based not on discipline but on geographical areas.

Mr. Michael: Does my hon. Friend agree that the Minister's intervention seems inappropriate to the new clause because the new clause would provide consideration of the needs of the individual community and co-ordination between CHCs? I hope that the proposals for the break-up of the structure within Gwynedd health authority will not go ahead because that would remove the link between management and local communities.

Mr. Jones: Absolutely right. My hon. Friend makes his point effectively.

There could be an improvement in the management structure of Gwynedd health authority. The Minister knows that I have been highly critical of its operations in recent years. Where management is based on geographical breakdown rather than on discipline, there is a case for having CHCs for each geographical area within the county. The Government constantly tell us that we should put the patient first. If the patient is to be rooted in a community and the voice of that community is to be articulated, it should be under a smaller system of CHCs.

One of the new structures created by the Bill is NHS trusts. God forbid that any operate in Wales. I am not aware of any hospital that has announced that it wishes to seek trust status. If one did, the danger is that other district general hospitals may find that they cannot provide the comprehensive health care which they are obliged to provide under statute because of a lack of resources and they may wish to buy in services from neighbouring authorities. We need CHCs locally to consider that.

In fairness I should say to the House that I was impressed with the lobby which the Welsh Association of Community Health Councils organised a few weeks ago. Its message—each CHC area in Wales was represented—was that the Government's plans would be detrimental to the monitoring of the Health Service in Wales and that the measures contained in the Bill would not lead to better services. Therefore, it is vital to have an effective local watchdog.

I am not aware of any body, person or organisation that has expressed support for the Welsh Office proposals in its consultation document. If the Minister were to reply again, perhaps he could tell us whether, as a result of the consultation procedure, any body, organisation or group of persons representing the Health Service in Wales supports his proposals.

Mr. Alex Carlile: I listened without surprise, but with accustomed dismay, to the earlier interventions of the Minister. They have confirmed the worst suspicions of people who live in rural Wales.

Apparently, Welsh Office Ministers still consider Wales to be a small place somewhere near Cardiff. As a Member representing a rural constituency, it seems that Montgomery is simply being cast into the Cardiff mould for the decision-making on community health councils. It is too far north for community considerations to be bothered with.

When the Secretary of State limps out of the Welsh Office he will leave quite a legacy behind him—the county councils, which he was responsible for creating during the previous Conservative Government, and which nobody in rural Wales ever wanted. The Government usually find that when a new authority is created eventually people get used to it, and they acquiesce in its existence and get on with the job. However, 16 years after the creation of the new Welsh counties we still do not want them, and we have not got used to them. It is offensive to the people of mid-Wales to have further community facilities and democratic accountability—if there is any accountability in this—ascribed to the same level as those unwanted county councils. When the Secretary of State leaves office we shall still have his unwanted county councils and our representation in health matters in mid-Wales will have been reduced to the same poor level.

In the early part of the 1980s, the Boundary Commission for Wales made a provisional recommendation that the seat which I represent and the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Brecon and Radnor (Mr. Livsey) should be merged to form a single Powys seat. There was a detailed hearing of the merits of that before a deputy boundary commissioner, Mr. David Glyn Morgan. After careful consideration of the evidence, Mr. Glyn Morgan came to the sensible conclusion that it was absurd to combine the communities of Montgomery—the old county of Montgomeryshire—and Brecon and Radnor. Why did he come to that conclusion? Because he could see that they are two distinctive communities which require distinctive representation; two geographical areas; two traditional community areas, with traditional community ties; two disparate communities. Therefore, he recommeded, and the Boundary Commission for Wales accepted, that there should be two separate constituencies. Exactly the same arguments apply to the number of community health councils in Powys.

It is a particularly stark fact for the people of Montgomeryshire that we are not as well served by the National Health Service as other areas. We have no district general hospital. Every patient who requires acute treatment has to go elsewhere to a district general hospital—and not to just one but to one of a selection—perhaps in Shrewsbury, Aberystwyth, South Powys, Hereford or Wrexham. It is ridiculous to suggest that a Powys community health council—bearing in mind what my hon. Friend the Member for Brecon and Radnor said about the size of Powys—could scrutinise the adequacy of health services made available to people in my constituency. It is likely to lead to a decline in accountability. We know what the Government are up to in their proposals concerning public bodies in Wales. They are reducing their size. In some cases that may have merit. However, they are being

reduced in size so that the Government can carefully put into place those who sympathise with their political views. That is a recipe for patronage.

Wales has been riddled with patronage for at least 80 years. It is time that there was a little less patronage in Wales and a little more democratic accountability. The putting in place of a few Tory business men and business women will not satisfy the people of mid-Wales.

Mr. Grist: If the hon. and learned Gentleman looks at the consultation document, he will see that we have left the appointments system exactly the same as it is at present.

4 am

Mr. Carlile: That is a joke and a half. Of course, the Government have left the patronage system as it is at present, but it will be much easier to find six or nine Tory business men than 32 or 34 Tory business men. It will be jolly easy, thank you very much, to pick out the chosen few —the chairmen of the Conservative associations and so on —to fill these jobs. If ever there were a bit of obvious cynical politicking, this is it.

From our viewpoint in mid-Wales—it is a special viewpoint, for the reason I mentioned: that there is no district general hospital within my constituency—it is high time that the Welsh Office recognised the need, which many have spoken of in the past, for a new mid-Wales health authority and for community health councils to be based on the very large district council areas that already exist. I mentioned earlier in the debate the size of my own area. That seems to me as large as one community health council can cover and manage. I pay tribute to the work that has been done in the past by my constituency's community health council. I deplore its passing.

My hon. Friend the Member for Brecon and Radnor was right to refer to the need for checks and balances. The trouble is that the Government do not care about the balances. All that they care about are the cheques—not the kind of checks to which my hon. Friend referred.

Mr. Rhodri Morgan (Cardiff, West): I intend to refer to the problems that constituencies will face if the Government do not accept new clause 3. It attempts to ensure that the community health councils will be able to look after consumers in our constituencies and provide the services that the National Health Service is supposed to deliver.

My constituency will need to call on the services of the community health council in Cardiff. The result of the severe underfunding of the South Glamorgan regional health authority is that it now proposes to close six hospitals, three of them in my constituency—one large and two small hospitals. St. David's is the large one; Glan Ely and the Ely ear, nose and throat hospital for children are the two small ones. The proposal is to close them during the coming financial year.

According to the document that was made public in February by the South Glamorgan regional health authority, consultations will be held on the closure of those hospitals immediately after 1 April. The community health council will take part in the consultations. The Minister said earlier, "If we have countywide community health councils, they will be able to take a more strategic line." That means that they would fit in with the regional health authority's thinking. They would not be so effective in representing the interests of the consumer. They would be able to understand what the management had in mind. They could be persuaded that the offer being made by the health authority—"We shall close down these six hospitals, reorganise the service and reduce the number of beds", and so on—was understandable. Being on the same strategic plane, they would be able to see that the health authority was doing the right thing. Of course, in reality, the Government are reacting to a severe underfunding crisis in South Glamorgan—underfunding to the extent of £7·5 million. They are closing hospitals so that the land on which they stand may be sold. In other words, revenue underfunding in the county is being made good by the sale of capital assets.

The type of problem that we in South Glamorgan face as a result of this clash with patient or consumer thinking is illustrated by the seminar that the NHS in Wales is organising this summer for the purpose of inculcating what it calls management thinking. It will be a wonderful seminar. It is being commended by John Wyn Owen, the director of the NHS in Wales. Indeed, the director has almost threatened that everybody involved in the NHS in Wales ought to attend. In the leaflet of invitation that was sent out on behalf of the NHS in Wales and the Yale university school of management he says:

"The need for the organisational development and the use of different management methods brought about by the White Paper"—

the White Paper "Working for Patients", not legislation—

"has made the programme of even greater relevance and interest at this time. I unreservedly commend it to you and look forward to seeing colleagues at this event."

Mr. Win Griffiths (Bridgend): Does my hon. Friend agree that this is a serious waste of paper? As American health costs are two or three times those in the British Health Service, it is unlikely that the Yale university school of management will be able to offer us any advice on the provision of patient care at low cost.

Mr. Morgan: I could not agree more. The cost of this seminar in Llandrindod Wells will be £1,500 per person attending. How many holidays in Llandrindod Wells could one normally get for £1,500? In addition, there is £225 VAT. This is to enable people from Yale to teach us something. But, as my hon. Friend says, in terms of National Health Service administration costs, we could teach them something. We could teach these professors from the Yale university how to run a health care system with very low administrative costs. The NHS in Wales is trying to inculcate this sort of management bunkum, whereas what we want is more money for the system. We do not want whiz-kids uttering buzz words; we want more medics delivering health care. Unfortunately, the elimination of community health councils will hardly help. It will lead to a culture in which management methods are finance-oriented—a culture in which, in the end, health care systems work for profit rather than for patient care. We need community-based CHCs to prevent that.

I listened very carefully to the Minister's remarks. I always find myself accepting that he is very sincere. He has an outgoing personality. If the electors of Cardiff, Central have anything to do with it, we shall discover at the next election just what an outgoing Member of Parliament he is. We in Wales do not want a transatlantic takeover. We do not want to be deprived of the ability adequately to resist the closure of hospitals. We want to be able to put forward the case for keeping the hospitals that we have. We do not want to see Ministers indicating to senior

[Mr. Morgan]

management staff of the NHS in Wales that we are heading for a finance-oriented system full of accountants and involving lots of expenditure on management conferences and new computer systems. We want a system whereby the CHC at community level represents the interests of the ordinary consumers of the NHS. If they want hospitals to remain open that the management wants to close, they should have the right to put their case as effectively as they can.

If the Minister thinks that he can get South Glamorgan health authority to close St. David's easily, he has another think coming. There will be an almighty row. We are not willing to accept that, suddenly, because of revenue shortfalls, health authorities will be panicked into making short-term hospital closure decisions. That will be the rocky road to ruin. It will mean that health authorities are left with no alternative but to sell their capital assets to make good the shortfall in money that the Government should provide.

Mr. Win Griffiths: We have had quite an interesting debate in the early hours of the morning. If we look at the Government's proposals once again—heaven knows, we have done so often enough—we see that they are based on a theory that has already been discredited in practice in many countries. In the United States, Switzerland, France and Germany, where there is much more of this so-called competition, average health costs are double those in the United Kingdom. The Government wish to bring into our Health Service market principles that are supposed to make the service more cost-effective and more sensitive to consumers' needs, but no health service in the world can support those claims.

On the basis of that discredited theory, the Welsh Office has already agreed to inject an additional £5 million into the Health Service to provide it with the information technology needed to enable the market system to operate. If the Government genuinely want to ensure that the new system is sensitive to the user's needs, a substantial increase will be needed in the resources made available to the community health councils. They are the statutory bodies charged with representing user and community interests in the NHS.

Instead, there has been a Welsh Office consultation paper in which the Secretary of State for Wales proposes to reduce the number of CHCs from 22 to nine. The Minister suggested that the Welsh Office would listen to all the responses, but he suggested also that our new clause, which is much more along the lines of the existing system than is the Government's proposal, is not to be countenanced. It seems as though the issue has been prejudged and that this is a deliberate attempt by the Welsh Office to remove a genuine local focus for anxieties about the NHS in Wales.

My CHC in the Ogwr district of Mid Glamorgan, which is superbly serviced by Mr. Chris Johnson, its secretary, does a tremendous job monitoring developments. There is no way that that CHC, translated into the county of Mid Glamorgan with the same number of people, could possibly monitor the entire Health Service in the county; it is out of the question. I hope that the Minister, in reviewing the responses he has received, comes to realise that that is the virtually unanimous opinion of all the people and all the organisations that have responded. Under the proposals, this extremely good community health council is destined to be swallowed, along with the three other community health councils in Mid Glamorgan, into one body with the same number of members—24. It cannot do the same job across the county as each of the present councils does in one district of Mid Glamorgan now.

4.15 am

In competitive business, commercial companies often take steps to ensure consumer satisfaction. There may be a move towards encouraging district health authorities, family health service authorities and service providers to assume more responsibility in this area themselves. However, in the commercial world, it is in the interests of the providers of goods and services to undertake that work in an objective manner. One cannot get such work done in the same way within the structure of a health authority. Patients do not have the same purchasing power as consumers have in the outside world. The two cannot be equated. In the National Health Service, purchasing power will lie with the procurers of the service, such as the district health authorities and the GPs who hold their own clinical budgets, rather than with the patients or the public at large. The imperative for the service providers will be to satisfy health authorities and GPs rather than patients. If patients benefit, it will only be by chance.

Community health councils as statutory and independent bodies must be recognised as having a primary responsibility for insisting on and measuring user satisfaction. They must be properly resourced to enable them to undertake that task effectively. Much of that input depends on the work of volunteers within the structure of community health councils. To imagine that the 24 good men and women will be ranged up and down the county of Mid Glamorgan—and this will be even less true of counties such as Powys—is to place a responsibility on them which cannot be sustained. We must look to community health councils that genuinely represent communities. Perhaps the Government do not fully appreciate that the councils are not only good at the provision of information, advice and assistance to individual members of the public, but are often the only groups performing such a task across the whole area of a health authority.

That part of CHCs' work is likely to increase substantially with the more complex pattern of services that the Government intend to introduce through the Bill. The Government are, unfortunately, seeking to introduce a far more market-style National Health Service. They will reduce the number of people who will provide an information service to patients seeking help in the Health Service. So far, community health councils in Wales have done an extremely good job with minimal resources. I should like the Welsh Office to review their work to see how it could be done more effectively, but merely to make a proposal to cut the numbers is wholly out of keeping with any form of providing an improved service.

The consultative document issued by the Welsh Office gives no confidence to the public that the CHCs will be able to do the job better when their numbers are slashed. The Department should accept that the CHCs will be even more important as part of the complex system that is being introduced.

Should the Bill pass unamended, we will move first to the commercialisation of the NHS and then to its

privatisation. In other words, this measure represents the first step towards the privatisation that the Government are trying to avoid having tagged on to them. The public at large know that that will happen, and it worries them.

The type of care that will be provided will be a precursor of what is now happening in America. We must face the fact that the more we introduce competition and the concept of cost-effectiveness in patient care, the sooner that American type of care will be on our doorsteps. Patients will become customers, cash will be king, cost-cutting will have a greater priority than patient care and access to treatment will be enhanced by personal payments.

The Government frequently say that they are spending more on the NHS. They are hiding behind the facade of the retail prices index, which has no relationship to the real cost of providing health care and meeting the expanding needs of the NHS, faced with our aging population.

Mr. Grist: I have been listening to this farrago for long enough—*[Interruption.]* The hon. Gentleman will appreciate that the vast bulk of the cost of the NHS is made up of pay, which is set against the cost of living index and therefore has a direct bearing on that index. Health authorities do not pay mortgages, which feature largely in the cost of living index. In other words, those issues have a great effect on the index.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. All of that is a considerable distance from the substance of the new clause that is being debated.

Mr. Griffiths: Community health councils play an important role in seeing that health authorities are properly funded so that patients get the care they need. Despite the Government's claims about putting extra money into the NHS, hospital waiting lists continue to lengthen and, because of the aging population and the stress that many people face due to high unemployment and more costly mortgages, greater use is being made of the NHS.

Not for the first time, I was confronted this week with a case that many other hon. Members will have faced. An old-age pensioner telephoned me almost in tears saying that he had been discharged from hospital into his home without anybody to look after him. He said he could not cope and was feeling unwell. I had to contact the health authority and social services to ensure that that old gentleman was not left to his own devices.

Such people are not being pushed out of hospital because they are considered to be well enough to manage on their own; they are having to leave to make beds available for others who are seriously ill. The CHCs, by monitoring developments of that kind, can highlight the need for a better-funded Health Service.

Why are health authorities in Wales—and, indeed, all over the country—crying out for cash for patients, when operations are being rationed? At Christmas last year, the Princess of Wales hospital in my constituency stopped all non-urgent operations for three weeks when waiting lists were growing. That is a scandal, and the Bill does nothing to deal with it.

Mr. Alan Williams: I did not intend to speak, but I want to respond to one or two points made by the Minister. As he knows from my experience with my local health authority—he has been of great assistance in that regard—I have as great an interest as he has in devising an effective method of controlling what could otherwise be arrogant and arbitrary authorities, although we may disagree on how that is to be achieved. There is no health authority in Wales more arrogant or arbitrary than that in West Glamorgan, as the Minister knows from the case of the Singleton casualty unit. We start from the same premise: we want an effective monitoring system that represents public interests vis-a-vis the policy decisions made by health authorities.

Nevertheless, I find it somewhat worrying—indeed, virtually grotesque—that a Bill that will change the system more drastically than it has been changed since the Health Service was established, so that even doctors are afraid that patients will be rendered into units of account by the budgetary system for GPs and the best-buy approach towards hospitals, also does something very different: it releases into that depersonalised system the very people who are least able to fend for themselves.

As a barrister, the Secretary of State for Health will remember—as will some of my hon. Friends—that, when the House first debated the abolition of the death sentence, one of the arguments against a life sentence of more than 10 years was that people who had served a sentence of 10 years or more became institutionalised. A week ago, a gentleman came to my surgery having just spent 30 years in a series of mental institutions. Now, in the community, he will have to survive as an individual, against the changing background that the Government are trying to introduce. He will find himself desperately dependent.

The Minister said that there would be no alteration in the CHCs' primary role of monitoring the changing pattern of the NHS. As I have said, however, this is a time of the most rapid change since the establishment of the service. As my hon. Friends have said, at the very time when monitoring is most needed—particularly in rural areas—it is being reduced. We are in danger of making the CHCs more inaccessible, not more accessible; more remote, not more available; and more difficult to find and approach.

4.30 am

Sitting alongside the Under-Secretary of State is the Secretary of State for Health, who has not enjoyed the greatest of eulogies in the past few months. But he at least is creating smaller CHCs in England than his colleague is seeking to impose on Wales. The Government are reducing the number of CHCs from 22 to nine, at the same time as they are halving the number of people who will be involved in them, and so halving the number of people available to the public and to carry out the very monitoring that he has admitted remains their primary role.

The Under-Secretary must ask himself how CHCs will achieve their primary function on much diminished individual resources. There just is not the manpower. There is no logic, other than on paper, in saying that there should be one CHC for each health authority. In Wales, except in Dyfed, the Minister is saying that there should be one CHC per county. If that is what he wants, it would be more logical—but not necessarily the best thing to do—to say that rather than create a special quango we already have representative organisations at county level. They are called councils. If he thinks that a county basis is correct, a machinery already exists that is more democratic than the one that he is seeking to impose.

Mr. Grist: The right hon. Gentleman will appreciate that we are not proposing to cut the amount of money going to CHCs. Therefore, the nine that we propose would be better resourced and so better able to carry out such work as patient surveys, which they may find beyond them at the moment. There is a pay-off there. It is difficult to know how 37 would be financed, particularly with a standstill on overall finances.

Mr. Williams: The Minister says that he will halve the number of people and give them the same resource. If he is cutting back on the number of people, it would be logical to increase the resource in order to enable the smaller number of people to use more up-to-date techniques to achieve his and our objectives.

Mr. Grist: The right hon. Gentleman seems to have misunderstood me. The same amount of money will be given to a smaller number, so they will have more money available.

Mr. Williams: But the point is that it is the same money, not more money. Therefore, the financial resource is the same. There are just fewer people to use it and to take advanatage of it. But the Minister does not understand that. That is where he has gone wrong. I hope that he will listen instead of laughing.

The Minister said at the outset that he approached the debate in an open-minded manner, but he does not give that impression and I am saddened by that. This need not be a point of great principle between the two sides. If there is genuine consultation, he should be willing to listen and not take a pre-set position. He should not sneer when someone is putting forward an argument in a reasonable way. I could make a completely different speech, which I would much more enjoy giving and which the hon. Gentleman would much less enjoy listening to, if I wanted to make a political speech. Atypically, I have tried to be eminently reasonable in the debate with the Minister and his colleagues.

The Minister started at the wrong end. He talked of bureaucracy but he brought to us a plan drawn up by bureaucrats for bureaucrats. He started with the system instead of with the people. He should have started not with the number of individual health authorities, but with the 2·5 million patients. He should have asked himself, "What is the correct structure to enable the interests of 2·5 million people to be properly monitored, sounded and represented by and to the health authorities and the Welsh Office?"

The Minister should remember that we are talking not just about policy decisions, but about monitoring local implementation and the results of those decisions. That is what matters to our constituents. That is why I said that he started at the wrong end. I return to the parallel that I put to him earlier; I am not suggesting that there should be 38 councils. He seemed to misunderstand my point.

There is a parallel to be drawn. In Wales we have 38 Members of Parliament, representing 2·5 million people. Does the Minister seriously think that we would do our job more effectively if we each represented two or three times as many constituents as we do at present? If he thinks of his surgery and daily caseload, does he seriously believe that he would do the job more effectively if he was responsible for two or three constituencies? That is what he is saying about the health councils. He wants them to become more remote and more difficult for the public to get to, yet they are supposed to be more representative. He is actually creating the reverse of what, I am sure, he genuinely wants to produce.

Will the Minister not be set and predetermined in his responses? There will be no crowing from the Oppositon if he says, "We have listened to the arguments and we think that some of the points that you have made were right. We reject other points, but on this particular point we think that the Opposition—not just as a party sitting on the Benches, but people in Wales, including the doctors, those in the Health Service, and the patients—are right. We acknowledge that we put forward a proposal in good faith, but on analysis it has proved to be wrong. Therefore, we shall be big enough to step back".

Mr. Michael: I had hoped that the Minister would respond to the generous invitation of my right hon. Friend the Member for Swansea, West (Mr. Williams) who was right to point out where the attention should be focused in this debate and to suggest that the Minister should start with the people, patients and the communities in which they live. That is what the debate is about and what the Minister has simply not understood.

Conservative Members have failed to respond to a constructive proposal. It is deeply disappointing that the Minister has been so negative. The Conservative party, generally, has been pathetic in this debate. We had a single sentence from the hon. Member for Pembroke (Mr. Bennett), who has otherwise been conspicuous by his absence. Apart from that, the Minister has been the single, lonely Conservative Member, rejecting the one opportunity open to him to build into this deeply unpopular and dangerous experiment with our National Health Service in Wales the representative of consumers in the community. As a Cardiff Member, I am ashamed of the Minister's response. The city of Cardiff, like every other community in Wales, rejects his plan and needs the new clause. His majority is not very large, so he will not be in the House much longer.

The Minister suggested that the CHCs—and there will be fewer of them—would be better resourced. They have an impossible task. The hon. Gentleman is trying to emasculate them and largely to eliminate the voluntary commitment that they attract and on which their work depends. I was amazed to hear his extraordinary claim that the new clause would fragment the community health services in Wales. That is complete nonsense because it is his proposals that will destroy them.

I regret that the Minister demonstrated his ignorance of the commitment and effectiveness of people in the local community if they are supported and encouraged to help a service in which they believe. The new clause offers a mechanism to co-ordinate the views of the more local CHCs that the hon. Gentleman proposes so that, where appropriate, a single view can be expressed across a county or district health authority area. That mechanism is built into the new clause, so why is the Minister rejecting it?

The Minister suggested that the link between the CHCs and what are now called family health service committees would be removed. That is untrue. The hon. Gentleman could not have read the clause. Paragraph (a) states:

"shall assume in its area, such responsibilities and duties in relation to health matters and services as are undertaken by the existing Community Health Councils."

No element in the work of the existing CHCs will be removed if the new clause is accepted. It involves representation in the development of plans within a county

council area because care in the community cannot simply be carried out by the local authority. We cannot ignore the overlap between the social services department, the health authority, the housing department and so on.

The new clause is an intensely practical recommendation. The Minister's response is impractical because he ignores what is done by CHCs—the regular and frequent visits to all hospitals, clinics and day centres; the fact that members of existing CHCs talk to patients and their visitors; the fact that they see conditions in Health Service provision as they are. That is what we want on a more local basis, taking into account the development of care in the community, and co-ordinated countrywide to provide the single, coherent voice that the Minister says that he wants.

I regret that I have to conclude from the debate that the Minister does not believe in giving the consumer a voice; that he does not believe in co-ordinating services in a way that involves the community; that he does not understand how communities tick. He has proposed a plan that will render the representation of the consumer in the community meaningless, and he had better think again.

Question put, That the clause be read a Second time:—

The House divided: Ayes 55, Noes 140.

Division No. 117] **[4.43 am**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Battle, John
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bradley, Keith
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Cousins, Jim
Cryer, Bob
Dalyell, Tam
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dixon, Don
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Flynn, Paul
Foster, Derek
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Harman, Ms Harriet
Haynes, Frank
Hinchliffe, David
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howells, Dr. Kim (Pontypridd)
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Kennedy, Charles
Killedder, James
Livsey, Richard
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Maxton, John
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Morgan, Rhodri
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Pike, Peter L.
Primarolo, Dawn
Redmond, Martin
Rowlands, Ted
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Spearing, Nigel
Wallace, James
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mrs. Llin Golding and
Mr. Ray Powell.

NOES

Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Brazier, Julian
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl'ts)*
Burns, Simon
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Fallon, Michael
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gow, Ian
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayward, Robert
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lord, Michael
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Marland, Paul
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Moss, Malcolm
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Oppenheim, Phillip
Patnick, Irvine
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Price, Sir David
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Redwood, John
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Rowe, Andrew
Sackville, Hon Tom
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Squire, Robin
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thurnham, Peter
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Waller, Gary
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, Sir John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilshire, David
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Tony Durant and
Mr. Sydney Chapman.

Question accordingly negatived.

New clause 4

CONSULTATION ON NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE TRUSTS

'(1) Before making an Order under section 5 of this Act the Secretary of State shall lay before Parliament a report.

(2) A report under subsection (1) above shall state:

(a) The results of a ballot of staff at the hospital or service applying for Trust status.

(b) In any case where a majority of the patients of the hospital or service reside in a single borough or district council, the result of a ballot of electors registered in that local authority area.

(c) The views of any relevant District Health Authority or health board in Scotland.

(d) The views of any relevant Community Health Council.

(3) The Secretary of State shall not approve application for a National Health Trust until a report under this section is approved by both Houses.'.—*[Mr. Robin Cook.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

Mr. Robin Cook: I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

We now come to the heart of the Bill and of the Government's proposals. The new clause relates to the proposal that the Government were good enough to refer to as one of their key propositions—the creation of self-governing trusts. That matter has given rise to strong views both for and against, and I am therefore happy to assure the House that this is not an occasion on which it is necessary for me to strike a non-partisan note. I have strong views on this matter. I believe that self-governing trusts will result in the fragmentation of the Health Service, that the competition on which they are based will introduce a commercial ethos into the Health Service, and that they are patently designed to pave the way for the privatisation of the Health Service.

I am aware that Conservative Members take a different view. Some take the view that this will be an excellent change for the Health Service. The Secretary of State's predecessor proposed that the changes would be the greatest breakthrough in medicine since the discovery of penicillin, but I doubt whether many hon. Members would wish to go that far.

Whichever view hon. Members take on whether self-governing trusts are desirable, there can be agreement on both sides that that step is a major decision for the local Health Service. The contention of new clause 4 is that that decision should be taken by local people. I am happy to say that the Secretary of State seems to agree with that proposition. At an early stage during the debate on the White Paper, he made a speech on self-governing hospitals which was videoed and included on the staff communications video. These are the words of the right hon. and learned Gentleman in that message which was so expensively prepared for the staff of hospitals contemplating self-governing status:

"I believe the best decisions on local services are the ones made by doctors, nurses and managers who have first-hand knowledge of the needs of local people."

That is a sensible basis on which to proceed.

However, I am sorry to report that, ever since we took the Secretary of State at his word, he has been desperately inventing arguments about why this local decision could not be left to local people. The Bill makes it perfectly clear who is intended to take that "local" decision. Clause 5 opens with the deathless line:

"The Secretary of State may by order establish bodies, to be known as National Health Service trusts".

It also states that the Secretary of State shall also appoint the board of directors of the trust, and

"The functions specified in an order . . . shall include such functions as the Secretary of State considers appropriate . . .

The Secretary of State may by regulations make general provision with respect to—

(a) the qualifications for and the tenure of office of the chairman and directors of an NHS trust . . .

(b) the persons by whom the directors and any of the officers are to be appointed and the manner of their appointment

(c) the maximum and minimum numbers of the directors;

(d) the proceedings of the trust; and

(e) the appointment, constitution and exercise of functions by committees and sub-committees of the trust".

All those things will be established in regulations that are to be decided by the Secretary of State. It is perfectly clear that it will not be left to the local people to decide whether they shall have an NHS trust, nor even what that NHS trust shall do. There is nothing in the Bill to oblige the Secretary of State, when deciding whether to create an NHS trust, to produce a single scrap of evidence that it is supported by the people who work in that hospital or those who use it.

That is why I have tabled a new clause 4, which would oblige the Secretary of State to report to the House before approving an order for an NHS trust on the views of three seperate groups that are most closely affected—all of them local people. The first of the three groups comprises the patients of the hospital. They come from the population of the catchment area of the hospital or unit concerned. I am conscious that the formula that I have proposed in the new clause will not fit every case on the list that is proposed for self-governing status. However, it will fit the majority—a point which I shall develop later.

Why should patients worry about the creation of National Health Service trusts? Why should they seek the right to ballot on the creation of a trust? The first reason is that trusts will be obliged to trade on their own account. Working paper No. 1 on self-governing hospitals is refreshingly candid on that point. On page 8 we find in paragraph 2.2 the following candid statement on how various hospitals or units are expected to balance their books:

"The main source of revenue will be from contracts with health authorities to provide their residents with specified NHS services to a given level and quality of service. Other contracts may come from general practitioner practices or private patients"

—a point to which I shall return. The moment that a hospital or unit finds that it is dependent for income on trading on contracts, it has entered into a commercial environment in which the directors who run the hospital will be obliged and have a duty to secure its financial viability before medical needs can be fulfilled.

5 am

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I am following the hon. Gentleman with great care. The passage that he quoted would apply to every hospital in the NHS, whether self-governing or directly managed. I am not sure why the quote from working paper No. 1 gives a key reason why self-governing status should be the subject of the ballot that he proposes.

Mr. Cook: I welcome that intervention, which I anticipated. The Secretary of State has just confirmed that not only self-governing trust hospitals will enter into a commercial ethos, but every hospital in th Health Service will find itself in a competitive and commercial environment.

The reason why I believe that patients in a catchment area where there is a proposal to create a trust should be anxious is that the moment that the hospital becomes self-governing it will be outwith the scope of the district health authority. It will no longer be directly managed by the district health authority. In the case of several district health authorities, to which I shall refer later, hospitals will have acquired self-governing status in defiance of the wishes of the district health authority. Hospitals may find that the district health authority does not have the loyalty and commitment to making it a success that it has to those which it directly manages.

If hon. Members have any doubts about how swiftly and dramatically the new environment would encourage a

commercial ethos within the hospital sector, they need only glimpse the documents currently being prepared by hospitals contemplating forming an NHS trust. I have found it depressing how quickly the language of public service has been replaced by the patter of the salesman. The most remarkable is the document produced by Yorkshire region. It advises management on what it will need to do once the hospital is a self-governing trust. It contains the immortal advice that managers should keep changing the product lines. I presume by that they mean the specialties of the hospital.

The dilemma of such hospitals has been well expressed by the director of one of the private hospitals in London, the Lister hospital. He was invited to write an article outlining what he saw as the challenges to the management of a self-governing trust. He said:

"The opted out hospitals will need to make firm decisions as to which services to promote and which are uncompetitive. Some specialities may have to go. The problem of unsuccessful specialities will be a real one. For how long could one carry a loss-making speciality?"

I invite my hon. Friends to notice what happened between the second last and last sentences of that paragraph. There was a reference to "unsuccessful specialities". How is an unsuccessful speciality redefined? Not as a speciality which failed to cure the patients, nor as one which was not needed by the patients, but as a loss-making specialty. The population of the catchment area of the hospital and its patients may seek the right to cast their vote on the question: what if they are the loss-making patient?

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: What does that mean?

Mr. Cook: It is not difficult for them to work out what specialties are at risk of being loss-making. We can identify them easily by running our finger down the list of specialties not provided by the present private sector. They are chronic care and long-term care with no immediate prospect of cure and involving heavy expense, for example, geriatric care, renal dialysis and chemotherapy. All are lacking from the private sector and are likely to be under pressure once the Secretary of State has created commercial pressures within the public service and the NHS.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: The hon. Gentleman is being most courteous in giving way. I am waiting for him to come up with one coherent argument for his proposed ballots. Perhaps because of the time of morning, he has so far not produced one. The manager of the Lister hospital has nothing to do with our proposals. All hospitals will depend on these contracts for finance. There is no distinction between NHS trusts and the rest. That means that they will be financed to the extent that they attract NHS patients. When they attract patients, whether for advanced surgery or basic community care, they will recover the full costs of treatment. They will not make a profit or a loss. If they are unsuccessful it will be because they are not attracting the patients of the GPs who would otherwise refer to that unit. We spent a long time on this in Committee, in which the hon. Gentleman appeared from time to time and took some part, so he knows that that is the position. I do not see the slightest relevance of his remarks to that position.

Mr. Cook: The Secretary of State has made an interesting observation which, if he means it, will require him to go back and redraft many of the notes of guidance and circulars which have been going around the district and regional health authorities for the past six months. He has just said that hospitals will recover the full cost of treatment of patients. That is not what his Department is saying to health authorities. It is saying that they must price a contract for a number of treatments with other district health authorities, their district health authorities or GPs, and deliver the required number of treatments within the price on the contract. That is the meaning of the whole contract system. The hospitals are not guaranteed the cost. If they get it wrong they will have difficulty in making ends meet. If that is not the case, it is utterly impossible to conceive what the function of creating the new system is, because at present we offer the hospitals their costs. It is that historic basis of pricing and paying the Health Service that we understand the Secretary of State is putting behind him.

If the Secretary of State is going to tell us that the director of the Lister hospital, as a director of a private hospital, has no insights to offer us about the future of the NHS, let me share with him the comments of the management of Trent region. It is within the NHS, although it seems to have every possible intention to get out as fast as possible. It produced an extremely interesting document marked "Strictly confidential" which provides advice to the personnel managers of hospitals seeking self-governing trust status. I shall return to the document later.

Mr. Rowe: I think that the hon. Gentleman has said something that, on reflection, he would not have meant to say. He stated that the people of the Trent region are working as hard as they can to get out of the National Health Service. The whole point about the hospitals—or units—is that they will remain part of the service.

Mr. Cook: That is an opinion which the hon. Gentleman is perfectly entitled to hold, but it is strongly disputed by many Opposition Members, and I shall develop that argument during my speech. If it is argued that those self-governing trusts will remain within the National Health Service, the hon. Gentleman has so redefined the meaning of that service as to put it beyond the recognition of anything that people would have previously contemplated.

I anticipate that the Secretary of State will not say that the management of the Trent region are irrelevant to our debate. Their document opens with some assumptions about self-governing trusts:

"a. in the short term there will be an initial period of stability and no immediate crisis"—

that is refreshing and reassuring, I am sure—and

"b. in the medium term, there will be rationalisation and contraction of services".

That is the assumption of the management of Trent region. That brings us back to the anxieties of patients in the catchment area, to whom I referred earlier. There is now a risk that specialties may be squeezed on commercial and financial grounds, but those patients require them.

Once upon a time, we were promised safeguards against contraction and rationalisation. Working paper No. 1 on page 3 promised those safeguards. The opening paragraph of the working paper on self-governing hospitals said:

"There will be safeguards to ensure that essential local services continue to be provided locally."

Those safeguards were going to be the core services.

One question that patents would want to ask themselves when considering voting in a ballot on the issue is what happened to core services. It was a pretty short list,

[Mr. Cook]

which did not at any stage include paediatrics or maternity services. The *Nottingham Post* had an entertaining quotation from a spokesperson for the Department of Health, who, when asked why maternity was not in the list of core services, replied that it was because Ministers forgot to put it in. However, it does not really matter whether paediatrics, maternity or anything else was omitted from the list, because there is not a word anywhere in the 60 clauses of the Bill about core services.

In Committee the Under-Secretary, who I suspect must be on the afternoon shift of these proceedings, advised us that he regretted that Ministers had got the name wrong. They should not have called them core services, because the use of those words encouraged us to have the wrong expectations. As it turns out, core services are no more than matters for negotiation between the district health authority and any hospital in the district that is contemplating forming a self-governing trust. There is nothing to prevent those trusts from deciding, during the negotiations, that they need a rate of return on renal dialysis or geriatrics that prices it beyond the reach of the district health authority, and nothing to stop the district health authority from deciding, during the negotiations, that the price offered is too expensive. Bang—between them, in the process of negotiation, it is gone; it is priced out.

I suggest that that is one of the key reasons why patients need a voice in whether their local hospital leaves the management of the local district health authority. They will lose the choice if a specialty goes and they may even lose the choice if the hospital retains the specialty that they need, because, as the Secretary of State fairly said in his intervention, patients will get into hospital only if there is a contract with the hospital for someone to pay for them to have speciality treatment—whether it is the district health authority or their GP.

That brings me to the last reason why patients in that catchment area should be anxious about their hospital becoming a self-governing hospital.

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): How can we be certain that patient needs will be defined? The scheme has been likened to going to a garage for a particular type of car repair. Is it not the experience of us all that we require treatment in hospital for a variety of reasons that involve different techniques? How will that practical problem be addressed?

5.15 am

Mr. Cook: I intend to deal later with that point. However, I believe that it is a travesty to describe the White Paper and Bill as proposals for the National Health Service. They regard people's experience of the NHS, particularly of hospitals, as episodic and completely unrelated to the continuity of care that they receive. The Government's proposals therefore threaten a break in the continuity of care that is represented by the present integrated service.

I was about to remind hon. Members of the contents of paragraph 2.2 of working paper No. 1. It refers to contracts with private patients or their insurance companies, with private hospitals and employers generally. We have only reached paragraph 2.2, but already we are into private provision. Let us suppose that a self-governing trust discovers that the mark-up for private patients is higher than the mark-up for district health authority patients. Let us also suppose that the private insurance companies with which it is supposed to negotiate says, "You will get our patients only if our patients get preference and shorter working times than NHS patients." That would be the perfectly normal reaction of private insurance companies. Would NHS patients then find that they had been disadvantaged?

The prospectuses that have been published by hospitals that are contemplating self-governing status are full of commitments to expand private practice. The nearest hospital to this Chamber that is contemplating self-governing status is St. Thomas's hospital. It has published a lengthy document which contains the following statement:

"There will be an expansion of private patient services, including a range of choice of accommodation."

Where is the expansion to come from? Where is the new range of choice of accommodation to come from? During the last two years that hospital has become notorious for removing NHS beds. Its expansion and new accommodation will not be a fresh site. The expansion in the number of private patient beds and new accommodation for private patients will be at the expense of the present NHS provision and of present NHS patients, who therefore are entitled to express their views in a ballot before such a step is taken.

Mr. Tim Yeo (Suffolk, South): Would it be the policy of the Labour party, should it ever come to power, to refuse to allow any National Health Service hospital under any circumstances to take private sector patients? Does the hon. Gentleman know how much income would therefore be denied to the NHS?

Mr. Cook: It is easy to answer the hon. Gentleman's second point: at present National Health Service hospitals are not permitted to take in private patients at a profit. It is only as a result of the Government's Health and Medicines Act 1988 that it is possible for them to seek to make a profit out of private practice. It is no part of the function of a free public service that is committed to meeting need, rather than to responding to market demand, to seek to make a profit out of the sale of medical services.

Mr. Yeo: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Cook: The hon. Gentleman has taken me wide of the new clause. I am anxious to confine my remarks to the scope of the new clause. I want to return to the new clause.

Mr. Yeo: Yes or no?

Mr. Cook: I am terribly sorry to disappoint the hon. Gentleman, but I have to say that I responded to his point. [AN HON. MEMBER: "What about the charity out of which he has had a good living for years?"] That is a very fair point.

As I do not want the hon. Gentleman to be disadvantaged in any way, I shall try again to answer his point. He may intervene again if he wishes to do so.

Mr. Yeo: Will it be Labour policy, should that party ever come to power, to allow National Health Service hospitals to take any patients from the private sector? Will the hon. Gentleman please answer yes or no?

Mr. Cook: Our policy on that matter has been set out fully on a number of occasions. The answer to the hon. Gentleman's question is that we have no intention of legislating to prevent hospitals from taking private patients. None of our policy statements contains anything to suggest that we so propose. It is our policy, however, that no patient should be brought in on a trading basis —for profit.

Secondly—and much more important—the function of National Health Service hospitals is to treat NHS patients and to meet the needs of the people in their catchment areas. If the National Health Service were successful in meeting that objective, the private sector's market would vanish. If the hon. Gentleman ever looks at BUPA's recruitment leaflets, he will see that the organisation's one selling point is the waiting lists for NHS hospital treatment.

All of this indicates precisely why we worry about a Government so patently committed to the expansion of private provision. One does not stimulate the private sector, one does not push the demand for private medicine, by subsidising it. Tax relief for the elderly patient is at the margin. If the hon. Gentleman asks, the private sector will tell him that such relief is peripheral. The way to increase the demand for private provision is to run down the public sector to such an extent that it cannot make proper provision. That is why one is suspicious of an Administration committed to expansion of private practice. Such an Administration cannot be committed to excellence within the NHS.

I was tempted wide of my remarks just as I was about to turn to the second group who, under new clause 4, would be provided with a right of consultation—the staff of the hospitals or groups proposed for self-governing status. The main anxiety about the proposals for self-governing status is the anxiety about what they will mean for patients. Staff do have legitimate concerns. Indeed, those concerns came up during exchanges in Committee on this point. The only protection for staff is provided in clause 6. It provides protection, but only at the point of transfer to the self-governing trust. At that point, staff will transfer with the pay and conditions to which they were entitled on the previous day. Thereafter, they will be on their own. They will have no right to be included in national negotiations. A self-governing trust hires and fires its staff; it sets its own wage rates; it chooses whether or not to follow a national award. Here we are considering not just Whitley council staff. What about those people who fall within the pay review body network? A self-governing trust will not be obliged to follow a pay review body award.

What about the thousands—tens of thousands—of nurses who are still awaiting a decision following the clinical grading review? What will happen if their hospital decides to form a self-governing trust? What will be done about appeals? To whom, for that matter, would they appeal?

Not only do the staff find themselves outwith national negotiating systems, but they find that they have no absolute right to collective bargaining. A self-governing trust has no obligation to recognise even the existing health unions. *[Interruption.]* I am grateful for that confirmation. A self-governing trust need not confer the right to organise in a union, although the staff transferred to it will be members of a union. There is no obligation, even on a self-governing trust, to recognise any system of collective bargaining, whether through trade unions or for any other purpose. Both those points—the exclusion from national negotiations and the loss of the right to collective bargaining through recognised existing Health Service unions—are surely sufficient to warrant the staff being asked whether they wish the hospital or unit for which they work to make such a dramatic change.

There is an even more pressing reason why the staff should be given the option of voting on this question. They are not even to be asked whether they are willing to transfer. Clause 6 does not give the staff the option not to transfer with the self-governing trust. They are not to be allowed to say, "I am sorry, I do not want to transfer to a self-governing trust. I want to stick with my present employer and hold my present employer to my present contract of employment." Clause 6 makes it clear that that option does not exist. Subsection (5) states that the preceding subsections

"are without prejudice"—

that is rather nice—

"to any right of an employee to terminate his contract of employment"—

it is unfortunate that we are obliged to use the legal fiction that everyone is male, especially in the context of the Health Service, where most of the employees are women—

"if a substantial change is made to his detriment in his working conditions".

That does not confer any additional right on an employee, because he or she has that right whether or not it is stated in the clause. I invite my hon. Friends to mark well what comes next:

"but no such right shall arise by reason only of the change in employer effected by this section."

In other words, that employee has no right to terminate his or her employment because of the transfer from the district health authority to a self-governing trust. As my hon. Friends know, were employees so determined to terminate their employment, and were they to turn up at the unemployment benefit office, they would be told that they became voluntarily unemployed and did not qualify for benefit for six months.

In Committee, Conservative Members rejected Labour amendments to give staff the right to say, "No, we wish to stick with the district health authority." All right, if it has to be a compulsory transfer and staff are not to be given the individual right to say no, surely they must be given the collective right to ballot on whether their hospital should form a self-governing trust. Conservative Members have strongly insisted over the past decade on ballots of union members for every conceivable purpose. I concede that over that period unions have got in a lot of practice in balloting. I admit that some have become quite attached to the idea of ballots, but the Government will leave those members of health unions in a strange position. They have a statutory right to elect their general secretary but they will have no ballot on a change in employment that could result in that general secretary not being able to protect them or negotiate for them with the employer to which they had been transferred.

Lest any hon. Member thinks that these anxieties are fanciful, I shall deal at some length with the document produced by Trent region called "Patients before Profits". It was essentially about the personnel function of the new hospitals that are to form the self-governing trusts. Let me share with the House some passages. This is a passage from page 6 of the document:

[Mr. Cook]

"Suppose people in key positions manifest a lack of commitment to organisational goals, ideals and values? What about renegades, subversives and opposers of what is being attempted? There will be a nettle to be grasped in terms of recruiting, keeping and getting rid of people in key positions right through the self-governing trust."

I note that my hon. Friend the Member for Halifax (Mrs. Mahon) is here. I suspect that if my hon. Friend had been an employee on such an occasion—and she was an employee of the Health Service—she would quickly be indentified as a renegade subversive and opposer. I suspect that my hon. Friend would be rather insulted is she were not swiftly so identified.

5.30 am

Page 9 of the document contains the following statement on trade unions.

"A self-governing trust will need to take decisions at an early stage as to whether it wishes to recognise any staff-side organisation for collective bargaining. It may be an appropriate tactic from the first day not to confer recognition on any organisation in order that the self-governing trust can pick the perfect time and opportunity to begin to enter into discussions for recognition of collective bargaining."

We should note the passage:

"to begin to enter into discussions for recognition of collective bargaining."

On page 10 there is the suggestion that even collective bargaining may not be conceded:

"A self-governing trust will have a choice. It may choose not to enter into collective bargaining arrangements. It may choose to continue to adopt the Whitley pay strategy or, alternatively, it may seek to impose pay deals. The trust will also need to have a clear view of its pay strategy and whether it chooses to move totally to individual remuneration packages."

I finally want to share with the House a passage from page 13. It says in the discussion on pay:

"Where the issue is one of lack of competitiveness, buying out a staff group may not be a viable option as this would merely increase costs when the defined problem was that the costs"—

I remind my hon. Friends that "costs" means pay—

"were already too high. The options here appear to be either to red circle existing work posts and offer different rates to new starters or to move into competitive tendering."

In that passage, the problem identified is that NHS staff are paid too much.

What emerges from the document is a picture of a management already manoeuvring to clear out those of independent mind and to remove the right to belong to a union that is recognised by the management. It is a management prepared to contemplate not even honouring existing pay agreements to new staff.

Mr. Max Madden (Bradford, West): Will my hon. Friend also accept that the Bradford Health Service trust has already said that staff who do not like the terms and conditions on offer will be subject to instant dismissal without any right of redress and that all night sisters in Bradford have been told that the night sister posts are to be abolished under the trust? They have been told that they may be redeployed, but they fear that it would be to lower nursing grades. They are also fearful that in cases where such vacancies are not available, they will be made redundant.

Mr. Cook: My hon. Friend strengthens the case for new clause 4. If those are likely to be the changes that will flow from transfer to a self-governing trust, how can one in all conscience deny those night sisters a say in whether that step is taken? Is it any wonder that they should worry in those circumstances? Is it any surprise that they want the right to be consulted on such a dramatic change in their employment?

So far, my remarks on staff have been directed mainly, but not solely, to the waged staff. There are also grounds for concern for the professional staff. There are the minority professions, by which I mean not professions that are marginal, but those that are small in number. My hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle upon Tyne, Central (Mr. Cousins) highlighted their position in a speech in Committee. There are only 900 medical physicists in Britain, and only 1,200 clinical biochemists. What are the implications, for small professions of that type, of the fragmentation of employers, possibly following different pay, different conditions and perhaps even the issue of different qualifications, because working paper No. 1 says:

"These hospitals will be free to hire whomsoever they please."

What will happen to the regional spread of such professions? What will happen to issues such as training and co-operation among professions that are so small in numbers that to be effective they require a high degree of collaboration on new techniques? Those are all questions of legitimate concern to those professions, the members of which should also have the right to cast their votes in ballots about what should happen to their hospitals.

Then there is the much larger medical profession, where, I concede, there may be a different result in respect of pay compared with what I anticipate will be the result in terms of pay and conditions for waged workers. It is possible that the members of the medical profession may be able to exploit the new arrangements to their financial advantage. The NHS is the monopoly purchaser of medical staff. It has immense bargaining strength. I suspect that that explains why other European countries have to pay more for their doctors. For reasons that appear dubious to me, the Secretary of State proposes to throw away that bargaining strength that he has in relation to the medical profession.

In creating self-governing trusts, the Secretary of State is creating competitors with himself for the best qualified doctors, and the most likely result is that he will have to pay doctors more. The Trent document anticipates that in some respects and says:

"There is a danger that they"—

self-governing trusts—

"may overheat the market place and create an inflationary spiral in respect of certain groups of staff whereby each of the self-governing trusts are bidding up terms for scarce staff or are recycling a chronic staff shortage."

In other words, those self-governing trusts will find that they are bidding up the salaries of doctors.

The Secretary of State's views on the financial motivation of doctors is well known, since he gave birth to an unfortunate phrase which identifies their motivation with their wallets. It is to the credit of the medical profession that its response to the proposal of those self-governing trusts has not been to recognise them as an opportunity for personal financial gain. Doctors weighing up the pros and cons of self-governing trusts have given their impact on patient care very careful consideration.

But there are narrower professional issues with which we must be concerned and which have already dominated the votes that have occurred, on an unofficial basis, among consultants in hospitals contemplating self-governing

status. Most of those issues have been concerned with their contract. At present, consultants hold a contract with the regional health authority. In future, they will hold it with the self-governing trusts. To all intents and purposes, they will hold their contract with the unit general manager.

The past two years in hospitals throughout the country have been marked by a struggle between consultants and unit general managers in which the latter have been cast in the role of people trying not to get more work out of their consultants but to stop the consultants from treating more patients—from going over budget—and there is foreboding among consultants about a situation in which, by contract, their general managers will be able to order consultants to stop carrying out treatments that they believe the patient population requires.

The next issue of concern to consultants is their freedom to speak out. They were promised that freedom by Nye Bevan at the time of the founding of the NHS. That promise has been respected until now by every Government. Sometimes it has embarrassed Governments. It has certainly been exercised by consultants, who have had no regard to whether they were embarrassing Governments or their managements. A self-governing trust is unlikely to respect the freedom of consultants to speak openly and freely to the public whom they serve about the standard of service in their hospital, and the pressure on them to restrict that standard in the interests of the budget.

Mr. Yeo: I understand the hon. Gentleman's need to pay heed to his union paymasters, and to make a determined plea to protect the power of Health Service unions. Does he believe, however, that the Secretary of State should have centralised powers to dictate to every unit in the country—however small—the qualifications for the staff that that unit wishes to hire and the work, salary, hours, terms and conditions of every employee?

Mr. Cook: As far as I am aware, none of my hon. Friends is sponsored by the British Medical Association, or, for that matter, by the National Health Service consultants' association. I should be slightly surprised to find that we had formed that link without its being brought to my notice at some stage, as I am a member of Labour's national executive committee.

Mr. Yeo: What about NUPE and COHSE?

Mr. Cook: The hon. Gentleman does not need to tell me the names of the Health Service unions. Of course there are links between them and my party, and I make no apology for those links: they are one of the reasons for our being able to keep abreast of developments in the Health Service, despite the cloak of secrecy with which the Government have tried to veil them. I happen to believe that the work force has legitimate rights which must be legitimately expressed. As I said earlier, our main cause for concern is the effect on patient care, but we should not dismiss the feelings of staff.

The hon. Gentleman asked whether the Secretary of State should have the power of direction. He does not at present: most of the qualifications are set by recognised professional bodies. Certainly I am not in favour of leaving it to individual self-governing trusts to decide what are the appropriate professional qualifications and what is the appropriate training; the House has a duty to the public to ensure that national standards are adequate.

Mr. Doug Hoyle (Warrington, North): I am sure that my hon. Friend would agree that professional qualifications have been developed not only by the unions but by the professional organisations, over many years. Are Conservative Members saying that what applies to accountants and lawyers should not apply to the Health Service? Surely professional qualifications are particularly important—indeed, essential—when life and death depend on them.

Mr. Cook: I have some sympathy with my hon. Friend's point, although it often strikes me as curious that we insist on professional qualifications for every profession except our own.

Consultants may be willing to forgo their right to speak out publicly, but it is a democratic right none the less. It was given to them by means of a parliamentary assurance, and they should be asked to give it up only on the basis of a democratic vote in which they are able to participate.

Consultants have other worries. What will happen to research programmes, for instance? Much of the most successful medical research is based not on actual sponsored work, but on the meticulous recording of patient notes over the years, and on investigations that, while not immediately necessary, are important to the consistency of the research programme. It is based on a case mix that is not necessarily consistent with the highest throughput or the greatest volume. All that may come under pressure from a board of directors looking for rapid turnover and high throughput. It may also conflict with the needs of medical training which requires that spread of case mix.

Those are all important considerations which give sound reasons why the medical profession may wish to have a vote on whether their unit forms a self-governing trust. I should like to think that the Secretary of State would not wish to deny consultants that ballot. That may be a rash presumption, but he has committed himself to that proposition. On page 22 of working paper No. 1, he says:

> "senior professional staff, especially consultants, must be involved in the management of the hospital . . . Any successful proposal would need to demonstrate that it carried the substantial commitment of those likely to be involved in the new management."

What better evidence could there be of that substantial commitment than a vote by the consultants on whether their hospital should form a self-governing trust?

5.45 am

I am not keen on a ballot confined to consultants. Other members of staff also form part of the same health team. Hospitals do not need just doctors and nurses to function; they also need ambulance staff, medical secretaries, porters, cooks, physiotherapists and laboratory staff.

If the Secretary of State is prepared only to recognise consultants, I am prepared to make the giant compromise and say that we will settle for a ballot on a consistent and official basis for consultants.

What worries me, and may worry other hon. Members, watching how the Secretary of State has gone about gathering in the applications for self-governing trusts, is that I know how he will go about getting that evidence of substantial commitment. He will find a few pliable consultants who sit around in committees putting their name to prospectuses to give the cover of consent for that hospital.

That approach is already causing tension. In Guy's hospital the consultants became so fed up with the fake consultation offered to them by management that they called in the Electoral Reform Society to carry out a ballot. Another hospital approached the BMA to hold a ballot because

"the in-fighting is poisoning the business of care at the hospital."

The problem is that the Secretary of State is playing with rubber rules. The problem with rubber rules is that they create friction. If he really wants to demonstrate that the consultants' commitment is clear and above board, if he wants to get the self-governing trusts off to a start that all consultants can accept as fair and open, he should give all consultants a vote in a ballot.

I have addressed my mind to why patients and staff should wish a ballot. But another group is identified in my new clause as requiring consultation before a step is taken to form a self-governing trust. That other group is the relevant district health authority. At first sight, it may seem eccentric even to state that the views of the district health authority should be obtained. After all, the hospital that is forming the self-governing trust happens to belong to the district health authority. It owns the buildings and hires and pays the staff. Its buildings and staff are going. Yet a number of major hospitals within district health authorities have submitted proposals for self-governing status against the express vote of those district health authorities. I know of four. They are Newcastle, where the Freeman hospital and the mental health services unit have been nominated for self-governing status; Doncaster, where, as my hon. Friend the Member for Barnsley, West and Penistone (Mr. McKay) will know, the Doncaster Royal infirmary and the Montague hospital are seeking self-governing status; North Tyneside, where we have the particularly rich paradox that North Tyneside district health authority has come out against self-governing status, and the entire services of North Tyneside are seeking self-governing status, leaving the district health authority with nothing directly to manage; and West Lambeth district health authority has come out against self-governing status and there remains an application on the table from St. Thomas's—not just one of the largest hospitals in central London, but the hospital of West Lambeth district health authority.

I can think of no more striking example of the way in which district health authorities are being bypassed by a new line of heirarchy—running from Richmond terrace, through regional management, to district management and down to unit management—than the way in which the Secretary of State has been able to call forth up that line of management accountability proposals for self-governing status that bypass the very health authority affected by the application.

There are reasons why the district health authority should be concerned, and why it may wish to have its views recorded before the House in the way that I propose in new clause 4. This brings me back to the intervention of my hon. Friend the Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing). There is the fragmentation of the service. The district health authority's strength is that it brings together in one comprehensive management both the hospital and community services. In Scotland we have achieved an even greater integration because the health boards also include the primary care function.

I always thought that the way forward in England was to achieve greater integration of the health services in England, instead of which the Secretary of State has chosen to go for fragmentation. That begs a number of questions. What is the meaning of continuity of care when the hospital is managed by a self-governing trust and the community services are managed by the district health authority?

The best patient care and management results from close contact and common management between consultant and district nurse or occupational therapist. Already that relationship is stretched by the increasing pressure on community services from the fast turnover in hospital beds. As a result, patients who have not fully convalesced are being sent home, placing an extra burden on community services. Effectively, hospitals are achieving greater efficiency at the expense of greater cost to part of community services.

If this happens now, how much more will it happen once the district hospital and community services have separate budgets and separate managements? Will not the self-governing trust be tempted to externalise its costs by passing as much as possible on to the community services still managed by the district health authority? That appears to be a matter of legitimate anxiety to the district health authority, which should have the right to record its views to the House. An essential reason for that anxiety is that the Government's new structure deals with hospital treatment as an episodic, isolated event, limited in time.

The hon. Member for Pembroke (Mr. Bennett) who, unfortunately, is not with us——

Mrs. Mahon: Fortunately.

Mr. Cook: —the hon. Member for Pembroke who, fortunately, is not with us.

Mrs. Mahon: That is better.

Mr. Cook: I am glad that I carry my hon. Friend with me on that point.

The hon. Member for Pembroke, unfortunately, was with us throughout that Committee proceedings, as my hon. Friend will recall. During one of the Committee sittings, he said that organisations that claimed to represent patients were bogus because patients' experience of the Health Service was limited to two weeks at a time. That would come as a novel insight to the Asthma Society or the Epilepsy Society which, by definition, represent people who are lifelong patients. It is a revealing glimpse into the way in which the package of measures before the House is dominated by the concept of short bouts of illness, and rapid cure and turnover. That is an experience limited to only a minority of patients. For the majority of patients, the episode in hospital is part of a continuous experience in which continuity of care is marked by transfer from primary care to hospital, and from hospital back into the community service. That is an issue about which any district health authority, or health board in Scotland, might wish to express views to the House.

Mr. Spearing: I am grateful for my hon. Friend's exposition of the point that I raised earlier—the disintegration inherent in the Government's proposals. Is he aware that I understand that St. Thomas's hospital stated specifically to those whom it wished to recruit that it would be handy and near to the proposed Channel tunnel terminal at Waterloo? At the moment, the district

hospital in Newham is not contemplating opting out. However, should—by some chance—the Channel tunnel railway come to Stratford, according to the Government's proposals the hospital could opt out without any vote or any concern for the district health authority. Is not that the precise point that my hon. Friend is making?

Mr. Cook: I well remember my reference to that. I said that St. Thomas's claims that one of the advantages of opting out would be that, because of the proximity to the Channel tunnel terminal, it could attract overseas referrals. St. Thomas's will have to do some rethinking in the light of what has happened with the Channel tunnel, but the idea existed that it might receive overseas referrals —presumably treated as part of its expansion of private patients' facilities, in the new range of accommodation for private patients at the expense of NHS provision.

Mr. Rowe: It would be only a marginal extension of the practice of St. Thomas's hospital if it went across the Channel for patients. It has been trawling for patients around the Medway towns and the rest of Kent for many years, at the great expense of the Medway towns, in order to keep alive one of the many hospitals in London for which there is no longer any serious need.

Mr. Cook: Without necessarily taking a view on whether the hon. Gentleman is correct, his contention goes to the heart of my new clause. He said that St. Thomas's meets no real need in the local population. That contention would be bitterly disputed by the West Lambeth district health authority. The new clause seeks to give that authority—which is opposed to St. Thomas's seeking self-governing status—the statutory right to have its views recorded in a report to the House. It would be proper for the hon. Gentleman in those circumstances, should he choose, to vote down that report and the views of the authority. If he is to bandy around such wild statements, we should confer on the health authority the right to express its views to the House and to protect the people whom it serves, who also strongly feel that they still require those services. I expect that the hon. Gentleman will soon recall the words of the Under-Secretary in Committee—not all of my hon. Friends will be aware of them—when he said, with characteristic candour, that as a result of the operation of capital charges—which would penalise the centre-of-London hospitals—some patients from those hospitals were being redirected to peripheral areas where capital charges were less costly, possibly Mid-Kent and thereabouts.

On the issue of new clause 4, I wish to focus on the anxiety of a district health authority rather larger than West Lambeth—for example, Leicester—or a health board—for example, Lothian—that has more than one major hospital. It may well have developed those hospital services not to compete with each other as the Bill supposes, but to complement each other. I shall cite the example of Edinburgh, a place I know well. It has two major hospitals—the Western general and the royal infirmary. They have been developed so that the rarer specialties are allocated between them to provide a complementary balance, not on the basis of a competitive scramble for the patient. The health board chose and planned that strategy because it is cost effective, and cuts out competitive duplication in expensive equipment and rare and expensive skills. It avoids the waste of the American system in which every commercial hospital has to have its own latest piece of technical gadgetry to retain an image necessary to succeed in competition.

A health authority with more than one hospital may wish to record its anxiety to the House about what would happen if one of the hospitals were to opt out. What changes would that cause in the other hospital that remained directly managed? How would it adjust to meet the competition? What new expenditure would be necessary? What new staff would it need? What new specialties might it have to consider adopting in order to meet the competition? Those are all considerations that the Minister may miss as he mulls over the questions in Richmond terrace. Those are considerations which the health authority has a right to have recorded in the House.

6 am

There is one even greater ground for anxiety among health authorities. Let me introduce this passage by reminding the House that the hospitals and the units setting out on the self-governing path are being invited to push the boat out into the new competitive sea. On the basis of the statements that I have seen by managements who are peddling self-governing trusts, there is an intriguing feature common to all the prospectuses and statements.

Every management seeking to encourage its staff to go out into the competitive sea says that it will succeed in the competition between hospitals. Logically, they cannot all be right. Some may succeed, but competition implies that there must also be losers. A district health authority is surely entitled to express its view as it answers the question, "What will happen if our district general hospital is the loser in the new competitive environment?" What if the hospital fails? It is not a fanciful question. It is a feature of the commercial market that there is constant contraction and expansion of competing firms.

In America, where competition between hospitals is commonplace, 90 acute hospitals have closed in every year of the decade. Will the same logic apply to these hospitals? Apparently, yes. The previous Minister of State, before his rapid and unexpected departure, went on record as saying that it was no part of the new NHS to subsidise hospitals that could not compete efficiently. Translated into the local context, that means that if a district general hospital has gone into a self-governing trust and is unable to make itself financially viable, the district health authority will see it closed because it is no part of the new NHS to subsidise hospitals that cannot compete efficiently.

Is there a safety net? If not, surely the district health authority is entitled to express its view on whether it wishes to see its general hospital take that competitive risk. That is undoubtedly also of concern to the staff and to the unions of the Health Service. After all, they are very much in the boat that is being pushed out in the competitive sea. They may want to ask, "Will it sink?" That is another reason why they should have a ballot. It is certainly the consideration which should weigh uppermost with the district health authority in expressing its opinion.

Until a year ago no NHS hospital had been required to price a single contract or a course of treatment to its district health authority. It is now being invited to enter the new competitive market in which it will have to do precisely that. The original theory put forward by the Secretary of State when he launched the White Paper was that by April of next year each candidate for

self-governing status in the first wave would have cracked the problem of how to price contracts, would be able to price a contract on every treatment and could also guarantee that the aggregate of each contract balanced the total expenditure of the hospital and of the unit. I concede that there has been much hedging and settling for second best as the sheer impossibility of the task became clear, but in essence those hospitals and units contemplating self-governing status are still left with the challenge of how to negotiate contracts that result in revenue matching expenditure. How will they do that? That question will surely exercise minds in many district health authorities and the staff at the hospitals. After all, the staff have witnessed at close hand the financial skills of unit general managers over the past two to five years. They have not always been impressed by the financial acumen of those general managers. Indeed, over the past year the Secretary of State has been constantly blaming those general managers for weak local management which has resulted in the financial crisis in the health authorities. However, the Secretary of State is now putting the charge for the financial viability of hospitals on those general managers. The tools that he is providing for them are pretty rough and ready.

When the White Paper was launched a year ago it was suggested that the pricing of contracts could be achieved by adapting the computer system for the resource management initiative. That computer system has not yet been evaluated and it was developed for a purpose entirely different from costing and pricing contracts. The district health authorities and the staff representing the hospitals within the resource management initiative quickly decided that they would need more time before they could price a contract.

There are only six hospitals in the resource management initiative and five of them made it clear from the outset that they could not carry out that function in the timetable required.

Mr. McCartney: About six weeks ago I wrote to my local hospital about a patient who was seriously ill with gallstone trouble. I received a reply from the unit manager, not from the consultant. The answer was revealing and shows that that hospital is already carrying out the kind of exercise described by my hon. Friend.

The unit manager stated that although the consultant said that the patient was of the highest priority, the hospital had exceeded patient numbers for this financial year and therefore the operation could not take place. I received that letter on 12 March from Miss Waterhouse, the unit general manager for Wigan hospital on behalf of her consultant urologist.

Mr. Cook: My hon. Friend illustrates the other side of the contract. Not only will hospitals have to get the costs right, because every penny coming to the hospital will come by way of contracts, but patients will get into the hospital only if there is still room in the contract for additional patients.

I was stating that five of the six hospitals in the resource management initiative decided that they needed more time before they could price a contract before April 1991. The one exception was Arrowe Park hospital in the Wirral. It expressed polite interest in the concept and was on the first list of hospitals listed as having an interest in self-governing status. That hospital has dropped out of the first division of that list. None of the hospitals that have experienced the resource management initiative computer system now want to opt out. All the hospitals that are seeking to opt out have no experience of that computer system.

Therefore the Secretary of State has produced a fall-back system. He has three pilot projects for a computer system known, appropriately, as HIS—hospital information systems. All those pilot projects are in deep trouble. I notice from the latest issue of *Computer Weekly* that two companies that were bidding for the system have now withdrawn. Many of the firms that did not bid, such as ICL and Istel, claim that the plans were overambitious with too short time scales between tendering and supply.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I have been glued to my seat for some time as I have listened to the hon. Gentleman through error after error, with misstatement after misstatement, describing the new process that he is seeking to attack. Does he accept that we have now reached the positon where all hospitals—not just self-governing hospitals—will have to provide all their services under contracts, such as he is describing, not only for acute services, but for community services also? All hospitals and all community units will be working under contracts.

Does the hon. Gentleman also accept that this issue about contracts has nothing to do with his new clause, and that the pricing of those contracts, the stipulation of quality and everything else that is required, will not depend on the resource management initiative or on HIS? We have made all that absolutely clear. Therefore, before the hon. Gentleman wanders off down this latest byway, perhaps he will return to the point raised by his hon. Friend the Member for Makerfield (Mr. McCartney) who was describing a situation which has arisen under the old National Health Service—the pre-contract National Health Service. No doubt that health authority was behaving as health authorities sometimes have to behave in response to the cash limit within which all health authorities operate. I remind the hon. Gentleman that the Labour Government introduced the system of cash limits. The position that the hon. Gentleman has described has been occurring in the NHS for as long as I can remember——

Mr. McCartney *rose*——

Mr. Clarke: No, I am sorry. This is an intervention. I am replying to the hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) who has kindly allowed me to intervene.

Given that the hon. Member for Livingston accepts the system of cash limits that was introduced by his own Government, how does he propose that the Wigan health authority should cope if it does not price what it is doing, if it does not have any budgeting or information systems or any matching of work with resources? What is his answer to his hon. Friend who has complained about the unreformed NHS, which he appears to defend? In the past, the hon. Gentleman has talked about activity budgeting. Will he explain what that means, as it appears to be his answer to the things that his hon. Friend mentioned?

Mr. Martin Redmond (Don Valley): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is not fair that the Secretary of State should make such a long intervention when he will

have the opportunity of making his own comments at the Dispatch Box to try to sell what he is trying to sell. It is appalling——

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I can reassure the hon. Gentleman that I shall make my speech as soon as I am enabled to do so after this third-rate filibuster to which the Opposition have now reduced our proceedings——

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Could you tell the House whether my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) has breached any of the Standing Orders during his excellent outline of the new clause?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I think that we had better get on with the debate. I call Mr. Cook.

Mr. Cook: Indeed, we had, Mr. Deputy Speaker. However, first I require your guidance. My hon. Friend the Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) has been good enough to point out that you have not intervened at any point to draw me to order. If, when responding to the Secretary of State, who has tempted me to discuss the general financial environment of hospitals and to respond to some of the statements that he made, I stray out of order, could you guide me, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

Since the Secretary of State has raised this point, let me respond to it. The right hon. and learned Gentleman said that cash limits were introduced by the last Labour Government, to which I can make two responses. First, I pray in aid my hon. Friend the Member for Makerfield (Mr. McCartney) and invite him—*[Interruption.]* I am terribly sorry if I have misplaced my hon. Friend, who is unusual among Scotsmen for having a detailed knowledge of Lancashire geography which is denied to many of his compatriots. I pray in aid my hon. Friend who has a knowledge of his area that stretches back to the days of the last Labour Government. Can he recall a like case that arose during the period of the Labour Government?

My second response to the Secretary of State is that although the last Labour Government introduced cash limits, they were subject to supplementary estimates. Throughout the period of office of that last Labour Government, the cash limits were automatically raised to reflect every staff and pay increase. It is the loss of that automatic uprating in line with the award to staff which has created the squeeze of the hospital sector under this Government.

I put it to the Secretary of State, since he asked the question, that I and my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition have stated our commitments clearly. The next Labour Government will do two things in the hospital sector. First, they will restore to the hospital sector that sum by which the health authorities estimate that they have been shortchanged by this Government since 1984. Secondly, we shall fully fund pay awards that are made thereafter. I notice you shifting uneasily, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am conscious that it is perhaps time that we returned to the new clause.

6.15 am

I wish to respond to one point in the Secretary of State's lengthy intervention—which I believe was in order. He made a comment about computer systems. I was not objecting to computer systems. It would be a good thing if more computer systems were developed within the Health Service. The point that I queried and which has been queried by *Computer Weekly* and by most reputable computer companies is whether it can possibly be done in the time scale on which the Secretary of State insists. He is shoving hospitals and health authorities down a path at a pace that is likely to guarantee chaos.

Just as the staff who work in hospitals should have a vote and patients should have the right to a ballot, the district health authority should have the right to record its views before the House. I have dealt with each of those three groups separately. But it is worth recording that they all have reasons in common to worry about the self-governing proposals. Each has a right to wish to express its view before self-governing status is acquired

I stress to the House that if it does not accept new clause 4, it will leave each of the three groups with no statutory right to express a view on the proposal for self-governing status. That is because the Bill makes little provision for any consultation before, during or after the creation of self-governing trusts.

If new clause 4 is not accepted, there will be no consultation before self-governing trusts are set up. There is no proposal in the Bill for consultation. Ironically and rather eccentrically, it proposes that there should be consultation before a self-governing trust is wound up, but not before it is created. It is one of the rare flashes in the Bill that suggest that the Secretary of State may have a sense of humour.

Staff, patients and health authorities will be excluded from the choice of directors. Just as the Secretary of State will decide whether to set up the self-governing trust, he will appoint the directors. There are only two constraints on his choice. First, in appointing the non-executive directors, he must consult the chairman. Who appoints the chairman? The Secretary of State. Secondly, the two non-executive directors drawn from the local community will be appointed by the regional authority. Who appoints the regional health authority? The Secretary of State. There is a seamless web stretching back to Richmond terrace.

Staff will have no right to nomination, community health councils will have no right to consultation, and patients will have no right to representation. Most breathtaking of all, the district health authority will have no right to nomination. The Secretary of State's choice of the regional health authority as the body which nominates the local community representatives is particularly eccentric.

As the College of Health has observed,

> "A board of 10 directors with a Chairman appointed by the Secretary of State and including at least two community directors appointed by the regional health authority does not sound like local people running their own hospitals."

I may be wrong. Perhaps the non-executive directors will be excellent people who are so much in touch with the local community and staff that there is no need for the new clause. Possibly, the need for new clause 4 will vanish at the announcement of their names. The simplest way to put that thesis to the test is to name them. It appears that the non-executive directors have already been appointed.

I have with me the minutes of the conferences of project managers held in December, January and February, all in large central London hotels. There is something perverse about decisions on local hospitals being taken in central London hotels behind closed doors.

Mr. Madden: Probably expensive hotels too.

Mr. Cook: Certainly not cheap hotels. I concede the point to my hon. Friend.

I draw attention to paragraph 7 of the minutes of the December conference which was held in one such hotel. I cannot name which one, but most were held either in St. Ermin's or the Grosvenor. The heading reads, "Non-executive helpers" and continues:

"Original chairmen have been commissioned by the Secretary of State to provide names of non-executive helpers by the end of the year."

That is the end of last year. It becomes patent that the phrase non-executive helpers is a transparent way of referring to non-executive directors whose names were provided to the Secretary of State by the end of last year.

I brush over the fact that we are still debating the Bill which creates those self-governing trusts. I overlook the fact that the Secretary of State has at present no power to appoint non-executive directors of a self-governing trust anywhere. I leave aside that constitutional nicety. I seize on the possible convenience of that to our debate.

If those non-executive helpers are the right people, perhaps we do not need the right of consultation through a ballot. This may be an opportunity for the Secretary of State to cut short the debate. Will he name these non-executive helpers whose names he received by the end of the last year, and share them with the House?

Mr. Spearing: Intervene now. Come on.

Mrs. Mahon: What about the long intervention now?

Mr. Cryer: Come on windbag, get up.

Mr. Cook: I would not wish the Secretary of State to remain so glued to his seat that he cannot intervene. His silence on this occasion speaks more eloquently than his intervention on the last occasion.

These non-executive helpers are remarkably coy. The rest of the paragraph states:

"Project managers have reported that in some cases such helpers are not prepared to be named publicly, at least until a firm decision to submit an application has been made. Some argue that public identification of such a helper may not be acceptable to clinicians at this stage."

It emerges from that minute that these are not people who represent the local community; these are people who are terrified of the reaction of the local community to their names becoming public. That reticence to go public is another good reason why staff and patients should have the right to a ballot before a hospital is handed over to these coy missing names.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: May I share with the hon. Gentleman the reason for my diffidence and that of some non-executive helpers? My guess is that they are rather loath to be drawn into the daft debate that we have had for the past hour about self-governing hospitals. The hon. Gentleman has misdescribed, deliberately in many cases and sometimes accidentally, just about every feature of the self-governing hospital proposal. I have not the first idea how he would describe the role of these individuals if they were named. No doubt he would cast them in some Mephistophelian guise. If we get outside people with business experience to help those contemplating the possibility of a self-governing trust in their locality, they should not be exposed to this sort of nonsense, even if hon Members must.

Mr. Madden: How much are these helpers being paid?

Mr. Cook: We can answer that succinctly. The Bill provides for £10 million to be paid to members of the new health authorities. *[Interruption.]* I think that the Secretary of State is in danger of misleading the House by saying that they will not be paid at all. Payment to the directors is a matter for the self-governing trusts to resolve.

Mr. Clarke: Given that smearing everybody's interest has been a feature of our debates from time to time, I took the intervention of the hon. Member for Bradford, West (Mr. Madden) to mean that non-executive helpers have been paid in some way for their present role. They most certainly are not.

Mr. Cook: I understand from that intervention that the Secretary of State is confirming my statement that the directors will be paid by the self-governing trusts once they are established.

I found two points in the Secretary of State's penultimate intervention particularly interesting. First, when he referred to the qualifications and background of the non-executive helpers, he named only one consideration—business experience. Not community representation, not medical qualifications but business experience. Secondly, the reason he gave for the helpers' coyness about being named was that they were not willing to enter into debate. I understand why people may not wish to enter into democratic debates and may not wish to mix with politics and I do not mind that. They are perfectly entitled to get on with their business and private lives as they wish. However, they are not entitled to seek to run major public services such as the Health Service because people who purport to run those services have to be prepared to enter into debate with Members of Parliament and with Opposition spokesmen on health.

There has been a revealing exchange between the two Front Benches about self-governing helpers and the direction in which self-governing trusts are going. The last area in which staff, patients and district health authorities are likely to find themselves excluded from having a say is in the future of the self-governing trusts. Working paper No. 1 on page 14 promises:

"In general, the Government looks for as much openness as possible in the management of the NHS hospital trusts. As a minimum, each Trust should hold an annual meeting open to the public, at which a report on the previous year's performance, the accounts, and the business plan would be formally adopted"—

not by the public, but by the trust.

I put it to the Secretary of State that an annual meeting at which annual reports are adopted by the trust in front of the public is scarcely

"as much openness as possible."

It is pretty mininal openness.

Three paragraphs in the working paper are headed "accountability". They are all concerned with financial accountability; none of them is about democratic accountability. As has been said, accountability of an annual meeting adopting annual reports is no more open to the public than the board of Unilever or Harrods is open to the public. Before the boardroom doors are closed and self-governing trusts are established, staff and patients must be given the right to express their views.

The last reason for staff and patients to be given a vote, under the terms of the new clause, is that there have been a number of such ballots already, on an unofficial basis.

We have debated a number of them in Committee. Wherever those ballots have been held they have come down crashingly against self-governing status.

In Aberdeen, where there was a ballot of consultants, 251 votes were cast and 80 per cent. of them were against self-governing trusts. In the Borders general hospital in Scotland in a staff ballot, 831 votes were cast and 80 per cent. were against. In towns in the north-west of the country there have been a number of ballots open to both the community and the staff. The total number of votes cast was 30,920, with 620 in favour and 30,300 against. In the east Midlands more than 7,000 people were polled in various locations. The vote for self-governing hospitals was 446 and the vote against was 6,500. In a ballot of 800 consultants in Wessex, there was a clear majority against any hospital seeking self-governing status. The pattern is unmistakable. Across Britain—from Aberdeen to Cornwall and from Blackpool to Lincoln—there is the same message. Given half a chance to take a local decision, local people do not want local hospitals to leave the management of the local health authority.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): The real reason why the Secretary of State does not want ballots to take place is that he knows that whenever there is a ballot there is bound to be an overwhelming majority against opting out. If he thought otherwise, he would not be against ballots. The figures that my hon. Friend has given well illustrate that fact.

Mr. Cook: My hon. Friend's helpful intervention leads me to my next point.

Where ballots have taken place there may not have been a specific proposal to opt out. Where there has been a specific proposal by hospitals to opt out, we find exactly the message that my hon. Friend suggested. There is only one major hospital in Scotland that has expressed an interest in forming a self-governing trust: the Royal Scottish National hospital at Larbert.

6.30 am

Mrs. Wise: My hon. Friend referred to a hospital that has expressed an interest in opting out. He is falling into the trap of accepting, unconsciously and unintentionally, the definition of a hospital that is implicit in the legislation: that the hospital is not the staff, or the patients, or the local community but simply the general management. I ask my hon. Friend to make it clear that he rejects that definition of a hospital. If he uses shorthand, such as "a hospital has applied to opt out", may we take it, nevertheless, that he rejects that definition of a hospital?

Mr. Cook: I am justly rebuked by my hon. Friend. She is absolutely correct. It is a phrase that I have slipped into using because of its frequent repetition by Conservative Members. A hospital cannot express an interest; it is a building. There are some remarkable examples of that in the original list of hospitals that expressed an interest in opting out. One of those hospitals was the new district general hospital at Gravesham, which at present is a collection of fields. There were pleasant television pictures of cows grazing peacefully in a field that had expressed an interest in opting out.

It is not always the unit management that expresses an interest in opting out. In some cases, individual members of the public have expressed such an interest. Gateshead mental services unit found that it had been nominated by an unknown member of the public for opting out. A hospital in East Grinstead found that it had been nominated by a concerned member of the public. I am happy to say that those hospitals have disappeared from the list. The original list of 178 has been reduced to fewer than half that original number. My hon. Friend is right to point out that the decision to opt out is not a corporate decision. The point of my new clause is to ensure a ballot that would result in a genuine corporate decision by those who are involved with the hospital.

The Royal Scottish National hospital was nominated by the unit general manager and by nobody else. That hospital is unusual and distinctive. It caters solely for severely mentally handicapped patients. They have made their home for decades in that hospital. I find it tasteless that the hospital for those patients, who cannot write letters to *The Scotsman* and cannot join protest marches through Glasgow, should be chosen as the pilot project for Scotland. The staff were balloted; 802 members of staff were opposed to self-governing status while 34 were in favour of it.

In Leeds, East there are two major hospitals. One of the largest hospitals in Europe expressed an interest in opting out. The two community health councils conducted a postal ballot of 1 per cent. of the electorate in 10 wards of Leeds, East. They found that 76 per cent. of those balloted were opposed to opting out and that 24 per cent. were in favour. The Secretary of State has just appointed as community representative and chair of the Leeds, East district health authority the chairwoman of the Yorkshire Conservative association. I have already said that the district health authority in Doncaster opposes the formation of a self-governing trust there. As hon. Members will know, an opinion poll in Doncaster found that 71 per cent. of electors and patients oppose self-governing status, whereas only 13 per cent. support it.

In West Norfolk, where the acute services have expressed an interest in opting out, there was a ballot of consultants. Of those, 33 came out against, and seven were in favour. How that can be regarded as evidence of senior staff being committed to self-governing status I do not know, yet the proposal there is going ahead. North Middlesex is nominated for self-governing status. In Haringey, 2,000 staff of the district health authority voted, and self-governing status was opposed by 96 per cent. of those. In Plymouth, there was a ballot of consultants. Ninety were opposed to self-governing status, and six were in favour.

The West Midlands regional health authority carried out the most comprehensive exercise. In a referendum open to every elector in Redditch borough, 32,000 votes were cast. That represented a 57 per cent. turnout—quite respectable for a local election. The people there were asked whether the local Alexandra hospital should press ahead with its proposal to opt out and form a self-governing trust. Of those people casting votes, 81 per cent. were against a self-governing trust. So there was massive opposition in that important test of local opinion.

Of course, my hon. Friend the Member for Walsall, North (Mr. Winnick) is right when he says that the Government are opposed to referendum because they produce these results. My hon. Friend was not a member of the Standing Committee, where we heard objections tumbling out of a number of hon. Members. They were at pains to point out why all these results were unreliable. One of the reasons, apparently, was that the people taking

[Mr. Cook]

part in the exercises had got hold of the wrong leaflets, which contained misleading information. Other reasons given were that people misunderstood the proposition and that they had been misled by me and by my hon. Friend the Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman).

In a winding-up speech in Committee the Minister said that the issue was too complex to be put to a mass vote. It is quite clear how the hon. Members on Standing Committee E would have voted on the Reform Act had they been here in 1832: they would have been against it. It would have been too complex an issue for the masses to vote on; or people are too prone to being misled by Opposition spokesmen; or they might get misleading leaflets.

At every general election in which I have stood, my opponents have circulated misleading leaflets. That is in the nature of democracy. One has to trust the electorate to be able to see through misleading leaflets. I am happy to say that, in my case, that is what has happened. This is the rough and ready nature of the British electoral system.

I come now to my concluding piece of evidence. We now have—I concede to the Secretary of State that we did not have it previously—ballot evidence that cannot be subjected to many of these criticisms. I refer to the ballot that was carried out by the district health authority in West Lambeth—the first official ballot formally organised by a health authority within the Health Service. Every member of the staff of West Lambeth district health authority was balloted. The people were presented with the issues. They were given information. The leaflets cannot have been misleading, as they were produced by the health authority.

What was the result? The result of a ballot with proper information and proper leaflets, and with not a single speech from my hon. Friend the Member for Peckham or myself, was that 2,449 people were against self-governing status, whereas 550 were in favour. I note from the press that the chair of the West Lambeth district health authority has undertaken to write to the Secretary of State to draw his attention to the result. Of course, the chair of that authority has more direct and immediate access to Richmond terrace: his daughter is the Minister for Health. I understand that, after that result, he indicated that he wishes to withdraw the community services from the bid for self-governing status. The major part of the bid—the application for St. Thomas's hospital to be given self-governing status—still applies.

Given that we were promised that such applications must show staff commitment and given that a properly organised, officially conducted ballot was held which showed that staff resistance, I regard it as an affront to democracy that the authority should persist with that application. It would be an insult to Parliament if the Secretary of State were allowed by the rules to let the unit general manager to get his way and opt St. Thomas's out so that it becomes a self-governing trust without even reporting that data to Parliament. That vote makes the case for new clause 4, the case for staff to have a right to ballot and for Parliament to have a right to know the results. On that ballot, I rest my case.

I have said enough to open up the debate. In Committee in debates on NHS trusts, we repeatedly heard how good they would be. We were told that they would release enterprise and initiative to find new cures for cancer. If the Government believe that self-governing trusts will be so good, let them put that case to the people and let them judge. I ask the Secretary of State to have faith in his case and to believe that it will not be blown apart by a misleading leaflet or a speech by me. If he really believes in local choice, he should give the local people a choice.

I give this warning: if the Government refuse to give that choice and turn down new clause 4, we will make sure that those ballots are organised for the Government. Throughout the country, we will expose not just how damaging self-governing trusts will be to the Health Service, as a public service committed to continuity of free care, but the fact that the Conservative party knows that the proposals are so deeply unpopular that it is terrified to let the people vote.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: When we began our proceedings on the Bill, I did not imagine that we would not embark on a discussion of the proposed reforms of the English National Health Service until more than 12 hours had gone by. At last, we have the opportunity of entering a debate. I apologise to certain Members for my getting up second, but I cannot be accused of getting up too early in terms of the time spent on debating new clause 4.

I have found the process of parliamentary debate on the Bill intriguing from beginning to end. I concede that we had a reasonably civilised discussion in Standing Committee. We completed our clause-by-clause analysis of the entire Bill—the National Health Service reforms and the care in the community clauses—within a reasonably fast time, without having to have any late-night sittings or a timetable and, for much of the time, without excessive controversy—[HON. MEMBERS: "No."] That allowed us to complete that stage of the proceedings. Obviously, there was a difference between us. The hon. Member for Livingstone (Mr. Cook) would expect me not to have been overwhelmingly impressed by all his arguments. The point was underlined to me that the deph of opposition in the Labour party to many of our proposals was not quite as great as one might have thought, given the froth outside.

After a pretty easy ride in Committee, in terms of the qualitative arguments and the length of time that they took, when we have come to the Floor of the House, we have suddenly turned to a long filibuster on the first NHS clause. [HON. MEMBERS: "No."] I have made long speeches in my time when in Opposition. I do not recall making one of nearly two hours, as the hon. Member for Livingston has just done. On a new clause that in essence covered ground that we covered several times in Committee, for two hours the hon. Gentleman produced a snippet of this and a bit of that and familiar arguments which I have heard many times before. The hon. Gentleman was entitled to return to them. Mr. Speaker selected the new clause and, of course, we must debate the amendments in order. I am glad to respond to the hon. Gentleman's arguments. As I said, having failed to mount a serious challenge to our proposals in Committee, the Opposition are in danger of reducing the Report stage to a third-rate filibuster.

6.45 am

Mr. Battle: The Secretary of State owes it to the House and to others who are interested to make it clear that many of us were not members of the Committee and did not have

the opportunity to hear the details of the argument. Aside from the poll tax, the Bill has been the single most important issue on which we have received correspondence for the past year. It is, therefore, important that we know the details of the argument on Report.

Mr. Clarke: It is important that everyone knows the details of the argument about any parliamentary proceeding at every stage. I merely said that we had gone by the most peculiar fits and starts in our debates. The opportunity for the hon. Member for Leeds, West (Mr. Battle) to participate in a full debate on each provision in the Bill will plainly be jeopardised if the Opposition spokesman, the hon. Member for Livingston, suddenly switches from the tactics of reasonably short speeches in Committee to two-hour introductions of new clauses once the Bill is debated on the Floor of the House. I need not detain the House for anything like the length of time that the hon. Gentleman did.

Mr. Tom Clarke: Apart from the fact that I submit to the right hon. and learned Gentleman that he is giving the House a distortion of events in Committee, does not he consider that in his first speech after the Government's defeat, he might offer a little bit more modesty than he has done so far?

Mr. Clarke: I think that I should be out of order if I went back to earlier new clauses, tempted though I am. I have given my description of events. An analysis of the length of the speeches of the hon. Member for Livingston will confirm what I have said. I shall give way as often as hon. Members wish. I anticipate that, given their current chosen tactics, they will interrupt me frequently. They obviously wish to spin out the proceedings.

Mrs. Wise *rose*——

Mr. Clarke: I shall give way if hon. Members insist. If it is the desire of the Opposition merely to stop serious debate proceeding, I shall concede that. Otherwise, I shall begin to address myself to some of the hon. Gentleman's remarks.

Most of the hon. Gentleman's points, as I sought to make clear in my interventions, were not remotely relevant to self-governing hospitals, although he said that they were. I shall try to sweep together a group of the hon. Gentleman's arguments—the theme to which he recurred frequently. The theme that he often uses when talking about the reforms is that we are "commercialising" the National Health Service and that in future, we shall concentrate on what is profitable, not what is loss making. He believes that that is a threat to the future of the Health Service. Most of those points relate to the contractual basis on which health services in the acute sector and the community sector will be financed when our reforms are implemented.

As I sought to make clear in an early intervention, the NHS trusts, the self-governing hospitals and the self-governing units to which the new clause relates will not be the only parts of the Health Service engaged on this contractual basis. It will be true of the directly managed units as much as of the self-governing units that they will enter into agreements with the district health authorities and with the GPs who wish to refer patients to them, either in a block or individually, to provide the services to those patients. In that agreement, they will set out the quality and quantity of service to be aspired to. They will also set out the nature of the service, and whether it requires continuity of care and a combination of the acute and community services, or even the management of a condition, such as diabetes. That will be stipulated in the contract and will apply to every unit, whether self-governing or directly managed.

There may be later amendments when we can discuss in greater detail the nature of the contracts. I suggest to the House that the most relevant amendments will be those later on quality. It is important to bear it in mind that when people make their choice, which they are entitled to do, about how they would prefer to be treated in the National Health Service, quality is probably the most important factor that they have in mind. So the way in which those contracts stipulate quality and the way in which we decide what quality of care the district health authorities, GPs and patients should be looking for, are probably the most important features of the contract.

In any event, contracts generally will apply to all hospitals. That is not a separate feature of NHS trusts, which can be the subject of any of the ballots to which the new clause is devoted. When we deal later with contracts, we shall make it clear that there is no such thing, and there never will be such a thing, as a profit-making or loss-making contract in the NHS. So the analogies on that basis are all false.

The hon. Member for Livingston argued that self-governing hospitals should be examined because if a hospital went self-governing, that somehow posed a threat to the delivery of essential local services. He went on to call services designated services. They are not set out in the Bill in those terms because it does not require a change in legislation to put into the reforms that we are proposing the concept of designated services, a subject that we explored repeatedly in Committee, when I tried to explain the position to Opposition Members.

When an application for self-governing status is made —and it is allowed, so that there is an NHS trust—and one then discovers that the trust is providing a service, which must be provided at that locality for a particular section of patients served by a district health authority, we have repeatedly made it clear that that will not be determined by ballot. The DHA will be able to require the NHS trust to carry on delivering that service. There will be no question, despite what the hon. Member for Livingston appeared to imply, of people being denied it because it will be priced out. They will be entitled to look to the Secretary of State to require that service to continue to be provided, and the Secretary of State will settle the price if that becomes a difficulty between the trust and the DHA. Again, that is not remotely connected to the question of ballots.

Mr. Spearing: The right hon. and learned Gentleman appreciated that the debate on the new clause involves important principles, which my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) adequately expressed. Is the Minister saying that where there is a difference of opinion —where there is a difference of interest between a district health authority and any contracting hospital, which may be a hospital of the type that we are discussing—the judgment of what is reasonable, or a similar form of judicial responsibility, will be placed on the Secretary of State? If so—and the right hon. and learned Gentleman said that it was so—is not that centralisation of the sort that his party is against in principle, as well as putting on a central authority, at the Elephant and Castle or

[Mr. Spearing]

anywhere else, a duty to make a judgment of clinical and medical matters for which such an authority is hardly suited?

Mr. Clarke: It is true that in those cases, which I believe will be comparatively rare, where there is disagreement between, say, a district health authority and a self-governing unit about whether a service should be designated as a service that must be provided by that trust at that location for a particular group of patients, in the end the Secretary of State will have to decide.

The hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing), who is familiar with the NHS, will realise that every time a major change in the pattern of service is proposed by a DHA that gives rise to local controversy, in the end that is determined by the Secretary of State. In practice, such matters are usually delegated by every Secretary of State —including those for whom I have worked—to the Minister of State. I take the view that I have made enough decisions about closing hospitals and major changes of service to have had my fill, so I get involved now only with the exceptional ones. A large proportion of the workload of the Minister for Health, under any Government, involves making just those judgments about proposed major changes of service, although the number of those that will arise in this conext will, I believe, be somewhat reduced.

Ms Dawn Primarolo (Bristol, South): What criteria will the Secretary of State use to adjudicate between a purchaser and a provider in relation to the provision of a core service in a given area? I do not think that that has been dealt with, although business plans are being prepared.

Mr. Clarke: I think that that has been spelt out, so I shall give an unscripted answer. The criteria will relate to whether the district has a reasonable alternative to the service to be provided from the location of the NHS trust. What is reasonable will depend on accessibility and geography, and also on whether any service of equivalent standard is available.

The circumstances will vary. Someone with a rare heart complaint, for instance, will be unlikely to find a designated service at his local hospital: people can travel hundreds of miles for such treatment. By definition, however, a high proportion of community services will be provided locally, in particular localities and by a particular part of the Health Service, and many will be designated. It will depend on the local circumstances of each case. That is why we have not spelt out the details of maternity provision. The maternity service varies throughout the country; it is also a service in which people particularly want choice. Indeed, we all want mothers to be given choice, rather than a single place being designated for all patients from a particular location.

Ms. Primarolo: Can the Secretary of State give us his definition of "local"? The definition in Bristol, where three district health authorities converge, may be very different from the definition in Cornwall.

Mr. Clarke: I agree that that could vary from place to place, but it refers to what is reasonably accessible to the population—given the geography—and to the service or specialty involved. We are not specifying a three-mile radius, for example, because, whatever a patient's condition, whether it is essential and reasonable that the service be provided locally varies from one area to another, as do the distances involved. The main test will be whether there is any reasonable alternative.

Mrs. Mahon: I questioned the Secretary of State closely last year about whether DHAs such as mine would keep their accident and emergency services, and he gave me a couple of answers. I asked the same questions in Committee. According to the answers, the trust or the DHA will decide what is local. Will the Secretary of State give me a guarantee that Calderdale will keep its accident and emergency service?

Mr. Clarke: I do not give such guarantees about any accident and emergency services, and never have: I have closed one or two in my time, as have my predecessors, both Labour and Conservative.

A major change in the service, such as the closure of an accident and emergency service, would be approved by the Secretary of State only if it were part of some improvement in the service: indeed, it would normally be proposed only in such circumstances. We do close accident and emergency services. I remember closing some in London, where they used to be extremely close to each other. There can be advantages in having one good centre, rather than a lot of underequipped ones scattered around a small area.

Before the hon. Lady decides that I am speculating about Calderdale, let me say that I cannot remember the configuration of accident and emergency services there, off the cuff; nor can I say whether anyone is remotely contemplating any change of any sort there. Under the new arrangements as under the old, however, the NHS would consider closing an accident and emergency unit only as part of an improvement in service.

Considerable pressure is being imposed on us by the Royal College of Surgeons to examine all our trauma services. It has made some extremely interesting propositions. Many surgeons think that it might be a good idea to concentrate more of our major accident work on fewer sites, and build up expertise and a range of specialties on those sites.

There is often a conflict between medical and public opinion. The average member of the public, including most hon. Members, probably thinks that accident and emergency departments should ideally be a couple of minutes away from wherever one happens to be knocked down. That is not something which would worry many doctors. They would want to know what was in the accident and emergency department to which someone would be taken. In particular, for a head injury, they would want to know whether there were the necessary specialists in the place to which the person was to be taken.

Those are the only sort of criteria that will go into such judgments in future, as under the old arrangements. As I have repeatedly made clear, it is nonsense to keep raising fanciful claims that an accident and emergency department would be closed because it was unprofitable or because people would go roaring off into doing private work at the expense of NHS work.

7 am

The decline in NHS work is dealt with in the Bill. It would have been nice if, in moving new clause 4, the hon. Member for Livingston had reminded himself of clause 5(6), which makes it clear that anybody engaging in private

sector work must not do so at the expense of NHS contracts into which he has entered. The idea that he put forward, en passant, wandering off into his red herrings with a particular flourish, that such people might take in private patients who could be put ahead of NHS patients in the waiting lists is complete nonsense, as the hon. Gentleman knows. We have repeatedly committed ourselves to the six principles that are accepted by both sides of the House that govern the treatment of private patients in NHS hospitals. One is that they should be treated according to clinical priority and we, like the Labour party, are against the idea of private patients queue-jumping. That will apply within the NHS within which there will be self-governing trusts in future.

The only change on private practice that the hon. Member for Livingston was proposing, as far as I could see, was that he would reduce the price charged to private hospitals. Apparently, he thinks that it is wrong that the NHS should make a profit out of private medicine. But he will not stop private hospitals engaging in private medicine on NHS premises. That is an extremely quixotic gesture. He will deprive the NHS of income by reducing the prices that it charges to the private sector. What a strange insight into the alternative policy of the Labour party on the NHS.

Mr. Simon Hughes (Southwark and Bermondsey): Is not the inevitable logic of a system, whereby the district purchases and chooses on the basis of cost between different offering hospitals that it will go for the cheapest option? As a result, there will be competitive activity between the providers, the hospitals, with, certainly in London—more obviously in London than elsewhere—the resultant forcing out of some of the services that would be regarded as core services simply because cheaper ones will be available, which districts will be obliged to contract to purchase. Is not that the inevitable consequence of a system that will become more competitive and that requires districts always to be seeking to save money, irrespective of quality, which is another criterion altogether?

Mr. Clarke: I am genuinely grateful to the hon. Gentleman because his intervention goes to the heart of a genuine controversy about our new proposals. It is simply not correct to say that districts will choose to place their services according to cost and cost alone. Many reputable critics of my proposals base their whole case on the proposition that somehow districts and GPs will feel obliged always to go for the cheapest option. I think that we all agree that there can be no more foolish approach to the obtaining of medical care than to believe that the cheapest option is always the one we should go for. Not one hon. Member would remotely want our health care to be decided on that basis. However, I would also guard everybody against the simple assumption that is often made, not least by hon. Members, that the most expensive is necessarily the best. That underlies many of the arguments that I face. The range of costs in the Health Service, under the present system, varies amazingly between one district and another. It by no means follows that the districts with the most expensive services are the best.

In making all those decisions, people will make a judgment, based on the combination of quality and the use of resources, as they should be doing now. All health judgments tend to be like that. Most people engaged in health care, be they professionals, clinicians or managers, constantly have to make difficult judgments on what is the best quality of care that they can obtain or provide for their patients within the resources available. Under the new system, that process will be undertaken in a more rational and open fashion, and people will see to what type of care and what quality the resources are being committed.

Mr. Hughes: I am grateful and I understand that. Let us take a specific example. My local health authority of Lewisham and North Southwark has options. It might go for what it regards as perfectly good orthopaedic treatment, to, for example, Guy's, King's College, or Maidstone hospitals. The qualitative judgment will be similar. Therefore, it will be bound to make its decision on the basis of the financial judgment. It will have many other needs to meet, and if it is looking to provide all those other needs for the populace of Lewisham and North Southwark, it will inevitably choose—if there is not much to choose on quality—the cheaper option. Eventually, that process will drive out alternatives because the market will have taken over from a National Health Service providing corporate care.

Mr. Clarke: If there is not much to choose from on quality that might happen. The first judgment that the authority makes will be based on quality, as I have said. However, in using all the resources, it will have to do what it does now—to make decisions about how to get a comprehensive service so that everything, not just orthopaedics, is financed. It will want to get the best quality across the spectrum, using the resources that it has.

It may be that in some areas the de luxe quality is so expensive that the authority will decide that it cannot spend that much on orthopaedics and has to go for a cheaper option, either because it has to get the volume to get its waiting lists down or because it wants to invest more money in its mental illness or mental handicap sectors.

Those sound difficult choices, and they are. But they are exactly those that the Health Service has always made. The odd-sounding events described by the hon. Member for Makerfield (Mr. McCartney) related to a specific example, about which I know nothing. However, we all know the sort of difficulties that health authorities currently get into when they have to make just such judgments.

The trouble is that, at present, authorities do not know exactly how much they are spending on their orthopaedics or their community services. Nobody measures the quality. We are introducing quality control through clinical audit. The authorities do not know whether the services that they are receiving are better than those at the place down the road. When a district discovers that it is spending spectacularly more on a part of the service than is the next-door district health authority, it is often a revelation to those in the district. When they look to see what they are getting for the extra money, they may find that it is nothing, in which case the contract system will enable them to rationalise.

Mr. Hughes: I do not object to auditing and ensuring that money is spent wisely. However, the Secretary of State must appreciate that the difference between the system that he proposes and the present system is that, at present, the same patients in the same health authority, for example, Lewisham and North Southwark, look to their local

[Mr. Hughes]

hospital to provide all those services. The difference will be that when the quality judgments work out equally and the cost judgments are different, instead of all the services being available locally, some of them will no longer be available locally. People will be sent away for those services because the district will have no other choice, so gradually there will be a contraction of the wide range of local health services provided in the local community by the local hospital. Gradually, that will whittle away choice, as people will not have the choice to go to their local hospital for the range of services because they will not be there any more.

Mr. Clarke: We shall not agree on that and we are in danger of repeating ourselves. Lewisham and North Southwark will want to respond to the local population, who may want to be treated locally. I accept that in most urban areas the population want to have the bulk of their medical care from the nearest hospital, where their relatives can easily visit them. They sometimes find that the planners, who are defended vigorously by opponents of my reforms, are closing down the little local hospitals.

The districts will be under a duty to respond to the wishes of their general practitioners who, under our new contract, will be driven by their patients' wishes. The districts will put in place a series of contracts to provide local services. They might find that their local services are spectacularly more expensive than the alternative, but they could still continue to place their contracts locally——

Mr. Hughes: They do.

Mr. Clarke: They may be doing that at the moment, but the costs are inordinately high. When they discover that —and I do not know whether Lewisham and North Southwark ever will—they have to ask themselves whether that is consumer friendly and whether the fact that it is local is sufficient reason to justify the increase in costs. They will put great pressure on the local hospitals because all the money will go in high costs, which will inhibit their ability to develop their services.

Ms. Harriet Harman (Peckham): Does the Minister realise that the reason why costs will be spectacularly high in London will not be luxury or quality, but capital charges which, for the first time, will have to be paid by NHS and opted-out hospitals? Therefore, the cost of treatment in Maidstone or Brighton will be very much cheaper. For certain surgery and for ordinary district general hospital services, patients from London will be bussed out to outlying hospitals where the land charges are much cheaper. Given that local accessibility is a key factor in quality, does not that mean that there will be an undermining of the quality of those services for people in London.

Mr. Clarke: Health care in London is high-cost health care, and always has been. Capital costs are a key feature of health care costs in London. That will be exposed by our capital charging system, and why not? We must face up to that truth. The Government did not invent the position. The fact is that it costs more to treat people in hospitals in London. That is why a permanent problem for about the past 120 years in the British health care system has been the concentration of so much of our hi-tech teaching health care system on practically the most expensive site in Europe—all in the middle of London and within a stone's throw of each other.

We are doing nothing other than what should be done in any sensible, businesslike organisation—exposing where the costs lie, including the capital costs in London. If the Labour party does not want to face up to those costs in a system that it aspires to run, it is simply burying its head in the sand.

Of course, there is the danger of a sudden exodus if the Labour party did nothing about the problem. However, I do not think that it would be patients in Lewisham, Peckham or Lambeth who would stop having their treatment in London. They would say to their GPs and the DHAs, "We want to go to the local hospitals. In fact, we want more access to them. There is too much fancy stuff coming in from outside."

The inhabitants of Hertfordshire, Kent, Bedfordshire and Essex may well ask their DHAs, "Why are we having to wait such a long time to go to those expensive hospitals in London when, with the same money, you could treat us a great deal quicker in the place where we want to be treated, which is the district general hospital?" We must face that reality. I know that two Kentish hon. Friends here will want to make that point, and if any of my hon. Friends from Hertfordshire were here, they would also be getting steamed up about that. We must ensure that there is not a sudden cutting off and a disruption of the service.

That is why, in the new system of allocating moneys to the regions, we have built in for all time—until somebody changes it—a system of added allocations; we are still building in 3 per cent. extra for the Thames regions to reflect the inescapable extra costs of providing services in London. There are other in-built advantages in the way in which the money is distributed.

7.15 am

In the new contracting system we shall also distribute to the districts that use London services a bigger allocation of money, because we realise that we have to compensate them for the costs of seeking to place so much of their service in London. All those things have to be addressed and they will be sorted out. We are taking steps to avoid dramatic consequences and the sudden threat to the London hospitals and their standards described by the hon. Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman).

Of course, the London hospitals are very strongly placed because they include some of our finest hospitals. They cannot compete on costs. If it is a battle between Bart's and a hospital in Maidstone or in the middle of Kent, Bart's cannot get down to the costs of Maidstone. What Bart's has to offer is a world standard of excellence in the best of its services, although we should not assume that they are all marvellous. The patients and those who act on their behalf—districts, GPs and so on—will make the judgments about quality, cost and best use of resources that I described as part of the contract system.

The dominant competition will be in quality. The Opposition are so fearful of the word "competition" that the idea of different clinical units aspiring to demonstrate that they treat their patients better than others is inimical to them. They prefer a planned system, which does not allow such nasty comparisons to be made and in which people do not vie with each other on the excellence of the service that they can offer to patients.

Mr. Rowe *rose*——

Mr. Clarke: I am relying on the Opposition rather than my hon. Friends to induce me into filibustering.

Mr. Rowe: I am not asking my right hon. and learned Friend to filibuster, but the fact is that the Opposition resist the proposition that there is any form of competition in the National Health Service at the moment. That is a total myth. Anyone with any idea of the bitterness and arguments between health authorities about the allocation of resources knows well that competition is alive. Furthermore, many of the London-based Opposition Members seem to believe that Londoners are incapable of travelling for treatment while people from Kent are expected to do so.

Mr. Clarke: I agree with my hon. Friend on both points, which he made passionately. The descriptions by the hon. Member for Livingston of contracts for self-governing hospitals were for the most part mere fiction. My hon. Friend has intervened to show that his descriptions of the present service were pretty rum too.

There has been reference to the professional standards required in the National Health Service. It is not the case that self-governing trusts will be allowed to set their own qualifications and professional standards—a serious point made by the hon. Member for Livingston. He did not attend all the proceedings in Committee—*[Interruption.]* I did not either, but the hon. Gentleman may not have reached schedule 6(2), which provides, in relation to NHS trusts, that the Secretary of State shall stipulate what the professional qualifications will be of people in the National Health Service. The trusts will not be allowed to set their own professional criteria for staff. They will be obliged to go by NHS standards.

Mr. Cryer: The Minister used the word "battle" when referring to competition between hospitals. Can he tell us what will happen to the hospitals that lose the battle?

Mr. Clarke: The word "competition" is used frequently —perjoratively on one side and in praise on the other. In the Health Service it is used in terms of quality. There will be competition to attract patients into a unit. Under our arrangements, for the first time, as long as patients continue to be referred to the unit and are treated, the resources that that unit requires will come with the patients and allow that unit to be financed. If the unit is ambitious, the people working there will want to demonstrate the excellence of their work and try to get more patients and more resources.

Under the new arrangements if a unit is not doing so well, obviously patients who used to be referred there are now being referred to another unit—the district health authority, the GPs and the patients obviously prefer to go to the other unit. The DHAs are under instructions to follow the wishes of GPs. The GPs will retain the freedom to refer their patients wherever they want and they will respond to their patients and to the new contracts that were fought so bitterly by the Opposition and some sections of the medical profession. Those contracts will make GPs more responsive to their patients than ever before.

There have always been closures in the Health Service. One of the qualities of the National Health Service is that under both Labour and Conservative Governments, the NHS has closed its redundant facilities and has developed better and newer facilities elsewhere. There are health systems abroad that are so arthritic that they cannot do that.

We have a careful process of consultation, including the approval of the Secretary of State. My Labour predecessors closed redundant hospitals at about the brisk pace that Conservatives close them. I believe that David Ennals was somewhat quicker in that respect than we have been.

Much of the controversy now, as hon. Members will realise, is based on great arguments about planning, the policy of the DHAs and resources. Many hon. Members challenge those issues like mad because they are all open to argument.

Under the proposal in the new clause, a unit might get into difficulties. Perhaps the service is being rationalised and the unit should go. That might happen because the GPs and DHAs prefer to use another part of the system. If another part of the system achieves better quality, that is one of the better reasons for contemplating a change in the pattern of services. Of course, I hope that the less successful sections will be provoked by competition into asking why they are losing referrals. They might then use the system of clinical audit to raise their standards, and to recapture referrals.

Mr. Tim Devlin (Stockton, South): Will all hospitals be on an equal footing or will we have the old long-standing distinction between so-called teaching hospitals that are predominantly concentrated in London and non-teaching hospitals elsewhere? All patients seem to want to be referred to teaching hospitals, even if their local hospital is just as good.

Mr. Clarke: My hon. Friend's constituency is further north than mine, but I am about as provincial as most people in the House. I cannot forbear adding Nottingham, Leicester and Sheffield to Leeds.

There is a problem with the teaching hospitals, We must ensure that the contract system does not damage the provision of undergraduate medical training, post-graduate training for doctors and continuous education for consultants. We must also ensure that the system does not damage research. That is why extensive discussions are continuing with the various interests to ensure that in attracting contracts for their services, the teaching hospitals are not put at a disadvantage because they have to carry extra costs on the contracts for teaching and research.

However, I also share the concern expressed by my hon. Friend the Member for Stockton, South (Mr. Devlin) that we must ensure that, in meeting their legitimate expectations to have education and research protected, the teaching hospitals are not placed at an unfair advantage. I do not want money put into the teaching hospitals under the excuse of protecting postgraduate education and research if that enables those hospitals, together with the cachet surrounding their names, to continue to attract patients who could perfectly well be treated in a good district general hospital close to their homes.

I actually heard the hon. Member for—I cannot remember the name of his constituency——

Mr. Cryer: Bradford, South.

Mr. Clarke: That is safer than it used to be. I heard the hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) muttering,

[Mr. Clarke]

"Level playing field" under his breath earlier. That is a good Tory slogan that has even got to Bradford, South. We are seeking to ensure a level playing field between the teaching hospitals and the rest.

Ms. Harman: Will the Secretary of State face up to the fact that the bogus link in his argument and the reason why competition will be that of cost and not of quality, as he has asserted, is that the decision about where patients will go for treatment will not be made, as now, by the general practitioner, but under the NHS contract system? The decision will be made by the managers of the district health authority, who are not trained or recruited to know anything about quality and outcome, but who are trained and recruited to know everything about cost.

Mr. Clarke: I totally refute that and I shall seek to persuade the hon. Lady that that is not an accurate description of the contract system when we reach that new clause and when the contract system is more relevant to the debate.

The DHAs will place the contracts. It will not only be the managers who decide that. The DHAs will place the bulk of the contracts, first according to the advice from their own public health adviser and other medical advice. Following our instruction that they should put in place contracts for the preferred referral patterns of their own GPs, unless there are compelling reasons to the contrary, the managers will not simply place the contracts where the DHA wants, but will place them as the GPs want. We have also made it clear that there must be a contingency fund so that any GP who wishes to refer an individual patient to a particular place outside the DHA's block of contracts will remain free to do so.

Under those arrangements, the DHAs will be much more responsive to GPs. I am sure that my reforms are building up the role and influence of general practitioners in the NHS like never before. When we ask the DHAs to take on this task, we are discovering that they are having to get to know their GPs for the first time. Many DHAs do not know their GPs—*[Interruption.]* They do not. It is no good laughing. This is the system that the hon. Member for Halifax (Mrs. Mahon) is defending. When I reveal some of the things that the NHS has done, the hon. Lady is dying in the last ditch to try to keep it that way.

For the first time, the DHAs, which currently manage our hospitals, are having to discover the referral patterns of their local GPs; why they refer in that way and what they are seeking for their patients in those services. That is what they will have to reflect in the contracts. That has not happened before.

General practice budget holders will be able to bypass the DHA and directly handle large sums of money that they can invest in the local Health Service, where it matters——

Mr. Allan Rogers (Rhondda) *rose*——

Mr. Clarke: Well, I am not sure on what parliamentary day I shall now be able to answer the hon. Gentleman's written question. A lot of nonsense is talked about the opposition of doctors and, as soon as we proceed and I am able to answer that question, I shall reveal to the hon. Gentleman that the vast majority of GPs who are eligible to be fund holders and to have a practice budget have expressed an interest in doing so, because GPs see what I see—that they will have a much more influential role in placing contracts than British general practitioners have ever had before—*[Interruption.]* No, I hate to have to tell the hon. Member for Peckham that the figures will prove that doctors are not taking seriously any of the nonsense that is being put out by her, or parts of the BMA, about the practice budget scheme. They are on the wrong side of the argument. They should have thought of it first.

Ms. Harman: Does the Secretary of State accept that GPs are putting themselves forward to become fund-holding practices because they fear the straitjacket of their loss of clinical freedom to refer under the NHS contract system? Their applications are not a vote of confidence in fund-holding status but a vote of fear about remaining in the system when the NHS contract system bites.

7.30 am

Mr. Clarke: That was a good try. The hon. Lady has been telling us for the past 12 months that fund-holding practice budgets are the greatest threat to general practice. So has the BMA. The hon. Lady was led into error by people who should have known better and who, in my opinion, should have invented practice budgets. The BMA has pumped its message out through the medical profession for as long as I can remember. The moment that we put out our explanation and a form and asked those who were interested to come forward, the majority applied—as I have said for ages that they would. We all meet GPs. I was in no doubt that the majority would apply. The vast majority have applied and not for the reasons given by the hon. Lady.

I wish to move on. We shall have contracts and GP practice budgets only if we can get on with the Bill. I have tried to explain why none of what took up most of the speech of the hon. Member for Livingston had anything to do with self-governing hospitals and ballots. When we got on to what had something to do with NHS trust status we reached a point about pay and conditions, trade unionism and so on when the hon. Gentleman became lyrical. Pay and conditions represent a high proportion of what is getting up the Labour party's nose about self-governing hospitals. Labour Members are desperately anxious to maintain national bargaining for pay and terms and conditions for all staff. They are anxious to retain the present strange and archaic methods of collective bargaining in the NHS. They are completely in the pockets of NUPE, COHSE, NALGO and GMBATU, the TGWU and all the people who have run fancy polls up and down the country.

I know that there is a fairly reputable and legitimate case to be made in favour of collective bargaining, national bargaining and so on. But I must correct some of the coloured phrases used by the hon. Member for Livingston to describe what faces people. NHS trusts will indeed be free to set their own pay, terms and conditions, if they wish. But they will have to negotiate them. They will not wish to do it on a dramatic scale, certainly in the early stages, not least because they will have to fit in with the contracting system of the directly managed hospitals.

Staff will transfer into an NHS trust with their current contracts of employment. Any changes would have to be negotiated and, presumably, discussed and made attractive to the staff. The clause that was objected to—the

hon. Gentleman said that people would be fired if they did not like the change—merely means that staff will not be entitled to walk out on their job simply because the hospital or unit has become a trust. They will not be able to rely on that as the basis for a claim for wrongful dismissal. The change of employer alone would not be regarded as a change to their detriment. Staff will carry all their rights under their contract, including their right to redundancy and so on. If they are treated in some of the ways that the hon. Gentleman described, they can bring a claim for wrongful dismissal under their contract.

Ms. Harman: The Secretary of State said that people will transfer from the National Health Service to the NHS hospital trusts and that they will not lose their employment rights. Staff may take with them the piece of paper called their contract of employment, but it was made clear in Committee that they will not take with them their right to have their union recognised. When they become the employee of an NHS trust, although they will have their piece of paper called a contract of employment, they will not have the right to have their union protect them when that NHS self-governing trust tries to renegotiate individually the terms and conditions in the contract. If the Secretary of State says that existing trade union members will take with them the right to have their union recognised we will accept that there is no detriment. But if they are to be stripped of that right, he must accept that there is a severe detriment on transfer from the NHS to self-governing trust status.

Mr. Clarke: The hon. Lady knows that I will not give guaranteed rights of recognition. Every employer will have to consider what trade unions are recognised. It would be foolish to say that all the unions recognised for every category of staff should be recognised in every self-governing hospital, not least because some unions will undoubtedly not have any members in those hospitals.

This is not the time for me to launch into the Whitley council procedure, although it is relevant because NHS trusts will no longer be bound by its terms and conditions. The distribution of voting rights on Whitley councils bears no relation to the membership of the trade unions. At times it is even laughable. I am not complaining. I am extremely pleased about the satisfactory outcome to all sides of the ambulance dispute, resolved finally by the staff side voting yesterday. My guess about the ambulance officers—they will never tell the Secretary of State—is that the vast majority are represented by NALGO. When I deal with the unions my belief is that it must have the majority of ambulance officers. They are outvoted on the Whitley council by the other trade unions.

At the start of the dispute the ambulance men's Whitley council consisted of NUPE, which I am sure has more members than any other union, with COHSE, the TGWU, GMBATU and NALGO. The distribution of the voting rights is quaint. I am not making an issue of this and I will withdraw it if I am proved wrong, but although GMBATU does not have many ambulance men, it has quite a lot of votes. What would be appropriate as a trade union for particular groups of staff at a particular place is different from those that have recognition now.

Ms. Harman: Even for individual employees?

Mr. Clarke: Does that mean that if a particular group of staff has one member of a union recognised nationally that member is entitled to say that his union must be recognised the monent they achieve self-governing status?

Several Hon. Members *rose*—

Mr. Clarke: I realise that the moment I get into trade union rights and recognition I am likely to rouse Labour Members. I shall try to calm them down by saying again that it is fanciful to suppose that this will give rise to huge disputes in most NHS trusts, although it will give rise to a great deal of campaigning in the proposed ballots.

Mr. Hinchliffe: May I take the Secretary of State back to my hon. Friend's point about the possible clear-out of dissident staff in health authorities that opt out and propose the formation of a trust? Is it not a fact that that clear-out is already taking place? He is aware of the sacking of the treasurer of Wakefield district health authority in questionable circumstances. He stood up and opposed the expenditure of large sums of public money on wining and dining in connection with the opting-out process—he has been backed by consultants in the authority—at a time when nurse staffing levels in the wards are dangerously low. Has not the clear-out already begun? Is that not what happened to Mr. Corner in Wakefield? It will happen elsewhere.

Mr. Clarke: The hon. Member for Livingston spoke for two hours and promptly vanished. He has not been here for the past three quarters of an hour.

Ms. Harman *rose*—

Mr. Clarke: There may be some good reason for that which I shall hear in a minute. The hon. Gentleman made extensive use of the Trent regional health authority document which I have never seen. There is no way in which anybody can be dismissed from the NHS without having all the usual rights of a contract of employment, unless he is in breach of it. The document has not been drafted by me or anyone in my Department so far as I am aware. I have heard only the partial quotations from it in Committee and again today. One cannot sack anybody for dissent, without having a claim against one for unlawful dismissal. One must be able to demonstrate that the person has turned that dissidence into a refusal to obey proper instructions.

I am not going to get drawn into the management disputes in Wakefield district health authority. It is an area which produces lively disputes about management. The district health authority's case is that the treasurer in question was dismissed for failing to obey a reasonable instruction. I understand that that is now being argued about and will no doubt be sorted out in the normal way.

In my reforms I am in favour of devolving the maximum amount of responsibility at local level, and arguments between the district health authority in Wakefield and the district treasurer should be sorted out locally in the usual way. The treasurer has the usual forms of redress if he does not think that he was dismissed on satisfactory grounds.

Ms. Harman: The Secretary of State made a comment about the absence of my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston. My hon. Friend is explaining to the country at large, through radio and television, our profound opposition to the Bill and our concern about the way that

[Ms. Harman]

the Government refused last night to accept the will of the House to protect elderly people from eviction from private homes. Many members of the public in Conservative Members' constituencies are bewildered about the reasons why some of their constituents face eviction.

Mr. Clarke: What a ridiculous parliamentary performance. The hon. Member for Livingston gave us an easy time in Committee—both in terms of the quality and length of his arguments. As soon as we begin to discuss the Health Service on the Floor of the House he speaks for more than two hours—he was deliberately filibustering. Then he does not wait to hear a word of the reply but goes dashing off to appear on television, having apparently lost all interest in parliamentary proceedings for the time being. The hon. Member for Peckham is pointing to the clock. I should sit down soon, and perhaps you will make me, Mr. Speaker, but it is obvious that the Opposition are determined to interrupt me frequently. I have taken part in filibusters before. The moment that we get to the subject of the NHS in England, the Opposition abandon any serious discussion. They did not discuss it much in Committee, and now they are just spinning it out. They can feel free to intervene on my speech to spin it out, but I regard this as an abuse of Parliament. The idea that the hon. Member for Livingston is out there appearing on television now, boasting about his pathetic performance——

Several Hon. Members: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order, I shall call Alice Mahon first.

Mrs. Mahon: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. It is a matter of public record that the Opposition fought this Bill every inch of the way. I served on the Committee and I did not miss a sitting apart from an hour and a half on one occasion which was unavoidable.

It is on record——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am sure that that is true, but it is not a matter of order for me.

Mr. Madden: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. You will confirm that we have now been debating the Bill for about 15 hours and that a number of Opposition Members, including myself, have not intervened although, unlike most Conservative Members, we have been present for those 15 hours. You can also confirm, Mr. Speaker, that the only contributions on the new clause, on which I have been waiting to speak for 15 hours, have been those by my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) and by the Secretary of State. Will you also confirm, Mr. Speaker——

Mr. Speaker: Order. Yes, I can confirm that easily because I have a note of the timings. The hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) spoke for nearly two hours and the Secretary of State has spoken for an hour. We should move on to the Back-Benchers.

Mr. Clarke: Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. I assure the hon. Member for Bradford, West (Mr. Madden) that, unlike the hon. Member for Livingston, I will stay to listen to his speech, if he is lucky enough to catch your eye. Secondly, I shall stop giving way to interventions, which are lengthening my speech and I shall conclude——

Mr. Madden *rose*——

Mr. Clarke: I shall give way one last time—to the hon. Gentleman and then I shall conclude my speech as rapidly as I can.

Mr. Madden: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The Secretary of State has alleged on several occasions that Labour Members are filibustering. I would like you to confirm that you and your Deputies, throughout the 15 hours that we have been debating the Bill, have not found any hon. Member out of order. If any Member was committing a fillibuster, you and your Deputies would have called him to order. As that has not happened, the Secretary of State is clearly wrong in his assertions.

Mr. Speaker: It is within my knowledge that no occupant of the Chair has ruled any hon. Member out of order for filibustering. However, the Front-Bench speakers have made long speeches. The House will wish to hear the speeches of Back Benchers.

Mr. Tom Clarke *rose*——

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I shall give way for the last time.

Mr. Tom Clarke: I am grateful to the Secretary of State. Will he reflect on two points? First, his Cabinet colleagues who hope to get other Bills through the House this Session may not thank him for his absurd account of the Committee proceedings. Secondly, it is not unreasonable, especially after last night, that the British people should hear what the Secretary of State for Health in the forthcoming Labour Government wants to say.

7.45 am

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I hear what the hon. Gentleman says. The Secretary of State for Health in the forthcoming Labour Government, if there is one, will have to demonstrate rather better knowledge of the NHS reforms after they are implemented than he demonstrated in his speech.

The hon. Member for Livingston implied throughout his speech that self-governing hospitals have something to do with the acute sector only. That is complete nonsense. Many applications have been from a combination of hospital and community services; quite a lot of them have been from community services alone. That part of the hon. Gentleman's speech was irrelevant.

The hon. Gentleman said that our reform is based on an episodic approach to patients rather than on continuity of care. I forebore to ask him what on earth his evidence was for making such a claim. He frequently makes that claim. However, as the contract system shows, and as we develop the specimen contract, it will be obvious that we are not dealing with each patient incident as though it was isolated.

I must refer finally to what purports to be the point of new clause 4: everything being handed over to ballots of staff and electors and the views of district health authorities. I do not believe that management changes of the type that we are discussing, imperfectly understood as they are, even by the hon. Member for Livingston, can be turned over to local referendums for a final decision. When the National Health Service was created in 1948 it was not

subjected to a ballot of staff and local electors. When a hospital is closed we do not ballot the staff and the electors. No major change in the pattern of services has ever been subjected to any process that is remotely like that, either by a Labour Government or a Conservative Government, during the past 40 years.

The staff will remain National Health Service employees. The hospitals will remain NHS hospitals. A previous Labour Government changed the employment conditions of private enterprise employees when private sector companies were turned into nationalised industries. I do not recall that the Labour Government canvassed the idea that the judgment on whether to nationalise an industry should be left to a staff ballot, or to a ballot of the local population, or anyone else. These management changes are akin to the 1972 changes. Nobody said that they should be subjected to a ballot. The Labour party and the trade unions are enjoying themselves. They are conducting opinion polls throughout the country and they are trying to give legitimacy to that course of action.

I give an undertaking to the House for the umpteenth time that when we receive formal applications for NHS trust status we shall submit them to the fullest process of public consultation. They will have to include business plans, plans for the development of patient services and the names of those who are proposed as directors or chairman of the NHS trust. Then there will be consultations on the basis of reasonable information. Those consultations will be taken into account in the way that Ministers of all Governments are used to doing, after which the Secretary of State will make his decision on whether to allow a particular unit to attain NHS trust status.

I have made it clear that I shall go in for the fullest consultation and, in the light of that consultation, shall base my final decision in each case on one key criterion above all others: is this application for NHS trust status in the interests of the National Health Service, of the people who work for it, and of the patients who will be served by the unit in question? I repeat that that key judgment will be made after the fullest process of consultation.

As I have said, the Opposition are trying to give legitimacy to these ballots all over the place which were discussed interminably in Committee. I do not propose to base any decisions on such straw polls. The Labour party and the trade unions are organising these on their own terms; they are using their own propaganda, and people do not have any actual proposition before them. I have a look at opinion polls occasionally. Not all of them get published. Let me give the Opposition a word of warning lest they put too much faith in all these remarkable opinion polls. One whose results I have seen shows clearly that, on the basis of almost any kind of polling, one can get different answers depending on what questions one asks. We all know that. It is why so many polls are producing damned silly answers to damned silly questions.

The response that one gets from the public about whether they approve of NHS trusts depends crucially upon whether they are told that the NHS trusts will remain in the Health Service. Some of our critics have had great mileage out of the totally false claim that these trusts will opt out of the service. The public do nor want hospitals to leave the National Health Service; nor do I. It is a deeply unpopular proposition. I have seen results that show that if the questions that are asked make it clear that NHS trusts will remain part of the Health Service a majority of the public in most localities think that local management is a good thing. When the NHS trusts are in place—at the moment there are 79 in the first wave—people will see from experience that they will provide the much better National Health Service that we are seeking to create.

Mr. Simon Hughes: I had better start where the Secretary of State left off. He referred to private polls whose results, he says, indicate that the public really believe that the NHS trusts are acceptable. It would be helpful if those results were published. If I may give the Secretary of State a little advice, it is that, so far, there is, I believe, grave suspicion of the Government's scheme. That view is based on an objective examination of the situation.

The starting perception seemed to be that hospitals would be separated from their local health districts—that they would be on their way out of the Health Service. I know, and the Secretary of State will know, that many people have been at pains to make it clear that that is not the case. Certainly people can make mischief by pretending that the local hospital will opt out of the Health Service.

If there is evidence that proper, objective polling has indicated that people are happy that self-governing trust hospitals should be set up, that evidence ought to be produced. I have here a large, colourful document. I am sorry that I do not have a smaller copy, but, after all, it is breakfast time. The document reproduces this question:

"Under the Government's proposals for the NHS would you be in favour of Guy's, Lewisham and the mental illness service seeking to become a self-governing trust?"

That question is reasonable; it is not loaded, as I hope the Secretary of State will agree. He can see the figure: 90·5 per cent. said no. This was a staff-side exercise. It is the first known ballot of Health Service employees in Lewisham and North Southwark. The Minister knows, too, of the narrow decision by the district health authority that there should be a ballot of all its employees. That ballot will take place. We expect the result within the next month. In Lewisham and North Southwark we have had three ballots so far. It was agreed that when the proposals have been worked out finally, the 220-plus consultants will be balloted. When there is a ratio of more than 9:1 against the Government's proposals in that reasonably put question, the staff must start by feeling some suspicion. I have referred to the view of people who work in the Health Service. The Government have cause for concern.

Although I did not serve on the Standing Committee —perhaps I am grateful for being spared that—I should like to refer to what remain the crucial issues in the debate. The questions and answers mentioned during the Secretary of State's speech go to the heart of the subject. Without being personal, I must say that it is a bit much for the chief spokesman and then the second spokesman for the Opposition to come in and go out of the same debate. In the debate about hospital trusts, there were three changes of Opposition Front-Bench staff. That is not satisfactory in terms of meeting one's duty to take responsibility for a debate.

I shall discuss the area that I know best because it provides a good example—the hospital which first looked as thought it would lead the way to opting out, Guy's hospital. My first question relates to the options put in the ballot. The Secretary of State said that there had never been, under either a Tory or a Labour Government, any ballot to decide on a change of management like this. I

[Mr. Simon Hughes]

accept that that is the case in the Health Service. I accept that one can argue that it is merely a change in the management structure and that the hospital will stay within the Health Service so a ballot may not be necessary. Under the Prime Minister's premiership, the Government have introduced and argued for ballots when there has been a change of management—not a complete and fundamental change—in two different sectors.

Both examples occurred in my constituency, so I know them well. In the education system, parents have taken part in ballots to decide whether schools should opt out of the control of the local education authority to become grant maintained. The London Nautical school, which is just up the road and is on the Lambeth-Southwark boundary, did that.

Provision was made also for ballots of tenants when someone wants to take over their property or, more importantly, when there has been a change of management, not from the public to the private sector, but from one part of the public sector to another—from the local authority to a housing action trust. As the Secretary of State will remember, at the end of the debate on the Housing Bill, the then Housing Minister decided that housing action trust sites would come into operation only if there were a ballot of tenants. There are therefore precedents for consulting, by ballot, the people affected when a change of management occurs.

I should like to explain why the Secretary of State should consider even now the validity of ballots. The Health Service needs the confidence and commitment of the people who work in it. It is abundantly clear that certain parts risk not having the staff that will be needed in years to come. Nursing is an obvious example, because of demographic trends. If changes are to take place with the confidence of the Health Service—I am talking not so much about the confidence of the doctors outside the hospitals as about the confidence of the doctors, nurses and other staff in the hospitals—is not it important that they should be persuaded of the merits of the case?

After informed debate, those staff should be able to judge the merits of the case. We will have had the White Paper, the Bill will have been considered for a year in both Houses and consultation will have taken place—the Secretary of State said that there will be further consultation—so surely at the end of that series of exercises there is no reason why all the people concerned should not have the full information and the ability to decide between the options. The Secretary of State would be wiser, in the interests of the Health Service, to allow people to pass that judgment.

It is not as if there will be self-governing hospital trusts in every health authority; clearly, there will not. There will be an option between places that will have a self-governing trust and others that will not. The Secretary of State has confirmed that some of the hospitals that were originally in line for going to self-governing status are no longer regarded as being in the first wave. There will be an option. Under the scheme of the Secretary of State, in two to six years' time there will still be hospitals that are integral parts of the local health service with their local health authorities. They will not be separated in the way on which the debate has been concentrating. If that is the case, the option between having and not having self-government is realistic and should be available to all. It is important to take account of the views of those concerned.

There is—and I say this with real feeling—an enormous public demand to participate in the decision. If we are to keep the public involved in the Health Service and to ensure that they feel that it is their Health Service, the last thing we want to do is to make it look as if decisions are made by a handful of people, let alone one.

8 am

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman: Paragraph (2)(b) of the new clause says,

"In any case where a majority of the patients of the hospital or service reside in a single borough or district council".

Forty-nine per cent. of those coming to Royal Lancaster infirmary come from all over Cumbria. What happens to them? That figure applies only to one specialty. It is a massive problem in all specialties and the new clause would give the 51 per cent. an enormous power over the 49 per cent. How does one define a constituency for that sort of situation?

Mr. Hughes: That is a proper and important question. I want to link it to the key question. In the interchanges in the speech of the Secretary of State, we did not get to that question and I should be grateful if I could attract the attention of the Secretary of State to this crucial point. The hon. Member for Lancaster (Dame E. Kellett-Bowman) asked how one finds a proper constituency for a ballot of the public.

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman: I was also talking about a majority.

Mr. Hughes: I understand that. The hon. Lady will appreciate that my London constituency contains a teaching hospital. In her constituency and mine, enormous numbers of those who use the hospital come from outside the local health authority. The only proper constituency is the area of the health authority at the moment. That brings us to the last questions in the interventions in the Secretary of State's speech. His arguments seemed to be quite plausible arguments for cross-charging and for saying that if people come from outside a health authority to use its services, such as in Lancaster or my constituency, they should bring their fees with them, quite compatible with saying that that will encourage good standards and good practice because it means that if Lancaster royal general hospital——

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman: The Royal Lancaster infirmary.

Mr. Hughes: If the Royal Lancaster infirmary or Guy's hospital is doing a good job and attracting people, they are getting paid for the work that they do, which is proper. However, it is not necessary for the consequence to be that they separate the local hospital from being the automatic provider of hospital care for the community with which it is geographically and traditionally associated.

I support the idea that the hon. Lady's health authority should be able to charge the authorities that send patients to it for the proper cost of their care. If a hospital did a good job, therefore, it would stand a chance of having more income and being able to develop its services. If it did not do a good job, people from outside the hon. Lady's

district health authority would go elsewhere. People from outside my district health authority might also go elsewhere.

The Secretary of State did not give a word of explanation of why that requires separation of hospital from health authority. There are still grave reservations not about the principle that hospitals should be paid for what they do and that good practice should be thereby encouraged, but about the principle of separating health authority and hospital. If Guy's hospital opts out, how can that be compatible with tradition, general interest and proper democratic procedures? In the context of tradition, Guy's hospital, like some others, was set up by a 1725 Act of Parliament. It was founded with the money of Thomas Guy, a Southwark man, and its duties were set out by that statute, which made it clear for whose benefit the hospital should be provided. It said in the will of the benefactor, provided for in the Act, that the hospital should be

"for those who are thought capable of relief by physical surgery; several species and kinds of sick persons deemed or called incurables; and . . . the time of continuing them in hospital to the discretion and pleasure of the trustees."

Although that was stated in 18th century English, the purpose of the hospital—which was set up to deal with those for whom St. Thomas's in those days could not deal—was to care for the long-term sick, people in need of convalescence and the poor. All the evidence that I have been able to accumulate makes it clear that the motive for founding Guy's hospital was not simply to provide acute services but to provide long-term services. There is ample evidence concerning the purpose of the hospital.

The 1990 version of that is a hospital which must meet the range of services—from the most difficult internationally reputed specialities and operations for which people come to Guy's from all over the world to see consultants who are world famous—and be a local district general hospital, providing services which, by any definition, are not cost efficient or profitable, such as geriatric care and so on.

The great concern—in saying this I hope that I do not misrepresent the views of the local community—is that all those services that are not so high tech, high cost, high turnover, high quality and high profit could be at risk because they may not come within the obligatorily provided services.

The bulk of people in my constituency—there must be some also in the Secretary of State's area—rely on the local hospital because they are at the bottom end of the income scale and have worse health than many people in the country. They suffer from bronchitic, arthritic, chest, lung and other disorders and they need to be assured that they will have a local health service. They fear that they will not, because it will not be compatible with the cost criteria for the local hospital to continue to provide everything. They fear that the least cost-beneficial services will have to go.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I had better intervene now in this mini Adjournment debate, as it were, on Guy's, and Lewisham and North Southwark, because I may not have a chance to do so later. What the hon. Gentleman is saying is relevant because it provides a good vehicle for discussing self-governing NHS trusts.

What the hon. Gentleman says is true of all the London teaching hospitals. They are crowded together because originally they were put here to serve the poor of the teeming London slums. They provided free treatment to the residents of those poor districts in exchange for the residents allowing themselves to be used for medical teaching, training and research.

Now, a high proportion of that population in most of London has gone away from the area of the hospitals, so we have extremely up-market, high-tech centres of excellence, with international-quality surgery being done in the teaching hospitals which were established for another purpose. I accept the hon. Gentleman's underlying point. I am not attracted by the idea, any more than he is, of some of the London teaching hospitals becoming high-tech centres of international excellence that give up their contact with local services. They will not do that because it is more profitable; as I tried to make clear earlier, the geriatric services will enter into contracts with the NHS that will cover the cost.

I understand that those who favour self-governing status at Guy's are contemplating a merger with the Lewisham hospital, although I do not know how that affects the community services associated with those hospitals. Contrary to popular belief, we are leaving it to the local people. However, I have encouraged those in favour of self-government to look at configurations that will ensure that Guy's stays tied in with what I recognise as one of its fundamental objects: serving the local population in Southwark and Lewisham. I shall certainly use that criterion to judge any application that is made, and it will virtually swamp the public consultation to which I committed myself a few moments ago.

Mr. Hughes: Although what the Secretary of State has said may apply most acutely to the London teaching hospitals, I am sure that the same sentiments are felt throughout the country. I was born in the north-west, in Stockport; no doubt those who use Stockport royal infirmary will feel the same. I was brought up in south Wales, and no doubt those who use Cardiff royal infirmary will feel the same, too. There may be a difference in the degree of feeling, but not in the principle. People want their local hospital to be able to provide the range of services that it provides now, with no prejudice to the least glamorous aspects.

Mr. Peter L. Pike (Burnley): Indeed, it is not a Guy's issue or a London issue. The people of Burnley certainly want to be treated at Burnley general hospital. They feel that they are entitled to the best possible treatment locally, unless they need recourse to a specialty for which they know that they must go elsewhere.

Mr. Hughes: I am sure that the Secretary of State recognises the feeling on both sides of the House—and I am sure that his friends in Kent and Hertfordshire agree—that, if possible, those who wish to receive treatment locally should be able to.

The system for deciding which hospitals should become self-governing is regarded with great suspicion. I have considerable respect and some affection for—and many dealings with—some of the senior people involved in the Guy's proposal, and I know that they have the interests of the Health Service at heart. I believe that, at the time of the debate on the Health Service in the 1980s, they would have opted for a system of district cross-charging rather than for the Secretary of State's proposals. That would have been a much better idea.

Lord McColl of Dulwich and all the other protagonists—in general terms, that is—have accepted what they see as

[Mr. Hughes]

the second-best option, encouraged by a fairly self-evident "carrot": if Guy's goes first it will be looked after. They are clearly attracted by the finance that they would secure for their hospital and teaching facilities as a result of its being the apple of the Government's eye.

What worries ordinary people, however, is that the decision will eventually be made by the Secretary of State, after he has been approached by a mere handful of advisers. We all know that tradition removes Secretaries of State from the direct sentiment of local people. I do not criticise the Secretary of State personally; he must know that any Minister who runs a Department that spends such huge sums finds it impossible—with the best civil servants in the world—to be as much in touch with local feeling as he would like, as any ordinary Member of Parliament is with the community.

The problem is that the Government will want the scheme to succeed, and will want hospitals to opt out to show that it can succeed, even if there is mass opposition from all but the handful of people whom the system empowers to put the idea on the Secretary of State's desk. That is what is wrong with not testing the argument and allowing the whole community to decide through a ballot.

Mr. Flannery: During the past year we have been unable to discover from the Government exactly who would make those decisions. Members of Parliament from Sheffield had meetings with the health authority and about two months ago, more by way of a slip, it admitted that it was a group of consultants. In the meantime, outside the Northern general hospital, a group of local people set up a table with a petition on it against the proposal. People in the hospital got out of bed, put their clothes on and went outside, down the drive, to sign the petition. People passing and going into the hospital signed the petition and none was in favour of the decision.

8.15 am

Mr. Hughes: I think that that is right. The Secretary of State must know. I have met no one in favour of the scheme. That is not because they have misunderstood it. I am talking about many well-informed people in the Health Service and outside it. New clause 4 allows the Secretary of State to put his argument that there is a better way to run the Health Service to each local community so that it can judge.

I am not here to defend the technical drafting of the new clause and say whether the electorate is correctly defined. I know that there are problems about that. However, the best electorate are not the people who work in the Health Service, but the people who use the Health Service. I have never understood the argument that it is more important to ballot those who work for that employer because, clearly, they have a self-interest and they are traditionally conservative. We all are about our own professions, and I have the same profession as the Secretary of State.

Mr. Hayes: When a hospital closes, which is far more serious than a hospital taking self-governing status, there is no ballot. The proper way of focusing public opinion is through community health councils. Another point that I am sure has been raised many times in the early hours of this morning——

Mr. Campbell-Savours: The hon. Gentleman has not been here.

Mr. Hayes: I have not been to bed yet. I have been here listening carefully. I may go to bed in a minute, but let me return to the point that I was trying to make.

How on earth does one determine, in a place like Guy's or Bart's, who has to be balloted? Those hospitals have enormous numbers of people from an enormous area across all sorts of boundaries. It would be administratively impossible. Is not that the real difficulty about the Opposition's proposal?

Mr. Hughes: If the hon. Gentleman had been here earlier he would have heard me answer that point in reply to the hon. Member for Lancaster. One cannot have ballots for closing hospitals, because that is a decision for which one needs less resource. This is not the same situation. This is a decision about whether to change the nature of the relationship between the local hospital and the local health authority. That is perfectly susceptible of a ballot in a way that closing hospitals would never be, because one would never get the assent of a community. No such parallel can be drawn.

The Secretary of State said that he is aware of private polls that show that a majority of people are in favour of the scheme. The rest of us have not seen those polls. I have seen no public polls to that effect. One poll last week showed that 71 per cent. disapproved of the Government's scheme, 58 per cent. disapproved of their hospital becoming a self-governing trust and 37 per cent. of those who said that they were Tory voters said that the electorate should be the local community.

I should have hoped that the new clause would have more appeal after a second glance. It does not say that the ballot is determinative, and it could be criticised for that. It says that there must be ballots, reports of which must be presented to Parliament. The hospital can be allowed to be a self-governing hospital trust only if that report is approved.

If, on reflection and having seen the difficulty that this part of his scheme has given him, the Secretary of State believes that it is worth ruining the chance to improve the Health Service by staying firmly with this proposal, he is committing a grave error of judgment. I hope that he will realise that this proposal is probably provoking the greatest difficulty for him among the public at large.

I hope that the Secretary of State will realise that if he is determined to offer the opportunity of separating a hospital from a district, a way forward is to say, "I am prepared, as my colleagues in other Departments did, to accept that the public must have a say." If the public have a say, his Health Service reforms may begin to get more widespread approval. If the public are excluded, people will not believe that the reforms are in the interests of the Health Service and the public, and are just more separation according to Tory dogma and a development of the Health Service from one based on care to one based on cost. That is not what any of the public want.

Mr. Redmond: The Secretary of State mentioned consultation. Is it consultation as a PR exercise or meaningful consultation? Given the track record of Conservative Governments since 1979, I believe that when they say "consultation" it is merely a PR exercise. They intend to take no notice of what the people and various groups are suggesting. A recent example of that occurred

over their education and student loans policy. The talk of consultation is a charade. I wonder whether the Conservative Government are aware that a vast number of people in this country place a big question mark over what the Government say? When the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State say that the NHS is "safe in our hands", no one believes them or anyone who tries to kid the public.

I passionately believe in the National Health Service and fully support it, as do the vast majority of the public. There is no doubt that, given the option, the public would contribute a little more in taxes or another form, to ensure that they have a viable, efficient Health Service that meets their needs. Regrettably, Tory dogma stops that happening.

For the Government, opting out is not one step but one of a series of steps towards the privatisation of the Health Service. I will oppose it in every possible way because the public certainly want a Health Service, and the House has a duty to provide it.

Mr. Jack Thompson (Wansbeck): There is another aspect of the opting-out proposition in relation to hospitals. A new hospital is being built in my constituency; the Secretary of State is coming to lay the foundation stone next week. I shall not comment on what my constituents say that they should do with the stone. I suspect that the new hospital will not get the chance to opt in, but will be opting out from the very day it opens. We can look forward to a future of new hospitals being built that will always be opting out and never opting in.

Mr. Redmond: There is no need for me to comment because my hon. Friend's point is self-explanatory and well put.

When the Secretary of State lays the foundation stone, perhaps consideration should be given to putting him in a time capsule. He is unique and will be worth a bob or two in years to come.

When I was a Labour member of Doncaster council I served on the Doncaster health authority, and became its vice-chairman. The chairperson was Celia Wilson. She left no one in doubt that she was a Conservative, but her brand of Conservatism was vastly different from the Government's. Tony Dale was the secretary—again, not a Labour supporter—but he was a first-class administrator and was committed to the Health Service. David Eaves, the treasurer, was also committed to the Health Service.

The Government talk about value for money and an efficient Health Service. David Eaves and Tony Dale helped to provide the foundation, the core services and the efficiency of Doncaster health authority. It has one of the lowest administration costs in the country. The major part of its funding is used to ensure that nurses can provide the necessary care for patients. The administration costs are kept down.

Doncaster is a jewel in the provision of health care. But because it has been so efficient the Secretary of State cannot kid me that he is not making a decision on that authority until later in the year. He has already made his decision about Montagu hospital because of political dogma. It is a tragedy and it makes a mockery of his statement.

I am not a gambling man, but I will bet the Conservative Whip £1—*[Interruption.]* I am not sure whether I am allowed to do that in the Chamber, so I shall make my wager outside. I am convinced that the Secretary of State has already made the decision about the published list. He referred to the Whitley council. I served on that council, and I carefully studied the various disputes—especially the ambulance dispute. The blame——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman is going a little wide of the debate.

Mr. Redmond: I accept that, Mr. Speaker, but the Secretary of State mentioned the benefits of the Whitley council in relation to wage negotiations. Having sat on a Whitley council I am aware of the manipulation by the Secretary of State for Health. It is kidding people to say that the Whitley council can make its own judgment. It cannot.

8.30 am

The Bill is one of a series of steps towards the privatisation of the Health Service. Everyone is convinced of that. That is one reason why the Government are opposed to the new clause.

Mr. Hayes: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. It is a very serious matter. I have just returned from St. Stephen's entrance where I saw the shadow Health Secretary in a seated position, with electrodes on his head and surrounded by men in white coats. That may confirm some of the suspicions many of us have had for a long time. Might it be appropriate for the hon. Gentleman to make a personal statement?

Mr. Speaker: He looks healthy enough to me.

Mr. Redmond: If the hon. Member for Harlow (Mr. Hayes) had been in the Chamber as long as we have, he would have heard the explanation. It shows that he was not in the Chamber for the whole debate, which is unfortunate.

I said that the Bill is one of a series of steps towards privatisation. Since 1979 various Secretaries of State have shifted every health authority chairman who has voiced opposition or even raised a question about Government proposals. They have been replaced by the nodding brigade. How can people believe the Conservative Government when they fill the health authorities with people who will not say that enough is enough?

Doncaster health authority has a fair mix from the community. The chairman, who was appointed recently, supports the Conservative party. That was no surprise; we expected it. There is a Conservative majority built into the authority. One problem for the Government is that occasionally the consultants say, "Stop." When the health authority discussed opting out, the two consultants decided that they wanted nowt to do with it, and the health authority decided not to support the opting out of Doncaster royal infirmary and the Montagu hospital.

One reason why the people do not trust the Government is that since 1979 there has been a regrettable lowering of standards, despite what the Prime Minister says at the Dispatch Box about more money, more nurses and more of everything. I wish people would go into wards and open their eyes instead of looking through blue-tinted glasses. Since I finished with the health authority, when I became leader of Doncaster council, my sister has had three major operations, my brother has become a diabetic and my brother-in-law has had two strokes which have left him blind. Unfortunately, I am at that age when many of my friends and colleagues are falling ill and requiring

[Mr. Redmond]

treatment at Doncaster royal infirmary, the Montagu hospital or even at Hull and Sheffield hospitals. Standards are lower.

No one would praise nursing staff more than I. However, I do not want to single the nurses out. They are part of a team including ancillary workers, from the porters to the people who type and send the notifications of appointments. If one visited a ward now, one should not see a highly qualified nurse dashing round serving cups of tea to the patients. That should be someone else's job. We should not train nurses to perform skills and then employ them as charladies. That is really disgusting. I am convinced that we should ensure that nurses are paid for nursing and not for mashing cups of tea and serving lunches and dinners from a trolley.

Mr. George J. Buckley (Hemsworth): My hon. Friend is making an important point. However, with due respect, we are talking about the control of hospitals, not the services within them. In relation to the points about the Government systematically changing chairmen, does my hon. Friend suggest that the Government are practising a form of nepotism in that they are securing positions to control the hospitals so that their clandestine actions in relation to privatisation will meet no resistance? Are the Government doing that systematically as a step towards the privatisation programme for which they have no mandate?

Mr. Redmond *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I remind the House that we are considering National Health Service trusts.

Mr. Redmond: My hon. Friend the Member for Hemsworth (Mr. Buckley) is absolutely right. The Government could guarantee the Conservative supporters.

Doncaster royal infirmary and the Montagu hospital have expressed an interest in the trusts. The two unit managers—Nicholson and Turner—covertly or in some other way, decided together with a small clique to write to Trent health authority and to the Secretary of State. Since then they have spent a fair amount of time—which is money—and a fair amount of real money as well, pursuing an issue that I believe was outside their terms of contract. They are employed by Doncaster health authority, not by Trent health authority or by the Government. However, they connived with one or two other people in the authority to express an interest.

When we tried to discover the names of the people who had expressed an interest on behalf of the people of Doncaster, the Secretary of State informed us that he did not know who had expressed that interest. There is a saying—which is not racist—"They kid niggers in Africa." That is what the Secretary of State is trying to do. He is trying to kid us. He knows the names that were submitted from Doncaster.

When the Secretary of State was pushed because we wanted to know the facts and started to apply pressure, we were told that the unit managers had expressed an interest, that the consultants had carried out a ballot among themselves and that they supported the expression of interest. However, it turned out that the chairman of the consultants—of the medical panel—had done his own thing and consulted one or two cronies. Having consulted a minority, he decided that he would follow the example of the Secretary of State and allow the minority to dictate to the majority. Although there were no proper consultations, the proposals went ahead.

My hon. Friend the Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) referred to Doncaster council, which paid for a MORI poll to ascertain the opinion of the people of Doncaster. A survey was carried out, in which MORI, not the council, posed the questions. MORI decided, "That is the problem; these are the questions." When asked, the overwhelming majority of the people decided that they wanted nothing to do with the Secretary of State's proposals on opting out. The community health council also decided that it would not go along with that expression of interest. I have already said that Doncaster health authority has decided not to support the two unit district managers.

Montagu hospital had been earmarked years previously for a geriatric hospital. It was said that the accident and emergency unit would close, that the operating theatre would be lost and that it would become a geriatric unit. Regretfully—for the Government and Trent—the local people fought like blazes and reversed that decision. We now have some fine operating theatres and good improvements, although we still have some way to go. If we had listened to the pundits and to the whiz kids all that time ago, Montagu hospital would simply have been a geriatric unit, but now it provides the services that I have mentioned. It is one of the hospitals that will opt out. Does the House think that the people of Mexborough and the Don valley will stand idly by?

Against that background, I hope that the House will reject the Government's proposals. I have said that I am totally committed to the NHS. I am a blood donor, but hate to think that some of my blood might go to a hospital that has opted out. New clause 4 should be accepted, as should the idea of ballots and referendums—whatever one likes to call them. I hope that the House will support new clause 4.

Mrs. Wise: The Select Committee on Social Services made a recommendation on balloting, which is the subject of new clause 4. The paragraph with which I am concerned in our eighth report, which was issued in July, begins with some sentences that were agreed by the whole Committee:

> "The proposal for self-governing hospitals within the NHS is controversial. The Government is pressing ahead very fast with its plans, despite the fact that the basic cost accounting systems . . . needed to provide the foundation for the establishment of trading in the NHS generally, and of self-governing hospitals in particular, have not yet been fully developed. Unnecessary haste with one aspect of the planned changes may make it impossible for others, including the planned budgets experiment, to work."

That was accepted without any attempt to amend it. The paragraph continues, and this was the subject of an unsuccessful amendment to delete the passage:

> "If self governing hospitals are to be implemented, they should be phased-in like GP budgets. If this is to be a consumer-oriented revolution, as the Secretary of State claims, the first such hospitals should be set up in districts where there is only one district general hospital serving that area and where customers in the district, i.e. the local population, have indicated through a ballot that they support the hospital becoming self-governing."

That is the very point at issue in new clause 4. The recommendation was approved by a majority of the Select

Committee. It was not done on the spur of the moment. The Select Committee devoted two full sessions to examining the resourcing and structure of the NHS.

8.45 am

When the vote was taken, those who supported the recommendation were not all Labour Members. They were two Labour Members, two Conservative Members and an Ulster Unionist Member. The House will agree that that was a fair spread. Three Conservative Members opposed the recommendation. Of those three, only one had served on the Select Committee during the whole of the inquiry. If we take away the vote of another member of the Select Committee who was not present during the whole inquiry, and my vote on the grounds that I am Labour so I would vote that way, the remaining members, all Conservative, supported the recommendation by three to one. Conservative Members of the Committee who took part in the whole inquiry, supported the idea of a ballot by three to one.

Ms. Primarolo: Did the Select Committee refer to the position that arises when an entire district health authority prepares to opt out as is the case with the Bristol and Weston health authority? The authority seeks to take all hospitals out.

Mrs. Wise: Some anxiety was expressed on that point from time to time, but most of us thought that it would be improbable. Although we want to retain an integrated service, that method of remaining integrated would, I think, not meet with much favour on the Select Committee.

I have compared the provisions of the new clause with the recommendation of the Select Committee. The new clause is both more cautious and more comprehensive than the Select Committee's recommendation. It is more cautious because it does not give the last word to the ballot of the population. It gives the last word to the two Houses of Parliament.

The new clause is more comprehensive in ways which have merit. It accepts the notion of a ballot of the population. That is crucial. I hope that my hon. Friends on the Front Bench have been influenced by the deliberations and recommendations of the Select Committee. But my hon. Friends have gone further. They have met the Government's argument that perhaps the electorate would lack expertise. The new clause remedies that by making sure that there would be a ballot of the staff. That provides expertise from clinicians and those working daily in the hospital concerned, which is a valuable addition.

My hon. Friend the Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) explained in detail how the new clause takes account of the district health authorities' views also, and requires that they be made known to the House. That point would not necessarily have commended itself to me immediately, but my hon. Friend was convincing. The new clause draws in administrative expertise. Because his speech was rather too short, my hon. Friend did not explain that the new clause also brings in the views of any relevant CHCs. The Government have not paid attention to that. Indeed, it has scarcely been touched on. Perhaps the Government do not want CHCs' views to be made known because the Association of Community Health Councils has already made clear its strong reservation on the whole matter.

Mr. Flannery: Does my hon. Friend agree that clearly, whoever is balloted, the Government believe profoundly that they will be defeated in every single aspect of democracy? Therefore, to subvert that, they must have recourse to diktat. Diktat is now the order of the day because they have smelt defeat if they engage in democracy.

Mrs. Wise: I fear that my hon. Friend is right.

My hon. Friend the Member for Livingston referred to various ballots which have taken place. I shall quote from evidence to the Select Committee, particularly choosing bodies for the range of interests that they represent. They are not trade unions. There was considerable unanimity on this point across a wide range of organisations.

The Maternity Alliance is a broad organisation devoted to the needs and wishes of pregnant women. It pointed out:

"Within many hospitals' obstretric units women are now getting more choice about how they give birth but choice about where they do so has been restricted by closures, usually of smaller units. This has meant that many women now have to travel further for their maternity care. The Maternity Alliance is concerned that, under the new proposals, the economics of competition and the creation of self-governing hospitals will further concentrate services."

It points out how that would be a drawback for women:

"A more patchwork service would mean more travel."

It expands on that point, but I shall not detain the House. I recommend the evidence to the House.

Mrs. Mahon: In Committee I moved an amendment to include maternity services in core services. As my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston rightly said, core services have disappeared from the Bill. The Government refused to include them. That shows their lack of commitment to a comprehensive Health Service.

Mrs. Wise: My hon. Friend makes a good point. Undoubtedly not only the Maternity Alliance but bodies such as the Royal College of Midwives have expressed grave reservations about the fragmentation likely to result from these proposals.

Even allowing for our wholly disproportionate reliance on hospitals for childbirth, pregnancy and childbirth necessarily involve the community, then the hospital and then the community again. Fragmentation would be extremely dangerous—and I use that word advisedly—for the care of expectant mothers.

Mr. Rogers: My hon. Friend rightly mentioned that women now have to travel considerable distances for their children to be born, because of communication difficulties, and that is a real problem in the south Wales valleys and particularly in the Rhondda valley.

I am glad that we have been joined by the shadow Secretary of State for Wales and the shadow Health Minister for Wales, because I hope that they will be able to correct that situation when they come to power. One of the greatest things that can happen to a person in Wales is to be born in the Rhondda. That is not only considered to be a distinction; it is a distinction. However, women in East Glamorgan have to travel to be delivered of their children; due to Government cutbacks children cannot be born there. In a tribal area such as the south Wales valleys such an issue is of considerable importance. I know that the shadow Secretary of State for Wales will put this issue high on the agenda when we win the election next year.

Mrs. Wise: The Medical Women's Federation said:

"Implementing change without consulting those on whom the burden will fall flies in the face of good management practice and demonstrates a discrepancy between this Government's self image and its behaviour."

The federation went on to make even less complimentary references to the Government, but in deference to the fact that they are having a hard time today, I shall not quote any more.

The Royal College of General Practitioners, speaking about independent hospital trusts, said:

"The College feels that the proposals for independent hospital trusts will seriously affect the level of services for patients and training. The creation of self-governing hospitals will de-stabilise future community care and may lead to a fragmentation of services."

Perhaps that is the sort of evidence that has led the Government to believe that it would be highly dangerous for medical opinion to be consulted and to be laid before the House; the Government think that they will lose.

The Health Visitors Association is concerned about another aspect that has been somewhat neglected. Community services as well as hospitals can opt out of control by the community through the district health authorities and that is an extraordinary proposition.

The Health Visitors Association is deeply worried about that because, by definition, health visitors are in the community. It said:

"A possibility not touched on in the White Paper and Working Papers (except implicitly in the references to health authorities being empowered to buy services from the private sector) is that a private company could bid for the contract to provide all or part of the community nursing services. While the Government's stated intention is for careful regulation and monitoring of contracts and their performance, the Association believes that specific safeguards are needed to prevent vested interests from developing services in directions detrimental to the interests of clients. An infant formula manufacturer, for example, should not be able, by any act or omission, to create conditions within the health visiting service which would adversely affect the quality of unbiased information and advice about infant feeding."

That is a matter of great concern, which the Government have not referred to at all. They are not privatising the NHS—I will concede that—but they are blurring the edges and the interface between it and the private sector, which will result in a most peculiar and uncontrollable hybrid.

The Health Visitors Association has proven knowledge of and a proven interest in the matter. It would welcome the opportunity to ensure by means of a device such as new clause 4 that its concerns were put directly to the House.

The association also referred to the integrated nature of the service. It said:

"Integrated child services ensure close links between the nursing and medical staff, in and out of hospital, concerned with a range of provision for children with special needs, and in relation to child protection. Where these aspects of hospital and community services were no longer to be managed by the same agent, the Association fears that these links could be jeopardised, particularly if they added to the hospital's costs."

The last phrase—

"particularly if they added to the hospital's costs"—

contains a considerable sting. It will determine what a hospital does. I agree with the association that the kind of services to which it refers, which are so important to children, would be jeopardised.

The Division of Social Responsibility of the Methodist church also submitted evidence. I accept that the term "social responsibility" might invalidate the Methodist church's evidence in the eyes of Conservative Members, but that will not apply to the public. The Methodist church's response to the Select Committee's report was:

"NHS Hospitals may opt out of Health Authority control. They will be managed by business-oriented Trusts, which may trade with other institutions, private and public, hiring their own staff at their own rates."

9 am

The Secretary of State compared this reorganisation with the 1972 reorganisation—again by a Conservative Government. I was not predisposed towards that reorganisation, but it bore no relationship to these proposals. The Secretary of State relies on people not having read the documents relating to his proposals. The Methodist church referred to the relationship with the private sector and said:

"There is no reason to welcome the expansion of the private sector; countries with a larger proportion of health care provided privately do not always enjoy better health care than does Britain. The White Paper envisages the NHS working much more closely with the private sector. In view of the proposals to bring senior clinicians more closely into management, this implies a very serious conflict of interest. Consultants are likely to have a fairly dominant role under the new proposals, and would be chiefly responsible for buying services from the private sector, that is, from their own medical businesses. This is seen as corrupt when it occurs in the Local Authority context, and will place a heavy policing burden on the Audit Commission and on Health Authorities.

The deep suspicion arises, however, that the plans for hospital trusts are designed to make large-scale privatisation possible."

That is not a Labour party document; it is a document from the Methodist church's Division of Social Responsibility.

Mr. Hoyle: I am very impressed by my hon. Friend's remarks. Does she agree that, as all this is about cost, there will be a temptation to put pharmacy, laboratory services, and so on, out to the private sector and that, as a result, we shall have an inferior, less efficient service that could put lives at risk?

Mrs. Wise: I agree entirely. As the point that my hon. Friend has made is self-explanatory, I shall not elaborate on it.

As I have shown, the Select Committee took evidence from a very wide range of organisations. It took evidence also from the research team for elderly people at St. David's hospital, Cardiff, which added its voice to the expression of worries and anxieties about the likely consequences of the Government's proposals. No doubt, those people would like a chance to be consulted. The research team told us:

"The interface between community and hospitals, including flexible respite care, is also critical for older people. It is hard to envisage hospitals which become autonomous seeing such work as a priority unless they perceive that such an approach will reduce the readmissions of chronic cases. What evidence exists suggests that elderly people who get into trouble after discharge are not regularly reassessed. There will be no financial incentive for a hospital to ensure that good follow-up and rehabilitation facilities exist. The tendency will be even greater if such reassessment is likely to lead to readmission, thus incurring heavy financial disadvantages. Unless the auditing system extends to surveillance of the community, these failures are unlikely to be recognised."

I suggest that the people who would recognise these failures, and indeed would be in a position even to anticipate them, are elderly people themselves. Thus, those who care for them clinically and those who carry out

research on the subject should have the ear of the House, as should the elderly people themselves, by way of the proposed ballots.

The case for a ballot has been made not so much by Opposition Members as by all these outside organisations with their expertise and their interest—and that cannot be said to be simply self-interest; the range is far too wide for that. I could have quoted many more instances. As it is, I have quoted a very wide range of people with an excellent reputation and with expertise.

I believe that the new clause, because it would give the final say to both Houses of Parliament, is cautious. It is also comprehensive, in that it brings in clinicians and other staff, district health authorities and community health councils, as well as the local population, and ensures that the Secretary of State is obliged to include their views in any report on proposals to opt out. He would not dare proceed against the weight of the opinion that would be disclosed. That is why the new clause is being resisted so fiercely by Government Members.

Mr. Terry Davis (Birmingham, Hodge Hill): The Secretary of State complained at the beginning of his speech that my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) had spoken for a long time in moving the motion on the new clause. The Secretary of State spoke for one hour and 11 minutes and did not get to the point of the new clause until he had spoken for one hour and six minutes. By contrast, like my Back-Bench colleagues, I shall devote all my remarks to the purpose of the new clause, which is to ensure that there is a consultative ballot of local people about the future of their local hospital.

The Secretary of State is not in the Chamber. He told the House that he intended to make a special point of being present for speeches by Back Benchers. He left the Chamber almost as soon as they started to make their speeches. His absence is particularly unfortunate because I intend to take him to task for his remarks about the ballots held in some parts of the country.

I speak for the west midlands. The Secretary of State announced in a press release that five "units"—the Government's word—have expressed an intention to opt out of local health authority control and become self-governing trusts. I was interested to note that the first of the units on the list promulgated by the right hon. and learned Gentleman is the Alexandra hospital in Redditch. It is first because the list is in alphabetical order. The Alexandra hospital is in the area of the Bromsgrove and Redditch health authority, where I lived for many years and which I briefly represented in the House.

A hospital was desperately needed in that new town, and the people of Redditch campaigned for nearly 20 years to get one. Everything else was provided—housing, schools, shops and roads—but the hospital was at the end of the list. A marvellous hospital was eventually constructed a few years ago. Although it does not operate to capacity because of underfunding, it is a tremendous boon to the people of Redditch. However, they have learnt that someone—I believe that it may be the health authority—has expressed interest in the idea of the hospital opting out and becoming a self-governing trust.

Mr. Winnick: My hon. Friend referred to five such hospitals in the west midlands. Is he aware that the opt-out proposal for a district general hospital in my borough has been opposed by the local community health council, which made it clear in a letter to the Secretary of State that there was no justification for opting out and which echoed all the fears that I expressed in an Adjournment debate on this subject last July? Is not it a fact that there has been no sign of any public support or support from the staff at those five hospitals for the proposal?

Mr. Davis: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. He has saved me from making some remarks about Walsall. I thought that he might want to represent the interests of his constituents.

I shall concentrate at this stage on the Alexandra hospital in Redditch, where a ballot has been held. The Secretary of State referred to what he called fancy polls up and down the country and talked about the Labour party and the trade union movement enjoying themselves organising straw polls to oppose self-governing trusts for NHS hospitals. The people of Redditch will take grave exception to his remarks, because the Redditch ballot was organised not by the Labour party, the trade union or some fancy people but by the local council. It is true that there is a majority of Labour councillors on Redditch district council, but the ballot was supported by all parties, including Conservative councillors who, to their credit, believed that the people of Redditch should be consulted about the future of their local hospital, for which all parties had campaigned for many years. Those councillors went so far as to invite the Secretary of State for Health to launch the ballot. He declined and refused to send a representative. The leaflets distributed by the local council could not be described as propaganda. They set out the arguments for and against a self-governing trust.

When I read the leaflet, I wondered what the result would be, because it gave the Government's alleged advantages of opting out. The ballot was organised by the council officers on behalf of all the council and it was done fairly. There was no bias in either the questions or the explanatory leaflet. Even the Secretary of State would have to concede that point if he took the trouble to look at the leaflet.

9.15 am

The ballot had a tremendous result. There was great interest in the town of Redditch, and 57 per cent. of the people took part. There was no way in which the ballot boxes could have been stuffed. The ballot was conducted by council officers who visited people's homes to collect the forms, so there can be no allegations of rigging. Thirty-two thousand people took part in the ballot which was organised by all parties on the district council in Redditch. Of those, 3,210 or 10 per cent., having read the arguments for and against, could not make up their minds on whether the hospital should opt out, and 5,262, which is 17 per cent., were clearly in favour of the hospital opting out. The other 22,869 people said that they were against their hospital opting out. That is 73 per cent. of the many people who took part in the ballot and represents 81 per cent. of those who had an opinion, as my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston said. They said that they were against their hospital opting out.

The hospital serves not only Redditch, but the Bromsgrove district. I know that district well because I used to live there. It includes a rural area as well as the town of Bromsgrove and is a large district. It was only right that the people of Bromsgrove should be consulted as well as the people of Redditch, because the hospital serves

both districts. Unfortunately, Bromsgrove district council, which is Conservative controlled, refused to conduct a ballot, so it was left to the Labour party to consult the people of Bromsgrove. Bromsgrove Labour party, to its credit, put a great deal of effort into organising a ballot, which it tried to make as fair as possible. It received a tremendous response, too. There were 20,000 ballot papers and 35 per cent. of the people in Bromsgrove responded to the opportunity to be consulted about the future of their hospital, which is the Alexandra hospital. That is more people than participate in many local elections, as hon. Members of all parties will accept. Having thought about the issue, 238 people said that they were in favour of the hospital opting out and becoming a self-governing trust, whereas 6,812 people said that they were against opting out. Of 20,000 ballot papers, the response was 7,050, which is 35 per cent. Ninety-seven per cent. were opposed to the Alexandra hospital being allowed to opt out.

Another ballot was held, not by the Labour party or by the council, but by the staff for the staff at the Alexandra hospital. It was not restricted to staff who happened to be members of trade unions, but was for all staff. It recognised the right of everybody who worked at the hospital to express an opinion about the future of their place of work. Eighty-three per cent. of the staff took part in that ballot, and the result was similar to the results of the ballots of those living in the catchment area of the hospital. Thirty-one members of staff were in favour of a self-governing trust, whereas 795 voted against. That is 96 per cent. against a self-governing trust and only 4 per cent. in favour. There is no question about the overwhelming opinion of the staff at the hospital, of the people living in Redditch and of the people living in Bromsgrove about the future of their hospital.

What was even more significant in the context of this debate about new clause 4, about whether people should be consulted and whether people should have an opportunity to express their opinion, was the result of the other question that people in Redditch were asked. Redditch council asked the local people whether they thought that they should be consulted. There were differences of opinion about whether the hospital should opt out, 81 per cent. of those who expressed an opinion being against—although the crude voting figures showed that 73 per cent., three out of four, were against opting out, with 17 per cent. in favour and 10 per cent. not knowing.

But when the people were asked whether they should have an opportunity to be consulted, the response was even more impressive. Only 3 per cent. did not have a view about that; 10 per cent. had not formed an opinion; only 7 per cent. were against being consulted; but 90 per cent., including a large number of those who were in favour of opting out, said they should have an opportunity to express an opinion. They were talking about being consulted, not about determining the future of the hospital. That is the purpose of the new clause—to ensure that people are consulted—and experience among the people in the Bromsgrove and district health authority area clearly shows that the public want to be consulted. The Government are resisting the new clause and are thereby saying that people should not even be permitted to give their view.

We are not saying that the local people should determine the future or that the ballot should be binding. The Conservatives are in favour of compulsory and binding ballots when it suits them. Let the people be consulted and express a view, and let us be told the result. The Government's supporters, Tory councillors and even those who are in favour of the hospital opting out want them to agree to the principle of the new clause.

Five units are now being considered. In other words, in five places an intention to opt out and become a self-governing trust has been expressed. My hon. Friend the Member for Walsall, North (Mr. Winnick) said that the Walsall acute services hospital was one of the five. I have spoken in detail about the Alexandra hospital. It has been suggested that a hospital in Rugby should become a self-governing trust, but unfortunately we do not have an hon. Member among us to say what the people of Warwickshire think about that.

Two other units are outstanding. In those, an intention to become self-governing trusts has been expressed. It so happens that the people served by those two units will be consulted in the most effective way. They will have not just the opportunity but the right to be consulted about the Government's plans, not only for their hospitals but on a wide range of other issues. Those two units are the Mid-Staffordshire mental health hospital and the Mid-Staffordshire community hospital. The people of Mid-Staffordshire will have their say on 22 March. I am confident about the view that they will express, and the Government will be obliged to listen.

Mr. Madden: I need not apologise for intervening in the debate because first, I have been waiting for 16 hours to speak to the new clause and, secondly, I am anxious to report why many people in the city of Bradford strongly believe that the public and staff concerned should be consulted about the Government's proposals for self-governing trusts.

We in Bradford are told that there is to be a trust which will incorporate Bradford royal infirmary, St. Luke's hospital and Woodlands hospital. If that is true, it means that 85 per cent. of all Bradford's hospital services will be included in the trust. There are rumours that a fourth hospital will also be included, although it has not been identified.

Many people in Bradford, and throughout the rest of the country, are concerned about the extensive preparatory work undertaken over the past 12 months to establish trusts, before any parliamentary approval has been given to the Bill that provides for them. Dr. Mark Baker, Bradford's district general manager, has spearheaded the intense preparations for the Bradford trust. He has secured a very unusual agreement with Bradford health authority: he has been seconded to Yorkshire regional health authority for two years, after which he is free to return to his Bradford post if he so wishes.

That unusual agreement underlines the suspicion that the Government see the Bradford trust as the flagship of their proposals to dismantle the NHS there. There is also some significance in the allegation that the Government have allocated £400,000 extra to the Bradford health authority this year: that is clearly intended to facilitate and finance the preparatory work that has been under way during the past year.

Many other worries felt by Bradford people reinforce the need for ballots to be held before NHS trusts become a reality, there and elsewhere in the country. The Bradford trust, unlike the health authority, is not observing an equal-opportunity recruitment policy. Top jobs are being

filled not through open competition—they are not being advertised—but under the old pals act, which many people both inside and outside the NHS find entirely unacceptable.

Furthermore, neither the public nor the press will have the right to attend the meetings at which the trust will determine its overall policy on patients and other important matters. That, too, is causing widespread concern. Officers who intend to become directors and officers of the trust have been drawing up their own trust contracts, and dealing similarly with other matters in which they have a direct financial interest. Some have received large bonuses to speed the development work. It is feared that after April 1991, when the authority takes on its new contracting status, it will be left with a rump of officers unable to compete with the much more powerful sole supplier of core services—the trust, whose directors will know the health authority inside out. That is no way in which to operate a contractor-contractee relationship.

This year, the health authority's budget of £80 million has had to be cut by £3 million. Chronic services for the elderly, psychiatric patients, disabled and handicapped people, and the community services, have been cut by £1·2 million, whereas acute services, have been cut by only £300,000. That has occurred against a background of continuous concern about underspending of the chronic services budget and overspending of the acute services budget.

9.30 am

We know that the acting unit general manager for chronic services is planning to go to the trust as Dr. Baker's deputy. That man is in charge of the cuts programme in chronic services, cuts which protect acute services and make the trust more financially viable, and which are thereby of direct future financial interest to himself and in conflict with his present responsibilities to do the best that he can for the chronic and community services. It has been freely admitted that part of the cuts will entail job losses in the geriatric and school nurse services.

There is serious anxiety about the trust's employment policies. On 13 February 1990, Mr. Charles Vize, a senior consultant for the ear, nose, throat and eye unit, who is to become the clinical director of the Bradford trust for those specialties, met nursing staff at Bradford royal infirmary and told them that the Whitley council's terms and conditions of service, at present recognised by the Bradford area health authority, would not be recognised should Bradford become a self-governing trust. They were also told that flexible working patterns are to be introduced in the ear, nose, throat and eye unit in the near future with or without members of staff approving them, and that members of staff would be liable to summary dismissal and would lose the right of redress.

As I have already said, night sisters in Bradford have been told that under the trust those posts will be abondoned. A night sister working in Bradford wrote to me saying:

"I am now told that I am no longer necessary and I am very worried and concerned for my patients and my staff. Who will help and support my staff, some of whom are newly qualified . . . At the end of the day it is the patients who will suffer . . . I feel angry, hurt and let down that after all these years my services are no longer required. I worked for many years on a low salary but because we were classed as dedicated this was acceptable. Now when I am receiving a decent salary I am classed as an expensive commodity and out I go. Do the public realise that there will be no Health Service as we know it if the White Paper is passed through Parliament? I would appreciate any help that you can give me."

That comes about because I understand that under the trust there is to be rotating 24-hour staff cover and night sisters will not be part of that. There will be only day sisters; night sisters' posts will be abolished. They are worried about whether alternative vacancies will be offered to them and whether those posts will be on a comparable grade, and there are real fears that a number of night sisters now doing dedicated and caring work in Bradford are likely to be made redundant in the near future.

I have also received letters from junior doctors in Bradford. They have recently formed the Bradford junior doctors committee and they are campaigning about their excessive hours of work which range from 90 to 120 hours a week. They write:

"We feel that now is the time for action. Bradford Area Health Authority have expressed an interest in "opting out" and are putting a lot of behind-the-scenes effort into this, but none into improving our working conditions. Things will only get worse if opting out becomes a reality."

In the view of many of my constituents and the majority of people of Bradford, the Bradford trust and the aura that is being created around it, is producing an unacceptable atmosphere of secrecy, sleaze and self-interest. Instead of health care, there is talk about business plans. Instead of talk of patients there is talk of customers. The principle of the National Health Service was put to the people of this country at a general election and the Labour Government in 1945 received a massive mandate for it. The proposals fundamentally to dismantle the National Health Service should, in turn, be put to the people of this country at a general election. Therefore, the Government should call an immediate halt to the preparation for National Health Service trusts throughout the country. We are told that 16 will be announced this October, and another 40 or 50 next year.

It is wholly unacceptable, and possibly unlawful, that preparatory work for those trusts has gone on in Bradford and elsewhere during the past 12 months—months and months in advance of parliamentary approval. If the Government are not prepared to accept the recommendations in the new clause that extensive and thorough consultations with staff and the public should be undertaken in properly supervised ballots, they have no alternative but to withdraw the proposals, call a halt and allow the people of this country to show clearly at a general election whether or not they support the fundamental dismantling of their National Health Service.

Mr. Keith Bradley (Manchester, Withington): I am grateful to be called after 16 hours of detailed debate of the Bill to look at new clause 4 in the light of a hospital in my constituency, Christie hospital, a famous national centre of excellence. I wish to show by this case study the process that has been going on over the past 12 months and why the clause is so important. I shall concentrate on subsection (2)(a) of the new clause, which refers to a ballot of staff at a hospital. I specify that part of the new clause because, although I fully support and commend the Opposition calls for wider consultation and ballots among the local community, I accept that, in the case of Christie, patients come from all over the country to use its facilities and there could be an argument—I say no more than that—why the electorate would have to be narrowed down in this ballot.

[Mr. Keith Bradley]

The people of south Manchester are proud of Christie hospital. They do a lot of work to raise money to ensure that it continues to operate. Without that support from local people many of the services that still exist at Christie hospital certainly would not have continued. With that reservation, I shall limit my remarks to a ballot of the staff.

I shall first make a general comment about the context of Christie hospital. It is in South Manchester health authority. In Committee, the Secretary of State for Health, on one of his rare appearances in the Committee, said that he was fed up hearing about the problems of South Manchester health authority. He is going to hear a bit more about them today.

The chaos of financial crisis in south Manchester continues. It has come to such a point that not only has the chair of the health authority resigned and will not be reappointed from 1 April, but the general manager leaves tomorrow. Three months of consultations have just been completed on a document containing plain supposedly to rationalise services between Withington and Wythenshawe hospitals, has been rewritten and a new document was to be presented to a health authority meeting this Thursday. At 11.30 pm yesterday I learned that that meeting has been cancelled and no meeting to discuss the consultation document will be held before the chairman of the health authority and the general manager leave. Therefore, the financial crisis and chaos in south Manchester continue. We must consider the proposals for Christie to opt out in that overall context.

It has been clear from the start that any expression of interest by the consultants and staff at Christie hospital to opt out of South Manchester health authority control has been based exclusively on the lack of resources within South Manchester to provide the amount of care that the hospital wants to give. There was an Adjournment debate on that very subject in 1986. If those resources had been made available to Christie hospital, recognising it from that point as a centre of excellence, there would have been no expression of interest in opting out. It is the last resort to gain some extra resources; a cynical attempt to grab what money may be available to prop up a failing service.

Even that expression of interest was not unanimous. A ballot was held among the consultants and, by only a narrow majority, they decided to express an interest. However, it was made quite clear that that was only so that they could receive more information about opting out. There was a clear understanding that no decision had been taken about opting out, that the information from the Department would be studied, and a decision then made.

However, based on that expression of interest, the whole bandwagon got under way at the hospital. The general manager, Mr. Fry, wanted to push ahead as fast as possible and to retain the hospital's position on the short list for being one of the first to opt out. He was egged on by a few consultants, and the whole process moved on.

Hon. Members have already mentioned the amount of work done in hospitals even before the Bill has completed its stages. Already a draft document is ready to be presented to the Secretary of State. A great deal of management time and expenditure went into that which should have been spent on health care for South Manchester. It is a scandal and the Secretary of State should be here to try to defend that.

What is the process of consultation to discover whether that vague expression of interest has any validity among the staff of the hospital? The Labour party has been accused of trying to influence public opinion on opting out by putting out misleading information. What did the management of south Manchester do? It regularly produces a good-news newspaper for the health authority called "Health Call". That is distributed to all the people in South Manchester. Throughout the financial crisis in South Manchester, when wards and even whole units have been closed and waiting lists have grown, with consultants saying that people are dying because they cannot be admitted to hospital, did the newspaper mention those facts? Not a word—it is all good news. It contains articles such as

"Why Christie's may opt for self-government"

with a nice picture of a smiling general manager exploding the so-called myths of what is happening.

Follow-up propaganda—a nice, glossy magazine—was also produced at the health authority's expense to explain why the hospital should opt out. It is probably only a coincidence that it is on blue-headed paper. It gives the management's position and then devotes a whole page to

"Some myths associated with self-governing status."

The general manager, in his unbiased presentation of information for the staff on how to reach a decision, quotes the supposed myth:

"When health authorities or GP budget holders run low on funds, patients will be denied treatment."

He then asserts:

"Not true. The Department of Health has stated many times that . . . no patient will be denied treatment solely on the grounds of lack of cash."

However, when we tabled an amendment in Committee to ensure that no patient would be denied treatment because of lack of funds, the Government refused to support it and voted it down. Therefore, the "not true" assertion of the general manager of Christie hospital has exploded in his face. It is party-political propaganda to try to kid the staff that it will be in their best interests to opt for self-governing status. That flies in the face of the Government trying to accuse the Labour party of undertaking such propaganda exercises.

9.45 am

What is the process that Christie will undertake? The whole basis of the expression of interest has been on that one vote among the consultants. They have continued down the path. Now there is to be a series of consultative meetings with staff in the hospital. When the general manager was asked to have another ballot to see whether the expression of interest had been firmed up, he said that it was not possible to have a ballot because he could not identify which population should be balloted. When it was accepted that the ballot should take place only for staff in the hospital, he wondered whether all the staff should take part, or whether part-time staff should be allowed only half a vote. He refused a ballot and said that he would arrive at a consensus which would emerge from the consultative meetings. When he was asked how it would emerge, he replied that he would gauge the mood of the staff meetings.

The position is reflected in a copy of a letter that I received from a consultant who is happy to be named. Mr. Martin Harris wrote to the general manager:

"I have read the Draft Application for Self-Governing status for the Christie Hospital, and I do not believe that it

sets out a convincing case that the Hospital is likely to be financially viable as a Trust. Furthermore, I feel that the application is misleading in a number of ways".

He identifies why it is misleading. In the light of the new clause I shall read just the first one:

"I object to the implication made at several points that the Application has the support of staff in the hospital. Perhaps it does, but this has not been ascertained by a ballot."

He wanted a ballot and he thought that the votes cast for and against should be identified in the application. The general manager has said that a consensus of support is emerging. Mr. Harris carried out a ballot of his staff and the consultants in pathology and medical oncology. Every consultant was against the proposal, as well as 15 out of 27 staff; 60 per cent. were against the proposal.

Here we have a general manager expressing a view based on no new information from the Department of Health. He has refused a ballot and said that he can gauge the consensus. Yet the evidence is clear that if there were a ballot, the majority would vote against the proposal.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) said, we will not allow the management of hospitals to opt out without a ballot. We will ensure that the staff in Christie hospital have the right to ballot. We will ensure that that is included in any further document and that the people of South Manchester, who care passionately about the future of the hospital, understand that the Government are ignoring the wishes of the staff and of the general public, and are ploughing ahead. That is democracy to the Tory party. We will ensure that democracy is seen to be done.

Mr. Tom Clarke: The hon. Member for Harlow (Mr. Hayes), who is back in his place, raised a point of order earlier. He drew the attention of the House to the presence of some men in white coats. My hon. Friend the Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) is still here. Until a few seconds ago, the hon. Member for Harlow was missing. I cannot see the Secretary of State. I wonder whether that was the reason for the presence of the men in white coats.

The Secretary of State owes an explanation to the House. Having criticised my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston, who had been present for much longer than he had been, he said that he would listen to contributions from Back-Bench Members. So far as I could see, he did not listen to any. But that is par for the course for him.

New clause 4 is clear, logical and reasonable. I believe that it invites the support of the House and I have no doubt that it has the support of public opinion. The new clause is headed "consultation" and it deals with the essential principle that the Government have adopted of opting out and the formation of NHS trusts. If we still claim to be a democracy, it must be reasonable that patients, workers in the Health Service and communities should have a say in the Health Service in their areas.

I was disappointed that the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) saw a difference between those who work in the NHS and the patients. I do not believe that the patients see it that way. They accept that they owe a great debt to NHS workers and they would respect the views of the people who maintain the Health Service, of which we have been proud and of which we will be proud under the next Labour Government.

The Secretary of State opposes the principle in the new clause. However, as we saw in Committee, he does not oppose it on the basis of logic or by embracing democracy. He does not oppose it because he thinks that it will not improve the Health Service or because the Government are being consistent—and we must remember that we are talking about a Government who imposed ballots on the trade unions, and introduced the same principle to education and housing, but who have now decided that the principle is not practical for health because they know that in every test of public opinion the Government's view would not prevail. The reason for the Government's stand on this clause, as on others, is that we face nothing but dogma, and that dogma is utterly repugnant to the British people.

My hon. Friend the Member for Livingston and my other hon. Friends who have contributed to the debate, including my hon. Friend the Member for Preston (Mrs. Wise) who referred to the view of the Select Committee on Social Services, have made an unanswerable case. The case is so unanswerable that I will conclude by asking the House to take the only reasonable view, which is to support the new clause. If the Government still resist it, I invite the House to divide on it.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Mr. Roger Freeman): I will endeavour to answer some of the questions that have been raised and if other hon. Members—

Mr. Campbell-Savours: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker—and I am not being unreasonable in raising this point of order.

I understood that my hon. Friend the Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke) rose to ensure that a closure would not preclude a speech being made by a Scottish Member on this important matter. If the Minister is taking this opportunity to reply, can we presume that we will not be excluded from the debate? My hon. Friend the Member for Monklands, West was protecting himself—

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): Order. That is a very convoluted point of order. The hon. Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke) rose and it was my duty to call him as he speaks for the Opposition.

Mr. Freeman: Obviously if the hon. Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke) tries to intervene, I will try to answer any questions that that he may ask.

The hon. Member for Monklands, West made the main point of his attack the fact that we were approaching the establishment of NHS trusts as a matter of dogma. I cannot agree with that. I believe that there is sound common sense behind our proposals, because we are not taking anything away from the NHS. We are not taking anything away from the people of Manchester, Withington, of Birmingham, Hodge Hill or of Bradford, West.

Through the delegation of greater responsibility to hospitals, mental health services, ambulance services and districtwide services—there are many different types and models of NHS trusts—I hope that we shall restore more local pride and responsibility in the management of the NHS. I am somewhat surprised at the hon. Gentleman's comment and disagree with him that we are approaching the issue as a matter of blind dogma. I honestly believe that it is sound common sense and later this year when the House sees initiative covers a relatively modest number of hospitals and other units, hon. Members will recognise that it is a sound and sensible initiative——

Ms. Primarolo: I apologise for interrupting the Minister so early in his speech, but he said that a relatively small number of hospitals and units were involved. The South-West regional health authority contains 11 district health authorities. Currently his Department is planning for eight of those DHAs to be removed to trust in their entirety. That is not modest; that is not a small number; it is almost all the NHS provision in the South-West region in its current form.

Mr. Freeman: I do not believe that the hon. Lady has got her statistics right for two reasons——

Ms. Primarolo: I am referring to the Minister's press release.

Mr. Freeman: First, we listed 79 potential NHS trusts several months ago, ranging across the board from services within an entire district, to an acute hospital, to an ambulance service and a mental health unit. There were many different examples. I hope that I have made it clear to the hon. Lady that when my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State launches the initiative once the Bill becomes law, we shall be dealing with a relatively modest number. There are 260 major acute hospitals in England of which a relatively modest number will join the initiative.

The main thrust of the earlier remarks of the hon. Member for Bradford, West (Mr. Madden) was that he questioned the validity or the constitutional propriety of such preparatory work. I do not think that he used the word "illegal". He knows that this matter has recently been tested in the courts and that a clear judgment was reached, ruling that the preparatory work undertaken so far was legal. I assure him—as did my right hon. and learned Friend—that no definitive steps will be taken until Parliament has given the Department of Health the necessary authority. The preparatory work is prudent and modest. Whatever Government were in power and planning any change in the NHS, for whatever reason, I believe that they would have sought to take such steps.

The hon. Member for Birmingham, Hodge Hill (Mr. Davis) said that the public would not be consulted. I think that that fairly reflects the hon. Gentleman's concluding remarks. I am sure that he did not mean that we would not go through the regular consultation procedure involving the community health councils when the Bill is enacted. Through the community health councils of those districts where NHS trusts are recognised as potential candidates, there will be a process of proper consultation lasting several months which will involve the community health councils offering their opinion, ascertaining the views of the public through media advertisements and doubtless through the canvassing of the hospital staff, both medical and non-medical. All those views will be sought and, I am sure, expressed. We are not proposing in any way to change the existing procedure by which the community health councils can express their opinions on what will be a significant change of a delegation of authority within their districts.

We believe strongly that a formal ballot is unnecessary because we are talking about the delegation of authority. We are not taking anything away; we are not removing a hospital from the Health Service. The units will remain within the service. We are delegating authority and therefore we believe that a ballot is unnecessary.

We are delegating——

Mr. Bill Michie (Sheffield, Heeley): In all the consultations that have been guaranteed and taken place in the past, whether involving a hospital or ward closure, the overwhelming evidence from the public, staff and patients has suggested that the place should stay open. Yet after that consultation, the opposite has happened. The results of the consultation have been completely ignored. Therefore, there is frustration. It is fine to have the consultation, but unless the powers-that-be take notice of it and act upon it, it is a complete waste of time. A ballot shows the number of people who believe that such a place should stay open or should not opt out. The evidence is public and should be recognised. Consultation is a con. If we could have some sort of ballot, action could be taken.

Mr. Freeman: It is not fair to say that the community health council consultation procedure—certainly in my experience—has been a con or a sham. It is statistically true that few hospital or ward closure decisions, perhaps as part of rationalisation, are reversed or stopped in their tracks. But the nature of the changes is often altered as a result of representations from the CHC. The qualifications placed on what may happen may be changed.

10 am

Mr. Gerald Bermingham (St. Helens, South): I have listened carefully to the Minister. He may recall the occasion not long ago when people from the St. Helens area came to see him about the geriatric units there. Everyone, from the community health councils to doctors and everyone else involved agreed that they should not close. The Minister listened to the area health authority and ignored the populace at large. What guarantee is there in what he says?

Mr. Freeman: When decisions do not go in the general or specific direction that hon. Members and their delegations want, they believe that the Minister has listened to the health authority. Any Minister from any Government has to listen to the facts of the case. He has to operate within certain guidelines. The guidelines are the resources available to the region and the district. The consultation procedure is not a sham.

A balloting system—*[Interruption.]* I keep my remarks brief, logical and to the point. A balloting procedure is unnecessary because responsibility is being delegated.

We are delegating responsibility for hiring staff, except junior doctors. We must maintain control over the pyramid career structure for all doctors. We must control the number of junior doctors. We want to give NHS trusts the power to hire staff in the numbers and range of qualifications that they need and to pay them the right rate for the job in the local circumstances. That does not mean ——

Mrs. Mahon: Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Hoyle: Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Freeman: Certainly I shall give way, but I wish to finish my sentence first. It does not mean that NHS trusts will be able to pay the limit and therefore bid staff away from directly managed units for the simple reason that money is not being printed. NHS trusts will have to win, through contracts, sufficient revenue to balance their books. They will be subject to the same constraints as directly managed hospitals.

Mr. Hoyle: Will the Minister clarify two points? I do not know whether he was in for all the Secretary of State's speech. The Secretary of State said that some unions might be under-represented in the new trust hospitals. If so, will unions be recognised? Secondly, did I understand from the Minister's latter remark that, far from paying the going rate, trusts might pay a lower rate? If so, how will they retain staff?

Mr. Freeman: I was here for the great majority of the Secretary of State's speech although, like many other hon. Members, I sought a brief rest during the night. I heard most of his remarks. He said that there would be no automatic guarantees of union representation in NHS trusts. That would be a matter for the trust. He answered that point fairly and squarely.

The NHS trusts must ensure that they provide a range of services through the contracts that they have won. They must pitch their labour rates for clerical staff and support staff in the hospital at the right level to attract the right number of staff of the right quality.

Mr. Cousins: What is the level?

Mr. Freeman: That is a matter for each NHS trust. The Secretary of State was frank and direct when he said that national pay bargaining and a national structure were not appropriate for NHS trusts. We want the NHS to move to a more flexible system of pay bargaining. My right hon. and learned Friend said of the ambulance dispute that in the future we look to local productivity deals, perhaps arranged regionally at first, so that ambulance men with the right qualifications and approach to work are paid more.

Mrs. Mahon: Does the Minister accept that this modest initiative will affect thousands of Health Service staff? We have the blueprint for what will happen to them, in the confidential Trent document to the general managers for self-governing hospital trusts. It talks about individual remuneration, deskilling, which will lead to even more wards without a skilled person in charge, and separate pay deals. It refers to renegades and subversives when talking about ordinary Health Service workers trying to ensure decent pay and conditions. This is a dramatic change for the staff. Does not the Minister owe it to their dedication and loyalty at least to give them the vote?

Mr. Freeman: My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State made it plain that staff moving to an NHS trust will take their employment contracts with them. The management of NHS trusts may seek in the years after establishement to vary those terms and conditions, like any other concerned, sensible employer. The employer must set the rate for the job that will attract the right quality and quantity of staff.

Mr. Cousins: One paradox is that there may be low pay on the one hand and a high level of pay on the other creating a monopoly of scarce skills in a handful of hospitals. Does the Minister intend that regional health authorities should have the power to arrange the scarce skills in their region so that there is a fair distribution of those skills across the range of hospitals and so that they are not all concentrated in one, two or three hospitals which would therefore hold a monopoly?

Mr. Freeman: I shall deal with the last point first. The hon. Gentleman, who served on the Committee, knows that the Secretary of State has powers of intervention in the last resort to prevent any hospital, perhaps an NHS trust hospital, from exercising monopoly powers either in relation to pricing or staffing policy.

Mr. Cousins: An important new point is being made. The Secretary of State made it clear in his speech that the Government are in full intellectual retreat on the issue and that we are to have a highly managed market, if market it be at all. That relates to contracts and pricing. Now the Minister is saying that the wage market will also be highly managed, with all sorts of consequences for the higher and lower pay ranges. That is an important extra statement that goes beyond anything said in Committee.

Mr. Freeman: I would be the first to recognise, as the whole House does, that in making this major change in the organisation of the NHS, referral patterns, contracts and prices must be managed. Certainly the labour market must be managed. We cannot move overnight to a system of unregulated, unfettered competion. The Secretary of State made that plain. It would not be possible.

The hon. Gentleman asked specifically about those employed in NHS trusts. I said that there was one major exception in the trusts' ability to employ staff in relation to junior doctors. That is an important exception. Although responsibility for determining the numbers and rates of pay of nurses, clerical staff and support staff lies firmly with the NHS trust as the employer, clearly the rates it pays and the number employed are governed by two factors. The first is its own financial resources, because at the beginning of the year a National Health Service trust unit starts with no money in the bank—it is not guaranteed any resources, except the revenue that it earns through various contracts. The second is that it is subject to the market pressures that surround any major enterprise. If it needs administrative and clerical staff, or support workers, it must pay the right rate for the job. That may have a consequence for costs, but it must pay the right rate to attract the necessary staff. The rate of change must be managed, counselled and carefully monitored by the regional health authorities and by the Secretary of State.

Mr. Bill Walker: We have had an interesting response to the hon. Gentleman's point about the effect that this may have on the market. Does my hon. Friend believe —as I certainly do—that in the circumstances a market is working? I shall explain why. Consider the position in my constituency, where the quality of life is good, and we attract high calibre doctors, nurses and other Health Service workers because it is a nice part of the world to live in. It is a good place to bring up children and the education facilities are superb. A market is working and people want to work in my constituency rather than in some of the inner cities, where the pay and conditions are no better. The quality of life in my part of the world is far superior.

Mr. Freeman: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. My argument has been that there will be consultations, but a ballot is unnecessary for the delegation of authority and impractical to organise. I believe that there should be a consensus of support within any potential National Health Service trust. The hon. Member for Manchester, Withington (Mr. Bradley) poured scorn upon that, but it is obvious and important. That initiative will be welcomed

[Mr. Freeman]

in the National Health Service because it is sound common sense and not dogma, and I urge my hon. Friends to throw out the amendment.

Mr. Renton *rose in his place and claimed to move,* That the Question be now put.

Question put, That the Question be now put:—

The House proceeded to a Division—

Mr. Hinchliffe *(seated and covered):* On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. *[Interruption.]*

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. I am trying to deal with a point of order.

Mr. Hinchliffe: I have sat here all night in an attempt to be called in the debate. This issue is crucial to my constituents. It is disgraceful that we have been forced into a closure motion at this point in time. I hope that you will rule against the Government and defend the rights of Back-Benchers.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. If the hon. Gentleman looks at the new clause and examines the comments that have been made in the debate, he will realise that the subject has been fully covered. Additionally, if he looks at the list, he will see how long some hon. Members have spoken—perhaps that is why it has not been possible to call other hon. Members.

Mrs. Mahon *(seated and covered):* On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker—*[Interruption.]*

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. I must hear a point of order.

Mrs. Mahon: A major issue that has not been debated fully during the past 15 or 16 hours has been the effect upon the staff if the new clause is not accepted. The NHS is the largest employer in Europe. It is the duty of the House——

10.15 am

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. I understand the hon. Lady's feelings, but I am sure that she is not criticising the Chair's decision.

The House having divided: Ayes 259, Noes 136.

Division No. 118] **[10.12 am**

AYES

Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Burns, Simon
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Critchley, Julian
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Emery, Sir Peter
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fishburn, John Dudley
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Sir Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gow, Ian
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Hague, William
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Key, Robert
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
Madel, David
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Moss, Malcolm
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Paice, James
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, Rt Hon John
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh

Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Rt Hon Nicholas
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Rt Hon Ian *(Herts N)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thatcher, Rt Hon Margaret
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Waldegrave, Rt Hon William
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Walker, Rt Hon P. *(W'cester)*
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilshire, David
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Alastair Goodlad and
Mr. Tony Durant.

NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashton, Joe
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beggs, Roy
Beith, A. J.
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Blair, Tony
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Dalyell, Tam
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dixon, Don
Douglas, Dick
Duffy, A. E. P.
Eastham, Ken
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Harman, Ms Harriet
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Haynes, Frank
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howells, Geraint
Howells, Dr. Kim (Pontypridd)
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kilfedder, James
Lamond, James
Lewis, Terry
Livingstone, Ken
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
McCartney, Ian
McFall, John
McLeish, Henry
McNamara, Kevin
Madden, Max
Maginnis, Ken
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Primarolo, Dawn
Radice, Giles
Redmond, Martin
Richardson, Jo
Robertson, George
Rogers, Allan
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon Sir David
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Rt Hon J. D. *(S'ford)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Allen McKay and
Mr. Jimmy Dunnachie.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Question put accordingly, That the clause be read a Second time:—

The House divided: Ayes 144, Noes 260.

Division No. 119] **[10.24 am**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashdown, Rt Hon Paddy
Ashton, Joe
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beggs, Roy
Beith, A. J.
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Blair, Tony
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Dalyell, Tam
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dixon, Don
Douglas, Dick
Duffy, A. E. P.
Eastham, Ken
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Harman, Ms Harriet
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Haynes, Frank
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howells, Geraint
Howells, Dr. Kim (Pontypridd)
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kilfedder, James
Kirkwood, Archy
Lamond, James
Lewis, Terry
Livingstone, Ken
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum A.
McFall, John
McLeish, Henry
McNamara, Kevin
Madden, Max
Maginnis, Ken
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric

Maxton, John
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Primarolo, Dawn
Radice, Giles
Redmond, Martin
Richardson, Jo
Robertson, George
Rogers, Allan
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Smith, J. P. *(Vale of Glam)*
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon Sir David
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Wray, Jimmy

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Allen McKay and
Mr. Jimmy Dunnachie.

NOES

Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Burns, Simon
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Critchley, Julian
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Emery, Sir Peter
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fishburn, John Dudley
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Sir Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gow, Ian
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Hague, William
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Key, Robert
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
Madel, David
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, Rt Hon John
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Rt Hon Nicholas
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Rt Hon Ian *(Herts N)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thatcher, Rt Hon Margaret
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Waldegrave, Rt Hon William
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Walker, Rt Hon P. *(W'cester)*
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Alastair Goodlad and
Mr. Tony Durant.

Question accordingly negatived.

Motion made, and Question proposed, That further consideration of the Bill be now adjourned.—*[Mr. Sackville.]*

10.30 am

Mr. Robin Cook: The Treasury Whip has moved a motion of which he owes the House an explanation; the House cannot accept it without one. You will confirm, Madam Deputy Speaker, that the motion is debatable. I am surprised that the Treasury Whip should choose to move such a motion at this hour; I could have understood it had he done so last night to save his hon. Friends from a night out of their beds. But now that we have gone throught the night and we are feeling enthusiastic about a day's debate in prime time, an explanation is required. We were just getting into our stride and beginning to enjoy ourselves.

Before the Whip moved the motion, we were about to debate a new clause relating to GPs' lists—*[Interruption.]* I think that hon. Members are having difficulty hearing——

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. I have been here a long time but I should still like to be able to hear the debate.

Mr. Cook: As we are debating a procedural motion, it is most important that the occupant of the Chair should be able to hear.

We were about to debate the rights of patients who are in danger of being struck off GPs' lists and to propose to confer on them a right of appeal. That is a matter of considerable interest outside the House, and I know that a number of my hon. Friends have come prepared to speak in the debate. It would be for my hon. Friends' convenience if that debate started now rather than at another time. I cannot believe that it would not also be for the convenience of Ministers. We have two Ministers—three if the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State is willing to stay—ready and willing to respond to the debate. There is nothing to suggest that it would be for the convenience of either Opposition or Ministers if we adjourned the debate.

You will be aware, Madam Deputy Speaker, that new clause 8 deals with junior doctors' hours. It would be instructive for hon. Members to debate that now, having been out of their beds for a full night. In that debate, we shall challenge the Government's policy, on junior doctors' hours. The Government are prepared to accept as a modest minimal target the one-in-three rota. I need hardly explain to Ministers what that means: every third weekend, junior doctors have to work from 9 am on Friday, right through Saturday and Sunday, until 5 pm on Monday. To put that in the context of the hours that we have been sitting—until the Treasury Whip moved his motion—we have reached only Saturday morning. We should have to continue until midnight on Friday to achieve the same number of hours as Ministers expect junior doctors in hospitals to work on the one-in-three rota.

There is an obvious question here for the House. If Ministers expect junior doctors to work from Friday morning until 5 pm on Monday, why does the Treasury Whip—he has not spoken to the motion but I presume that he will reply to the debate—feel that 10.30 am on the second day of debate is satisfactory? We have another three days ahead of us to match the doctors. There would be merit in pressing on with the debate, at least until we reached the new clause dealing with junior doctors' hours, so that the House could address that important and serious issue in the same state of fatigue and sleep deprivation in which junior doctors are asked to carry out operations in our hospitals.

Next, we shall come to the new clause on competitive tendering—*[Interruption.]* For a moment I thought that the Government Whip had deserted us. He should pay attention to the views being expressed——

Mr. Campbell-Savours: My hon. Friend may want to comment on another aspect of this motion. The Government were defeated last night, and the public are entitled to ask whether we are being required to truncate debate on the Bill because the Government cannot afford another defeat. If Conservative Members feel after many hours of debate that the Opposition have a case, the Government may think it best to truncate debate as much as possible so as not to allow the opportunity for another defeat. That is a serious proposition.

Mr. Cook: My hon. Friend raises an intriguing matter. Perhaps the Government Whip does not have enough troops to deliver the motion this morning. After all, so far the Government have won only five out of the six votes, and given their majority that is a poor record. It is open to the House, therefore, in the non-partisan spirit in which we debated new clause 1, to examine this motion, which the Government have yet to defend.

Mr. Jeremy Hanley (Richmond and Barnes): Perhaps the truncation of business has more to do with the fact that the hon. Gentleman spoke for one hour and 48 minutes earlier this morning than with any risk of the Government losing future votes.

Mr. Cook: The hon. Gentleman reminds me of my previous record, which I clearly have to beat on this occasion. The hon. Gentleman fairly states that I spoke for one hour and 48 minutes, and suggests that that is the reason for the remarkably brief speech made now by the Treasury Whip.

The Secretary of State for Health spoke for one hour and 10 minutes. I seek the hon. Gentleman's guidance: where, between one hour and 10 minutes and one hour and 48 minutes, rests the optimum time appropriate to the dignity of a Front-Bench speaker?

Rev. Martin Smyth (Belfast, South): Will the hon. Gentleman sympathise with Members who represent Northern Ireland, who do not have the luxury of exploring the changes in our Health Service in the same depth? In the coming months those changes will be foisted on us after only five hours of debate, so we appreciate the depth of investigation that is going on in the House now.

Mr. Cook: I have noted that the Northern Ireland Bench has frequently been full during our debates and I hope that we have given Northern Ireland Members plenty of ammunition.

Mr. Bermingham: Will my hon. Friend consider the fact that, as he spoke for one hour and 48 minutes and the Treasury Whip replied in a moment, if he had spoken for three or four hours, we might not have heard from the Whip at all?

Mr. Cook: Eventually, even my own party—

Mr. Hanley: The Secretary of State, with his usual courtesy, spoke for one hour and 10 minutes to answer the thousands of points made by the hon. Gentleman during his filibuster.

10.45 am

Mr. Cook: The hon. Gentleman rather overstates the case: I would not claim to have made thousands of points during my speech, although I am flattered at the hon. Gentleman's suggestion. I made several dozen points and, patently, since you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, allowed me to make them and thought it appropriate for the Secretary of State to respond to them, they must have been in order and relevant to consideration of the Bill. So the hon. Gentleman has condemned himself from his own mouth. I and my hon. Friends want to scrutinise an enormous number of points in the Bill, which is why we were taken aback that the Government Whip thought this an appropriate moment to curtail debate——

Mr. Bill Michie: Are not the Government rubbing salt in the wound? Some of us have been here all night, myself included—apart from two hours that I spent outside the Chamber. Not only was I prevented from making a speech on new clause 4, but the Government are curtailing further discussion of the Bill. That is precisely what the Government have been doing with the Health Service in general. It is the people's service, not the Government's. The Government dictate what will happen to the service, and then consult. The Government are suggesting that we all go home because they have lost the argument.

Mr. Cook: They also lost the vote, as my hon. Friend will recall.

Mr. Frank Haynes (Ashfield): We are not running away. I thank my hon. Friend for giving me the opportunity to make an intervention. I want him to know that I saw the Secretary of State for Health not long ago, and he is in a terrible state. His problem is that he cannot stand the pace. The Government want to shut down debate so that he can go to bed, and he looks as though he needs to. We, however, are fit as fiddles—and I have been here all night, too. I am raring to go.

The Tory Benches are empty; Conservative Members all want to knock off and get to bed. I recognise that the hon. Member for Richmond and Barnes (Mr. Hanley) has been here all night, too. I was a little surprised that he objected to the length of my hon. Friend's speech. It was a brilliant speech. The hon. Member for Richmond and Barnes had the chance to match it, but he did not. Now he should object to the motion to close the debate, so that he can make that speech. I want to make a speech, too, which is why I object to the motion.

Mr. Cook: I think that I can assist my hon. Friend. If the purpose of the motion is to allow the Secretary of State to go to bed, I immediately offer the Whip an agreement; it is the only agreement that I shall offer him during these proceedings. I am perfectly content that the Secretary of State should go to bed while the rest of us carry on with the Bill. In the light of experience of his presence, I assure the Government Whip that we shall make more rapid progress in the absence of the right hon. and learned Gentleman. If that is the point of the motion, we can accommodate it without sacrifice. It is not we who are running out; it is the Treasury Whip who wants to run out of the debate and away from the Chamber——

Mrs. Mahon: Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Cook: I shall give way to my hon. Friend, who has been with me through the dark hours of the night.

Mrs. Mahon: Does my hon. Friend agree that it could be that Conservative Members do not want to debate new clause 9, known as the "Forsyth" clause? Twenty Conservative Members have an interest in private contractors and the debate could be embarrassing to them. As we beat them during the night, perhaps a sense of conscience would break out, they would declare an interest and refuse to vote.

Mr. Cook: That new clause is yet another one which would be postponed as a result of the motion moved by the Treasury Whip. My hon. Friend the Member for Halifax (Mrs. Mahon) puts an angle on new clause 9 that had not occurred to me. It is certainly true that we have drafted that new clause in such a way as to oblige firms that obtain contracts from the Health Service to declare those parliamentary consultancies that they have awarded in the previous six years. Undoubtedly that would result in the name of at least one Health Service Minister appearing on that register as someone who has held such a consultancy in the past six years.

Mr. Neil Hamilton (Tatton): What about union sponsorship?

Mr. Cook: Our sponsorship is openly recorded and all that we ask is that consultancies held by Conservative Members and Health Ministers are equally openly recorded.

If we did not accept the motion from the Treasury Whip, it would be possible, given the current rate of progress, to reach the debate on new clause 9 before the newspapers for tomorrow have gone to bed. By postponing the debate further, the Government may try to smuggle that debate through at an hour when it would not attract the media attention it otherwise would at prime time.

Mr. Skinner: My hon. Friend is making a good case, but we all know that a guillotine will follow. This is an ill wind that blows no good for anyone. If the Government stop the debate this morning they will finish up with the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry having to answer questions on uncomfortable issues such as Harrods, the invisibles being invisible and the rest of it. My hon. Friend mentioned some of the Tory Members who are involved in murky dealings with private companies. Could he spare a moment to read out that list of Tory Members—I believe that about 30 of them have got their fingers in the pie? My hon. Friend has access to that information.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): Order. Before the hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) responds to that invitation, he should remember that we are dealing with the motion, That further consideration of the Bill be now adjourned.

Mr. Cook: I respond, of course, to your instruction, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The list is here, but we can arrange

to deposit it in the Library, provided that the Library does not follow its recent practice of posting the information back to the hon. Members concerned.

My hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) raised a consideration that crossed my mind during the latter half of the Secretary of State's speech. I wondered whether the concealed purpose of the right hon. and learned Gentleman's speech was to filibuster out Trade and Industry question time under instructions from the Cabinet. What my hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover said about a guillotine being contemplated is rather sinister. We heard nothing about that from the Treasury Whip. We merely heard an innocent and apparently innocuous notion that would have the simple effect of postponing our debate for five hours.

Mr. Cryer: If a guillotine follows, that will be relevant to the business interests of Tory Members involved in the Health Service. Rumours are flying that a guillotine will follow and it is said that the Government have moved to adjourn progress ready to introduce a guillotine. That will curtail discussion greatly and would be to the advantage of hon. Members who see privatisation as a great opportunity for the enterprise culture, as opposed to Opposition Members who have tabled clauses and amendments to try to retain public ownership of the National Health Service. I suggest to my hon. Friend that the business interests of Tory Members are relevant to the debate.

Mr. Cook: My hon. Friend tempts me, but I shall be guided by your advice, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and——

Mr. Campbell-Savours *rose*——

Mr. Cook: I cannot resist giving way to my hon. Friend on this point.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: If it is the Government's intention to curtail debate on new clause 9, and our efforts today to draw the public's attention to the relationship between Conservative Members and private contractors are curtailed, we shall bring Parliament to a halt. The public need to know what is going on in that sleazy relationship. If our debate is curtailed in any way we shall bring this place to a halt.

Mr. Cook: I have spent some time out of the Chamber —not much—in the past few hours and, having watched television and heard the radio, I assure my hon. Friend that the world outside now knows of the vigorous opposition being presented to this deeply unpopular Bill. In the current opinion polls the Bill is even more unpopular than the poll tax Bill was at the same stage of its parliamentary proceedings last year.

Mr. Nigel Spearing: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I wonder whether you can assist me. The question is whether we should proceed with the debate and have further discussion on the substance of the Bill. My hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) suggested that there may be less time for such discussion in the near future if a guillotine or timetable motion is moved. We are not sure whether that will happen. If no timetable motion was planned, I would take a different view of the motion before us. Can you tell us, Mr. Deputy Speaker, whether there is any way in which Ministers can inform the House whether a timetable motion is envisaged —I am not asking about its details, but about the principle. Unless we know whether that is likely, we cannot properly debate the merits of the motion.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. Gentleman and the House will know that that is hypothetical. In any event, it has nothing to do with the Chair.

Mr. Madden: Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. About 17 hours ago my hon. Friend the Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) and I asked Mr. Speaker whether it was proper for Conservative Members with direct pecuniary interests in private contracting companies and other interests directly related to the Bill to vote. Mr. Speaker explained that, as a matter of public policy, such voting was permissible. Is it right for such hon. Members with direct pecuniary interests to vote on procedural motions that would have the effect of gagging the House on new clause 9? That new clause specifically concerns Tory Members with direct pecuniary interests in the NHS, and it is clearly connected with the health trusts that are an integral part of the Bill.

I should be grateful if you reflected on this and gave hon. Members advice on whether it is proper for such Tory Members to vote on procedural motions, because, when such motions are considered, they have no opportunity to declare their interests. It could be held that those hon. Members are putting themselves in considerable difficulty and embarrassment if, subsequently, they are found to have voted on procedural motions that had the effect of gagging the House in relation to their interests.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Let me deal with this point. I heard Mr. Speaker's ruling at the beginning of our debates and exactly the same ruling applies to the procedural motions.

Mr. Cryer: Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I must draw your attention to what happened regarding the private Bill on Lloyd's in 1981, when the position was again slightly obscure. Speaker Thomas simply said that any hon. Member who might have a clash of interests in relation to a private Bill promoted by Lloyd's should refrain from voting. There were 70 members of Lloyd's present during the various stages of that Bill and all except one abstained from voting, on the general guidance of Mr. Speaker.

Some of the Members of Parliament who have a financial interest in the matter receive money from public relations organisations which advise cleaning companies, private medical organisations and so on. Others receive direct payments—for example, from Brent Green Cleaning Services, which is involved in National Health Service contracts.

It seems to me that it would be worth while for you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to refer that point to Mr. Speaker, so that he may re-examine the question and determine whether the 1981 example set by the Lloyd's Bill is definitive. If so, Mr. Speaker can then tell right hon. and hon. Members, "If you have any direct pecuniary interest, you know best" —we know that many Conservative Members are not very keen about disclosing their interests—"but I advise you that the best decision would be to abstain."

11 am

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Mr. Speaker dealt also with that point at the start of the debate, when he drew a clear distinction between private Bills and public Bills. There is nothing that I can add, or need to add, to Mr. Speaker's ruling. I remind the House that the speech of the hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) has been interrupted, and I am anxious that we should return to it.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I have dealt with the point that was raised. If the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) has a different point of order, I shall take it—but I remind him that he will be further delaying the speech of his hon. Friend.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: You, Mr. Deputy Speaker, ruled on the basis of a ruling that was made at the beginning of the debate by Mr. Speaker. I accept that that was the basis of your ruling, but we are now raising a completely different matter. It does not relate to public policy issues, to which Mr. Speaker's earlier ruling related.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I have already dealt with that matter, and I have said that the same applies in both cases.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Perhaps you would care to examine the text of "Erskine May" while I am on my feet. Although your ruling is acceptable in relation to public policy issues, the question now before the House is one of procedure. We are not drawing a distinction between a private Bill and a public Bill but are debating a procedural motion.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I take the hon. Gentleman's point. The appropriate reference appears on page 357 of "Erskine May":

"Procedural Motions: no interest involved.

As no financial interest is involved in procedural motions such as closures, Members have been allowed to vote for the closure on bills in which they may have a financial interest."

The motion now before the House is a procedural one, and that guidance in "Erskine May" is clear.

Mr. Cryer: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I understand that a business statement is to be made later today, at the conclusion of this debate on progress. There is no indication on the annunciator that a business statement is being prepared by the Government. However, I understand that they have woken up the Leader of the House to come here to make a business statement. Will you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, ensure that any announcement of a business statement is properly made, well before the statement itself, so that right hon. and hon. Members will know to come to the Chamber to ask questions on it?

Mr. Deputy Speaker The matter of business statements is not for the Chair, but I am sure that the hon. Gentleman's point has been heard on the Treasury Bench.

Mr. Robin Cook: Although I do not wish to raise the matter as a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was interested by your last point. If there is to be a business statement, I should have thought that, as a matter of courtesy to Mr. Speaker, the Speaker's Office would by now have been advised of that fact.

I now find myself in some difficulty, in that, since I last resumed my seat, the Treasury Whip who moved the motion has departed. The Treasury Whip now present in the Chamber is not the Whip who originally moved the motion, and was not in the Chamber at the time—

Mr. Michael Fallon (Darlington) *indicated dissent.*

Mr. Cook: The hon. Gentleman indicates that he was present. I am perfectly willing for him to intervene if he wishes to clarify the point, because I am interested to know whether he intends to proceed with the motion, given that the Whip who moved it has now departed from the Chamber. When I saw the Whip who moved the motion departing, I had a moment of hope that, having been made aware of the strong views of right hon. and hon. Members an of the Opposition's clearly stated desire to proceed with the debate—for there is no advantage to us in adjourning the House at this stage—he had decided not to pursue the closure.

As to new clause 9 and competitive tendering, one of the points that we wish to examine is the remarkable casualisation of the hours that goes with competitive tendering, and the frequently deeply unsocial hours that are associated with private contractors, who have no regard to retaining—*[Interruption.]* I shall give way to the hon. Member for Tatton (Mr. Hamilton) if he wishes to intervene—but if he does not, I shall be obliged if he will not keep up a constant monologue during my speech.

Mr. Neil Hamilton: It is a bit rich of the hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) to complain about unsocial hours when his filibustering caused us to be here all night.

Mr. Battle: But the hon. Gentleman was paired out.

Mr. Cook: I am grateful for my hon. Friend's clarification. Perhaps someone can produce a Division List to show that the hon. Member for Tatton has shared the unsocial hours that have certainly been shared by my right hon. and hon. Friends.

Mr. Leigh: When I was voting at a quarter to five this morning, only about 55 Labour Members were present to vote. Were all the others in bed? What is this talk of Opposition Members staying up all night?

Mr. Cook: With respect, the matter was raised by the hon. Member for Tatton. My right hon. and hon. Friends run a relaxed, liberal and free whipping system. I am bound to say that it seems to be more successful than the whipping system run by Conservative Members. Those of my right hon. and hon. Friends who had to address their minds to other important matters were given full permission earlier this morning to leave. It is a matter of regret that Conservative Members were obliged to remain when they wished to go home to their beds. We would be willing to support their representations to the Treasury Whip that they should enjoy the same rights and prerogatives granted to my right hon. and hon. Friends and myself, and should be free to come and go as their stamina allows.

I am somewhat disturbed by the lack of stamina in the new Conservative parliamentary party. When I first entered the House, I was appointed to the Committee considering the Community Land Bill, which undertook five all-night sittings in two weeks. That was due to no filibustering on the part of my hon. Friends or myself but was entirely the result of the length of speeches made by

the then Conservative Opposition. One of the older Conservative Members, observing a couple of my hon. Friends asleep at six in the morning, remarked that the trouble with the Labour party was that it was full of people who had wasted their youth receiving an education at grammar school and university, whereas he had spent his youth constructively, spending whole nights at nightclubs —and therefore was better fitted for the rigours of parliamentary life. I am sorry that there seems to be something of a declension in the stamina, fitness, and possibly background of the members of the modern Conservative parliamentary party.

Mr. McCartney: I wish to make a more serious point. Those of us who were involved in the debate on clause 1 on community care and other matters which carried on throughout the night included members of the Select Committee who are most concerned about the curtailment of the debate. The second part of the Bill relates to ring fencing, and we are concerned about the ability of the House to determine the proper and appropriate funding for care in the community.

We know that the Government resisted proposals from the Select Committee and from both sides of the House. One of their reasons for wishing to curtail the debate later this afternoon may be to prevent further discussion on ring fencing care in the community. That would be a disaster for the House and for the elderly and for those with physical and mental handicaps who will be left without the resources to implement the proposals of the Griffiths report. I hope, that having had the knockabout, we will get down to the serious business of nailing the Government to the mast about the lack of resources to implement the proposals about care in the community.

Mr. Cook: My hon. Friend justly reproves me. We are considering matters of the greatest gravity and seriousness.

My hon. Friend referred to the clauses on community care. He is absolutely right that those clauses are at the end of the Bill. It has always been my suspicion that they were put at the end of the Bill in the expectation that they would be forgotten. That is why, when my hon. Friend and I met in Committee to discuss our strategy, we decided on a timetable that from the start was deliberately devised not to give the Secretary of State the protection and satisfaction of a guillotine that would rob us of any debate on the clauses at the end of the Bill, but to agree on a pace of proceedings in that Committee that would enable us to ensure that those clauses were adequately examined and scrutinised. I take pride in the fact that my hon. Friends and I were able to devote four full days to examining those important clauses on community care.

Since the Secretary of State has returned to the Chamber, I must say that he was fully privy to the discussions that resulted in that timetable and those four days being set apart for the clauses. I regard as a breach of faith on his part the way in which, ever since, he has misrepresented that agreement and that strategy as an absence of opposition to his measure and an acceptance of the major proposals in his Bill.

I am happy to share it with the House, as the Secretary of State is now present, that I regard that breach of faith, that misrepresentation in public of our strategy in Committee and the downright deceitful things that have been said about behaviour in Committee as well beyond the acceptable behaviour between Opposition Front Bench and the Government. As long as the Secretary of State holds offices of the Crown, he will never again get an agreement from me for any legislation that he brings to the House because he is not a man who can be trusted with any agreement.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I admire the way in which the hon. Gentleman can turn from feigned frivolity to feigned pomposity and sensitivity as he appears to be wounded by my description, which remains my candid opinion of his performance in Committee and the quality of the arguments that he produced. I am entitled to that opinion and I shall retain it.

As for the important clauses to which the hon. Member for Makerfield (Mr. McCartney) referred, they come quite early in the selection, which I accept is because of the order in which the new clauses were tabled for Report by the hon. Gentleman. But during the past 18 hours or so, we have heard exactly the same arguments as we heard in Committee, but made at three times the length by the hon. Gentlemen who put them in Committee. If we had made the same progress as we made in Committee, we would have had a debate on new clause 36 long before now. Frankly, the larking about of Opposition Members has prevented the hon. Member for Makerfield from having a debate on ringfencing during today's proceedings.

11.15 am

Mr. Flannery: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The Secretary of State is abusing the House. Many of us spend a great deal of our lives on Committees and we cannot all be on the same one at the same time. He is saying that those of us who were not on the Committee have no right to debate the subject and that those of us who were on the Committee have debated it too much already and therefore there should not have been any debate at all.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It would be better if we got on with the debate.

Mr. Cook: I wish to respond to the Secretary of State's intervention. He made an observation that the House might wish to ponder. He said that, if we had made the same progress on Report as we made in Committee, we would have reached new clause 36 by now. Perhaps the Secretary of State should reflect on the fact that, ever since the Committee was reaching a conclusion, he has used the progress made in Committee as evidence in his contention of a lack of opposition to the Bill and an acceptance of its fundamental principles. If he says that about the progress that was achieved in Committee, he should hardly expect that progress to be replicated on Report.

Mr. McCartney: There is a fundamental and important issue at stake here. Since the Committee met, the non-partisan Social Services Select Committee, which has a Conservative majority, has produced two substantive reports, one in particular about ring fencing and appropriate recommendations for the House to consider. The amendments on the Order Paper were tabled not in the name of my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston, (Mr. Cook) but in the names of hon. Members who prepared that report for the Select Committee.

If, under the guillotine motion, the Secretary of State does not give adequate consideration to the amendments in the name of my hon. Friend, he must at least give a

[Mr. McCartney]

commitment to ensure that there will be time to consider the amendments and recommendations proposed by the Select Committee. If he does not do that, there will be no further consideration of resources in the community for those who are most vulnerable. He should give that commitment to the House in a non-parisan way.

Mr. Cook: My hon. Friend perfectly refutes one of the Secretary of State's contentions—that he has merely heard the debate that he heard in Committee.

I invite the Secretary of State and the House to reflect on our debate on new clause 1. Some of the principles of new clause 1 were certainly aired in Committee, but there was much new material, never mind new hon. Members joining in that debate on Report. An important part of that new material was the Select Committee report to which my hon. Friend referred, because it was not available to us when we met in Committee. We have not been provided with that evidence of all-party agreement among hon. Members who considered the matter in depth, examined witnesses, taken evidence and reached the conclusion that matters were insupportable. It may be that that new evidence was part of the reason why, last night, the Government suffered their first defeat since 1987.

My hon. Friend referred to ring fencing. The Secretary of State is entitled to say, and no doubt will say, that we debated ring fencing in Committee. I spoke for half an hour in that debate about ring fencing. Perhaps the Secretary of State should decide whether that constitutes feeble and token opposition or whether it constitutes a filibuster. Perhaps the hon. Member for Tatton and the Secretary of State would like to put their heads together and work out which option to choose on this occasion. It is certainly the case that, in Committee, we did not have the Select Committee report which was published on Monday and which shows the very strong all-party feeling for ring fencing.

My hon. Friend is correct to say that new clauses 36, 37 and 73 and amendments tabled in my name also deal with that issue. They are important matters for the House to debate, partly because they refer to carers who provide care and attention for elderly people who require constant nursing, with minimal domiciliary support and very little opportunity for respite care. The Bill contains no proposals to widen that respite care.

Carers who look after relatives who are in need of constant nursing do not have the option of a Treasury Whip moving that they adjourn their caring until the next day. They must provide constant, 24-hour caring, frequently with interruption of sleep. It would be appropriate, in the interests of those who serve our society selflessly and at great cost to their health, for us to continue with our proceedings until we reach new clause 36.

Mr. McCartney: Is my hon. Friend aware that there have been further developments since the proceedings in Committee? For example, we have had the report of the Select Committee. Further, we have yet to hear more about the Government's funding of the poll tax in England and Wales and the possibility of the Government capping certain authorities. That could have a fundamental effect on the funding of some provisions in the Bill. Does my hon. Friend agree that the Secretary of State must make it clear how those recent occurrences are likely to affect the funding of the Bill?

Mr. Cook: My hon. Friend again produces important new material which has emerged since we debated the Bill in Committee. My hon. Friends who were with me in Committee will recall that, when we debated ring fencing, I drew attention to the extent to which the Government's standard spending assessment had assumed that social services authorities in England would be spending this year £200 million less in real terms than they spent last year. That cannot be reconciled with the claim that the Bill will expand community care. Implicit in the Government's standard spending assessments is a reduction in social service spending, and therefore in community care.

My hon. Friend the Member for Makerfield (Mr. McCartney) draws attention to the fact that, since we debated that issue in Committee some weeks ago, the whole debate about the community charge has undergone a sea change. We now know that the community charges are at a level never anticipated by Conservative Members and that any increase to meet the shortfall in standing spending assessments would be unsupportable. We also know from the increasing panic on the Government Benches that some local authorities will be poll tax-capped, and that in turn will have devastating effects on the quality of social services in those authorities.

I must, in that sense, rebuke the Secretary of State because those are two new matters which the House must consider. Those new issues emphasise the importance of our making progress with the Bill and reaching new clause 36, but I fear that the Treasury Whip is seeking to frustrate that debate.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: For all his flannelling about, the hon. Gentleman cannot get away from the fact that his change of tactics has put in jeopardy the debate which his hon. Friend the Member for Makerfield (Mr. McCartney) wants to have. The hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) was faced with a dilemma in Committee. Had he filibustered the Standing Committee, he ran the risk of a guillotine, which in turn ran the risk of excluding debate on care in the community. He decided to enter into an agreement and debate care in the community.

In an earlier speech I paid tribute to the fact that we debated the whole Bill at that stage. We had an agreement, to which we kept. I will always keep to agreements that I make, as will my hon. Friend the Member for Derby, North (Mr. Knight). Part of that agreement was that Report and Third Reading would be handled in two and a half days, which was a concession that we made as part of that agreement.

Since then, Opposition Members have had a change of mind. They turned up last night—today, in parliamentary terms—setting out on a vain and obvious filibuster once we got past the serious debate on new clause 1. The hon. Member for Livingston is now talking, apparently with no limit, on a procedural motion because he has suddenly realised that the whole night has gone by with him and his hon. Friends rehearsing at enormous length arguments that we had all heard before. His hon. Friend the Member for Makerfield appreciates that the time last night should have been used seriously to discuss such matters as care in the community.

Mr. Cook: I am always happy to give way to the Secretary of State, because it is interesting to analyse his comments. He has now been more balanced and honest than at any time in the last two months about what happened in Committee. He has faced up to the fact that we had to decide that if we went for the guillotine in Committee, the clauses on care in the community would not have been adequately debated. We chose a timetable which provided for far more rigorous scrutiny of those clauses than would have come out of any guillotine motion that the right hon. and learned Gentleman might have proposed. Out of those debates came the genesis of our earlier debate on new clause 1.

That is not what the Secretary of State has been saying in recent weeks. I have with me some comments that he has made, particularly on radio. He said that the Bill was making

"smooth and rapid progress through Committee."

He said:

"It has not given rise to any sensational parliamentary controversy."

Mr. Campbell-Savours: What about Michael Forsyth?

Mr. Cook: It gave rise to the only suspension of a Standing Committee in this Parliament, and it has given rise to the first defeat of the Government. I would not describe that as no sensational parliamentary controversy.

The Secretary of State proceeded to elaborate on that smooth and rapid alleged progress and alleged lack of sensational parliamentary controversy when he said:

"I seriously believe that the Labour and Liberal parties privately accept the need for most of the reforms that we are proposing."

If we have done one thing in the last 24 hours, I hope we have disabused the Secretary of State of the notion that his vile, irrelevant and damaging Bill is not opposed by the Opposition.

Mr. McCartney: Parliamentary procedures debar me from saying that the Secretary of State tells lies. I will only say that his nose is larger than Pinnochio's. The position is clear. At all times the Government control the timing and nature of our debates. If the Secretary of State is as concerned as we are to discuss community care, will he give an absolute commitment that the Government business managers, in preparing the guillotine motion that will surely come, will ensure that ample opportunity is provided to debate the clauses relating to community care and ring fencing, remembering that those issues were the subject of a Select Committee Report published on Monday?

Mr. Cook: I hear my hon. Friend's observations. His concern for those issues was reflected in our priorities in Committee and in choosing new clause 1 for debate at this stage of the Bill. I draw attention to the fact that, after we have disposed of new clause 36 and other new clauses, the first amendment to which we shall come relates to the appointment of chairs of health authorities.

Mr. Bermingham: Is my hon. Friend aware that, in my constituency, a former major mental hospital is being closed down? We do not have the facilities to house those who are being discharged into the community and who are finding their way to Liverpool and north Wales and are living in cardboard boxes. We are also faced with the problem of probable capping for poll tax. Those and other problems that we face must be aired. The difficulties to which my hon. Friend the Member for Makerfield (Mr. McCartney) referred, and which were highlighted by the Social Services Select Committee, are the real problems concerning care in the community. They must be debated and solved before human beings are cast on to the streets with nowhere to go.

Mr. Cook: Our debate of new clause 1, the longest debate we have had in these proceedings, was marked by exactly that type of concern for our constituents. The human dilemma that is faced throughout the country was raised in speeches by hon. Members on both sides. That is why I take it amiss when the Secretary of State accuses us of having spent the past 18 hours merely rehearsing partisan arguments.

11.30 am

Ms. Diane Abbott (Hackney, North and Stoke Newington): Does my hon. friend agree that it is extraordinary for the Secretary of State to accuse those who took part in the debate on new clause 1 of mere filibustering? He should remember some of the many considered, constructive and heartfelt contributions from Conservative Members. Is he smearing them with his accusations of filibustering? *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Cook: The Secretary of State appears to have changed his mind.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke *rose*——

Mr. Cook: I am happy to give way to the Secretary of State, but he accused the House of filibustering. Our debate on new clause 1 was the longest that we had during this sitting.

Mr. Clarke: I am sure that I said that, after we finished the first debate on new clause 1, we started to filibuster ——*[Interruption.]* Yes, I did. It is no good the Opposition, having realised that they have made a complete pig's ear of their tactics on the Bill, suddenly becoming abusive, as they are beginning to do. We had an agreement on a timetable in Committee which seemed sensible to both sides of the House, which we kept. Part of the agreement was that we should spend two days on Report and half a day on Third Reading.

The hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) obviously began reading his press cuttings and was wounded because I described the Committee stage as having gone smoothly and to a good timetable. I know that, behind his robust exterior, the hon. Gentleman is more sensitive than he seems. However, the fact is that we went smoothly and made good progress in Committee. He may have had excellent motives for allowing us to do so.

In the middle of last night, when we finished new clause 1, the Opposition, to show machismo about the issue, suddenly began to give great long speeches about things that we had heard before. We have now reached the stage when we are reporting progress, having made little progress on the list of amendments. The hon. Members for St. Helens, North (Mr. Bermingham) and for Makerfield (Mr. McCartney) and other hon. Members with a genuine concern about care in the community and many other aspects of the Bill, are quite right to complain that we have had a pretty unsatisfactory few hours through the night to this stage. That is because the hon. Member for

[Mr. Clarke]

Livingston, having followed one course in Committee, because of some press cuttings, had a total change of mind and ran last night in a quite different fashion.

Mr. Cook: The Secretary of State misses the point. The problem is not that the Secretary of State said that the Bill was making smooth and rapid progress in Committee; the problem which he has not disposed of is that he then built on that the assertion that the Labour party did not oppose the Bill. That assumption is wholly without foundation.

There was an even more interesting point in the Secretary of State's intervention, and again he fills a useful Socratic role. In a single sentence, he encapsulated much better than I have yet managed to do the case against the motion from the Treasury Whip. We have got through our third successive Treasury Whip since we began debating this motion. No wonder the Whips want to adjourn and go away; they can last only half an hour at a time on the Bench.

The Secretary of State said that we were reporting progress when there is little progress to report. One could not think of a better argument against reporting progress. If there is little progress to report, why are we reporting progress? What progress are we reporting? Would not it be far better in these circumstances to seek to make more progress before we report progress?

Before my hon. Friend the Member for St. Helens, South (Mr. Bermingham) intervened, I was about to say that, when we make progress in defiance of the Treasury Whips, reach clause 1 and consider the first group of amendments to that clause, we shall be considering amendments relating to the appointment of chairs of district health authorities. There is an important reason why the House may wish to debate that matter, and debate it now.

On Friday, the Secretary of State released the full slate of virtually every chair of the district health authorities in England. I arranged my Friday around the expectation of that statement. I stayed in London to receive the list of new names. I was anxious to receive this additional information and to see the kind of person and the background of the people who had been appointed as chairs of district health authorities.

When I received the press release at 3.30 pm on Friday, I found that it was literally a list of names with initials. It did not even give christian names, just surnames and initials. There was no designation, no background, no address, no qualifications and no nominations. I have never seen a press release that had been so thoroughly passed through the wringer to squeeze out of it all useful and helpful information. Why had that been done? Because the Secretary of State did not wish us to finger the reasons why those people had been appointed.

The Secretary of State's ruse did not entirely work. We were able to piece together quite a few pieces of information. We were able to work out that, of the seven known Labour party members who are chairs of health authorities in England, three were sacked last Friday. That is an important matter to which the Opposition wish to address their minds. We find it convenient to do so today. We would rather address our minds to it as soon as possible after the event than postpone it to a future day.

The other matter that we would wish to consider when we debate that list and the partisan way in which Labour figures have been discriminated against, is the even more remarkable way in which there has been discrimination in favour of Conservative figures. Despite the brevity of the list and the paucity of information on it, we were able to identify six Conservative councillors, or former Conservative councillors, among the 28 new appointments. There we have it: three Labour figures go and six Conservative councillors come in, including Conservative councillors appointed to such obvious Conservative strongholds as North Tyneside and Bloomsbury—places where the local Conservative party might be well advised to put in a bid for proportional representation.

I hope that the Secretary of State will agree that this is an issue on which we undoubtedly have fresh information which was not available to us in Committee. That is the Secretary of State's own definition of what would make a valuable debate on Report. Therefore, surely that is the sort of issue which we should aim to reach and have a full debate in the House so that we can press the Secretary of State to tell us a little more about his list and justify the fact that, having applied his mind to the qualifications, experience and fitness for office of those people, he came to the remarkable conclusion that those who were fit for the posts were overwhelmingly Conservative and those who were unfit were, almost without exception, Labour.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: That is not true.

Mr. Cook: The Secretary of State says that it is not true. That is precisely the point on which we wish to have a debate.

Mr. Clarke: We last made these appointments when the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) filled the position that the hon. Gentleman now occupies. The hon. Member for Oldham, West tried to mount a great political campaign, again trying to prove that the appointment of chairmanships to district health authorities were all party-politically motivated. He sent out a highly contentious letter quizzing people about their political allegiance. The only thing that the hon. Member for Oldham, West succeeded in doing was not improving the case, but provoking the chairman of a district health authority who had previously been a Labour party member into resigning from the Labour party because he was so shocked by the way in which the hon. Member was handling the matter.

Mr. Cook: The Secretary of State is perfectly correct: the one good thing to come out of that circular letter was the resignation of Eric Moonman from the Labour party.

In his intervention, the Secretary of State has made the case for the debate. I concede with enthusiasm and anticipation that he wants to get in there and mix it with me. He wants to defend his position and attack not me, but my predecessor. I am happy to accommodate him. I am here; he is here. We are both in the prime flush of youth, and plainly on form. We are both at a time when it is convenient to press ahead with the debate.

Mrs. Mahon: Does my hon. Friend agree that the one thing that sticks in everybody's throat about such antics —it is nepotism—is that the Conservative party criticises those in states in eastern Europe who have put their friends and political allies into positions, but the Tories do exactly the same? There is no difference between them. They

sacked a member of the Labour party in Calderdale three or four years ago simply on the say-so of the very Tory chairman.

Mr. Cook: I suspect that the spirit of Erich Honecker is alive and well and lurking in the Department of Health. It is precisely the centralised appointment of safe people within the party machine that is now discredited throughout eastern Europe.

Mr. Flannery: My hon. Friend the Member for Halifax (Mrs. Mahon) rightly said that that occurred a long time ago in many cases. The Secretary of State knows, from long before he held his exalted position, that there was a Labour chair of the Trent regional health authority. In Sheffield, there was a Tory chair. That created a balance. As soon as the Tories took over, they sacked the Trent chairman, promoted the Tory chair of Sheffield to Trent and put in another Tory at Sheffield. The same is happening now. The guillotine will come with its resident Madame Defarge.

Mr. Cook: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his intervention.

Mr. Bermingham: The Secretary of State is aware that my old adversary, who happened to be a party member and chairman of my district health authority, was also disposed of. We do not have anyone who reflects the thinking of the Merseyside area. It would be helpful if the Secretary of State did not simply issue names, but told us a little about the appointees so that we would know how to judge them when we have to deal with them. That is especially important at a time when the Government are trying to privatise our hospitals and dispose of the care services. We should have the right to know about those with whom we will be dealing. Of course, the Secretary of State does not believe in glasnost or perestroika; he believes only in the jazz clubs.

Mr. Cook: Had the Secretary of State been inclined to appoint to the chairs of district health authorities a few more of those whom he meets at the jazz clubs, I might have been happier with the list last Friday.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: The hon. Gentleman is serving a public function. My recollection of the chairman of Trent, who retired early in this Government's period of office, is that he was a former Liberal parish councillor who was in his 70s when he was replaced by a younger man. I pay tribute to the former chairman of St. Helens for his time in office. He was a Labour party member, but as the hon. Member for St. Helens, South (Mr. Bermingham) knows, I appointed him to the chair of that health authority. It is ridiculous to attempt to put together a conspiracy theory from a list of names that is not motivated by party politics.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): Order. It has been difficult to relate the past 10 minutes directly to the motion before the House.

Mr. Cook: I take your comment to heart, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I shall respond briefly to the Secretary of State's remarks and then move on to another subject.

It is true that the right hon. and learned Gentleman appointed Mr. McNamara—and he also sacked him. The question that arose sharply from that list on Friday was not so much the departure of Dr. Dunwoody—he is a former Labour Member of Parliament—as the fact that, when the right hon. and learned Gentleman came to replace him, he did not appoint the obvious and logical person—Helene Hayman, who had served on the authority for more than a year as vice-chairman, and is another former Labour Member of Parliament—but instead appointed Sir Alan Greengross, who is a leader of Conservative councillors in London and who had been serving on that health authority only since January. It is patent that he was appointed in January so that he could take over as chair in March.

Leaving aside the departure of Dr. Dunwoody, it is impossible not to view the choice of an outside Conservative councillor, in preference to the inside former Labour Member, as anything other than clear political bias.

11.45 am

Mr. Bradley: I have noticed the enthusiasm of the Secretary of State for joining in the debate. Accepting that Mr. Gordan Legat of South Manchester health authority asked not to be reappointed, will the right hon. and learned Gentleman explain to the people of South Manchester exactly what connection Mr. Peter Hadfield has with the local communities of Withington and Wythenshawe? What is that gentleman's experience of health care matters?

Mr. Cook: I shall give way to the Secretary of State so that he can answer my hon. Friend.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: It is true that Mr. Legat asked not to be reappointed, so I hope that he is not being added to the list of political purges that I am supposed to have carried out. I do not think that he is a member of the Labour party, although I am not aware of his politics. I am sure that his successor will be found to be extremely good.

In case people think that we are making light of the name of Dr. John Dunwoody, who was an excellent chairman of Bloomsbury district health authority, I must point out that I reappointed him. When I was last involved in these matters, I extended his period of chairmanship —despite the fact that he is an ex-Labour Minister, let alone a Labour Member of Parliament. He would have preferred to have another year in place before handing over his responsibilities, but we decided that it was the right time to change. It was a question of when to replace him.

It is not right to canvass in the Chamber, in our admittedly light-hearted debate, the name of such a distinguished chairman, leaving the impression that he was sacked on party-political grounds. He was not. He had a good innings as chairman. As far as I am aware, throughout his time in that post we always got on extremely well together and I admired his work. However, I thought that this year was the time to change, not next year.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I remind both Front-Bench spokesmen that they are moving a long way away from the motion.

Mr. Cook: I shall content myself with saying that the right hon. and learned Gentleman's intervention makes the case for a debate on this issue and that is why we are resisting the motion to report progress.

Looking back over the past 20 hours—and I say this in a spirit of comradeliness——

Mr. Renton *rose in his place and claimed to move,* That the Question be now put.

Question put, That the Question be now put:—

The House proceeded to a Division—

Mr. Kirkwood *(seated and covered)*: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I will take it after the Division.

Mr. Kirkwood *(seated and covered)*: On a point of order on the Division, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I would value your advice on the reason for calling the Division. It was, as you know, a closure motion, and it was a closure motion on a procedural motion——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman is getting close to questioning the judgment of the Chair. The closure was moved. I accepted it. We are now proceeding to a Division on it. There can be no further argument about that.

Mr. Kirkwood *(seated and covered)*: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am in no way seeking to confront your judgment. It is noticeable that there was only one speech in the debate——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman is now proceeding to do what he said he would not do, which is to question the judgment of the Chair.

Mr. Kirkwood: Simply——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

The House having divided: Ayes 244, Noes 166.

Division No. 120] **[11 47 am**

AYES

Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amery, Rt Hon Julian
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Burns, Simon
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Cormack, Patrick
Cran, James
Critchley, Julian
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Durant, Tony
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fishburn, John Dudley
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Sir Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gow, Ian
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Hague, William
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Sir Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knox, David
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
McCrindle, Robert
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
Madel, David
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Monro, Sir Hector
Moore, Rt Hon John
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Paice, James
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, Rt Hon John
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Rt Hon Nicholas
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, Sir William
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Rt Hon Ian *(Herts N)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Waldegrave, Rt Hon William
Walker, Rt Hon P. *(W'cester)*
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, Sir John
Widdecombe, Ann

Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Alistair Goodlad and
Mr. Tom Sackville.

NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashton, Joe
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Battle, John
Beggs, Roy
Beith, A. J.
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Blair, Tony
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Bradley, Keith
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Dalyell, Tam
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Douglas, Dick
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Faulds, Andrew
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gould, Bryan
Graham, Thomas
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Haynes, Frank
Heffer, Eric S.
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howells, Geraint
Howells, Dr. Kim (Pontypridd)
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Ingram, Adam
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kilfedder, James
Kirkwood, Archy
Lamond, James
Lewis, Terry
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Loyden, Eddie
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum A.
McFall, John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McNamara, Kevin
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliot
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
O'Brien, William
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Radice, Giles
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Richardson, Jo
Robertson, George
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Sillars, Jim
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Smith, J. P. *(Vale of Glam)*
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon Sir David
Steinberg, Gerry
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Rt Hon J. D. *(S'ford)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Wallace, James
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Wray, Jimmy
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Dennis Skinner and
Mr. Gerald Bermingham.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Question put accordingly, That further consideration of the Bill be now adjourned:—

The House divided: Ayes 254, Noes 169.

Division No. 121] **[11.59 pm**

AYES

Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amery, Rt Hon Julian
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Burns, Simon
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Critchley, Julian
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Durant, Tony
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fishburn, John Dudley
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Sir Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gow, Ian
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Grylls, Michael
Hague, William
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*

Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Sir Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knox, David
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
McCrindle, Robert
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
Madel, David
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Paice, James
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, Rt Hon John
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Rt Hon Nicholas
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, Sir William
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Rt Hon Ian *(Herts N)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Waldegrave, Rt Hon William
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Walker, Rt Hon P. *(W'cester)*
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, Sir John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Alastair Goodlad and
Mr. Tom Sackville.

NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashdown, Rt Hon Paddy
Ashton, Joe
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beggs, Roy
Beith, A. J.
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Blair, Tony
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Bradley, Keith
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Dalyell, Tam
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Douglas, Dick
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Faulds, Andrew
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Graham, Thomas
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Heffer, Eric S.
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hoey, Ms Kate *(Vauxhall)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howells, Geraint
Howells, Dr. Kim (Pontypridd)
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Ingram, Adam
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kilfedder, James
Kirkwood, Archy
Lamond, James
Lewis, Terry
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Loyden, Eddie
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum A.
McFall, John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McNamara, Kevin
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliot
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
O'Brien, William
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Radice, Giles
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Richardson, Jo
Robertson, George
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Sillars, Jim
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Smith, J. P. *(Vale of Glam)*
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon Sir David
Steinberg, Gerry
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Rt Hon J. D. *(S'ford)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Wallace, James
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Wilson, Brian
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mrs. Llin Golding.

Question accordingly agreed to.
Bill to be further considered this day.

Business of the House

12.9 pm

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Tim Renton): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a statement about the re-arranged business for this week:

WEDNESDAY 14 MARCH—Timetable motion on the National Health Service and Community Care Bill.

Completion of Report stage of the National Health Service and Community Care Bill.

THURSDAY 15 MARCH—Until about seven o'clock, Third Reading of the National Health Service and Community Care Bill.

Consideration of Lords amendments to the Coal Industry Bill.

Motion to amend schedule 1 to the House of Commons Disqualification Act 1975.

The Chairman of Ways and Means has named opposed private business for consideration at seven o'clock.

At ten o'clock, the Question will be put on all outstanding supplementary estimates and votes.

Mr. Robin Cook (Livingston): As, on this occasion, the business statement was made, unusually, by the Patronage Secretary, may I begin by asking the right hon. Gentleman whether he is confident that his Whips Office will deliver a majority for the guillotine motion this afternoon? Is he aware that the deeply unpopular National Health Service and Community Care Bill now threatens to damage democracy as much as it threatens to damage the Health Service?

Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the Bill, which gives local people no say about whether their hospital opts out of the NHS, is now to be forced through Parliament at a pace that gives Parliament no opportunity for a proper debate? Has the right hon. Gentleman counted the selection that remains before the House? Is he aware that it includes 40 new clauses and 212 amendments, of which 100 are Government amendments? How does he propose that the House should give proper scrutiny to those outstanding 250 items for debate in the timetable that he has stated?

Is the real reason for the timetable motion to curtail the debate, not of the Opposition, but of Conservative Members? As he is Patronage Secretary, will the right hon. Gentleman explain to the country outside why a Government with a record majority require a record number of guillotines to get their business through the House?

Mr. Renton: If he remembers what it was, the answer to the hon. Gentleman's first question is, "Yes, Sir." In answer to his second point, there is no question of the timetable motion damaging democracy in this House. It is rather that the hon. Gentleman's speeches have damaged the procedures of the House.

The hon. Gentleman gave the game away earlier this morning when we were debating the motion to report progress. He said that he was getting into his stride, because we were in prime time. In the past five hours, the hon. Gentleman has made two speeches, one of one hour and 48 minutes and one of one hour and 11 minutes. He is suffering from what may indelicately be called "televised verbal diarrhoea". The sooner that the House can help the hon. Gentleman to find a cure, the better.

Mr. Archy Kirkwood (Roxburgh and Berwickshire): Does the right hon. Gentleman regard it as significant that, for the first time that I can recall, a major health Bill has been subject to a guillotine motion? Can the Patronage Secretary tell the House the last time that we had a guillotine on a major health Bill? The National Health Service Act 1946, which enjoyed a degree of consensus across the House, went through without a guillotine. I repeat: when was the last time that we had such a guillotine?

Will the right hon. Gentleman confirm that each of the 100 Government amendments will potentially have to be put to a vote under the timetable motion? In what way will the timetable motion take account of the amount of time that will be necessary for those Divisions?

Finally, does the right hon. Gentleman accept that the people of Scotland, who will be deprived of a huge chunk of Scottish legislation, will wonder why we burden the House with such an amount of business that we cannot discuss it properly, when we could have the viable alternative of a Scottish Parliament that could give proper debate to important matters of Scottish business?

Mr. Renton: I am pleased that the hon. Gentleman asked me his first question. The last time that a health Bill was guillotined was in 1976, when the Labour Government guillotined the Health Services Act 1976 after just 80 hours in Committee. Hon. Members who served on Standing Committee E will know that we have already spent 109 hours in Committee. This Committee stage was not guillotined by the Government, whereas the 1976 Act was guillotined in Committee, and on Report, and on Third Reading, and the timetable motion was introduced by the Labour Government after only 42 hours in Committee. That gives the hon. Gentleman his answer.

On the Scottish dimension to which the hon. Gentleman referred, he knows that Scottish Office and Welsh Office Ministers have been represented during our debates and there has been an ample separate Scottish debate for the many areas in which the legislation is separate. The hon. Gentleman will be able to raise points about the details of the timetable motion later this afternoon, when the timetable motion is debated.

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): The Patronage Secretary has claimed that his proposals do not represent an intrinsic affront to democracy. Will he now tell the House the period in which he expects to be able to settle the timetable motion tomorrow? Will it run over the possible 18 hours that we could have, from about 6 pm this evening until midday tomorrow—through the night?

Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the remaining new clauses and amendments relate to many important things that affect every citizen of this land, including dispensing from doctors, appointments to health authorities, carers, disabled people and every aspect of our National Health Service? Will he tell the House the timetable that he envisages?

Mr. Renton: The hon. Gentleman is a well-known expert on the procedures of the House and he knows as well as I do that the timetable motion will appear on Wednesday's Order Paper. The House is currently enjoying Tuesday; I am simply trying to give the House a Wednesday in which the timetable motion can be debated, along with the Bill's remaining stages. The House will have an opportunity to debate the details of the timetable motion later.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett (Pembroke): Is my right hon. Friend aware that members of the public who are watching the proceedings of the Opposition will wonder what they have been up to? Those of us who served on the Standing Committee know that we had a sensible Committee stage in which the Opposition debated the clauses, new clauses and amendments at some length, but not at the length at which they debated the Report stage during the night. We have discussed only four clauses since yesterday afternoon. Is my right hon. Friend aware that, like his hon. Friend the Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook), the hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Michael) spoke for half an hour in the middle of the night, moving a new clause which merely——

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: No. What the hon. Member for Pembroke (Mr. Bennett) has said has been perfectly in order.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. May I ask you to intervene to protect Back-Bench rights? My hon. Friends have identified many new clauses and amendments that have to be spoken to——

Mr. Speaker: Order. If I call the hon. Gentleman to put a question to the Patronage Secretary, he can ask it. At the moment, I am hearing the hon. Member for Pembroke.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: The Patronage Secretary has not told the House the time that is to be available. I am asking you, Mr. Speaker——

Mr. Speaker: Order. That is not a point of order for me.

Mr. Bennett: Is my right hon. Friend aware that the hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Michael) spoke for half an hour in the early hours of this morning? He moved a new clause, the only effect of which was to make the community health district council boundaries the same as the local authority boundaries. It took him half an hour to move the new clause and we had an hour's debate on it. Is it not time that the House got on with debating the Bill, which many of our constituents want to see on the statute book, so that we can bring in the reforms?

Mr. Joseph Ashton (Bassetlaw): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Martin Flannery (Sheffield, Hillsborough): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The hon. Member for Pembroke (Mr. Bennett) did not take account of the nature of the debate that takes place in the House after Committee stage. There is a wider grouping of people in the House on Report than in Committee. The hon. Gentleman seems to believe that that wider grouping should not discuss at any length the matters that have been discussed in Committee.

Mr. Speaker: I am not responsible for what the hon. Member for Pembroke (Mr. Bennett) seems to believe. Questions to the Patronage Secretary must be limited to

the business statement that he has just made. They must not raise arguments that should properly be raised when we come to discuss the guillotine motion.

Mr. Renton: I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Pembroke (Mr. Bennett). The Committee stage was dominated by sensible and reasonably brief discussions. The Committee stage was completed in 109 hours. Up to the business motion, we spent 18 hours discussing a mere five new clauses.

There was clear agreement through the usual channels that two and a half days was sufficient for the whole debate. My right hon. and learned Friend the Leader of the House announced that in business questions last week. There was no comment on it from Opposition Members, except from the hon. Member for Belfast, South (Rev. Martin Smyth) who congratulated my right hon. and learned Friend on making as much as two and a half days available.

The Opposition have simply failed to deliver the agreement. We have discussed only five new clauses on the first day. If the business is to be concluded in two and a half days, there is a clear need to structure discussions more sensibly from now on.

Mr. Dafydd Wigley (Caernarfon): Does the Patronage Secretary realise that, if the guillotine motion is passed, the important debate on disablement will almost certainly be lost? Is that not completely unacceptable? In view of the statement that he has just made on the general business, will he tell the House whether the Government will make a statement today or tomorrow on the appointment of a new Secretary of State for Wales? The appointment has been announced on the tapes but not to the House.

The present Secretary of State for Wales, the right hon. Member for Worcester (Mr. Walker) is carrying on as Secretary of State in Committee. His future position is uncertain. We do not know how long he will remain in office. In the meantime we have been landed with another governor-general, not elected by or answerable to the people of Wales, to do the Government's dirty work.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am not certain that this has much relevance to the guillotine motion.

Mr. Renton: As the hon. Gentleman knows, Welsh Ministers have been represented on both Front Benches during the debate. There have been several separate debates on Wales, too.

On the appointment in due course of the new Secretary of State for Wales, I am sure that all my hon. Friends wish the new Secretary of State for Wales every success. [HON. MEMBERS: "Who is it?"] I am simply answering the hon. Gentleman's point. He can raise the other point of detail either on the timetable motion this afternoon or in business questions tomorrow.

Mr. Alun Michael (Cardiff, South and Penarth): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The Patronage Secretary congratulated an individual on an appointment which has not been announced to the House. May I ask through you, Mr. Speaker, that the Patronage Secretary come to the Dispatch Box and tell the House the name or the constituency of the individual whom he has just congratulated?

Mr. Speaker: I am not aware that it has ever been the practice that ministerial changes are announced in the House. I call Mr. Bill Walker.

Mr. Ray Powell (Ogmore): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Is it to do with this statement?

Mr. Powell: My point of order is directed to you. I remind you of a point of order that I raised on a similar issue and the points of order that were raised on three occasions last week and in Business Questions on Thursday. It arises from whether we should have a statement about the successor to the right hon. Member for Worcester (Mr. Walker), who is now Secretary of State for Wales. We have had no statement from the Government. We ask the question yet again because the press and the media have been given the statement. It is an abuse for the Government to overlook the fact that hon. Members who represent Wales would like to be informed publicly and in the House who will be the successor to the person who has resigned.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Again, I cannot recollect that ministerial changes have to be announced in the House. That is a new doctrine altogether.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: It is nothing to do with this statement.

Mr. Donald Anderson (Swansea, East): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Of course it is not the practice that resignations are announced to the House. The point that my hon. Friend the Member for Ogmore (Mr. Powell) sought to make was that the Secretary of State for Wales is betwixt and between. He was in what must be a wholly impossible situation this morning. He appeared as the first Government speaker in the Welsh Grand Committee, after it had been announced on the tapes that he had been succeeded by his hon. Friend the Member for the poll tax, the Member for Wirral, West (Mr. Hunt). Clearly, the Secretary of State for Wales is in an impossible position. No one knew whether he was speaking with the authority of the Government or not.

Mr. Speaker: I understand that argument, but it has nothing to do with the statement or with me.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: I shall take the hon. Member, as long as he is to the point.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: I raised an issue earlier. I put it to you that you are now—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman does not need to be barracked from his own side.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: I do not need comments like that. You are now in conflict with Ministers. You have selected amendments and new clauses on the basis that sufficient time would be given for their debate. Ministers are curtailing the rights of hon. Members to debate these matters by introducing the guillotine motion. The conflict is not between us and Ministers; it is between you, as

[Mr. Campbell-Savours]

selector of the amendments and the new clauses, and Ministers. You should advise Ministers what time should be given for further debate on the Bill. It is a serious—

Mr. Speaker: Order. That is another new doctrine. I have not heard it enunciated before. The Speaker's duty is to select the amendments.

Mr. Ray Powell *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am dealing with one question at a time. Of course I selected the amendments. I did so very generously. I do not bring in guillotine motions; that is a matter for the Government. That motion will be debated this afternoon.

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Let us have the hon. Member's question. I called him to put his question to the Minister.

Mr. Walker: When I take the opportunity to put my question, may I draw it to your attention that I, too, represent a minority in Parliament? Minorities look to you in the Chair and whoever sits in the Chair in Committee to ensure that their rights are not abused. One of the reasons why the Order is important to us as minorities—my right hon. Friends on the Front Bench——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I certainly give the hon. Gentleman my protection but I would prefer that he put his question to the Patronage Secretary rather than to me. I cannot answer what he seeks to enunciate.

Mr. Walker: I understand that. I was on the point of addressing my question to my right hon. Friend. My point of order is important because of what I am about to say to him.

Does my right hon. Friend agree that a reason why the motion is so important to the interests of minorities is that, throughout the Committee stage, and, indeed, today, we have been exposed to bogus points of order, many of them from the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours)? He has taken up a great deal of time and the Chair has always replied "That is not a point of order for me." He has taken up more time than any contribution made by any Member on any specific narrow topic that we have debated.

That is why my right hon. Friend is right to introduce the motion. Those of us who have been present on Second Reading, throughout the Committee stage and through the night believe that minority interests, for which I speak in Scotland, must be heard in this Chamber. That is why we must deal with the offenders.

Mr. Renton: I thank my hon. Friend for his support. I agree with him that, over the past 18 hours, we have listened to the same speches as those made in Committee, but by and large in Committee they were made briefly, whereas over the past 18 hours they have been made at inordinate length.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I hope that I am not doing hon. Gentlemen a disservice, but if I may anticipate them, I am not prepared to take any more points of order on the appointment of the Secretary of State for Wales of which I have no knowledge. I call Mr. Ashton.

Mr. Joseph Ashton (Bassetlaw): Is the Patronage Secretary aware that, when Bassetlaw health authority announced that it would opt out, it caused tremendous controversy and that the Secretary of State for Health had to smuggle himself past protest meetings into the local hospital in a small car? He gave an assurance that the matter would be debated in Parliament, there would be full consultation and nothing would pass without extensive consultations. Now we find that the Bill will go through on the nod this afternoon. How does he expect my constituents' protests to be made and democracy to work?

Mr. Renton: My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Health is not normally considered capable of being smuggled quietly anywhere. That is not in his nature. The business motion deals only with the business before the House for the next two days. The hon. Gentleman will be able to ask the Secretary of State the point of substance and detail that he has made, during the debate on Wednesday or Thursday afternoon.

Mr. Roger Gale (Thanet, North): As, last night, the Opposition lost every last vestige of credibility——

Several Hon. Members: On a point of order——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I called Mr. Gale.

Mr. Gale: As last night the Opposition lost every vestige of credibility that they might have had in the public eye by failing to be present in the Chamber to take part in a Division which they at least considered important, does my right hon. Friend think that on this occasion their anger might be just a little synthetic?

Mr. Renton: It is not only synthetic, but it shows, in the long-winded speeches with no content, the Opposition's lack of interest in series proposals for improving the NHS.

Mr. Alexander Eadie (Midlothian): Does the Patronage Secretary realise that, because of this announcement, he can be accused of mismanaging the business and procedures of the House? As there has already been some discussion with him through questions on what the nation will think about this, does he realise that he is giving food to the thought that this motion is not just about gagging Members of this House, but about gagging Members in his party because the Government suffered a bad defeat last night?

As this is a major piece of Government legislation and some of us were not privileged to serve on the Committee, how can we as Back Benchers have the opportunity to debate the many significant new clauses and amendments to the Bill which affect our constituents?

Finally, as his hon. Friend the Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) confessed that the Conservative party was a minority party in Scotland, does the right hon. Gentleman realise that this motion will ensure that it remains a minority party in Scotland for a long time?

Mr. Renton: The hon. Gentleman is a senior and experienced Member of this House, and I am sure that he is trying to be helpful, but when he makes accusations of mismanagement, he should direct them at his own Front Bench. There was agreement between the usual channels that Report and Third Reading would take two and a half

days. In business questions last week, the only comment on that suggestion came from the hon. Member for Belfast, South (Rev. Martin Smyth), who expressed thanks for finding so much time. Between 5 am and 11.30 am, the hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook), speaking from the Opposition Front Bench, took three hours and occupied nearly half the time available. If the hon. Gentleman thinks that that is serious discussion on the Bill, the hon. Member for Livingston, who is not even in his place, should be replaced by someone more serious.

Mr. Edward Leigh (Gainsborough and Horncastle): Anybody who attended the 100-hour-long Committee, as I did, would have to accept that our debates were infinitely superior in terms of point and conciseness than the farce of the past 12 years—*[Laughter.]*—or rather, 12 hours. It felt like 12 years. Is it not partly due to the wounded pride of the hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook), because of the temerity of my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State in announcing publicly that the Committee had had a smooth ride and debated the issues sensibly? Given that the Opposition gave an undertaking to get the Bill through in two and a half days on Report, can we ever believe anything that they say again? Does this not underline the need for early guillotines in future?

Mr. Renton: I thank my hon. Friend for his sensible and brief comments. It was a Freudian slip that led him to refer to 12 years rather than to 12 hours, but many of us on both sides may agree that it felt like that. One must ask where the hon. Member for Livingston is. I suspect that he has left the House to give another television interview.

Mr. William Ross (Londonderry, East): Is the Patronage Secretary aware that, although my hon. Friend the Member for Belfast, South (Rev. Martin Smyth) expressed thanks for small mercies, the Unionist party is not in favour of guillotine motions, and we shall vote against this one as usual? May I put it to him that we are extremely disappointed that, when the opportunity occurred to rejig the rest of this week's business, the chance was not seized to discuss the decision of the Dublin Supreme Court and the Anglo-Irish Agreement, which vindicated the stance taken by the Unionist party, or to discuss the judgment handed down on extradition in the courts in Dublin yesterday, which can simply be translated as a licence to murder in Ulster?

Mr. Renton: I remind the hon. Gentleman of the precise words of the hon. Member for Belfast, South (Rev. Martin Smyth):

"I welcome the fact that there is to be a two-and-a-half-day debate on the National Health Service and Community Care Bill."—[*Official Report*, Thursday 8 March; Vol. 168 c. 1014.]

The debate has not proceeded with due dispatch, simply because of the inordinately long speeches made, particularly from the Opposition Front Bench, rehashing comments that they had already made in Committee.

The hon. Gentleman is well versed in the procedures of the House. The question of the Irish judgment does not arise from the business statement. The question of a debate on that and, indeed, on other subjects, is best left for discussion through the usual channels.

Mr. Doug Hoyle (Warrington, North): Does the Patronage Secretary realise that, because of the Government's action, we shall not have an opportunity to debate new clause 8 on the limitation of junior doctors' hours in self-governing hospitals? Because of that, patients' lives could be put at risk if junior doctors must endure the long arduous hours that they are enduring now in many hospitals.

Mr. Renton: The hon. Gentleman should direct his remarks to his Opposition Front Bench spokesmen. If they curtail their speeches this afternoon and tomorrow, perhaps we will reach new clause 8.

Mr. George Foulkes (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley): Why has not the Patronage Secretary given details of the timetable? As he has not given details, perhaps he will tell me whether there will be any time for me to raise the allegation that the Scottish Office is bribing consultants in South Ayrshire by saying that phase 2 of the new South Ayrshire hospital will go ahead faster if there is agreement to opt out of the National Health Service. Does he agree that we ought to have time to discuss that kind of disgraceful allegation? It reeks of corruption in the highest places in the Scottish Office.

Mr. Renton: I congratulate the hon. Gentleman on his success in making his point during the course of these questions on a business motion. He is an ingenious Member, who usually finds an opportunity to make any point that he wants to make. He knows the procedures of the House very well. As to the timetable motion, I repeat that it will appear on Wednesday's Order Paper, and during the debate on it these matters of detail may be raised with Ministers.

Mr. Ian Gow (Eastbourne): Did my hon. Friend really believe that the agreement that had been reached through the usual channels would be honoured by the Opposition?

Mr. Renton: My hon. Friend and I might have a quiet discussion about that later, outside the Chamber.

Mr. Alex Salmond (Banff and Buchan): Did the Patronage Secretary's business statement take fully into account the 100 Government amendments outstanding? I am sure that he is aware that, regardless of his power to restrict debate, he cannot restrict votes on those amendments. There is potential for 24 hours of voting. Would it not be better to devote that time to debate? Will he, rather than whining about the usual channels and about agreements made or not made, acknowledge that many Members and many parties in this House are not covered by the usual channels? How does his announcement today defend the rights of those Members who have been waiting to contribute to the debate?

Mr. Renton: The hon. Member, if he has studied the amendment paper carefully, will realise that the 83 Government amendments deal with drafting and technical matters. They are the ones about which there did not seem to be any dispute. There should be no need for substantive debate on them. However, as I have said, there will be plenty of time at the sittings on Wednesday and Thursday to consider these matters in detail.

Mr. John Battle (Leeds, West): Will the Patronage Secretary acknowledge that the longest debate on this Bill so far was the one on new clause 1, which dealt with income support shortfall for people in residential homes? During that debate, Government Members took up more

[Mr. John Battle]

time than Opposition Members. Can the Patronage Secretary guarantee that new clause 12 will be debated at length?

When the Secretary of State had replied last night, there was unfinished business on that clause. He promised that the House would return to it. This is obviously a matter of great concern to Members on both sides of the House, and it ought to be debated fully.

Mr. Renton: The hon. Gentleman is getting extremely indignant. I can only say to him what I have said to other hon. Members on both sides: the timetable motion will appear on Wednesday's Order Paper, and the House will have an opportunity, in the debate on that motion later today, to deal with this matter. I remind the hon. Gentleman that the two longest speeches in Tuesday's debate were the one by the hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook), which lasted one hour and 48 minutes, and one that lasted one hour 11 minutes. If the hon. Member thinks that that is orderly progress in this House, I have to tell him that it is not my understanding of those words.

Mr. James Lamond (Oldham, Central and Royton): I imagine that it is with some sorrow that the Patronage Secretary is proposing a guillotine motion. Guillotines thwart the very purpose of Parliament. The right hon. Gentleman has based his proposal on the suggestion that the debates on this Bill have been over-long. I am sure that he was present last night when, within 10 minutes of the end of a fairly lengthy debate on new clause 1, it was necessary for one of his hon. Friends below the Gangway to get to his feet to ask for clarification of the awful things that the Government are proposing.

If ever there was an illustration of the fact that the debates have not been over-long—that the debates that we have had have been extremely necessary to bring to the attention of Government Members exactly what is happening—that was it. Unfortunately, the hon. Gentleman, having received a reply indicating that his thoughts were absolutely correct, did not carry his objection into the Lobby.

Mr. Renton: Perhaps it is no surprise to the hon. Gentleman to hear that I disagree with his interpretation of the events of the last 18 hours. Progress last night and this morning clearly showed that the Opposition are seeking to delay this Bill rather than to engage in sensible debate. It is always with regret that a Patronage Secretary as democratic as I am introduces a timetable motion, but, for the reason that I have just given, the motion is necessary. The House must be enabled to continue to make progress on this very important matter.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett (Denton and Reddish): Does the Patronage Secretary agree that the first affront to the House was to put Health Service legislation and community care legislation together? Can he confirm that very many people expected last year that there would be two separate Bills and two separate opportunities for debate? The second affront is the Government's introduction of a guillotine motion without telling us how much time will be allowed. Does not the Patronage Secretary realise that hon. Members and very many people outside who try hard to lobby their Members of Parliament in respect of particular amendments are being denied the opportunity to allocate the remaining time rationally?

Mr. Renton: No one can make a soufflé rise twice. The hon. Gentleman really should not rehash the argument about putting two Bills together. This matter was well ventilated, for example on Second Reading, for which we allowed two days—in itself, an unusually generous provision. As to the hon. Gentleman's other point, I repeat that he will be able to make it in detail when the timetable motion is debated and in further proceedings on Report. When business motions of this sort are tabled, it is not customary to give precise details of the timetable. Those appear on the Order Paper, as will happen on this occasion.

Mrs. Alice Mahon (Halifax): The Patronage Secretary must be aware that many clauses and amendments that concern patient care will now not be debated fully. Many hon. Members hoped to raise the question of the deficits that their district health authorities are facing. In the case of the authority in my area, the figure is £1·2 million. That will lead to a massive loss in patient care, to ward closures and to many other difficulties that will cause suffering and inconvenience to the people of Halifax would have been grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) had he talked from now until next week, if that had given us a chance to bring to the attention of the House the great suffering that these cuts will inflict on them? The hon. Gentleman's trivialisation of the debates that have taken place does neither him nor his party any good.

Mr. Renton: Obviously, the hon. Lady ought to direct her remarks to the hon. Member for Livingston. She says that she would have been content had he spoken from now until next week. Clearly, in those circumstances it would have been impossible to restrict the debate to the two and a half days that were agreed and accepted by the House during business questions last week.

Mr. Tom Clarke (Monklands, West): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. As those on the Opposition Front Bench had been attacked several times by the Chief Whip, it ought to be made quite clear that there never was an agreement on two and a half days. The Government did not give us two and a half days. The Government lost again last night, and today they have run away with the ball.

Mr. Speaker: I have no knowledge of what goes on in the usual channels.

Mr. Harry Barnes (Derbyshire, North-East): This is my first chance to say anything during the entire proceedings on the Bill. I believed that I would have an opportunity later to get involved in the debate. Why is it that, presumably, I will not be allowed to speak during the course of the proceedings on the 108 amendments that could still be taken? And if I am not allowed to speak, why will I not be allowed to vote?

I was voted into this House by people in my constituency, and they expect me to be able to vote on their behalf on these important matters. Will we be given a chance to go through the amendments, so that we may at least have an opportunity to exercise our right to go through the Division Lobbies?

Mr. Renton: I note the hon. Gentleman's enthusiasm. He has had a number of occasions on which to vote during the past 20 hours and I am sure that he will have other occasions on which to vote in the hours ahead.

Ms. Dawn Primarolo (Bristol, South): I am sure that the Patronage Secretary is aware, because this point has been made during the debate, that there are 11 district health authorities in the south-west, of which eight in their entirety are to be removed as trusts in the first wave. As a member of a district health authority, I know that the care services for the mentally ill and the physically disabled and the priorities for community care have not yet been dealt with. Will the right hon. Gentleman guarantee that we shall have adequate time to discuss the items raised under community care? In that way, some guidance can be given to the district health authorities which are opting out and at present making no provision.

Mr. Renton: As the hon. Lady well realises, it is not in my power to give the guarantee that she seeks. Whether there is an opportunity to raise those detailed points about the south-west depends very much on the length of the speeches made in the debate on the timetable motion and during the remainder of the Report stage.

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): At the beginning of the debate on the timetable motion, will the right hon. Gentleman include a section for what might be called sleaze time? This information was not discussed overnight, although it was circulated. It concerns the four companies —P and O, British and Commonwealth, Trusthouse Forte and BET—which, since 1983, have given more than £1 million to the Conservative party. We could also discuss the 22 Conservative Members who have shares in those various companies. There has been some dispute—which we should clear up—as to whether those Members should be allowed to vote. They certainly would not be allowed to vote in local authorities, so why should they be allowed to vote here?

Mr. Renton: The hon. Gentleman has a natural aptitude for raising matters concerned with sleaze. Whether there is time to debate those points on Wednesday or Thursday obviously depends on the length of speeches made by him and others of his hon. Friends during the debate.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): Is not the real reason why the Patronage Secretary has come to the House today the fact that the Government are crumbling at the edges, as witnessed by their defeat last night and the absconding of the Secretary of State for Wales? Where is the Leader of the House? Has he done a bunk as well? The Government are rotting at the centre. They do not want to debate these issues because they do not want those 22 Tory Members to be named in the debate. What is wrong with debating between now and Sunday night? If hospital doctors have to work for 80-odd hours on their own, why cannot Members of Parliament work? Stop the cover-up.

Mr. Renton: The hon. Gentleman has a marvellous capacity for fantasy, which never ceases to amuse and delight both sides of the House, although I sometimes wonder how much his constituents like it. We will have business questions tomorrow, and perhaps the hon. Gentleman will then tell us when we shall have an opportunity to debate the conduct of the 32 Labour Members who are leading a campaign not to pay the poll tax, and when the leader of the Labour party is going to put the boot where his mouth is and remove the Labour whip from those Members.

Mr. Harry Ewing (Falkirk, East): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that his normal good humour is wearing a bit thin, and he is certainly looking the worse for wear? Is he aware that, if all these rumours about the new Secretary of State for Wales are true, we in Scotland will be bitterly disappointed? We had hoped to get rid of the Secretary of State for Scotland, and thought that he had a chance of getting that job.

On the business statement, why did not the Patronage Secretary take the opportunity to correct the history knowledge of the hon. Member for Rockburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood), who said that the National Health Service Act 1946 was an agreed measure? Why did not the right hon. Gentleman tell him that the Tory Opposition voted against its Second Reading and fought it line by line? Is not the guillotine which has been announced evidence that the Health Service is not safe in the hands of the Conservative party and that, in fact, a guillotine looms over it?

Mr. Renton: I thank the hon. Gentleman for his sympathy. On listening to him, my good humour returned. I should like to point out, however, that he has a selective memory. As I said to the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood), the Health Services Act 1976—a Labour Act—spent only 80 hours in Committee. The debate in Committee was then guillotined, as were the Report stage and Third Reading, and the timetable motion was introduced after only 42 hours. If the hon. Gentleman compares that disgraceful Labour record with ours, I am sure that he will join me in thanking Conservative Ministers for the democracy that they are showing and for their care for the procedures of the House.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: So that the public clearly understand what is happening in the House of Commons, will the Patronage Secretary confirm that we are now required to debate more than 108 amendments and new clauses in five and a half hours, whereas last night the Government were prepared to give six hours to one clause? Cannot the public rightfully ask why the Government are willing to give six hours to one new clause but only five and a half hours to a further 108 measures?

Could it be that one of those measures would give us the opportunity to discuss the sleaze factor, to which my hon. Friend the Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) referred—that is, give us the opportunity to expose the relationship between Conservative Members and private contractors who hope to act as parasites living on the back of the NHS following this legislation?

Mr. Renton: As I said in answer to the hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer), the hon. Gentleman has a natural attraction to sleaze. If he wishes to discuss that matter during the Bill's later stages and the Opposition make short speeches, he will have an opportunity to do so. I agree that progress during the night was too slow. We shall introduce a timetable motion so that reasonable progress can be made.

Points of Order

12.57 pm

Mr. Ray Powell (Ogmore): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. My point of order, which I tried to raise earlier, is relevant, because it deals with the National Health Service and Community Care Bill. One of the Bill's sponsors is none other than the right hon. Member for Worcester (Mr. Walker). We now know from the tape and from the Patronage Secretary that the right hon. Gentleman's successor has been appointed. Would it not therefore be in order for the Bill to be withdrawn because one of its sponsors has resigned? I understand that he has resigned, without making a statement to the House, in order to become chairman of PowerGen.

As I said earlier, I raised this matter on points of order on three previous occasions and during business questions on Thursday in the hope that a statement would be made so that we in Wales could ask the Secretary of State for Wales why he was resigning. We had a six-hour Welsh debate, yet the right hon. Gentleman did not declare his intention of resigning to take up the job as chairman of PowerGen. I think that it comes within your ambit, Mr. Speaker, for you to ask Ministers and the Patronage Secretary why appointed Ministers should not declare to the House their reason for resigning.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. Let me deal with one thing at a time. The right hon. Member for Worcester (Mr. Walker) was the Secretary of State for Wales when the Bill was printed and, as far as I am aware, he is still the Secretary of State for Wales. I have no knowledge of any other job that he may or may not have been offered, so as far as I am concerned that point does not arise.

Mr. Barry Jones (Alyn and Deeside): Further to the point of order, Mr. Speaker. I seek your assistance and guidance concerning the appointment of a new Secretary of State for Wales. In the Welsh Grand Committee, which sat this morning, the right hon. Member for Worcester (Mr. Walker) gave us no details of the situation whatever so we are not sure whether the right hon. Gentleman is still the Secretary of State for Wales. That is why we seek your help, Sir. Can you bring the Patronage Secretary to the Dispatch Box to make a statement giving us all the details, to enable us to establish whether it is true that the Minister for the poll tax has been selected to take the place of the right hon. Member for Worcester?

Mr. Speaker: I have absolutely no knowledge of these matters, and they are not matters for me.

Mr. Dafydd Wigley (Caernarfon): I, too, was present at this morning's sitting of the Welsh Grand Committee, when the Secretary of State for Wales—until now—said that he knew nothing of a statement having been made concerning the appointment of his successor. Yet a few moments ago, the Patronage Secretary not only referred to the new Secretary of State for Wales but commended him to the House, so he at least must know who it is to be.

We do not know whether we have no Secretary of State for Wales, one or other, or two at the same time. That is a completely unsatisfactory state of affairs, given that that matter is vital to us in Wales.

Mr. Speaker: That is not a matter that can be raised on a point of order in the Chamber. I have absolutely no knowledge of these matters.

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, you will recall that I asked the Patronage Secretary to give us more details of the time that would be allowed if the timetable motion were carried. I pointed out that it would be possible for that timetable motion to give us a further 18 hours of debate on the 30 remaining new clauses and matters related to them, which affect everyone in the country. When I went to the Table Office immediately afterwards, I found deposited there the timetable motion whose details the Patronage Secretary had uncharacteristically declined to reveal to the House. It was public knowledge to hon. Members in the Table Office, but not in the Chamber.

If the timetable motion is carried, we shall have until midnight tonight—Wednesday—to debate these matters. That gives us a maximum of six hours. Would it be in order, Mr. Speaker, for the Patronage Secretary to discharge his duties to democracy and to the House and follow the precept that he mentioned in his reply to me? Could he, during the Adjournment debate, table a different timetable motion giving us three times as long —until midday on Thursday—to debate these very important new clauses?

Mr. Speaker: It would be in order for the Patronage Secretary to do that if he so wished, provided that the motion appeared on the Order Paper before we began Wednesday's proceedings.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I will now take Mr. Alton's petition.

Mr. James Wallace (Orkney and Shetland): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: What can the point of order possibly be after all that?

Mr. Wallace: You will recall, Mr. Speaker, that, about a quarter of an hour ago, the Patronage Secretary said that, tomorrow, we should debate a motion to amend schedule 1 to the House of Commons Disqualification Act 1975——

Mr. Speaker: Order. Was the hon. Gentleman not here during questions to the Patronage Secretary? Surely he could have asked his question of the right hon. Gentleman then.

Mr. Wallace: It is your guidance that I seek, Mr. Speaker. During the points of order that followed the business statement, the hon. Member for Ogmore (Mr. Powell) said that the right hon. Member for Worcester (Mr. Walker) was about to take up a position as the chairman of PowerGen. Suppose that that is established before tomorrow evening. From 31 March, PowerGen shares will be held by the Government. Does that mean that the chairmanship will become an office of appointment under the Crown, and will it be relevant to debate that tomorrow evening?

Mr. Speaker: That is a very interesting point, I am sure.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Let us have the petition now.

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The guillotine arrangements that we shall be following later today and tomorrow, will not be in the Vote Office before the House adjourns. In view of that very short notice, will you be accepting manuscript amendments, as that would be most helpful?

Mr. Speaker: I shall certainly consider them most carefully.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: I will take one more point of order, from the hon. Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson).

Mr. John Home Robertson (East Lothian): On a quick point of order, Mr. Speaker, I was very perplexed by something that the hon. Member for Caernarfon (Mr. Wigley) said. He said that he had attended a sitting——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The fact that an hon. Member is perplexed by what another hon. Member has said is not a point of order. I am constantly perplexed.

Mr. Home Robertson: I seek clarification from you, Mr. Speaker. The hon. Member for Ogmore said that he was present at a sitting of the Welsh Grand Committee this morning. Surely that is impossible. He must have been there tomorrow morning.

Mr. Speaker: I think that I can indeed clarify that matter——

Mr. Wigley *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: No, let me have the first go. It is Wednesday upstairs in Committee, but it may be Tuesday down here.

Mr. Wigley: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. On the question of the appointment of the Secretary of State for Wales, I realise that you have very little power in this matter, but the Government have been unforthcoming and have made no statement. The circumstances are completely different from those that usually pertain. Usually when a Secretary of State resigns, the job becomes empty and we have an announcement from Downing street. In this case, an announcement has been made while there is an incumbent in the job. Once again, we have strangers in Wales taking over the jobs. In those circumstances, as I have in the past, I beg to move, That strangers do withdraw.

Notice being taken that strangers were present. MR. SPEAKER, *pursuant to Standing Order No. 143 (Withdrawal of Strangers from the House), put forthwith the Question,* That strangers do withdraw:—

The House proceeded to a Division—

1.21 pm

Mr. Speaker: I direct the Serjeant at Arms to inquire why there is a delay in the Division Lobbies.

The House having divided: Ayes 2, Noes 190.

Division No. 122] **[1.06 pm**

AYES

Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Alex Salmond and
Mr. Dafydd Wigley.

NOES

Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Alton, David
Amess, David
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashton, Joe
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beggs, Roy
Beith, A. J.
Bellingham, Henry
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bright, Graham
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Corbett, Robin
Cryer, Bob
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Dalyell, Tam
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Dewar, Donald
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dixon, Don
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas, Dick
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunn, Bob
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fearn, Ronald
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Flynn, Paul
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grist, Ian
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Harris, David
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Haynes, Frank
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howells, Geraint
Howells, Dr. Kim (Pontypridd)
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Irvine, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Key, Robert
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkwood, Archy
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knox, David
Lamond, James
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lewis, Terry
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Loyden, Eddie
McCartney, Ian
McFall, John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
McKelvey, William
Maclean, David
Mans, Keith
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Meale, Alan
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Moate, Roger
Morgan, Rhodri
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Murphy, Paul
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
O'Brien, William
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Pike, Peter L.
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Quin, Ms Joyce
Raffan, Keith
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rogers, Allan
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rowe, Andrew
Ruddock, Joan
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Sackville, Hon Tom

Sayeed, Jonathan	Wallace, James
Scott, Rt Hon Nicholas	Waller, Gary
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*	Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Shore, Rt Hon Peter	Wareing, Robert N.
Sillars, Jim	Wheeler, Sir John
Skeet, Sir Trevor	Widdecombe, Ann
Skinner, Dennis	Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Speller, Tony	Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*	Winterton, Nicholas
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*	Wise, Mrs Audrey
Stokes, Sir John	Wolfson, Mark
Stradling Thomas, Sir John	Wood, Timothy
Summerson, Hugo	Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*	Young, David *(Bolton SE)*
Temple-Morris, Peter	Young, Sir George *(Acton)*
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*	
Thornton, Malcolm	Tellers for the Noes:
Thurnham, Peter	Mr. John M. Taylor and
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*	Mr. David Lightbown.

Question accordingly negatived.

Several Hon. Members: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I shall take one point of order from the hon. Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney (Mr. Rowlands).

Mr. Ted Rowlands (Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. As this was the first time that that question was put to the House since the television cameras were introduced, if it had been carried, would the television cameras have been shut off? Would the cameras be strangers?

Mr. Speaker: If that had occurred, I confirm that that would have been the case—the cameras would be shut off.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am not taking any more points of order. I now call Mr. David Alton to present his petition.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover) *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I will not take the hon. Gentleman's point of order.

Mr. Skinner: I am moving the writ for Upper Bann.

Mr. Speaker: I order the hon. Gentleman to resume his seat.

Mr. Skinner: According to "Erskine May"—

Mr. Speaker: I have already asked the hon. Gentleman to resume his seat. I call Mr. David Alton.

PETITION

Local Government Finance

1.25 pm

Mr. David Alton (Liverpool, Mossley Hill): At the end of this 23-hour marathon session of the House I am pleased to have the opportunity to present a petition that has been collected by my constituents in the Wavertree, Edge Hill and Smithtown areas of the city of Liverpool.

I could mention many of the streets included in the petition, but I am sure that the House would not wish to be detained. [HON. MEMBERS: No. Name them."] Many hundreds of people in those areas have asked me to present the petition on their behalf detailing their concern about the implementation of the community charge, the poll tax. I am sure that the House would wish to hear the terms of reference of the petition. It reads, in the time-honoured way:

"To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in Parliament assembled.

The humble petition of the residents of Smithtown ward in Liverpool showeth that this community rejects the poll tax as a unfair law and notes that many people in this community will face grave difficulty in paying the charge.

Wherefore your Petitioners pray that your Honourable House will replace the community charge with a fair and equitable means of local government finance that truly reflects a persons ability to pay.

And your petitioners in duty bound will ever pray."

I should like to take this opportunity——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman may not make a speech about it. He must present his petition.

Mr. Alton: I believe that it is normal for one or two sentences to be said——

Mr. Speaker: Prior to reading what the hon. Gentleman has just read out.

Mr. Alton: I should like to take the opportunity to congratulate the organiser of the petition, Mr. Peter McGrath. Responsible opposition of this sort highlights the acute anxieties that many people in under privileged parts of the country, such as the community that I have represented for 18 years in Liverpool——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The rule is that the hon. Gentleman should make any preparatory remarks before he reads out the petition. He has read it out. Will he please put it in the bag?

Gynaecology (Privacy)

1.28 pm

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Dorell.]*

Miss Emma Nicholson (Torridge and Devon, West) *rose*—

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): I have got the writ here for Upper Bann.

Miss Nicholson: The purpose of the debate is to restore to women the dignity and privacy on gynaecological matters that the new—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Allan Rogers (Rhondda): The hon. Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton) has not presented his petition.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I call on the hon. Gentleman to put his petition in the bag. Miss Nicholson.

Miss Nicholson: The purpose of the debate is to restore to women the dignity and privacy that the new GPs' contract has inadvertently removed.

Several Hon. Members: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. We are in the middle of the Adjournment debate.

Several Hon. Members *rose*—

Mr. Speaker: Order. Hon. Members should sit down, as we are in the middle of the Adjournment debate—*[Interruption.]*

Grave disorder having arisen in the House, Mr. Speaker, *pursuant to Standing Order No. 26 (Power of Mr. Speaker to adjourn House or suspend sitting), adjourned the House without Question put.*

Adjourned at Twenty-nine minutes past one pm.

House of Commons

Wednesday 14 March 1990

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PRIVATE BUSINESS

NOTTINGHAM PARK ESTATE BILL *[Lords]*
Considered; to be read the Third time.

STRATHCLYDE REGIONAL COUNCIL ORDER CONFIRMATION BILL
Read the Third time, and passed.

Oral Answers to Questions

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Business Innovation Centre, Cheshire

1. **Mr. Butler:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has had concerning the funding of Cheshire's business innovation centre; and if he will make a statement.

The Minister for Industry (Mr. Douglas Hogg): I have had several representations, including my hon. Friend's, asking for grants from the European regional development fund to be made available to the Cheshire business innovation centre. The centre is eligible to apply.

Mr. Butler: Will my hon. Friend confirm that there are moneys available at the European level for the business innovation centre? Will he encourage the local authorities to apply for that money, and give the application fair wind?

Mr. Hogg: It is not a matter for me to adjudicate upon, but moneys are available and I hope that an application will be made. My hon. Friend's urging is of great significance and will be taken into account by those who ultimately make the decision.

Mr. Hoyle: If an application is made now that moneys are available, will the Minister give it his support in the right quarters in Brussels?

Mr. Hogg: The application will be considered by the programme monitoring committee. Clearly, the application must satisfy the usual criteria—notably, that it represents good value for money and that there is no duplication. I am sure that those making the application will apply their minds to satisfying precisely those criteria.

Single European Market

2. **Mr. Bellingham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent representations he has received from engineering companies in Norfolk about the single European market.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: None, Sir.

Mr. Bellingham: Is my hon. Friend aware that while Norfolk firms are gearing up for 1992 they are also helping the disabled and handicapped? Perhaps he will join me in paying particular tribute to Bead Engineering, which recently won a Fit for Work award for employing disabled people? Is my hon. Friend further aware that while Norfolk firms will definitely benefit from the Department of Transport's recent commitment to dual the main trunk roads into King's Lynn, they will have to compete on a level playing field in Europe? What steps will my hon. Friend take to ensure that a level playing field exists?

Mr. Hogg: My hon. Friend played an important part in having the roads of King's Lynn improved and I take this opportunity to congratulate him on his success in that. I have no doubt that he also played a part in ensuring that unemployment rates have fallen by 14 percentage points in the last 12 months. As to the broader issue of a level playing field, my hon. Friend is right to say that the removal of state aids and the provision of level playing fields is an important policy objective.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I remind the House that right hon. and hon. Members should ask only one supplementary question, not more.

Trading Standards Officers

3. **Mr. Martlew:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he last met representatives of local authority trading standards officers to discuss consumer matters.

7. **Mr. Maxton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he last met representatives of local authority trading standards officers to discuss consumer affairs.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Industry and Consumer Affairs (Mr. Eric Forth): I met representatives of local authority trading standards officers on three occasions in 1989 to discuss consumer matters, and my officials have frequent meetings with trading standards officers.

Mr. Martlew: Is the Minister aware that there is deep concern in trading standards offices and in British industry that the harmonisation of safety laws throughout Europe will mean the dumping of dangerous foreign goods on an unsuspecting British public?

Mr. Forth: If there is such concern, it is misplaced. Authorities will still have powers to identify any items that are proved to be unsafe and to remove them from the market. That will be against the background of creating the single market and a single, verifiable and viable product safety standard so that consumers throughout

Europe can be equally assured of the safety of products on the market place. We shall continue to strive for that objective.

Mr. Maxton: When the Minister met the trading standards officers, did he discuss with them the compulsory annual recording of car mileages? If he did, does he agree with them that it is an essential means of cutting down on fraud in the car markets? If so, when will he introduce legislation to carry it out?

Mr. Forth: The answers are no, no and I do not have it in mind.

Sir Anthony Grant: When my hon. Friend next meets the trading standards officers, will he discuss with them a serious problem which has arisen for small petrol retailers? The trading standards officers have said that pumps must be changed to allow for unleaded petrol by the end of the month, but the manufacturers and installers of the new pumps are unable to meet the demand, largely because they are overworked by the big oil companies. Will the Minister tell the trading standards officers to take things calmly in view of the backlog?

Mr. Forth: I am slightly surprised that the matter has not been brought to my attention other than by my hon. Friend now. He suggests that I have some powers over trading standards officers. I am sure that the House will be reassured to know that I have no such powers and that the trading standards officers do their excellent work totally independently from the Government. However, I acknowledge the problem that my hon. Friend has described and I will find out what can be done to alleviate it.

Mr. Holt: Does my hon. Friend agree that, far from Britain being a dumping ground, the stringent laws that have been introduced in Britain for the furniture industry make us unique in Europe so that no European manufacturer can sell in Britain without attaining our standards and we are leading the world?

Mr. Forth: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for raising that point. I should like it to be more widely understood in Britain that throughout the furniture industry enormous efforts have been made to comply with our high furniture safety standards. I very much welcome that, and I believe that people in Britain can be reassured that they will enjoy the highest standards of furniture fire safety in Europe if not the world.

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: Is the Minister aware of the public concern over his failure to reappoint Esther Rantzen to the National Consumer Council—*[Laughter.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. I do not think that it is really a laughing matter.

Mr. Griffiths: I agree entirely, Mr. Speaker. It is far from a laughing matter. Is not the truth simply that the Minister cannot face the criticism that that consumer champion articulates on behalf of millions of people in Britain? Is not she paying the penalty for supporting the Consumer Guarantees Bill which the country and people overwhelmingly want and the Minister implacably opposes? Will he consider reappointing Esther Rantzen to the NCC as part of a Government contribution to world consumer day tomorrow?

Mr. Forth: I am not aware of the source or the nature of the public concern claimed by the hon. Gentleman. Ester Rantzen has served three terms on the National Consumer Council. That is exceptional in itself and I felt that it was time for new blood and new ideas. Despite the fact that on her programme some three or four weeks ago Ester Rantzen invited people to write to Members of Parliament and to me expressing their public concern about the Bill that the hon. Gentleman mentioned, as of a few days ago I had received only one letter in reply.

Manufacturing Facilities, Birmingham

4. **Mr. Roger King:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many overseas-based companies have now established manufacturing facilities in the Birmingham area.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: To date, some 50 companies have established manufacturing operations in Birmingham. Recent announcements include projects from two West German companies, Kirsten Automotive Ltd and Keiper Recaro, which will be located on the Woodgate business park in my hon. Friend's constituency.

Mr. King: Is my hon. Friend aware that the growing tide of foreign companies investing in Britain, certainly in Birmingham and the west midlands, is evidence of a strong resurgence of manufacturing capability in the region? Does he further agree that the role of the West Midlands development agency has been a spur to encourage much of that investment and that it is the wish of businesses in the region that that work should continue and increase?

Mr. Hogg: I entirely agree with my hon. Friend about the West Midlands development agency, and he will know that I have been able substantially to increase the money that goes to that organisation. It must be said that my hon. Friend has also made a considerable contribution to attracting industry to his area. I was extremely grateful to him for his support of the Keiper Recaro project. I greatly valued my hon. Friend's representations, which enabled me to form a clear view of the matter, following which I was able to give the project a grant.

Mr. Henderson: The Minister will know that, even with the inward investment in the west midlands, which we all welcome, manufacturing investment in the area is lower today than it was in 1979 and that even in high-tech industries, as defined by the Department of Trade and Industry, 10,000 jobs have gone since 1981. What will the Minister tell industrialists and workers in Lichfield in Mid-Staffordshire about Conservative economic policy?

Mr. Hogg: I will tell them the truth, and they will be mightily impressed by it. Between 1984 and 1988, more than 260 inward investment projects in the west midlands created or safeguarded about 36,500 jobs. While we are talking about investment, I should point out that manufacturing investment in 1989 was 5 per cent. higher than in 1988 and 34 per cent. higher than five years ago. That is the fastest rate of growth in any three-year period since the war. That is what I shall tell them and they will find it very persuasive.

Avionics

5. **Mr. David Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much is to be provided by his Department in the form of grant for research into civil aircraft avionics under the first phase of the control technology programme.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I am pleased to say that the Department has offered a grant of £3·88 million for the programme under the civil aircraft and aeroengine research demonstration budget.

Mr. Evans: I welcome that reply. Is not that just the pump primer that we need to develop digital avionics bearing in mind how necessary that is for the next generation of civil aircraft? Does my hon. Friend agree that that is just what business and the Government should be doing so that we can develop our industry and rebut the Opposition's claims that we do not have an interest in the future redevelopment of our aerospace industry?

Mr. Hogg: Absolutely—I entirely agree. My hon. Friend is a particular champion of the British aerospace industry and I am grateful to him for that. On the substantive question, pre-competitive collaborative projects are extremely important to the Government and we put a lot of money into them. That is one reason why the aerospace industry is so successful.

Mr. Jack: Will my hon. Friend ensure that that excellent news is transmitted to the engineering unions, which so recently sponsored a strike in the aerospace industry which damaged the prospects of Airbus Industrie and the future potential for the research that my hon. Friend's Department is funding?

Mr. Hogg: I shall certainly point out that the Government are showing a commitment to the engineering and aerospace industries which is not always apparent among Opposition Members or in the trade unions.

Regulatory Obstacles to Business

6. **Mrs. Gorman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what actions he has taken to remove the regulatory obstacles to business.

The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Corporate Affairs (Mr. John Redwood): The Department of Trade and Industry has a co-ordinating role around Whitehall in deregulation matters. In addition, each of the major Departments has a Minister and officials responsible for deregulation in their own areas. They are charged with the task of reviewing existing regulations to establish whether they can be simplified and reduced and for ensuring that new regulations meet the right standards so that they do not impose an unreasonable burden on business.

On 21 December 1989, at columns *395-97* of *Hansard*, the Government listed the deregulation reviews currently under way. I am pleased to tell my hon. Friend that the Department is conducting a series of studies of the problems faced by new businesses trying to establish themselves in particular sectors to see whether further help can be given to them in the form of more deregulation.

Mrs. Gorman: I thank my hon. Friend for that reply and I applaud his will to do something about the over-regulation of the business community, but is he aware that the DTI still administers 48 quangos with esoteric functions such as the "persons hearing estate agents' appeals" body, and so on? Is he also aware that the section of the Civil Service guide dealing with the ramifications of the Department's interventionist bodies runs to 70 columns? When will those bodies be curtailed?

Mr. Redwood: My hon. Friend may rest assured that the DTI is extremely keen to reduce unreasonable regulation. We are busy in many areas—for example, in the financial services. Tomorrow we shall take up the powers under the Companies Act 1989 to simplify the financial services regulations, without in any way endangering investor protection. We are also announcing the removal of the need for company seals under the Companies Act. We have set out arrangements for simplified financial statements and we have introduced a great deal of simplification in export licences.

However, if my hon. Friend knows of specific cases of bodies that she thinks are unnecessary, or whose work could be handled better in some other way, I should be happy to hear of them.

Mr. Matthew Taylor: As the Minister has referred to so many people involved in trying to help businesses to avoid the problems imposed on them by the Government, has he had any representations about—and is he planning to take action on—the problems caused to small businesses by plans to force them to administer and enforce attachment orders related to poll tax? There is considerable anxiety about the personnel problems as well as the administrative problems that they could cause.

Mr. Redwood: If I receive representations I will forward them to my colleagues at the Department of the Environment. The burdens on business that the Government impose are modest compared with those that would be imposed by the policies of the Opposition parties. I was interested to see a recent study by Public Policy Consultants, an independent body, which said that if Labour policies were adopted the burdens on business would rise substantially, which would be deleterious to the conduct of business in this country.

Mr. Grylls: Does my hon. Friend accept that despite his positive answer about the review of the work of the deregulation unit, which is certainly encouraging, there is a need to reduce the considerable hurdles that firms have to overcome when they start up and to prevent new hurdles from being placed in their way? My hon. Friend's Department may be good at preventing such hurdles, but not all the other Departments are so good. Will he therefore keep a vigilant eye on them because that is also part of his task?

Mr. Redwood: As I explained earlier, the main responsibility lies with each Department and its deregulation Minister to see that its regulations are responsible and reasonable and that the burdens on business are not insupportable. That is what they are doing. Of course my Department will remain vigilant through its co-ordination role, and my hon. Friend is right that particular problems affect small businesses and new businesses. That is why the deregulation unit at the DTI, in conjunction with other Departments, is making a

special study of a group of small business start-ups problems to see whether we can cut through still more red tape.

Ms. Mowlam: Will the Minister explain in what conditions he would use the existing regulatory structure applying to businesses under section 8 of the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986? We should be interested to know under what conditions he would operate the phrase "public interest" if not in the case of the Fayed brothers and the House of Fraser.

Mr. Redwood: I have nothing to add to the statement that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State made on that subject last week, or to my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General's remarks at Question Time. It was made quite clear that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State had taken into account all necessary matters and had decided that it was not in the public interest to pursue that case.

Mr. McCrindle: My hon. Friend has referred to the Companies Act 1989 and financial services. Is he satisfied that the whole approach of self-regulation, with its plethora of self-regulatory organisations, continues to operate in the interests of the investor and as expected when the legislation went through the House?

Mr. Redwood: I think that the 1986 legislation is a major advance on what preceded it. A statutory framework operates through the Securities and Investments Board. I also welcome the fact that the SIB is currently keen to see regulation reduced to the minimum required to meet the necessary standards of investor protection and is working hard on the rule books with the self-regulatory organisations to ensure that that is so. I am also pleased that in the Companies Act 1989 the House passed the provision ensuring that the cost of compliance must be taken into account when forming regulations for financial services.

Confederation of British Industry

8. **Mr. Haynes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he next expects to meet the president of the Confederation of British Industry; and what matters he intends to discuss.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I look forward to a continuation of constructive dialogue with the president of the CBI on matters relevant to the well-being of British business.

Mr. Haynes: Will the Minister take the opportunity to have a word with that dodo of a Secretary of State so that when he meets the CBI he appreciates the CBI's concern about investment in our manufacturing industry? The Government should be forced to help so that industry is competitive. Will he also have a word with the Secretary of State about the serious situation arising out of high interest rates which help to make our industry uncompetitive? The Minister should get his right hon. Friend up off his backside and let us have some industry working in the interests of the nation.

Mr. Hogg: I look forward to the discussion, as we shall begin by discussing the fact that in the three years ending in 1989 investment increased by around 40 per cent. As I have already said, that is the largest three-year growth since the war. I shall express my pleasure at that and I shall go on to say that no doubt such investment is at least partly responsible for the fact that in the past 12 months unemployment in the hon. Gentleman's constituency has fallen by 30 per cent.

Mr. Dickens: When my hon. Friend next meets the president of the CBI will he ask him to congratulate his members on producing products that people want to buy, and which are of excellent quality, at competitive prices and are offered with good after-sales service and delivered on time? That is why the industrial base of our country is now outstripping the rest of Europe. We do not need any carping from the Opposition.

Mr. Hogg: I entirely agree with that. One of the extraordinary things about the Labour party is its willingness to denigrate British industry. I shall certainly congratulate the president of the CBI on the fact that exports are 11 per cent. higher than they were 12 months ago. That is an extraordinary achievement and it is proper to congratulate the CBI on it.

Mr. Gordon Brown: Now that the Secretary of State has virtually abandoned his responsibilities in relation to City fraud and is also winding down his responsibilities to the regions and even to export services, will the Minister at least wake up to the damage that his 15 per cent. interest rate policy is doing, particularly the 45 per cent. rise in business liquidations reported to the Lord Chancellor? Does he agree that a do-nothing Budget for industry will simply not do and will he urge upon the Chancellor an investment budget for industry and training which will help bring interest rates down?

Mr. Hogg: You will recall, Mr. Speaker, that, in last Tuesday's debate, I referred to the hon. Gentleman as having made a speech composed of stale jokes and ignorance—on this occasion he left out the stale jokes. The liquidations point is a good example of the hon. Gentleman's ignorance. He seems unaware that there are 60,000 more firms opening each year—that is the difference between the number closing and the number opening. In a dynamic economy there are both closures and new firms starting. At present, there are many more new firms than closures, representing a fourfould increase on the previous 10 years. That is a basic fact. The hon. Gentleman should do just a little more homework, please.

Hungary

9. **Mr. Butterfill:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans his Department has to promote increased trade links between the United Kingdom and Hungary.

Mr. Redwood: My Department is taking an active interest in promoting trade with Hungary. For example, it is leading trade missions. I led one myself, and last week there was a successful industrial delegation to Hungary. The Foreign Secretary also visited Hungary recently.

We have established a know-how fund effective from the beginning of April and we have also involved ourselves with our European partners in developing European assistance for Hungary and other eastern European countries. We are making a wide amount of information available through the DTI in London and through Foreign Office posts in the relevant countries and capitals. We are also making information available more generally

—for example, through a seminar in May to be led by the DTI, the CBI and the London chamber of commerce, telling British business men about opportunities in Hungary. I am pleased to say that there has already been a vigorous private sector response.

Mr. Butterfill: I congratulate my hon. Friend on the action that he is taking. Does he agree that Hungary represents excellent investment opportunities for British businesses and that it deserves special recognition as the first eastern bloc country to throw off the shackles of Socialism and to introduce democracy and the beginnings of a market economy?

Mr. Redwood: It is certainly one of the more promising areas of central and eastern Europe where business opportunities are considerable. That is not just my view but the view of the investing companies of western Europe. Many successful joint ventures have already been created by western companies and some by British companies, which I especially welcome. The Government will, of course, extend the hand of friendship and assistance and ensure that the interests of British businesses are well represented in Hungary and in the other promising eastern European countries starting out on the process of enterprise and democratic reform.

Dr. Hampson: Can my hon. Friend say whether he prefers, rather than direct investment at this stage, to support management training and the giving of technical assistance? Has he considered approaching British businesses to see whether they would second some of their younger managers to Hungary and other eastern European countries for a period? They could provide much assistance on matters such as marketing and distribution.

Mr. Redwood: The purpose of the know-how fund is to encourage such links and to help in financing the transfer of know-how. Of course, I would welcome it if British businesses made talented managers available to help in that process. I believe that many will also decide to invest in countries such as Hungary where they will learn for themselves, at close quarters, of the trading conditions and opportunities in that country. British business men are already winning contracts there and I am pleased to announce that Rank Xerox signed a contract last week for £250,000 and has already done £700,000 of business in the year so far. That is a major improvement on the conditions which existed prior to the changes that we are discussing.

GATT

10. **Mr. Kirkwood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the progress being made in reducing tariff barriers in interventional trade in the current general agreement on tariffs and trade round.

Mr. Redwood: It has been agreed that participants in the Uruguay round of GATT negotiations should submit offers of tariff reductions by mid-March, to be followed by requests for improvements in others' offers by the end of April. I expect the European Community to offer a reduction of around one third in tariff levels, which is the target agreed by Ministers at the mid-term review of the round. This would be subject to review in the light of offers from others.

Mr. Kirkwood: Does the Minister accept that for trade to be fair there must be reciprocal openings of other markets in third countries outside the EEC if the international conditions are to be stabilised and made productive for all parties? Does he recognise that the particular interests of the high-quality cashmere industry in the central and border areas of Scotland are vitally dependent on getting access to those new markets? Will he give the House an assurance that the special interests of the high-quality hosiery industry in those areas will be taken into account when negotiating the final EEC mandate for the GATT talks?

Mr. Redwood: The hon. Gentleman is right. There needs to be reciprocal action by all parties to the GATT discussions so that there is progressive market opening on both sides. There is major asymmetry in current tariff levels with Japan at 2·5 per cent. and the European Community at 5·5 per cent. on average for industry, whereas India and Brazil are at 135 per cent. and 45 per cent. respectively.

I can give my hon. Friend a pledge that the interests of important British industries will be taken into account in our advice to the European Community, but I stress that it is an EC matter and the EC will handle the negotiations for ourselves and the other 11 member states.

Mrs. Currie: Is the Minister aware that there is concern in parts of the footwear industry in my constituency about the possible dumping of shoddy goods from abroad? Does he share with me a robust view about fair competition but, nevertheless, agree that where there is any evidence of unfair practices the Government will take action?

Mr. Redwood: I agree with my hon. Friend that it is important to make trade more liberal and to open it as much as we can, but there need to be GATT disciplines —as there are—if trade is unfair. One of the negotiating objectives of our partners and ourselves is to ensure that there are sensible disciplines against sudden surges in imports of sensitive products and against dumping and other malpractice.

Mr. Madden: Will the Minister make it clear that unless real safeguards are secured for international textiles within GATT the British Government remain committed to an extension of the multi-fibre arrangement? Will he say what progress is being made in persuading the Americans to abandon national quotas?

Mr. Redwood: We have extensively debated the arrangements for the MFA and for the transition that would be necessary if successful negotiations were achieved in GATT. Those debates made it clear that GATT procedures and protections will need to be strengthened in several areas, such as design and intellectual property, surges of imports, dumping, subsidy and other problems of which the hon. Gentleman is aware. I reaffirm the pledge that those are matters for the GATT negotiations and that they will be handled by the EC negotiators. As we come near the end of the round—it has to be completed this year—it will be necessary for the EC as a whole to make a judgment about whether sufficient progress has been made and whether the right assurances have been achieved for the package to be in the EC's interests by giving us more free trade opportunities.

Export Credits Guarantee Department

11. **Mr. Colin Shepherd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has recently received from the group of major British exporters in respect of ECGD.

Mr. Redwood: Recent representations made by the Major British Exporters Grouping were taken into account in the report submitted to the Secretary of State by the official interdepartmental working group formed at his request to advise on the Kemp review of status options for ECGD.

Mr. Shepherd: Is my hon. Friend aware of the concern felt by the group of major British exporters on the future of the project sector of ECGD, in that the international competition is much involved in utilising its own ECGD type of mechanisms? Is not the national interest involved? In view of the substantial contribution that the major British exporters make to our balance of payments, how does my hon. Friend view the future of the project sector?

Mr. Redwood: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and my noble Friend the Minister for Trade made it clear when they announced their proposals for the ECGD that the project sector would be kept separate from the insurance sector. The insurance sector is already profitable and is suitable for privatisation. The project group will remain under the Government's aegis. I accept that there is a role for such assistance to leading British exporters.

Mr. Skinner: Will the Minister confirm that the Export Credits Guarantee Department is bankrupt? Is he aware that the ECGD is supposed to help Third world countries as a sort of insurance against the lack of money that they suffer from time to time? Is not it odd that the Government, who pride themselves on their business activities, now find their insurance department in the red? On top of that, we hear today that invisibles are also invisible.

Mr. Redwood: The hon. Gentleman has it the wrong way round. The purpose of the ECGD is to offer cover for British exporters doing deals in those countries and to protect them against specified risks in return for certain premiums. Of course ECGD is not bust—it is supported by Her Majesty's Treasury and it has money from the Consolidated Fund to make sure that it can fulfil its role and carry out its remit. The hon. Gentleman is right that there has been generous support for ECGD in past years. That was necessary, given the risks that were covered and the important role played by that organisation in helping to finance British trade.

Mr. Ian Bruce: Will my hon. Friend say something about the review of the ECGD and that we would like to see a level playing field for European and worldwide trade? Surely other countries give better deals to their manufacturers and exporters. Unless we provide equal treatment for our traders, they will be at a great disadvantage, particularly as our trade is now suffering and needs a boost. Will my hon. Friend give an assurance that the ECGD will continue to back British industry?

Mr. Redwood: The ECGD has to conduct its policy within the framework of the GATT disciplines and of the European Community policy against state aid. If my hon. Friend has evidence of unrealistically high levels of state support by competitor countries I should be interested to see it, as would the European Commission, which is currently conducting an inquiry into the general issue of state aid. Of course, Britain does not wish to be undercut by other countries abusing state aids, but the British Government believe that the disciplines within the European Community and GATT should be strengthened to avoid an expensive and damaging trade war by escalating subsidies in that way.

National Economic Development Council

12. **Mr. Roy Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he last met the director-general of the National Economic Development Council; and what was discussed.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: My Department has frequent contacts with the director-general of NEDO and his staff on a wide range of business matters and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State looks forward to continuing those when he chairs the council on 4 April.

Mr. Hughes: Has the Minister discussed with the director general Britain's disastrous balance of trade figures, which show a £14·4 billion deficit with the EC for 1989? Did the Government consider a joint approach to the Chancellor of the Exchequer suggesting that an interest rate of more than 15 per cent. is hardly conducive to increasing trade and investment and thus reducing that tremendous deficit?

Mr. Hogg: I am sure that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will wish to talk about exports because he will find the position rather encouraging. In the three months to January 1990, excluding erratics and oil, the volume of exports was up 4 per cent. over the previous three months and by no less than 11 per cent. on the previous year. Those are encouraging figures. I am also pleased to note that between January last year and January this year unemployment in the constituency of the hon. Member for Newport, East (Mr. Hughes) has fallen by 22 per cent.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: What does my hon. Friend think that the prospects of the British economy would be if we renationalised most of our industries, increased income tax and national insurance, put a levy on training and increased corporation tax, all of which are policies that have been put forward by the Opposition?

Mr. Hogg: Experience has shown that the Labour party has not a clue how to manage the economy. Two things would happen. First, the competitiveness of British industry would plummet—let us not forget that the competitiveness of British industry plummeted by 25 per cent. when the Labour party was in office. Secondly, inflation would escalate—let us not forget either that it reached a high point of 26 per cent. or thereabouts in August 1975. That would be the inevitable consequences of the Labour party's policy.

Mr. Cabom: I hope that if the director general ever meets the Minister he will get more sense out of him than we do. That apart, can the Minister say whether there will be discussions about the economy of the west midlands? As my hon. Friend said, the level of manufacturing investment has fallen and there has been a 70 per cent. fall

in apprenticeships in the engineering industry from 1979 to date. That is a serious problem for the engine of the British economy—the midlands—so what does the Minister intend to do about it?

Mr. Hogg: The director general might be a little upset by the hon. Gentleman's offensive words. As usual, the Labour party has got it wrong. The west midlands has been extremely prosperous and is the chief magnet for inward investment. As we are discussing the west midlands, I shall mention manufactured exports, which rose by 3·5 per cent. in the past three months. That is jolly good news and it is a pity that the hon. Gentleman did not refer to that.

Sir Ian Lloyd: May I divert my hon. Friend's attention to a more fundamental matter? Has he discussed with the National Economic Development Council the acute and dangerous dependence on the Japanese semi-conductor industry, not only in this country but in western Europe and America? If not, will he show the NEDC the recent advisory report to the President of the United States, highlighting the grave consequences if that dependence is not reduced?

Mr. Hogg: I have not discussed the matter with the director-general, but I may find an appropriate occasion to do so, as I would welcome his views on the European programmes that we have in place, particularly on this matter. I think that they are the proper way forward and I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his support of them.

Advice Centres

13. **Mr. Michael J. Martin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what funding he proposes to give citizens advice bureaux and consumer advice centres for 1990-91.

Mr. Forth: My Department does not provide funds specifically for consumer advice centres or directly to citizens advice bureaux. Details of the DTI grant in aid for the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux and Citizens Advice Scotland in 1990-91 will not be available until after the Chancellor's annual statement on 20 March.

Mr. Martin: That is a very disappointing reply, given that the Government's policy is to keep interest rates high. He will know that many thousands of families are in a desperate situation because of mortage rates. Banks and other lending societies are giving easy credit and the only bodies people can turn to are the advice bureaux. In view of the Government's policies, ought not the Government at least to consider financing those organisations?

Mr. Forth: No, because since 1945 the system has been —correctly, I believe—that the responsibility for funding bureaux at local level lies principally with local authorities. We very generously finance the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux in London and Citizens Advice Scotland in Edinburgh to such an extent that Government funding has more than doubled in real terms over the past 10 years. It is worth noting that advice from the financial institutions, to those who seek it, is increasingly available from the private sector. We encourage that and think it right, and we look for the tendency to increase in the future.

Mr. Wells: Will my hon. Friend ensure that the advice given by citizens advice bureaux is non-political, and that the money spent by the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux is not kept at the centre to promote politically-oriented advice?

Mr. Forth: My hon. Friend voices an anxiety which I know is shared by many. It is legitimate when considerable sums of taxpayers' money—£9 million or £10 million per year—is given to an organisation such as the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux. I think and hope that those involved with the work of CABs are aware of the worries that my hon. Friend has expressed— *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Member for Glasgow, Hillhead (Mr. Galloway) has not been called to ask a supplementary question.

Mr. Forth: My hon. Friend seems to have touched a raw nerve among Opposition Members. I do not know what they are trying to conceal by their shouting and barracking, but I hope that the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux feels that it has nothing to conceal.

Mr. Loyden: Does the Minister accept that many people will note what he and his hon. Friend the Member for Hertford and Stortford (Mr. Wells) have said about the citizens advice bureaux, which exist to represent the interests of their clients whatever the Government in power? If the national association is being seen as another Marxist cell, we have reached a point where few people will take seriously what the Government say on these issues.

Mr. Forth: Methinks the hon. Gentleman doth protest a little too much. Everyone will wish to examine his words carefully as they were certainly not the words that I used.

Mr. Favell: Does my hon. Friend agree that in towns and cities such as Stockport, which are well served with citizens advice bureaux, it is an utter waste of money to set up a welfare rights unit on the community charge?

Mr. Forth: My hon. Friend is as assiduous as ever in drawing the attention of the House to what is going on in his constituency. He may wish to draw the same matters to the attention of the community charge payers of Stockport, who will wish to take a view at the local elections.

Industry Council

14. **Mr. Graham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what matters he expects to discuss at the next meeting of the EEC Industry Council.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The next meeting of the EC Industry Council will be held on 28 May. It is provisionally scheduled to discuss audiovisual matters, industrial targeting in electronics, small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) Participation in Community research and development programmes and SME access to public procurement.

Moreover, as the hon. Gentleman is perhaps aware, there was also a meeting yesterday of the Industry Council, which discussed automobiles, shipbuilding, textiles, footwear, biotechnology and mining policy.

Mr. Graham: Is the Minister aware of the European study, which stated that the steel industry has a bright five years ahead of it? Will the hon. Gentleman stop procastinating about the Scottish steel industry and give it his full support to ensure that it takes part in that bright future and that steel workers who have given their all to this country remain in full employment?

Mr. Hogg: My advice to the hon. Gentleman is that he should not lead with his chins but reflect more carefully before he asks questions. British steelmaking is among the most productive and profitable in the European Community. Incidentally, I always take it well from hon. Members if they preface their remarks by telling us by how much unemployment has fallen in their constituencies in the past 12 months. The hon. Gentleman did not do that, but I will tell the House that in his constituency it has fallen by 21 per cent.

Mr. Allason: When my hon. Friend attends the EEC Industry Council, will he raise the issue of artificial obstacles to exports to Japan? Recently, a confectionery firm in the west country was required to obtain certificates from Harwell for each item of confectionery certifying that each item was not radioactive. There was also a requirement at the trade fair in Japan sponsored by the DTI demanding that the firm display a large sign over its stall stating that the items on show were not fit for human consumption and would be destroyed after the fair. Will my hon. Friend draw attention to that issue please?

Mr. Hogg: I cannot guarantee to do that, but I am grateful to my hon. Friend for raising the matter. It would be helpful if he drew it to the attention of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State. We are anxious for the Japanese to admit yet more British products into Japan and, so far, we have achieved considerable success. In the past 12 months, exports to Japan have increased by about one third. In the same period, the number of passenger cars imported into Japan from the United Kingdom increased by 75 per cent. If those figures are wrong, I will write to my hon. Friend.

Assistance to Exporters

15. **Mr. Galloway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he has any new plans to help British exporters.

Mr. Redwood: The DTI and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office offer a comprehensive set of services to British exporters in overseas markets. We already have a good range of services in major markets, such as the United States of America, the EEC and the far east. In response to a previous question about Hungary, I announced the way in which we are strengthening our services in certain eastern European markets, especially Hungary.

I am delighted to tell the House that exports increased by 15 per cent. in 1989 on 1988, although some Opposition Members seem to find that difficult to understand. Many exporters consider that sponsored trade fairs, the work of the British Overseas Trade Board and of our posts in those countries greatly assist their export efforts.

Mr. Galloway: That all sounds patriotic, but why are the Government proceeding with the dogmatic privatisation nonsense in relation to the Export Credits Guarantee Department, some parts of which are being privatised while others are left with a big question mark over their future? That is spreading uncertainty throughout the OECD and those who depend on it. Why are the Government advancing with the Union Jack in one hand and the privatisation axe in the other?

Mr. Redwood: It is because privatisation works where other systems do not. That is why it is being adopted world wide to strengthen accountability and to improve services on a broad scale. I have already explained to the House that profitable insurance services are being privatised to bring them into line with EEC requirements, so that they continue to offer a good service to British exporters. The other services that we provide, costing £138 million a year, are welcomed widely by British industry, and exporters are proving to be successful.

Mr. John Marshall: Does my hon. Friend accept that exporters need decent postal services, and that there is widespread dissatisfaction with the quality of those services? Will he encourage his ministerial colleagues to get rid of the Post Office monopoly, which has led to poor quality service?

Mr. Redwood: I am sure that, like everyone else, exporters want high quality postal services. My hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State with responsibility for postal affairs is present and no doubt has heard my hon. Friend's comments.

Ms. Quin: Does the Minister agree that the prospects for exports have not been helped by recent Government decisions—for example, the strange decision to turn down the invitation to Britain to be special guest country at the Hamburg trade fair in 1992? Will he confirm that the French accepted that invitation since we declined it? Surely the German market is important for our visible and invisible trade now that the latter is also in the red. What does the Minister intend to do to ensure that we do not lose out in that market in the future? When will he take our trade problems seriously?

Mr. Redwood: I have explained the numerous measures that the Government are taking and how the private sector is responding. That is why exports are rising and why we are doing well in many markets around the world. The hon. Lady is not listening to my answers. Many services are on offer; people are taking them up and the results are there for all to see in an improving balance of trade.

Dame Peggy Fenner: Will my hon. Friend keep one of the old plans well in mind? I refer to the assistance to exporters for appearing at trade fairs. I follow the hon. Member for Gateshead, East (Ms. Quin) in this. We are a proud island race with a wonderful boat-building capability. British marine industries are doing very well and they need that extra help so that they can appear all over the world and contest what we fear will be the rise of Japan into that new market.

Mr. Redwood: Yes, of course the Government will support British exporters, as I have already described. As my hon. Friend knows, the British Overseas Trade Board runs a system of sponsored trade fairs, which many British exporters find most welcome.

Recycling

16. **Mr. Allen McKay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he expects the Recycling Advisory Group to report on its consideration of recycling of domestic and industrial waste.

Mr. Forth: The group is expected to complete the current phase of its work before the end of May.

Mr. McKay: Given the absence of provisions for recycling in the Environmental Protection Bill, will the Minister arrange for the report to be printed in full and then immediately introduce legislation to implement that report?

Mr. Forth: No. The hon. Gentleman perhaps misunderstands the purpose of the group. It was formed last September from a wide variety of interests to advise my Department and the Government generally about the way forward on recycling. We look forward to its preliminary conclusions, but they will not be part of a formal report. However, we expect that the group will provide a major input to the preparation of the environment White Paper later this year.

Mr. Bowis: Does my hon. Friend agree that although it is excellent to encourage householders to segregate and dispose of waste so that it can be recycled, ultimately the only efficient way forward is to encourage waste disposal authorities to negotiate with recycling companies so that 90 per cent. of domestic waste can be recycled?

Mr. Forth: My hon. Friend makes a fair point, but he tempts me to prejudge and pre-empt the recycling group's conclusions, which I am reluctant to do. The group will examine precisely those aspects and I look forward to its conclusions to ascertain how we can best put such recommendations into effect.

Textiles

17. **Mr. Geoffrey Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is the current balance of trade in the textile industry.

Mr. Redwood: The latest available figures show that imports of textiles exceeded exports by £1,565 million in 1989.

Mr. Robinson: As the Minister knows, given today's dreadful news that our invisible balance is also in the red, those figures give no room for complacency. What objectives does the Minister have for the forthcoming multi-fibre arrangement talks in Europe? Will he specifically tackle the global quota requirement which the United States is establishing and which, as we all know, is simple protectionism?

Mr. Redwood: I have already covered that in answer to a previous question and in extensive debates in the House. My hon. Friend the Minister of Industry has also answered such a debate.

The hon. Gentleman should recognise that the bulk of that deficit is in trade with advanced countries not covered by the multi-fibre arrangement; indeed, £1,248 million of the adverse balance is with such countries, leaving in all probability only a little over £200 million with MFA countries. I have explained the safeguards that the EC will try to negotiate in the GATT round for the textile sector. Of course, when dumping is suspected, cases are pursued, and sometimes action is taken when those cases establish that dumping has occurred.

Mr. Bill Walker: Does my hon. Friend agree that one of the best ways to help the textile industry, and any other industry in the United Kingdom in the export market, is to ensure that we do not indulge in practices such as sanctions which prevent our exporters from benefiting from the markets of people who want to buy from us?

Mr. Redwood: My hon. Friend is right. Open trade is the best of all worlds. It creates prosperity for all who accept its disciplines. It has to be negotiated through GATT to ensure that everyone agrees with it. There are examples of great success within the textile industry. I pay tribute to the wool textile industry where exports are up 10 per cent. to record levels of £673 million in the last year and where there is a favourable balance of trade. Companies such as Courtaulds, Coats Viyella and Dawson International are among our leading exporters and I wish them every success in exporting still more.

Extradition Decision (Dublin)

3.30 pm

Mr. James Kilfedder (North Down) *(by private notice)*: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on extradition between the Irish Republic and the United Kingdom following the decision of the Supreme Court, Dublin, on 13 March.

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Peter Brooke): The Supreme Court in Dublin yesterday overruled orders for the extradition to Northern Ireland of Dermot Finucane and James Pius Clarke. Both men are convicted terrorists who escaped from the Maze prison during the mass breakout in 1983. Clarke was serving 18 years for the attempted murder of a member of the Ulster Defence Regiment and Finucane was serving 18 years for possession of firearms and ammunition. Upon their apprehension in the Republic of Ireland, extradition of both was ordered by the district court. Appeals on behalf of both men were quashed by the High Court but were yesterday upheld in the Supreme Court, their last court of appeal. The Government are deeply disappointed at that decision.

Details of the judgments, which I understand are lengthy and complex, are not yet available to us, but I believe that the main ground of appeal was that their rights under the Irish constitution would be infringed by the treatment these prisoners would be thought likely to receive in the prison system of Northern Ireland. That this was upheld by the court is both disturbing and difficult to understand. It is an unacceptable slur on the professionalism of the men and women of the Northern Ireland prison service. I shall study the full judgment as soon as it is available and will pay particular attention to the references to Northern Ireland prisons. The conditions in the Maze prison, indeed throughout the prison system in Northern Ireland, are widely regarded as among the best in Europe.

Both the British and Irish Governments have pledged themselves to ensure that effective arrangements are in place for dealing with fugitive offenders. Extradition is a vital factor in this. I remind the House that it was the Irish authorities who originally sought these extraditions on our behalf and who have continued to make strenuous efforts, at every level of their judicial system, to bring these cases to a successful conclusion.

I shall obviously also be studying the full judgment carefully to see what implications it has for other cases. It is clearly right that each case should be considered on its merits. But our principal concern, shared with the Irish Government, is that the system as a whole should work effectively, as well as fairly. We will pursue this with the Irish Government.

Mr. Kilfedder: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the Dublin Supreme Court decision yesterday causes widespread anger and dismay among the people of this country, especially the people of Northern Ireland, who have suffered death, mutilation and agony at the hands of the terrorists for 22 years? More importantly, it generates disbelief and sadness—I wish, even in the anger of this moment, to emphasise the sadness—since the United Kingdom Government constantly stresses that the Irish Republic is whole-hearted in the fight against the IRA.

Does the right hon. Gentleman agree that the decision seems to provide a bar to the extradition from the Irish Republic of terrorists who commit their atrocities either in Northern Ireland or in Great Britain, so long as those atrocities are part of their brutal campaign to bomb Northern Ireland into an all-Ireland republic?

Finally, will the Secretary of State ask his right hon. Friend the Prime Minister to arrange an urgent meeting with the Prime Minister of the Irish Republic, Mr. Haughey, to ensure that the next six wanted men will be extradited from the Irish Republic to face justice in the United Kingdom?

Mr. Brooke: I am at one with the hon. Gentleman in much of what he has said, but I should reiterate that it was the Irish authorities that brought these cases on our behalf and it was the Irish court, which is independent, that ruled in the matter. Until the judgments of the Supreme Court have been received and studied, any comment on the effect on other cases would be merely speculative. However, if the judgments affect only cases involving Maze escapees, the immediate impact will be limited, as there are at present no other such cases before the Irish courts.

Mr. James Molyneaux (Lagan Valley): Does the Secretary of State share my bewilderment over the virtual suppression in the news industry of the earlier Supreme Court ruling of 1 March, that the claim to a united Ireland is no mere aspiration but a valid legal claim? Does he agree that that judgment discredited all the assurances given in the Anglo-Irish Agreement? Does he further agree that it provided grounds for yesterday's decision by the same Supreme Court, which probably felt that, having established its legal claim without any challenge from Her Majesty's Government, it was free to argue that it could not be expected to transfer or extradite its citizens from one part of what it considered to be its territory to another part?

Mr. Brooke: I am conscious of what the right hon. Gentleman said in the earlier part of his question, and he will recall that we had the opportunity for an exchange across the Floor of the House on Monday. As to the supplement to his question, I see no basis for the assertion that the Supreme Court's decision on the Finucane and Clarke extradition case is related to the McGimpsey judgment, which concerned the constitutionality of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, or for the right hon. Gentleman's inference that in the light of that judgment, the Irish authorities could no longer extradite persons to Northern Ireland. I am aware of no evidence from yesterday's judgments to suggest that the Irish now refuse to extradite people on the grounds that they consider that they have a legal claim to Northern Ireland.

Mr. Ian Gow (Eastbourne): Is my right hon. Friend aware that the failure last year to extradite a suspected terrorist, Mr. Ryan, and the failure yesterday to extradite two convicted terrorists reveals—in the most awful way—the unsatisfactory nature of our extradition arrangements with the Republic?

Does not my right hon. Friend understand that those two whose extradition was refused yesterday are convicted terrorists who are likely to return to their terrorist organisations and maim and murder others? Will he undertake to the House that, as a matter of the highest priority, he and my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General will put forward views and proposals to

the Government of the Irish Republic on how we can achieve proper arrangements for extradition between our two countries?

Mr. Brooke: The disappointing results in the Finucane and Clarke cases yesterday, to which my hon. Friend refers must be set against the generally satisfactory working of the extradition arrangements between our two countries over the past two years. Since January 1988, 13 persons have been returned to the United Kingdom, and orders for delivery in respect of a further six persons are currently the subject of appeal proceedings before the Irish courts.

Additionally, the Irish state has successfully appealed against the decision of the district court not to order the return of a further two persons. I share my hon. Friend's disappointment at yesterday's decision, but it should be seen against a generally satisfactory working of the arrangements over the past two years.

Mr. A. E. P. Duffy (Sheffield, Attercliffe): Does the Secretary of State agree that, contrary to the reaction in some quarters of the press and of some of his hon. Friends about the future of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, the forthcoming conference is all the more desirable to enable the Irish side to discuss coolly with him the fact that the judiciary is independent of the Executive and that the Supreme Court is specifically obliged to protect the constitutional rights of citizens?

Mr. Brooke: The hon. Gentleman is right to say that the Anglo-Irish Agreement offers a valuable framework within which the two Governments can discuss issues of mutual interest and concern, such as the one that we are debating this afternoon. Once we have had the chance to examine the Supreme Court's lengthy judgment more fully, we will make our response within the framework of the agreement. We have already made our representations through the secretariat.

Rev. William McCrea (Mid-Ulster): Does the Secretary of State accept that the vast majority of people in the United Kingdom are disgusted at the failure of the southern authorities to extradite the two convicted terrorists? The judgment in the Supreme Court in Dublin has given great succour and joy to the terrorists' organisation. Can the Secretary of State understand the feeling of terror in my constituency, given that one of the terrorists was convicted of terrorising the people of my constituency along the border? What happened yesterday was another kick in the teeth for the Government.

Mr. Brooke: I have already registered our disappointment in the outcome of the case. However, we should respect the independence of the Irish judiciary in the same way that we would expect them to respect ours. *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Brooke: I draw the attention of the House to the silence of the Irish Government in the context of a judgment in the House of Lords last week.

Mr. John D. Taylor (Strangford): Is the Secretary of State aware that most people in the United Kingdom will be very disappointed by his reply to the House this afternoon? For him to say merely that he is disappointed will come as a shock to most people. He should have said that he was outraged at the Irish court's decision.

Is the Secretary of State aware that, in addition to the reason given by the Supreme Court, which he mentioned —its suspicions about warders in the Maze prison—there was an even worse reason, which has not yet been mentioned in the press? I refer to the second judgment given yesterday, by Mr. Justice Walsh in the Supreme Court. As far as extradition is concerned—we are talking about convicted IRA men, not suspects—he said:

"political exemption . . . should not apply to persons charged with politically motivated offences when the objective of such offences was to secure the ultimate unity of the country."

So long as people kill outside Northern Ireland and so long as they do so in the interests of a united Ireland, it is allowed by Mr. Justice Walsh. That is the situation under the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

Does the Secretary of State recall that, when he and his colleagues tried to gain support in this House for the Anglo-Agreement, the headlines said, "It will bring normality into extradition"? Does he believe that normality exists in extradition?

Mr. Brooke: The right hon. Gentleman referred to the language that I used today. Yesterday, my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister referred to the sense of outrage at the implicit slur, which played a part in the judgment, on the Northern Ireland prison service. I endorse that, and referred to it in my statement.

The right hon. Gentleman referred to the judgment of Mr. Justice Walsh. I was aware of that aspect of the case. We shall examine that aspect of the judgment, together with all others, to see whether it moves the law forward from the Dominic McGlinchey case.

Mr. William Cash (Stafford): Does my right hon. Friend agree that there is considerable disquiet in Eire about the decision, that Mr. Alan Dukes has expressed his view on the subject and that we have every reason to question how the judiciary arrived at its decision?

Mr. Brooke: I am aware that politicians in the Republic of Ireland have made comments about the case. I especially noted that they recommended that it should be handled at an early stage within the framework of the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

Mr. Gerald Bermingham (St. Helens, South): Does the Secretary of State agree that, until we know the raison d'etre of the judgment, we cannot make constructive comments? Would not it be wiser to wait until we know the reasons for the decision? Discussions may then take place with the Irish Government about possible improvements to the existing state of affairs.

Mr. Brooke: I hesitate to say this to the hon. Gentleman, but I am answering a private notice question. I was not volunteering a statement.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I remind the House that a private notice question is an extension of Question Time. I shall call two more hon. Members from each side, and then we must move on.

Mr. Ivan Lawrence (Burton): Since it is clear what reasons were given by the Supreme Court in Ireland yesterday, and since the court was dealing with convicted terrorists, does not it sound suspiciously like an excuse for a court to do something that it would otherwise be wrong

[Mr. Ivan Lawrence]

for a court to do? If terrorists get the impression that courts of law are leaning towards their side, what chance have we of defeating terrorism?

Mr. Brooke: My hon. and learned Friend is right to enter that consideration. We would regard with horror any comment that encouraged murder in any part of the world.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): While I personally found the decision odd and unhelpful in the fight against terrorism, would not it be unfortunate if a judicial decision in the Irish Republic—the Secretary of State stressed that it was a judicial decision—led to a state of hysteria in the House of Commons? Will the Secretary of State be frank enough to admit that some Members of Parliament—we know who they are—will do anything to create the maximum ill will between the Irish Republic and this country?

Mr. Brooke: I do not think that anything approaching an air of hysteria exists in the House. Hon. Members have expressed their understandable concerns about a decision which they found disappointing.

Mr. W. Benyon (Milton Keynes): May I follow the hon. Member for North Down (Mr. Kilfedder), and emphasise the sadness caused by the Court's decision? This decision and a previous decision made by the Supreme Court seem to render null and void article 1 of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, which will have to be reconsidered.

Mr. Brooke: I think that my hon. Friend is confusing the particular circumstances of this case with the other case to which he alluded. But I join my hon. Friend and the hon. Member for North Down (Mr. Kilfedder) in saying that there are unfortunate aspects to this case which we shall pursue through the framework of the agreement.

Mr. Kevin McNamara (Kingston upon Hull, North): We share the surprise and disappointment at yesterday's decision of the Supreme Court in the Republic of Ireland. But to echo what the Prime Minister said in the House yesterday—on the day when a politician could institute prosecutions, the rule of law would end. I am sure that the right hon. Lady would support the Supreme Court's desire to remain impartial, detached and free from all political or diplomatic pressures in its objective determination of the issues involved. However, the court's decision is still very disappointing.

Will the Secretary of State confirm that, until the announcement of the court's decision, arrangements had been set in train for handing over the two men at the border? Secondly, can the Criminal Law Jurisdiction Act 1976 be invoked to bring proceedings against the two men in the Republic?

Thirdly, on the advice that the right hon. Gentleman has now received, does the decision apply only to this case or to cases that were decided before the Irish Republic incorporated into its domestic law the convention against terrorism? When the case was presented before the Supreme Court, were any steps taken to try to contradict the evidence produced to support the appellants who based their case on Chief Justice Hutton's decision in the Pettigrew case? Was evidence produced to show how much the Irish prison service has improved over the years?

Let me take this opportunity to pay tribute to the Irish prison service for doing a job that none of us would undertake willingly. [HON. MEMBERS: "Northern Ireland prison service?"] One would pay tribute to the work of the men and women of the prison service, whether in Ireland or the rest of the United Kingdom, because none of us would want to do that job.

Finally, will the Secretary of State confirm that both Governments still regard extradition as an important weapon in the fight against terrorism and that he will raise those matters at the next Anglo-Irish Conference? If it did not exist, decisions such as this one of the Irish Supreme Court would more than justify the Anglo-Irish Conference and the decision to establish it under the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

Mr. Brooke: The hon. Gentleman's first question related to yesterday's arrangements for handing over the two prisoners at the border. He is perfectly correct—it was visible to everyone on television—that massive arrangements had been made on both sides of the border for the reception of the prisoners. In that respect, the court's judgment was a surprise.

Extra-territorial prosecution would be a matter for my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General, but he would consider that only after having had the opportunity to study the judgment in full. The hon. Gentleman asked also about the effect of the convention on the suppression of terrorism. That would depend specifically on the particular charge in each case, and one would have to examine it on a case-by-case basis.

The Government provided substantial evidence to the Irish courts on the central issue of the behaviour of the Northern Ireland prison service, not least to the effect that any such treatment would be a crime in the jurisdiction of the North. The hon. Gentleman's final question was about the importance of extradition in the joint arrangements. We have discussed that matter before in the Anglo-Irish Conference and I confidently expect that we shall discuss it again at our next meeting.

Points of Order

3.53 pm

Ms. Joan Ruddock (Lewisham, Deptford): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. At about 1 pm today, the *Evening Standard* reported a horrifying near-collision between two underground trains at King's Cross. This information calls into question the one-person operation on the tube and has revealed serious signal faults.

Mr. Ivor Stanbrook (Orpington): This is not a point of order.

Ms. Ruddock: The information came to us when the House was sitting and prevented me from applying to you, Mr. Speaker, for a private notice question. The matter is of such great concern to my constituents and to the constituents of all hon. Members representing London constituencies that I must ask whether you have any information that the Secretary of State intends to make a statement to the House on this matter, which could have been another horrifying tragedy at King's Cross.

Mr. Speaker: The whole House is anxious about such accidents, but fortunately there was no injury to people in this case. I have received no information from the Government, but I am sure that those on the Front Bench heard the hon. Lady.

Mr. Geoffrey Dickens (Littleborough and Saddleworth): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Have not we today been hoist by our own petard? Was it not the much-praised prison service of Northern Ireland that allowed the prisoners to escape?

Mr. Speaker: That is not a point of order. Furthermore, I do not know what a petard is.

Mr. Norman Buchan (Paisley, South): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I have given you notice of an extremely important matter. The Standing Committee that is considering the Broadcasting Bill has now reached its 36th sitting. I apologise for not raising the matter earlier, but I was given the courage to do so when I noticed that the Committee that considered the legislation that became the Aircraft and Shipbuilding Industries Act 1977 had 58 sittings before the matter of its hybridity was raised.

I want you to consider, Mr. Speaker, whether the Broadcasting Bill is hybrid and should follow another course of action, such as a referral to examiners or to a Joint Select Committee. The accepted definition of hybridity is that of Mr. Speaker Hylton-Foster, who said that a hybrid Bill was

"a public bill which affects a particular private interest in a manner different from the private interest of other persons or bodies of the same category or class."

That relates to the problems that have arisen in Committee.

The matter was brought to our attention when the Government tabled new clause 42, which was entitled

"Duty to provide advance information about programmes".

It affects only two journals in Britain. I refer again to Mr. Speaker Hylton-Foster's words:

"other persons or bodies of the same category or class".

The journals are the *TV Times* and *Radio Times*. The nature of their copyright possession on scheduling of programmes was to be changed. Without that element of control, the parent ownership of the *Radio Times* was left at the mercy of other competitors who could reschedule accordingly. Furthermore, the basic business of the *TV Times* and the *Radio Times*, which are both private companies—one is owned by BBC Enterprises Limited and the other by Reed International—was strongly affected.

My second reason for believing that the Broadcasting Bill is a hybrid Bill is——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman must not go into detail about what is going on in a Committee. That does not concern the House.

Mr. Buchan: I am giving a truly factual account of an amendment to the Bill. I am not concerned with what has happened in the Committee but what has been incorporated in the Bill.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman kindly gave me notice of the matter, and I have been able to consider it in some detail. I can help the hon. Gentleman and the House. I believe that the new clause and the amendment to which he has referred have not yet been disposed of in Committee. It is not out of order for a Committee to make amendments that make a Bill hybrid, but I should not wish to make a ruling on such a matter before the Bill has been reported.

Mr. Buchan: In that case, I shall stick to the second ground why I believe that the Bill is hybrid. I have also given you notice of that in my letter.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I have told the hon. Gentleman that I cannot rule on the matter until the Committee has reported.

Mr. Buchan: I understand that, but, according to the precedent, which I examined with care, the earlier such an issue was raised, the better. On the Aircraft and Shipbuilding Industries Act, 1977, the apology was begged for 58 sittings and I have already apologised for 36 sittings. The matter should have been raised on Second Reading, but it came to our attention only when new clause 42 was tabled.

Mr. Speaker: What, then, is the hon. Gentleman asking me to do?

Mr. Buchan: I am asking you, Mr. Speaker, to undertake to report, presumably tomorrow, to the House, as happened on the Aircraft and Shipbuilding Industries Act 1977, on whether you think that there is an element of hybridity in the Bill. If there is, a course of action other than proceeding with the Bill in its present form is then open to you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I cannot undertake to do that tomorrow but I shall certainly undertake to do that with the greatest care when the Bill has been reported to the House in the usual way.

Mr. Buchan: Would it not be more sensible and in the interests of everyone if that could be rectified? That is why I should like to proceed and it is important that I should proceed——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The debate has not yet been concluded. As I understand it, the new clause is currently under discussion. It has not yet been disposed of by the Committee.

Mr. Buchan: What I am trying to make clear is that I have two distinct grounds. This having been brought to my attention yesterday, I examined the Bill to deal with the second ground, which is——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I cannot rule upon it now. It is not in my power to do so. I must wait until the Bill has been reported. That is the moment when I shall look upon it with great care. If the House agrees to the timetable motion, our debate today must end at midnight. It is taking a lot of time to deal with a matter that I really cannot rule upon.

Mr. Buchan: I am proceeding according to the precedent set when the previous Bill was dealt with. I will have to find other means of drawing attention to the peculiar case of Mr. Murdoch, who is being exempted from the operations of the Bill. If that does not create hybridity, I do not know what does. We are now told that the Bill will not apply to one individual, although it affects everyone else. The Minister said that it was not for the Government to pull the plug on a venture that was already running and had cost Mr. Murdoch vast amounts of money. It therefore also means—this is why it is so serious——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I honestly think that the hon. Gentleman has asked me now to pre-empt a decision which I shall have to consider with the greatest care at the appropriate moment. I cannot do that in the middle of the Bill. The hon. Gentleman is taking time from other hon. Members.

Mr. Buchan: If the Bill is hybrid, this is the exact moment to raise the matter, so that it does not go through any more useless consideration by the Committee and we can follow the proper procedure. There is a different procedure for hybridity. That is why I must make the case to you, Mr. Speaker, to see whether you can prevent the Government from wasting their time and the House from wasting its time in Committee and later on Report. It would take me two minutes to finish, so that you could consider the matter.

The position of Mr. Murdoch and his holdings—above all, Sky Television—has apparently been exempted from the Bill, which means a lifting for him of those barriers to people possessing other groups and bodies. The maximum 20 per cent. holding rule for those who have other press holdings does not apply to Mr. Murdoch. He owns 35 per cent. of the national press of this country. The requirement to be a British citizen or a citizen of the EC will not be a barrier to Mr. Murdoch and Sky Television. He is an American. This puts him in a different position from all others who may compete for the licence. The Bill is hybrid. We should examine it so that we will no longer waste time on what is, in any case, a pretty inadequate Bill, and can treat it in the proper way.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Robin Corbett (Birmingham, Erdington): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: There can be nothing further to it, because I have already made a ruling that I shall look at it with the greatest care when the Bill has been reported.

Mr. William Ross (Londonderry, East): The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland told the House a few moments ago that he had not volunteered a statement on the issue which was raised in the private notice question. Surely the matter is of such importance that we should have a statement, if not from the right hon. Gentleman, certainly from the Attorney-General. Have you any information, Mr. Speaker, about whether he will make such a statement? Furthermore, often when the business for the week is given on a Thursday, we are told that the necessary documents such as those relating to the EC will be printed in the *Official Report* so that we will have an opportunity to study the documents before the debate comes up. Could that general policy be followed before any statement is made or any debate takes place in the House regarding the two judgements of the Supreme Court in the Irish Republic, so that all hon. Members could study the judgments and form their opinions on them?

Mr. Speaker: I am sure that the hon. Gentleman's remarks will have been heard by those on the Government Front Bench. I granted today's private notice question, but I have no knowledge of a statement.

Mr. Andrew Faulds (Warley, East): On a matter of mutual assistance, Mr. Speaker. Would you, as an ex-military man, care to know what a petard is? I feel sure that the hon. Member for Littleborough and Saddleworth (Mr. Dickens) has no idea. Would you, Mr. Speaker, be interested to know?

Mr. Speaker: As a matter of fact, I would—but perhaps the hon. Gentleman will tell me later over a cup of tea.

London Local Government

4.5 pm

Mr. Simon Hughes (Southwark and Bermondsey): I beg to move,

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the law to enable parish and community councils to be created within Greater London.

In one respect, London is uniquely disadvantaged. Wales, Scotland and the rest of England all have, wholly or in part, parish local community councils. Although London is based on the parish structure, as is the rest of the country, it cannot have parish councils.

When local government reform at a lower level last took place 20 years ago, there was a series of mergers between small local authorities, to form much larger authorities. Subsequently, we saw the removal of the countywide authorities—so in London, below central Government, there is only one level of lower local government—borough councils. There are 32 of them, plus the City of London. Below them there is nothing, and communities as large as my own of 215,000 people have no local form of assembly, democratic representation or decision-making. They have no true local authority.

There is provision for parishes to be created elsewhere than London. Under the Local Government Act 1972, a procedure exists for the creation of parishes other than in London. To my own knowledge, at least three attempts have been made in this House and in another place since 1972, on a cross-party basis, to remedy the disadvantage that London has suffered since the abolition of the smaller borough councils 25 years ago. The late Graham Page introduced the Urban Parishes Bill in 1978, and in another place Lord McIntosh of Haringey introduced in 1984 the Urban Parishes Bill, which, after completing all its stages in the Lords, fell in this House only because it came here for its Second Reading towards the end of the Session.

In 1987, my hon. Friend the Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton), with support from hon. Members of four other parties, introduced the Directly Elected Neighbourhood Councils Bill to allow places such as London elsewhere in urban Britain to have, at the behest of ordinary people, the opportunity to establish the parish councils that people elsewhere take for granted.

The Bill will allow the process of creating parish councils to be instigated by the people in the areas that those councils would represent. London, like many other cities, is a collection of villages, not one unbroken metropolis. When people are asked where they live, they answer Willesden, Bromley, Bow or Walworth. They do not say that they live in Haringey or Brent. The place in which they live is much smaller than the boundaries of its borough council. People associate themselves with ancient communities having names that have come down through the ages and have their own histories and established traditions.

I seek to give the people of London the opportunity to petition the Boundary Commission for England, so that it may discuss with local people and their local authority the appropriate boundaries for a parish council—and then, in a short, time-limited period, make a proposal for a precise area in which parish council elections could take place.

The Bill would allow a proper democratic structure for representing the views of the local community to the borough council or to other authorities. There is no doubt that it would enhance community spirit, participation and pride. It would be an advantage, because some decisions could be made at the lowest possible level. It is certainly needed to counteract the remoteness and alienation that many people feel from local authorities throughout London.

There are very low turnouts at many local elections, largely because people neither know the candidates nor feel that the authority is near enough to be likely to do anything for them. As a matter of justice, if other places can have parish councils, I do not understand why we should not have them, too. Would it not be a good thing to build into our democratic structure the possibility of electing people to councils that represent the places where people feel most naturally at home?

What would such councils be able to do? They would be able to take part in planning consultation and possibly make devolved planning decisions. They would be able to provide community facilities such as community halls and street lighting and improve parks and benches. They might be able to take on the local management of schools and be the forum for police authorities and for the funding of community groups and act as a consultative network between the higher borough authority and the local community.

How would they be funded? They would not need to raise any money, but otherwise, like all other parish councils, they would precept a penny or two which the borough council would collect and they would be able to spend. All sorts of places would suddenly have the possibility of having recognised democratic community authority.

The Government have said that they do not receive much correspondence requesting that such councils be set up. That is what the Minister said when a similar Bill was last debated in the other place. I am in no doubt that, if people believed that they could have parish councils in London, the establishment of those councils would have enormous support. Certainly, in the boroughs of Bermondsey and Southwark, people would like them tomorrow, because they do not feel that they can relate to local government. I believe that parish councils would be as popular in London as the poll tax is currently unpopular, and that three out of four people would probably support them.

People would ask whether such councils would be just another layer of bureaucracy. The answer is no, because most parish councils have one part-time clerk, and that is often an honorary post. They do not have their own buildings or offices; they work out of a community building or community hall. There is no need for them to be bureaucratic or in any way to have the disadvantages of government at a higher level. They need not even be political bodies. Many parish councils have people elected as independents because they are known and respected and willing to give their time to the community.

Of course political parties would not be banned, but they would not have to take a predominant role at that level of local government.

On all other occasions when such a Bill has been introduced, it has received widespread support. I believe that good local government requires real local government. It is time to bring to an end the anomaly that London cannot have the parish councils which the rest of the country enjoys.

Question put and agreed to.

[Mr. Simon Hughes]

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Simon Hughes, Sir Rhodes Boyson and Mr. Ken Livingstone.

London Local Government

Mr. Simon Hughes accordingly presented a Bill to amend the law to enable parish and community councils to be created within Greater London: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 27 April and to be printed. [Bill 99.]

National Health Service and Community Care Bill (Allocation of Time)

4.14 pm

Mr. Speaker: We now come to the guillotine motion on the National Health Service and Community Care Bill. I have received three manuscript amendments—two in the name of the hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) and one in the name of the hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer)—and I have selected them all.

Mr. Robin Cook (Livingston): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. It may be for the convenience of the House if I explain that I intend to move the second, not the first, of my amendments as I understand that we can divide on only one of them.

4.15 pm

The Secretary of State for Health (Mr. Kenneth Clarke): I beg to move,

That the following provisions shall apply to the remaining proceedings on the Bill:

Report and Third Reading

1.—(1) The remaining proceedings on consideration and Third Reading of the Bill shall be completed in two allotted days.

(2) The proceedings on consideration shall be brought to a conclusion at midnight on the first allotted day.

(3) The proceedings on Third Reading shall be brought to a conclusion three hours after their commencement.

(4) Standing Order No. 80 (Business Committee) shall not apply.

Dilatory Motions

2. No dilatory Motion with respect to, or in the course of, proceedings on the Bill shall be made on an allotted day except by a member of the Government, and the Question on any such Motion shall be put forthwith.

Extra time on allotted days

3.—(1) On an allotted day, paragraph (1) of Standing Order No. 14 (Exempted business) shall apply to the proceedings on the Bill, but on the first allotted day it shall apply only for two hours after Ten o'clock.

(2) On the first allotted day, any period during which proceedings on the Bill may be proceeded with after Ten o'clock under paragraph (7) of Standing Order No. 20 (Adjournment on specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration) shall be in addition to the said period of two hours.

(3) If the first allotted day is one to which a Motion for the adjournment of the House under Standing Order No. 20 stands over from an earlier day, a period of time equal to the duration of the proceedings upon that Motion shall be added to the said period of two hours.

Private business

4. Any private business which has been set down for consideration at Seven o'clock on an allotted day shall, instead of being considered as provided by Standing Orders, be considered at the conclusion of the proceedings on the Bill on that day, and paragraph (1) of Standing Order No. 14 (Exempted business) shall apply to the private business for a period of three hours from the conclusion of the proceedings on the Bill or, if those proceedings are concluded before Ten o'clock, for a period equal to the time elapsing between Seven o'clock and the conclusion of those proceedings.

Estimates

5. Proceedings on the Bill or on any private business taken under paragraph 4 of this Order shall not be interrupted for the purposes of Standing Order No. 53 (Questions on voting on estimates etc.) and if on an allotted day Mr. Speaker is directed by that Standing Order (as modified by the Order of the House [12th March]) to put questions at Ten o'clock he

shall put those questions at Ten o'clock or at the conclusion of the proceedings on the private business, whichever is the later.

Conclusion of proceedings

6.—(1) For the purpose of bringing to a conclusion any proceedings which are to be brought to a conclusion at a time appointed by this Order and which have not previously been brought to a conclusion, Mr. Speaker shall forthwith put (so far as they are applicable and notwithstanding any Order of the House relating to the order in which the Bill is to be considered) the following Questions (but no others)—

(a) any Question already proposed from the Chair;

(b) any Question necessary to bring to a decision a Question so proposed (including, in the case of a new Clause or new Schedule which has been read a second time, the Question that the Clause or Schedule be added to the Bill);

(c) the Question that such of the amendments 139 to 141, 158, 256, 275, 276 and 341 as remain to be made be made to the Bill;

(d) the Question that the new Schedule (amendment 269) be added to the Bill;

(e) the Question that all remaining amendments standing in the name of a member of the government be made to the Bill;

(f) any other Question necessary for the disposal of the business to be concluded;

and on a Motion so made for a new Clause or a new Schedule, Mr. Speaker shall put only the Question that the Clause or Schedule be added to the Bill.

(2) Proceedings under sub-paragraph (1) above shall not be interrupted under any Standing Order relating to the sittings of the House.

(3) If an allotted day is one on which a Motion for the adjournment of the House under Standing Order No. 20 (Adjournment on specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration) would, apart from this Order, stand over to Seven o'clock—

(a) that Motion shall stand over until the conclusion of any proceedings on the Bill which, under this Order, are to be brought to a conclusion at or before that time;

(b) the bringing to a conclusion of any proceedings on the Bill which, under this Order, are to be brought to a conclusion after that time shall be postponed for a period equal to the duration of the proceedings on that Motion.

(4) If an allotted day is one to which a Motion for the adjournment of the House under Standing Order No. 20 stands over from an earlier day, the bringing to a conclusion of any proceedings on the Bill which under this Order are to be brought to a conclusion on that day shall be postponed for a period equal to the duration of the proceedings on that Motion.

Supplemental orders

(7).—(1) The proceedings on any Motion made in the House by a member of the Government for varying or supplementing the provisions of this Order (including anything which might have been the subject of a report of the Business Committee) shall, if not previously concluded, be brought to a conclusion one hour after they have been commenced, and paragraph (1) of Standing Order No. 14 (Exempted business) shall apply to the proceedings.

(2) If on an allotted day on which any proceedings on the Bill are to be brought to a conclusion at a time appointed by this Order the House is adjourned, or the sitting is suspended, before that time no notice shall be required of a Motion made at the next sitting by a member of the Government for varying or supplementing the provisions of this Order.

Saving

8. Nothing in this Order shall

(a) prevent any proceedings to which the Order applies from being taken or completed earlier than is required by the Order; or

(b) prevent any business (whether on the Bill or not) from being proceeded with on any day after the completion of all such proceedings on the Bill as are to be taken on that day.

Recommittal

9.—(1) References in this Order to proceeding on consideration or proceedings on Third Reading include references to proceedings at those stages, respectively, for, on or in consequence of, recommittal.

(2) On an allotted day no debate shall be permitted on any Motion to recommit the Bill (whether as a whole or otherwise), and Mr. Speaker shall put forthwith any Question necessary to dispose of the Motion, including the Question on any amendment moved to the Question.

Interpretation

10. In this Order—

"allotted day" means any day (other than a Friday) on which the Bill is put down as first Government Order of the Day, provided that a Motion for allotting time to the proceedings on the Bill to be taken on that day either has been agreed on a previous day, or is set down for consideration on that day;

"the Bill" means the National Health Service and Community Care Bill.

My right hon. and hon. Friends and I deeply regret the necessity to move a timetable motion given that the House has made such reasonable and rapid progress so far. There is so much interest in both parts of the Bill that, in the interests of Parliament and of both parties, it would have been an extremely good idea to have continued on a satisfactory basis until the end of the Bill's passage through the Commons and thus to have allowed hon. Members on both sides of the House to air all the matters that they wished to air.

It has to be conceded that we were well on course to make that agreed progress until the events of last night. I believe that my desire to avoid a guillotine if we possibly could was amply demonstrated by the Government's behaviour. Hon. Members will recall that we began by making two days available for the Second Reading debate. That is not unprecedented, I know, but only major legislation receives such treatment, which involves the concession of a day of Government time. The Bill then entered its Committee stage—we discussed it in part this morning—during which, we are all agreed, reasonable progress was made. We succeeded in debating an enormous number of amendments covering provisions from the beginning to the end of the Bill and allowing us a full discussion. We then returned to the Floor of the House.

I acknowledged this morning that the Bill's progress was facilitated by the agreement made through the usual channels—the best accompaniment to legislation—giving rise to an agreed timetable. We played by the rules on that agreed timetable. I always think that when the Government agree a timetable, we concede to the Opposition the whip hand when it comes to deciding how much time is devoted to each part. As the hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) said this morning, the Opposition were keen to devote four days to the community care part of the Bill. We reached the end of the Committee stage in a highly satisfactory fashion, but thereafter something appears to have gone wrong—[HON. MEMBERS: "You."] No, what went wrong was revealed this morning. We had an agreement that we would have two whole days for Report and half a day for Third Reading, which again was a generous provision of time.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Clarke: I shall give way later, although I should remind hon. Members that the more time we spend on the guillotine motion, the less time we shall have on Report.

[Mr. Clarke]

The hon. Member for Livingston revealed this morning the reason for the sudden change in our hitherto smooth progress. It is true that I had said in public what was factually correct—that we had made smooth, steady, satisfactory progress on the Bill. I repeated my view—I shall do so again before I end my remarks—that one thing that has sped us along is that, although the detail of the Bill is extremely complicated, much of the political debate on it conceals wide agreement that the Health Service needs better financial management, quality control and many of the reforms that the Government propose. My remarks were reported in such a way as to cause a certain amount of sensitivity on the Opposition Front Bench. From time to time, we all read press cuttings that we would not necessarily have written ourselves or have had written on our behalf, but it is no good our looking at press cuttings like a debutante actress who is nervous about her write-up.

When my comments that we were making smooth, steady and speedy progress on the Bill were drawn to the attention of the hon. Member for Livingston—in shadow Cabinet, I believe, which was perhaps an unfortunate setting—he reacted rather strongly. I shall not labour the point because I do not want to take up Opposition time, but in my opinion the Opposition made a misjudgment yesterday and decided to hold a machismo performance of the traditional kind on the Floor of the House, thereby reversing the extremely sensible conduct of debate in Committee. Given the agreement that we were to have two days on Report and half a day on Third Reading, they thereby put at risk the control over debate that they had won for themselves in Committee.

Mr. Alex Salmond (Banff and Buchan): The Minister's defence of this restriction on debate rests on the fact that some agreement between Front-Bench spokesmen has not been kept. I understand that the Labour party denies that, but I shall let it speak for itself. How does the Minister's point cover the many parties in the House that are not covered by formal arrangements through the usual channels; and how does he defend stopping contributions by my colleagues and me, who are not covered by the agreements that the Minister claims have been broken?

Mr. Clarke: I welcome the hon. Gentleman to our proceedings 130 hours into their duration. I was here for part of the Scottish debate in the small hours of this morning and I cannot recall whether he was present——

Mr. Salmond: I was.

Mr. Clarke: I congratulate the hon. Gentleman. The fact is that the agreement, although conducted through the usual channels, provided ample time for discussion of all the issues in the Bill. Had we proceeded last night as we did in Committee we should by now be well advanced in consideration of the Report stage of the Bill, without disruption of the timetable of the House——

Mrs. Alice Mahon (Halifax) *rose*——

Mr. Charles Kennedy (Ross, Cromarty and Skye) *rose*——

Mr. Clarke: I shall give way once more and then I shall give an illustration of what I think happened last night to justify this motion.

Mrs. Mahon: The Minister has said that he thinks that we were highly satisfied with the Committee's proceedings. I draw his attention to at least three amendments that I moved—one on enrolled nurses who cannot train; another on the lack of protection during staff transfers; and a third on care plans, about which the Minister for Health said that she was not particularly interested in doing anything that might harm the private sector. Far from being satisfied, I was bloody mad on all three counts.

Mr. Clarke: The hon. Lady made it clear on a number of occasions in Committee that we had unfortunately failed to satisfy her with our replies. My point is that she had ample opportunity to deploy her arguments, which were considered and given reasonable replies. We could have resumed those sorts of exchanges today—and we have, but in a very slow and protracted fashion.

Mr. Kennedy: I do not think that the Secretary of State's recollection of the Committee is accurate. We hit the buffers in the House last night because we reached, on a large-scale, the issue of income support for people in residential homes, and saw a repeat performance of what happened in Committee. Conservative Member after Conservative Member stood up to disagree with the Government's position. That was what took up so much time and it is why the debate ran so late last night. If the right hon. and learned Gentleman is looking to apportion blame, he need only look behind him at his right hon. and hon. Friends.

Mr. Clarke: I have no complaint about new clause 1. I did not like the result, but I accept that what happened was a perfectly proper parliamentary procedure. Three Conservative Back-Benchers and quite a number of other hon. Members spoke against us last night, and I agree that we were making satisfactory progress until the vote at about 10 pm. Thereafter, it rapidly became clear that things had changed dramatically.

I understand the choice that the Opposition have to make—I have been in opposition myself—of whether to filibuster or make reasonable progress——

Mr. Alun Michael (Cardiff, South and Penarth): The right hon. and learned Gentleman was guilty of a disgusting display of filibustering last night.

Mr. Clarke: I shall do it again if the hon. Gentleman is not careful.

When I turned up at the Scottish debate the warning signs were already apparent, but a reasonable debate appeared to be in progress on what I have no doubt was a serious issue. It took two hours. I could see the warning signs immediately, however, when we reached the Welsh debate on an undoubtedly important matter—the number of community health councils in Wales.

My hon. Friend the Member for Pembroke (Mr. Bennett), who is not in his place—not surprisingly—made an extremely pithy contribution. He pointed out that the Opposition were saying that they thought the number of community health councils in Wales should be the same as the number of Welsh district councils, whereas the Government were saying that they should be the same as the number of health boards. In one sentence my hon. Friend expressed an idea which it took the hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Michael) half an hour to expound repeatedly. The hon. Gentleman's point was so profound that it was repeated by every Welsh Member of

the House, who seemed to consist of a large proportion of the Welsh parliamentary Labour party, most of whom vanished from the Chamber the moment the debate concluded and who have not been seen from that moment to this.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): I ask the Secretary of State to do one thing: will he tell us what is going to happen this evening? When does he expect us to have the opportunity to begin the debate again on Report? I understand that agreements have been reached and that people have made suggestions as to what should happen, but at what stage during the evening will certain clauses be taken? What will happen to the hundreds of amendments and dozens of new clauses that may remain outstanding at the end of the evening? We should like to know. Let us get off all this rubbish about what happened yesterday.

Mr. Clarke: I confirm what I have already said—Report stage will begin as soon as the debate is concluded if the House agrees with the motion before it. I will not detain the House for long, but I insist on beginning by explaining why we are tabling a motion which I had no wish to table, especially as it is about to be challenged by the hon. Member for Livingston.

We reached the end of the Welsh debate last night. I am not going to relay everything verbatim——

Mr. Michael *rose*——

Mr. Clarke: I shall give way, but, as I keep saying, this is encroaching on Opposition time.

Mr. Michael: It is not satisfactory for the right hon. and learned Gentleman to try to write mythology into the record. Yesterday's record will show that the Welsh debate was conducted in an excellent manner by Opposition Members, but that the contribution from Conservative Members was pathetic. That debate showed that the Government have abandoned the consumer and the community. That is in the record and that will be noted by people and communities throughout Wales, whatever mythology the Minister tries to write into today's debate.

Mr. Clarke: I find that judgment of the Welsh debate as predictable and partisan as most of the hon. Gentleman's contributions. I am talking only about the length of time it took to debate what seemed to me, as an English observer who was waiting to debate the Bill, a rather simple point.

Mr. Kenneth Hind (Lancashire, West): Will my right hon. and learned Friend give way?

Mr. Clarke: Let me just consider last night's proceedings, and then I shall draw a veil over them. Those proceedings are the sole explanation for why we are now debating the motion.

About 12 hours after we had begun the debate—some of that time was no one's fault because of new clause 1—we started to discuss the English National Health Service. For more than 12 hours I had maintained total silence, apart from one intervention—no doubt a blessed relief to many Opposition Members.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: What does the Minister propose to do tonight?

Mr. Clarke: We then got on to a subject that is important, but a little tired to Committee members—consultations about the new NHS trusts.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am sorry to press this, but some of us have come into the Chamber for a constructive debate. We do not give a damn about what happened yesterday; we are looking forward to tonight's business. What proposals have the Government——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): Order. What is the point of order for the Chair.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: The Speaker selected nearly 200 new clauses and amendments—it was his decision which ones were to be called. We have five and a half hours and all that I want to know is at what stage in the evening will those matters be debated. That is a fair question. Let us forget yesterday and concentrate on the business tonight.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: That is not a point of order.

Mr. Campbell-Savours *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. It would be much better if the Secretary of State was allowed to get on with his speech.

Mr. Clarke: I propose to make my own speech and I am not going to take advice on it from the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: What is going to happen tonight?

Mr. Clarke: I shall certainly not take advice from the hon. Gentleman, who wasted the whole of the first morning of the Committee and part of the afternoon on the Floor of the House afterwards by raising a frolic of his own. So far as I can recall, he is the only person who, before last night, wasted time on the proceedings of the Bill. I am saying that, last night, when we got to the English NHS, the signs were clear when the Leader of the Opposition, who had made short, succinct speeches in Committee——

Mr. Robin Cook *rose*——

Mr. Clarke: The hon. Gentleman who leads for the Opposition on this subject. I do not want to start controversy or speculation on the Opposition side of the House of the kind that burst out in other parts.

A speech lasting one hour and 50 minutes was made by the hon. Member for Livingston which, as I said last night, was a patched-together collection of various speeches that he had made in Committee on a subject——

Mr. Campbell-Savours: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. It would be far better, in this short debate, to allow the Secretary of State to get on with his speech.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: The guillotine is about the arrangements for taking new clauses, amendments and Government amendments this evening.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. That is not a point of order for the Chair.

Mr. Clarke: The hon. Gentleman is maintaining his record as the hon. Member who has made more points of

[Mr. Clarke]

order in the proceedings on the Bill than any other, and probably more than all the others put together. He is merely taking up time.

I am explaining the background of events which are in the memory of most of us who have followed the Bill. Last night, for reasons of pure machismo that I have already described, the Bill was suddenly filibustered. It is up to Opposition Members to raise whatever subjects and arguments they want, but I do not believe that we heard an argument that had not been deployed before in Committee. We heard the same arguments, largely from the same hon. Members, delivered at three times their previous length by all Opposition Members who spoke. They did not want to debate the Bill but wanted to show that they were capable of making long speeches in the small hours of the morning.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton (Macclesfield): I fully support my right hon. and learned Friend in his opposition in principle to imposing a guillotine and I shall support the Government in the Lobby at approximately a quarter past 7 o'clock. Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that if the Government had advised the House that they would take on board the very clear message at the end on the debate on new clasue 1 that appropriate measures would be introduced in the Social Security Bill, that might have resulted in an orderly debate being held and the filibustering which went on last night would not have occurred?

Mr. Clarke: First, I believe that we made a proper response to the debate last night. Secondly, my right hon. Friend made it clear that we will all respond properly to the vote of the House last night as soon as we can. Whatever may have been the feelings of my hon. Friend last night, I do not believe that that lay behind the Opposition's activity on the Bill thereafter. However, I am grateful for my hon. Friend's support of the guillotine as I do not always get it for other measures before the House.

If I may be allowed to do so, I shall move speedily to my conclusion. I have explained that the reason for presenting the guillotine is to get back on to the satisfactory course of debate upon which we were set until there was a daft change of mind on the part of the Opposition at about midnight last night.

We are also amply supported by precedent. There have been guillotine motions in previous similar circumstances and reference was made this morning to the Health Services Act 1976, a major piece of legislation taken through the House by Barbara Castle. More time has been spent in Committee than on that Bill—we have had more than 100 hours in Committee. In 1976, the Labour Government guillotined both the Committee and the Report stages and did not allow matters to proceed to the point that we had reached until we were provoked into the action that we are taking today.

The hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) can scarcely contain himself any longer, although he looks more relaxed than he did during most stages of our proceedings. He will know that the motion will allow us to proceed in a perfectly reasonable fashion. As soon as the motion is passed by the House, if hon. Members accept my arguments, we shall proceed to Report, which will be finished by midnight tonight. If the hon. Gentleman has a copy of the timetable motion, he will see that paragraph 6 describes the conclusion of proceedings and the Questions that will be put by the Chair, if necessary. How many debates we get through between now and midnight is entirely in the hands of Opposition Members.

Not all my hon. Friends will be precluded from taking part in the debates, but I hope that I speak for them all—certainly those who followed the Bill through Committee—when I say that I expect that they will speak briefly. If the Opposition do not want to move some of their new clauses, they can move to others. They can command the time between now and midnight as they wish, making such progress as they can.

In Committee, much progress was made in seven and a half hours. At midnight, the proceedings will come to an end, as described in paragraph 6. Tomorrow, we shall come to the Third Reading motion, which will allow a Third Reading debate tomorrow afternoon.

Mr. Patrick Cormack (Staffordshire, South): Of course, I understand my right hon. and learned Friend's dilemma. But can anyone pretend that adequate consideration can be given to one of the most important pieces of legislation placed before the House in the 20 years that he and I have been here?

Mr. Clarke: My hon. Friend has been an hon. Member for exactly the same time as I have. He is an independent Back-Bencher, who puts his opinion quite frequently and is a strong parliamentarian. I hope that he will agree that, after two days on Second Reading and over 100 hours in Committee, it is reasonable to have two and a half days on Report. Our misfortune is that we are trying to make up in injury time for the eight or nine hours in the small hours of this morning when the Bill was filibustered. The Government cannot be fairer than that.

I would like to resume a measured level of debate. I believe that there is a wide consensus on the National Health Service. There is no division between us on the principles of the Health Service, the commitment to free treatment paid out of general taxation, and the provision of a comprehensive service as good as that available under any other health care system. Obviously, when we come to the mechanics, there are detailed differences between us. But I believe that there is widespread support for a reform that will bring better financial management, better quality control, and a greater say for patients paving the way for a better patient service. There was more controversy on the care in the community part of the Bill.

Mr. Andrew Mitchell (Gedling): It seems that my amendment No. 158 is not likely to be reached this evening. My right hon. and learned Friend knows the great importance attached to extending and clarifying the role of the Audit Commission. Is my understanding correct that, in its place on the amendment paper this amendment will now receive Government support?

Mr. Clarke: My hon. Friend will be glad to know that I have rescued his amendment from the debris. It is up to the Opposition to see what they can rescue from the debris. The hon. Gentleman's amendment is one of those listed in paragraph 6(1)(c) of the timetable motion and it will be put to a vote at 12 o'clock. It will be debated, and my hon. Friend can deploy the arguments that the Government

would have accepted had he had the opportunity of moving the amendment—if we make proper progress on Report between now and midnight.

There is widespread agreement. Care in the community has caused controversy, but the Griffiths report received all-party support. For heaven's sake, we all accept the need to improve the system for providing care in the community to the elderly, the disabled, the mentally ill and the mentally handicapped. Why is not the House capable of having a sensible debate on the issues of detail that divide us?

I invite the hon. Member for Livingston to agree to that sensible procedure, allowing us to get back to where we would have been had it not been for his behaviour from about one o'clock in the morning.

Mr. Hind: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I seek your guidance. If the House decided to collapse the debate now, would it be in order immediately afterwards to debate the clauses that are the subject of the Report stage?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The answer to that is yes. Immediately this debate is completed—it need not last for three hours—we shall proceed to debate the clauses in the Bill.

4.40 pm

Mr. Robin Cook (Livingston): I beg to move, as a manuscript amendment to the motion, in paragraph 6(e), to delete "that all" and insert "On each of the".

To those of my hon. Friends who do not immediately apprehend the objective of the amendment, I should explain that it would enable the House to vote separately on Government amendments on which it wished to vote separately, as opposed to the iniquitious proposal in the timetable motion, which obliges the House to vote on Government amendments as a block. I shall return to that issue later.

I refer to the point of order of the hon. Member for Lancashire, West (Mr. Hind). It may be proper for the House to find extra time for the new clauses and amendments that have appeared today in the amendment paper, but it would be possible for it to do that only by submitting without murmur or protest to such a constitutional outrage. A glance at the timetable motion confirms the contempt that the present Administration have for the right of parliamentary scrutiny and the ability to challenge legislation.

Mr. Hind: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Cook: I shall do so on this occasion, as I am conscious of the hon. Gentleman's observations, but other hon. Members wish to participate in the debate, so I shall not give way again.

Mr. Hind: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for giving way. Will he accept that, if we were to pass the guillotine motion now, we would have two and three quarter extra hours in which to debate the clauses of the Bill, some of which are thought to be extremely important by all hon. Members? Will the hon. Gentleman reconsider his position in the light of that?

Mr. Cook: If the Treasury Whip had not moved a motion to report progress six and a half hours ago, we should have had an additional nine hours of debate. It is important for the House to consider the timetable motion. If it submits to the motion without a whimper of protest, it will happen every second sitting day.

My hon. Friend the Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) has repeatedly asked the Secretary of State to tell us the effect of his motion. There are important new clauses still to be debated. They refer to important issues, the first of which is not within the scope of even this Government to prevent us debating. That is the new clause tabled by my hon. Friend the Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman) referring to the rights of patients to appeal against the decision of a GP to delete them from his list. There are other important new clauses that I fear we will not reach under this timetable, such as the rights of staff who are transferred to self-governing trusts and the ring fencing of grants for community care, which was a central issue in the Griffiths report, and which should be central to the clauses on community care in this Bill.

In addition to the new clauses, there are 212 amendments to 62 different clauses that still stand selected. The Secretary of State said that the motion would provide a perfectly reasonable way of handling the new clauses and amendments, but he has proposed 285 minutes in which to debate 252 new clauses and amendments. There is no way in which we can cram debates about those new clauses and amendments into such a finite time. There is no way in which the House could even vote on all those new clauses and amendments without any debate. There is not even an attempt in the timetable motion to pretend that it is possible to timetable that for useful debate on the new clauses.

This is not a timetable motion; no times are fixed in the motion. This is a simple, unadorned guillotine that falls at midnight. The Secretary of State said that it would enable the House to finish the Bill. We will not finish the Bill at midnight; I doubt if we will even have started consideration of amendments to the Bill by then. What happens at midnight is that the Government get their Bill, and they will get it without any debate on the clauses on community care.

I have to say to my hon. Friend the Member for Peckham, who served with me on the Committee, that, had I any doubt about the importance and correctness of our strategy in approaching the Committee sittings, and in seeking agreement to ensure that we had adequate days in which to air the issues in the Bill, that doubt would have been removed by a timetable motion that shows that, given half a chance, this Administration would block any debate on those clauses.

Among the 212 amendments there are 100 Government amendments. The effect of the timetable motion—an effect about which the Secretary of State was rather coy—is that those 100 Government amendments will be put to the House in a single Division. I have checked with the authorities and have been advised that there was no parallel with such a proposal before this Government took office.

There are a number of significant and important Government amendments, including an amendment to permit officers of health authorities to serve on health authorities and Government amendments relating to the transfer of assets to self-governing trusts. There is even a Government amendment on the restrictions on GPs. The House is being denied not only a debate on the amendments, and the opportunity to scrutinise them; it is even being denied a Division on them.

[Mr. Cook]

I turn from the effect of the motion to the observations by the Secretary of State. I assure the House that I shall be as brief as I can in dismissing them, but first I express some anxiety on behalf of all hon. Members who served on the Standing Committee. There is growing anxiety in our midst about what has become of the hon. Member for Derby, North (Mr. Knight). I do not recall seeing him on the Treasury Bench since the Division on new clause 1. I hope that he has not vanished down whatever oubliette is reserved in the Whips Office for the failed Whip.

The Secretary of State was good enough to say—I hope that the hon. Member for Derby, North has the message brought to him wherever he is incarcerated—that he had no complaints about the debate on new clause 1. That debate lasted five and a quarter hours. I differ slightly from the interpretation put by the hon. Member for Ross, Cromarty and Skye (Mr. Kennedy) on the length of the debate. The hon. Gentleman suggested that the debate was long because large numbers of Conservative Members spoke against the Government.

I believe that the debate, if it was unduly long, was so for the simple and self-evident reason that the House received no response from the Treasury Bench to what was patently the will of the House. If, throughout our proceedings, we had had Ministers who were willing to listen to the points of debate, and to take the sense of the debate and the will of the House, it would have been possible for us to make more rapid progress.

Throughout the entire proceedings on the Bill, both in Committee and on Report, the Opposition have received not one concession. Indeed, if there is one thing that infuriates us more than not getting a concession it is the fact that we cannot even get the Secretary of State to agree that we disagree with him on the content of the Bill.

Having said that, I have to say that the timetable motion is a fitting end to the proceedings on the Bill. It was conceived in secrecy, in a furtive review, behind closed doors, through which only Ministers were admitted. Those Ministers took no evidence, and held no consultations on the review; they issued no Green Paper to stimulate debate.

This is a fitting end to a Bill that will centralise in Richmond house the powers of control of the Health Service. On Second Reading, I drew attention to the Bill's 127 references to the Secretary of State, all of which gave him powers to regulate, to order and to instrument. Each of those 127 references survived Committee, and each of them will now survive Report, without debate.

It is fitting at this stage of the Bill that one of the four debates that we were allowed—before being muzzled—was one that exposed just how anxious the Government are to avoid democratic debate within the Health Service, and their determination to avoid people having a say in whether their local hospital opts out of local health authority control. The Government are terrified that they would not win a single ballot.

This is a fitting end to a Bill for which the Government had no mandate in the previous election. The proposals have not gained support since then. The Bill enjoys more unpopularity in the opinion polls than the poll tax Bill did at the same point during its passage through Parliament. But although the timetable motion provides an appropriate end to our proceedings, it will not quite be the end of the Bill. There is one ballot that Ministers cannot guillotine—the ballot that will take place in the forthcoming general election. Democracy will then take its revenge for the way in which the Government rammed the Bill through the House.

From now until that election, we shall set the agenda on health. We shall measure and broadcast each shift to a commercialised marketplace in health care. We shall log and publicise each patient who is refused treatment. Each speciality that is forced to the wall by competitive contracts will be recorded and remembered.

Each of those issues will be put in the reckoning on the day of the general election. I am confident that that election will return a Government who will re-create a Health Service that will give patients the treatment they need, not the treatment that they or their doctors can afford. As a result of the motion, the Bill will leave the House tomorrow. At that point, the Secretary of State's problems will start. The Bill will be leaving the one place in Great Britain where it could find a majority. It has no majority in the world outside. The right hon. and learned Gentleman cannot dragoon a majority for it by putting the Whips on to the world outside.

The guillotine motion is the last throw of the discredited doctrine that "No. 10 knows best"—a doctrine of which the nation is heartily sick. When the electorate has its next turn to speak, the Bill that that doctrine seeks to protect will be rejected, along with the Government who imposed it.

4.52 pm

Mr. Patrick Cormack (Staffordshire, South): I think that I have voted in almost every guillotine debate for the past 20 years, but for reasons that I shall explain, this guillotine is one guillotine too far.

Much humbug is spoken by those on Conservative and Opposition Front Benches when guillotine motions are introduced. The sort of speech made by my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State, for whom I have enormous respect and regard, is made from every Government Front Bench whenever a guillotine motion is introduced. I am delighted to see in his place the father of all guillotines, the right hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot). When he was Leader of the House, he entertained us hugely and introduced more guillotine motions than any other right hon. Gentleman.

We owe it to ourselves and to our constituents to consider what we are about in this place in a way that we have not considered it so far. Those of us on the Back Benches have rights and duties. One duty is carefully to scrutinise legislation. Our constituents expect us to examine Bills seriously and in detail. This Bill affects vast numbers of our constituents. It could be said, without great exaggeration, to affect each one of them directly or indirectly.

No doubt all of us have attended meetings in our constituencies, as I have done, with general practitioners and others who have been worried and sometimes alarmed at the Bill's contents. Many such worries have been based on misconstruction, and many alarms have been grossly exaggerated. There has been mischief-making against the Bill by those who should have known better. Nevertheless, this is a serious matter. The Bill affects all of our constituents and contains controversial elements that demand careful and detailed scrutiny.

Our debate this evening calls into question not only the Bill but how we deal with all legislation. It is time seriously to consider that aspect. We let down our contituents by our perfunctory approach—*[Interruption.]* It would be good if the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore) listened, because my argument is serious. We should get away from our perfunctory examination of all legislation.

Let us consider what happens. A Bill comes before the House and has a Second Reading. By the very nature of things, even if it is a two-day Second Reading, few of us can pronounce on the general principles. The occupant of the Chair has an impossibly difficult task in knowing whom to call so that the various strands of opinion and parties in the House are represented. Few right hon. and hon. Members have the chance to take part in Second Reading debates.

Next, a small number of Members go into Committee to debate the Bill in detail. As a Chairman of Committees, I know full well that Government Whips often exercise a certain persuasive power to curb the eloquence of Government Members, so that the Bill has a reasonably speedy passage through Committee. I do not point the figure at any particular Minister or Government. It happens, as all right hon. and hon. Members know.

Mr. Andrew Rowe (Mid-Kent): Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Cormack: Not at the moment. I am trying to develop a serious argument, but I may give way later.

The Bill then comes back to the Floor of the House, often lucky to have escaped a guillotine. The vast majority of us have had no chance to examine it in detail, to speak about how its provisions affect our constituents or to consider its implications for the country as a whole.

We then come to the Report stage. Today, we have a grotesque example of what can then happen. It seems generally expected that this debate will last until 6 o'clock or thereabouts. We shall then have between five and six hours in which to consider hundreds of amendments and dozens of new clauses to a Bill that affects everyone in the land. That will not be debate, consideration, scrutiny or what our constituents expect us to do. It will be another perfunctory gallop. Many right hon. and hon. Members on both sides of the House who wish to speak will have little chance to do so. Those who are called to speak will have to truncate their remarks. Tomorrow, after a brief Third Reading debate on generalities, the Bill will go to another place. It will come back to the House only in so far as their Lordships make amendments to it, which I trust they will; but we must wait and see.

What does it all mean? I do not criticise Front Benchers on either side of the House, but the House of Commons must consider how we go through our legislation. I believe that every Bill needs a proper timetable, not one agreed through the usual channels, nor cooked up at dead of night or in the early hours of the morning to cope with a crisis. What is needed is a proper timetable that is worked out by a scrutiny of legislation Committee of the House.

We should consider setting up such a Committee at an early date. It should consist of senior and experienced Members from both sides of the House, not just Privy Councillors but those such as my hon. Friend the Member for Macclesfield (Mr. Winterton) and me and others who have experience of chairing Committees, who can consider a Bill without regard to partisan points. They should consider what the Bill seeks to do, and its length and contents, then decide how reasonably it should be divided so that each clause can be properly debated. That is what our constituents expect us to do, and we let them down because we do not do it.

At the root of the matter is the amount of legislation before the House. If we are honest with ourselves, we will admit that few of us have the chance to understand even a fraction of the Bills before the House. They come thudding from the Vote Office on to our desks or doorsteps. They are complex and affect the lives of people all over the country—I am speaking not only of this Bill.

Let us consider the past Session or two and think of the reforms that have been introduced in this House. How many hon. Members can say that they have truly been able to understand and to follow the complexity of the legislation? I was privy to a Tea Room conversation only yesterday. A distinguished member of the Labour party was having a snack with me and a member of the other place came along and said, "Did you realise that that Bill which went through without a Division the other week had this measure in it?" He did not realise it, and neither did I. Frankly, I do not believe that any other hon. Member sitting round realised it.

There is too much legislation. Every party that goes to the country aspiring to government promises to bring in less legislation, not more. It is a pledge that is repeatedly broken. We need a ration which allocates time properly between Government and Opposition, which must have time for proper debate of the policies and approach of the Government of the day, whichever party forms the Government.

There should be time, far more than there is at present, for Select Committees. Select Committees labour away and produce far-reaching, stimulating and important reports which are frequently put into pigeonholes and never discussed on the Floor of the House. We do not have enough time for private Members, and legislation crowds out other things. Even the legislation itself is not fully and properly considered. That is highly unsatisfactory, and it is time that we put a stop to it.

Today's proceedings are particularly unsatisfactory. From those unsatisfactory proceedings, I would like to see emerge a Committee of Members of the House, first perhaps even setting themselves up spontaneously and unofficially, to consider ways and means by which our procedure could be improved to ensure fair distribution of time between the separate interests and issues before us and the detailed discussion of every Bill.

Dame Jill Knight (Birmingham, Edgbaston): I am listening to my hon. Friend with great care. I agree with what he said about the advisability of having less legislation. My hon. Friend appears to be saying that every Bill should have its Committee stage on the Floor of the House, with all hon. Members involved in it. That troubles me, because, if hon. Members are interested in a particular subject, it is easy, through the Library or by reading the *Official Report*, to find out all that they need to know. I cannot envisage a House of Commons in which all the Committee work is done on the Floor of the House.

Mr. Cormack: I apologise to my hon. Friend. If that was the impression that I gave, I must correct it immediately. I am grateful to her: if there were ambiguity

[Mr. Cormack]

in my remarks, I should not like to sit down and leave that ambiguity in the minds of right hon. and hon. Members. I believe very much in the Committee procedure; I believe that all Committees should be properly timetabled, so that there is no risk of a suddenly imposed guillotine, and that matters are properly discussed in Committee.

My point, which I obviously did not make as well as I should have, is that, for every piece of legislation—whether it be on student loans, the reform of the National Health Service, the privatisation of an industry or the introduction of the community charge—the vast majority of us are, inevitably, not on the Committee. When a Bill returns to the Floor of the House on Report, we should not run the risk of the sort of nonsense that we now face. There should be a procedure worked out by a scrutiny of legislation Committee, which would allocate a proper portion of time—for this Bill it should be at least four days—so that the legislation could be looked at properly and at a decent hour.

Mr. William Cash (Stafford): I am intrigued by what my hon. Friend—who is a neighbour of mine—is saying, because I am a member of the Committee that is considering the Broadcasting Bill. How much attention did members of the Committee that considered this Bill pay to the allocation of time to consider questions that might arise? We are often in danger of spending too much time waffling in Committee when we should be concentrating on important questions, some of which are arising now. *[Interruption.]* I accuse the Opposition—including the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore), who is muttering from a sedentary position—of waffling in Committee to precipitate the very situation that we are facing now: a guillotine. That happened when we considered the Telecommunications Bill, and it has also happened in this case.

Mr. Cormack: My hon. Friend is merely making my point for me. If there were proper timetabling in Committees, there would be no temptation to waffle, there would be no self-induced—or Whip-imposed—vow of silence by Government Members, whichever party formed the Government, and there would be true debate in Committee.

Mr. Rowe: I accept entirely what my hon. Friend says in so far as it applies to my experience of other Committees. However, on this Committee, Government Members were given as much freedom to speak as they wished. Because our speeches were almost universally short, every one of us had the chance to say as much as we wanted.

Mr. Cormack: I am gratified to hear that. It is unusual, but my hon. Friend was on the Committee and I was not. I accept what he says and it is good to hear it.

I was about to mention the time at which we hold our debates. People outside think that it is absurd that we go through the night. I saw a distinguished Secretary of State at lunch when we were attending the same function. It is ridiculous that he should have been up until 3 o'clock or 4 o'clock this morning when he has extremely important work to do in his ministerial capacity on behalf of everybody. The same applies whether it be a Labour or a Conservative Secretary of State. For a few to keep their colleagues up through the night, often talking endlessly about nothing, is ridiculous.

I should like to see a system whereby we finished our substantive business at midnight and no votes were taken after midnight. We owe the nation a quality of administration which, frankly, we are not providing. We must meet head-on the question of the procedure of the House, particularly now that we are under closer and more detailed scrutiny ourselves. I would say that whether we had a Labour or a Conservative Government. I am speaking without fear or favour when I say that, unless and until we do that, we shall not do our job as well as we should or earn the esteem which any legislator in a democracy ought to earn.

I have just come back from a few days in Romania, where people are desperate for the sort of things that we take for granted. They face their first election for 50 years, desperately hoping that it will be free and fair. I am sure that I speak for all right hon. and hon. Members in devoutly hoping that it will be both free and fair.

The Romanian people look to us to provide models. They look to this country as the mother of Parliaments. Although I much enjoyed trying to explain what we did here, I was conscious of the imperfections that riddle our procedures. I earnestly beg right hon. and hon. Members, especially my right hon. and hon. Friends on the Front Bench, to think seriously about changing our procedures.

Because the Bill's consideration tonight will be a travesty, I shall have no part of it in the Division Lobbies. I do not propose to vote any more on the Bill today.

5.11 pm

Mr. Michael Foot (Blaenau Gwent): I am pleased to follow the hon. Member for Staffordshire, South (Mr. Cormack). I agree with his comments about the quality of the legislation that has passed through the House of Commons in recent years. There has been a considerable debasement of the quality, but my reasons for saying that are different from those of the hon. Gentleman. I do not believe that the hon. Gentleman's cure would be any good. It has been suggested in many other quarters and would be grabbed immediately by the Treasury Bench. The Government would love to have a system under which any measures presented to the House would go through according to a timetable which was understood. The Government would be certain of getting measures through at particular times, but it would not be good for the House of Commons and it would not guarantee any improvement in the quality of legislation.

I should like to correct the misleading remarks that the hon. Member for Staffordshire, South made about me—quite unconsciously, I am sure—at the beginning of his speech. He called me the father of guillotines. I may be very old, but I am not so old as that. The father of guillotines can be traced back to the Liberal Benches and the pre-1914 Government. To discover who introduced guillotines, the hon. Gentleman would have to go back and have an argument with Mr. Gladstone's son, if not with Mr. Gladstone himself. The Liberals introduced the guillotine motion to deal with a House of Commons which would otherwise have prevented their legislation from being passed. Some of the people who were creating the biggest row were the predecessors of the hon. Member for Staffordshire, South, although they were not all on the

same side of the Conservative party, as he would have liked them to be. The origin of the guillotine therefore goes back a long way.

The hon. Gentleman should also not say that I was responsible for more guillotines than anyone else. Many more guillotine motions have been introduced in the past five or six years than in any previous parliamentary period. They have been introduced in the most objectionable manner at a late stage in the consideration of Bills such as this one to deal with immediate crises.

The previous Leader of the House did not seem to care at what stage he introduced fresh guillotine motions—he just introduced more and more of them. I am sorry that the present Leader of the House is not here to speak on this, although the Minister for Health—the hon. Member for Surrey, South-West (Mrs. Bottomley)—is a good substitute. I understand that the right hon. and learned Gentleman is in Chile, no doubt polishing up his methods by talking to Mr. Pinochet, to whom he gave so much support when he was at the Foreign Office. They probably have much to talk over, though not how a Parliament should be run. If the Bill is to be pushed through in this way, it is a pity that the Leader of the House has not been present throughout the proceedings. When I was Leader of the House, I considered it my duty to be present almost all the time and to be responsible for any proposals.

I am glad to come along on these occasions, partly for the sake of auld lang syne and to remember what used to happen, but also because there is always the danger that some blithering ignoramus—I am not referring to the hon. Member for Staffordshire, South or to the Secretary of State for Health—will suggest that, as Leader of the House, I did something similar to what the Government are attempting to do today when in fact they are doing something quite different.

There is the important question of the mandate. The Government cannot claim that it is not important. Whenever the Prime Minister is forced back to the House, as she frequently is, to defend measures such as the poll tax she refers to her mandate, saying that there was a mandate for the poll tax. The measures on which I asked for a guillotine, and which would not have had a chance of getting through the House without a guillotine, all figured in our party manifesto. The country had been able to vote on them and was familiar with many of the arguments. That is important for high quality legislation. Such was the quality of the five measures on which I introduced the guillotine that most of them are on the statute book today. People may not have liked the contents of those measures, but no one ever complained about their quality. Before introducing proposals in the House, we did our best to ensure that they were properly drafted and considered. We also wished to ensure that they were properly investigated by the House of Commons, which is at its best in Committee.

People often deride the House and say that time is wasted late at night or that few Members of Parliament are present. In my long experience, I have found that some of the worst features of bad Government legislation have been dealt with on the Floor of the House, often on Report, and sometimes late at night. That is one of our great protections.

One such debate took place last night and the Government were defeated. Even if they had not been defeated, the discussion would still have been beneficial. No one who listened to that debate could deny its quality. The result was good for most of the country. It showed the House really working properly and it was not under a guillotine. Last night's debate could not have taken place under a guillotine or under the permanent guillotine that some Members desire. A debate such as last night's debate can take place only when the House is at its best. Great credit goes to my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) who put the case so well, but a range of other speeches came from other quarters, which did not immediately change the Government's mind but which will do so eventually.

No Member of Parliament who was present last night would deny that at the very moment when the House showed itself at its best the Government chose to bring down the guillotine and to say, "We will have no more debates like that. Look what happens—we actually get defeated. We must have no more of that, so we shall stop it right away." Under such a procedure, we shall have no more great debates. The way in which so many debates are jammed in together is a disgrace to the House of Commons.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston said, the crucial aspect of the debate is the origin of the Bill. Had the Bill been an item in the Conservative party manifesto and been debated during the last general election campaign by the general practitioners who now oppose it and by the hospital workers who are now affected by possible opting out, things would be very different, but we all know that there has been no investigation. When Aneurin Bevan carried through the National Health Service Act 1946, he said that there should be fresh discussions about it in the years to come. He did not claim that it was perfect in every way—he wanted a five-year clause in each piece of legislation to require people to re-examine it. Nothing like that has happened with this Bill, as the Minister for Health must know even if she cannot admit it.

This measure started with the fatal decision at No. 10 to do for the Health Service what has been done already for education and social security. It is now being pushed through without proper discussion. That is especially disgraceful, given that the Government have spatchcocked another major Bill into the legislation by amalgamating two Bills. The future of compassionate care is a matter of major discussion throughout the country. Every hon. Member knows that that debate is real and no one would dare deny what I say. Yet the Government decided to manacle another measure to this highly unpopular, undiscussed Bill, and the two measures are interlinked. The Secretary of State could not come to the House to defend the Bill yesterday—his junior Minister had to do that—which further aggravates the offence of not allowing the House of Commons to discuss either measure properly.

Great arguments about the poll tax are raging at this very moment. The poll tax is bad enough, but it was at least mentioned as a sidewind even though it was not discussed properly. The Government have become so arrogant that they think that they can push through any measure whatever. To return to the points of the hon. Member for Staffordshire, South, that is the real reason for the debasement of the quality of the legislation going through the House of Commons.

The Prime Minister knows nothing of the House of Commons. She did not spend years on the Back Benches —the best place to learn about the House. I have had experience of both Front and Back Benches. The Prime

[Mr. Michael Foot]

Minister simply hears of uproar in the Chamber. She arrived yesterday without even knowing what had happened. The guillotine decision on the Bill was made in the middle of the night. Yet the Bill touches the lives of people perhaps more than any measure since the National Health Service was set up. The Secretary of State occasionally dares to compare himself with Aneurin Bevan, but Aneurin Bevan had endless debates with doctors and invited them time and again to discuss his proposals. He constantly asked for debates in this House. Before that Bill was introduced, when there was so much pretence that it was unpopular, he suggested that there should be another debate in the House of Commons. No one believed more strongly than Aneurin Bevan that the best way to get a decent measure on to the statute book so that it lasts not just a few years but for generations is to have a decent debate in the House of Commons.

That is how we got our great National Health Service, but on the orders of the Prime Minister the Government are injuring and destroying the National Health Service and the very process whereby we can maintain these proper institutions. What is happening is a disgrace to the House of Commons. The Secretary of State should go to Downing street and resign, like the Secretary of State for Wales. He should follow the example of some of his predecessors, pluck up his courage and say that he is not prepared to force such a measure through the House.

5.25 pm

Mr. Nicholas Winterton (Macclesfield): I am delighted to follow the right hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot). He is a man of great experience and an outstanding parliamentarian. As he said, he is wonderfully comfortable on the Back Benches, whether his party be in government or in opposition. I thoroughly endorse much of what the right hon. Gentleman has said.

Like my hon. Friend the Member for Staffordshire, South (Mr. Cormack), in my 19 years in the House, I have never tasted ministerial office or preferment of any sort. Like my hon. Friend, I sit on the Chairmen's Panel, which is a tremendous challenge and a highly responsible and very enjoyable task.

I said in an intervention at the beginning of the debate that I shall support the Government in the Division Lobby, but with great reluctance. Sadly, I do not believe that any timetabling of clauses, new clauses and amendments would make it possible to have a meaningful debate on this critical Bill. The right hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent pointed out that the issues involved are vital to practically everyone in the country. I shall vote with the Government only with great reluctance.

When my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State introduced the timetable motion, I intervened to say that, if my views were of any importance, the House could have debated these vital matters constructively and positively if the Government had responded properly to the result of the debate on new clause 1. Conservative Members expressed their anxiety about care in the community and the dreadful problems that were occurring in all our constituencies, whether we be Labour, Liberal Democrat or Conservative Members, about the growing gap between the amount of income support that elderly people in private residential or nursing homes receive from the Department of Social Security and the fees for those homes.

I am unhappy that matters that relate to ring fencing will probably receive no coverage in later debates today. We shall face grave problems because, as a result of a decision that was made not by the House but by the Government, geriatric accommodation in the National Health Service is being phased out. Almost all the provision for those who require such accommodation and care will be provided in private nursing and residential homes. Thus, an increasing number of people will be dependent on the income support that they need to pass their final days receiving the care and consideration that they need and merit. For that reason, the debate later today will be unsatisfactory.

I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Staffordshire, South, whose view was shared by the right hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent, that we have too much legislation and not enough debate. I was not here, as the right hon. Gentleman was, when the National Health Service was introduced in 1948, so I did not have the privilege of attending the great debates that took place leading to the formation of the NHS, which is cherished by 99.9 per cent. of the British people.

I wonder whether, if timetable motions had been used then as they are today, we would have got the Health Service that we all admire and respect and which, having travelled throughout the world as a member of the Social Services Select Committee, I can report is the envy of the world. I do not know a cheaper, better run or more comprehensive health system anywhere else.

I am saddened by the Government's response to the outcome of the debate yesterday on new clause 1, which perhaps set the House on a trail which I deeply regret. It has meant that no meaningful debate can take place on one of the most critical Bills now before Parliament.

In many Standing Committees, Back Benchers are beginning to exercise their rights over the usual channels. I have the privilege at present to be a joint Chairman of the Standing Committee on the Environmental Protection Bill. I am pleased to say that Back Benchers on both sides of that Committee are exercising their full rights to debate the measure to the full. I am anxious that the occupants of the Government Front Bench note my claim that hon. Members should be able on the Floor of the House to debate properly the legislation that comes before us.

I have in mind, for example, new clause 73, which will receive no more than scant mention in the short debate that will take place under the guillotine. That clause relates to the funding of local authorities and the demand of the Select Committee on Social Services that money allocated for community care should be ring-fenced. That is not simply the overwhelming view of that Select Committee, which looked into the matter in detail and took evidence from experts. It is the view of Sir Roy Griffiths, who produced the Griffiths report, on which the community care provisions of the Bill are based. He urged that the money should be ring-fenced and proposed:

> "Central Government should provide directly to social service authorities by a specific grant a substantial proportion of the total funds it estimates are needed to meet national objectives."

The Government are departing from a main proposal made in a report which they asked Sir Roy Griffiths to undertake, and the House is not being given proper

opportunity to debate the issue. I know that the hon. Member for Makerfield (Mr. McCartney), who is on the Select Committee with me, shares my view on that important matter.

I make no apology for raising a constituency matter, because it greatly concerns me that we should be proceeding to a situation in which health authorities can ensure, through their senior management, all of whom are politically appointed, that hospitals should decide to opt out. There is in my constituency a small hospital called the Alderley Edge cottage hospital, which was founded and built by donation and public subscription. It was taken into the NHS when it took over the provision for health care in Britain in 1948. That facility is much valued by the people of the area, but what is happening there is not democratic and there has been no meaningful public consultation.

My district health authority has decided to implement a temporary closure of the GP beds at that hospital—it is primarily a GP hospital—pending consultation. When I heard about this development from people in the NHS —people who know that they can come to me and get an objective hearing—I was appalled. I contacted Mr. Holt, the district general manager, who told me, "We have adopted this procedure before." I asked Mr. Holt, "Can you tell me of any hospital that has been reopened once a temporary closure has been imposed?" He hesitated and replied, "We have used that procedure before, but in respect of a hospital ward." I told him that hospital wards might reopen, but I could not discover a hospital on which a temporary closure order had been imposed and which had reopened.

The people of my area are outraged, and the majority of them are Conservative supporters——

Ms. Diane Abbott (Hackney, North and Stoke Newington): At the moment.

Mr. Winterton: I will allow that remark, made from a sedentary position, to pass.

We are creating a situation in which the public, democratic representatives, those who are concerned for the NHS and those who serve in it, are having a decreasing influence over the decisions that are being taken. That is why I say that to have so many amendments, all selected for debate, discussed in just a few hours, with no set procedure for vital new clauses to be debated individually, is appalling.

Ms. Harriet Harman (Peckham): Why, then, does the hon. Gentleman intend to vote for the guillotine?

Mr. Winterton: I said that I did not believe that, at this stage of the Bill, in view of what happened last night, we could have a constructive or meaningful debate. I hope that we shall have a considered Third Reading tomorrow. But, above all, I believe that the measure will receive a good hearing in the other place. Some Members of this House—although not the right hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent—fought hard for the preservation of the other place and for the amending opportunities that exist there. That Chamber can have a moderating influence on hastily considered legislation that has been forced through this House. I now have considerable trust in what may happen to the Bill in that House.

Mr. Cormack: Trust in the Lords.

Mr Winterton: Yes, I trust in the Lords, and in the Lord. My answer to the hon. Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman) is that, sadly, I do not believe that we shall have a constructive, meaningful debate on the Bill as it proceeds through its remaining stages in this House.

Mr. Tony Favell (Stockport): Nobody has taken a greater interest in the Health Service over many years than my hon. Friend. He and I served together on the Select Committee on Social Services. Nobody takes a greater interest in things local and taking decisions at a local level. Is he for or against self-government of hospitals? He has been talking about the Alderley Edge cottage hospital, which is outside my constituency, but not far away. Its decision is being interfered with by the district health authority. Would it not be better if that hospital was running its own affairs, free from outside interference?

Mr. Winterton: I can best respond to my hon. Friend, whom I regard with considerable affection, in the following way. He does a magnificent job in his constituency and has taken great interest in health care over many years. I was one of the few Government Members who opposed the Bill's Second Reading because I do not like the major proposals contained in it, not least that of self-governing hospitals, which will remove the comprehensive nature of our National Health Service, which is one of its major, most compelling and advantageous facilities.

I disagree with my hon. Friend the Member for Staffordshire, South on one matter but I wonder whether I might have the support of the right hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent. All major Government legislation should be referred to the appropriate Select Committee before coming to the House, so that some of the major problems in the legislation can be discussed by an all-party group. That is certainly a feature of legislation in a number of other democratic western countries.

Legislation put before this place could only be improved by being considered by an all-party Select Committee before it was presented to us. That might well shorten some of the debates in the Chamber, and those that did take place would be more realistic, constructive and rewarding because they would deal with the major issues that came through the scrutiny of a Select Committee.

Mr. Cormack: How did my hon. Friend know that I disagreed with that sentiment? Although I did not address myself to it, I do not necessarily disagree with it.

Mr. Winterton: I thought that my hon. Friend might disagree, because he put forward another proposition in his earlier contribution to this debate.

I shall reluctantly go through the Government Lobby tonight. Sadly, the House cannot claim much credit for what occurred last night. How right the right hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent was—a magnificent debate took place on new clause 1 yesterday. That is how the House works best.

I shall correct the right hon. Gentleman on one matter. New clause 1 is an all-party new clause. It was moved with great ability by the hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook), but its sponsors also came from among Government Members. We had a magnificent debate on it, because all those contributing had some knowledge of the subject and had made a careful study of it. They spoke

[Mr. Winterton]

with experience—sadly, that does not always occur in this place. Therefore, it is with sadness that I support a Government who are prepared to abuse the House in the way that they are doing today.

5.44 pm

Mr. Alfred Morris (Manchester, Wythenshawe): Time is at a premium, many other hon. Members want to express their sense of outrage about the motion and I shall be brief. This really is a quite shocking and, as my right hon. Friend the Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot) said, a wholly disgraceful motion. Parliamentary shoddiness was never more shoddy. The Bill is not one Bill, but four: two about the NHS and community care in England and Wales and two Scottish Bills. That is why the Secretary of State's comparison of it with the Health Service Bill in 1976 so utterly falls apart. The making of that comparison was proof positive of the bankruptcy of his case in this debate.

In Committee Ministers were tripping over themselves as a consquence of trying to squash too much legislatiton into one Bill. I shall give just one example. The hon. Member for Ealing, Acton (Sir G. Young) had some amusement at the expense of his hon. Friends in Committee, since the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth), the Under-Secretary of State for Scotland, introduced an amendment substantially the same as one previously resisted by the hon. Member for Surrey, South-West (Mrs. Bottomley), the Minister for Health. That may have been amusing in Committee, but it excites only incredulity and very deep concern among the disabled people who protest to right hon. Members on both sides of the House that these four Bills in one do not tackle key issues related to their well-being.

The guillotine motion makes it virtually certain that my amendments about community care and, in particular, the problems and needs of disabled people will not be given even a moment's consideration by the House. Similarly, amendments tabled by Opposition Members will be pushed aside without debate. They are amendments that were inspired by the all-party disablement group in the House and it is contemptuous of the efforts, not only of the distinguished officers of that important group, but also of some of the best known voluntary organisations of and for disabled people in this country. The Association of Crossroads Care Attendant Schemes has put to me its deep concerns about this legislation; so has the Spinal Injuries Association. But since my amendments will not be debated, their submissions, along with many others, must go by default.

Can we at least have an indication of the Government's response to new clauses 58 and 59, amendment No. 59, new clause 63, in the name of my right hon. Friend the Member for Stoke-on-Trent, South (Mr. Ashley), and the other new clauses and amendments that are so very important to disabled people, their families and carers? The hon. Member for Macclesfield (Mr. Winterton) talked about ring fencing, which is a profoundly important issue. Will there be a statement about the Government's attitude to that recommendation in the Griffiths report? Will there be any mention of the compelling need now fully to implement the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986, which was so ably promoted and piloted through the House by my hon. Friend the Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke)?

The Secretary of State, himself no innocent when it comes to speaking at length, has talked of filibustering, yet perhaps the longest debate on Report so far was that on an all-party amendment, so well and non-controversially moved by my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook). New clause 1, dealing with income support and residential care, produced a most impressive debate. It was a parliamentary occasion and, in fact, some of the longest speeches—none the less good for all their length—came from those on the Government Benches. The Government were defeated—their first such defeat for four years—and it is much to the honour of Conservative Members, as well as hon. Members on this side of the House, that the claims of needful people were put entirely above party considerations.

I applaud the intervention during the Secretary of State's speech by the hon. Member for Staffordshire, South (Mr. Cormack). His sense of fairness is an example to other Conservative Members. As he said, it is preposterous that debate on legislation of such importance should be so truncated. Let us hope, for the reputation of Parliament, that the hon. Gentleman's words will have had some effect on other Conservative Members. It will be a stain on the reputation of the House of Commons if the motion is not strenuously opposed across the Floor of the House as well as by Opposition Members. There is still time for the hon. Member for Macclesfield to rethink his position. I hope he will do so, and vote with us tonight.

5.49 pm

Mr. Andrew Rowe (Mid-Kent): I am sorry that the hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) is not in his place. I wanted to tell him about a dream that I had last night. I must have nodded off for a moment, and I dreamt that time was 1,000 years into the future and that a fossil skeleton had been found. The anthropologist instantly recognised it as homo sardonicus—in other words, the hon. Member for Livingston. The fossil's jaw was very highly developed and, at first, that was thought to be because the animal was clearly carnivorous. However, after a great deal of scrutiny it became apparent that it was just the result of over-exercise. I was alarmed when I woke up and discovered that that skeleton was fully clothed and in the middle of a speech lasting almost one and a half hours.

The guillotine motion owes a great deal to the efforts of homo sardonicus. He spoke at inordinate length throughout our proceedings, so the Opposition cannot complain if some attempt is made to move forward. During the late 1970s, the only matter under debate in the establishment was that Britain was ungovernable. It was assumed that Britain had gone over the edge into some sort of abyss and that it was no longer possible to govern it. During the past decade the Conservative Government have shown that to be a myth.

The second great debate, which took place during the middle and late 1980s, was about the defects of the National Health Service. We could not go anywhere in the country and speak to an audience about the NHS without there being paraded a catalogue of those defects. All the journals discussed how to prioritise, how to finance, how to control, how to organise, how to give general

practitioners a proper place in the system and so on. As a result of that longstanding, widespread and universally indulged-in debate, the Government introduced proposals to alter and improve the way in which the NHS is delivered to the consumer. The moment that they did so, everyone who until then had denigrated the old-fashioned, archaic way in which the NHS operated tried to pretend that it was working perfectly and that all it required was the injection of a little more money and it could go on exactly as before, with just one or two cosmetic improvements.

Mr. Ian McCartney (Makerfield): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am not trying to be controversial but, apart from brief absences for cups of tea, about six hon. Members have been in the Chamber for twenty-seven and a half hours. We are here to discuss a guillotine motion that will mean amendments being lost. The hon. Member for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe) is not speaking to that motion; he is giving a poor Second Reading speech. So that we may all have an opportunity to discuss the motion, perhaps he would try to debate the matter before us.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Member for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe) is in order. However, once again I appeal for brief speeches so that more hon. Members can participate in the debate.

Mr. Rowe: I have been on my feet for three minutes. The hon. Member for Makerfield (Mr. McCartney) may have been so anxious to make his own speech that he did not notice that the right hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot) spent a long time blaming the Government for introducing proposals to reform the NHS without a debate. There has been a massive public debate about the defects of the NHS which has spread from John o'Groats to Land's End.

Mr. Kennedy: If the debate that the hon. Gentleman claims started in the mid-1980s was such a burning issue and a priority for the Government, why did none of that appear in the Conservative manifesto?

Mr. Rowe: My recollection is that the manifesto contained a statement that the NHS would be reformed. That was all that was said because we were trying to work out the detail. Since then, there has been a massive public debate about the proposals, in many cases fuelled by disgraceful misrepresentation by the British Medical Association and other groups. They have used every means in their power—they had plenty of them—to misinform large numbers of our constituents by telling them considerable untruths. However, that gave us the opportunity to discuss these matters in our constituencies. It is absurd to suggest that there has not been a debate about the issues.

In the short time that the guillotine motion allows for debate, I wish to raise a number of issues in which I have an interest. One is the suggestion to open district health authority activities to public scrutiny. As is set out in new clauses 55 and 56, it is appropriate that health authorities come under the same discipline as local authorities and hold their meetings in public and open to public scrutiny. I hope that that proposal will be considered.

It is also important—I believe that my hon. Friend the Minister will give me some comfort on this issue—that local authorities can give, without anxiety about whether they might be breaking the law, cash assistance to the disabled to organise their own affairs. That is the ultimate in consumer power, and a great deal of the Bill is designed to strengthen the position of the consumer within the system.

I have also tabled an amendment about costs in rural areas. There is no doubt that the delivery of community care in rural areas is, in many respects, more expensive than in the inner cities. The hon. Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke) will agree that one issue that we need to canvass—if not in this debate, in the wider community outside—is the whole question of advocacy. It is improper to expect confused, vulnerable, disabled and frightened consumers to take an active part in the assessment procedure unless they have someone with them who can put their point of view and help them to understand what the process is about.

The role of the voluntary organisations, whether in the delivery of health care or community care, is absolutely central to the way that those services must develop. Unquestionably they will be major contractors. They will continue to be major suppliers. I suspect that every hon. Member has been approached by voluntary organisations that are torn between their desire to become effective members of the contracting organisations that deliver care and their wish not to lose their freedom of action and their spontaneity, by being swallowed by public providers calling the tune. That is a central issue and I am sorry that there may not be time to debate it tonight.

The motion is reasonable, given the extraordinary lengths to which the Opposition went to make their point during the long debate in our earlier proceedings.

5.59 pm

Mr. Charles Kennedy (Ross, Cromarty and Skye): As quite a few hon. Members want to contribute to the debate, I shall be brief. One comment arises out of the latter statement of the hon. Member for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe). In a sense the debate on the guillotine motion resembles the debate last night on new clause 1. With the sole exception of his speech—even he expressed hesitation about it—there does not seem to have been any strong argument in favour of what the Secretary of State for Health has put forward on the guillotine motion. The Government seem to be as isolated on this mechanical issue as they were on the issue of principle about income support and residential homes.

It is sad also that, if the guillotine is passed, there may not be proper debate on another issue where we might have had a rerun of what happened last night, which was itself a rerun of the proceedings in Committee. I refer to the question of ring fencing which has already been mentioned by the hon. Member for Macclesfield (Mr. Winterton). A proper, full-scale Report stage debate on ring fencing would probably draw out speech after speech from Conservative Back-Bench Members who would find themselves at one with Members of all Opposition parties. That would act as a useful lever on the Department of Health, if not at this stage in this House, certainly in another place. I can only hope that the signal sent last night at least on the income support issue, will find an echo elsewhere and that the Government will be forced to compromise on it.

The attitude of the Secretary of State for Health was epitomised by a phrase used in another political age—a period of silence would frequently be much appreciated. When he became more silent on the ambulance dispute we

[Mr. Charles Kennedy]

suddenly found that there was progress and a settlement. His lack of belligerence at certain times in Committee made for smoother progress than might otherwise have been the case. It was only when he could not contain himself any longer and started saying that the constructive co-operation of Opposition Members in Committee represented a cave-in on the principles of the Bill that he got people's backs up. What he said was a crude misrepresentation of what had happened.

The Secretary of State is on extremely thin ice in trying to refer to events during the night as filibustering after the dozens of hours spent on the Bill in Committee. It was wrong of him to talk about filibustering when, in last night's debate and consistently in Committee, the proceedings were distinguished by regular contributions from Conservative Back-Bench Members, unlike proceedings on many other Bills when Government Back-Bench Members are clamped. We had constructive contributions frequently from the hon. Members for Mid-Kent, for Ealing, Acton (Sir G. Young) and for Chislehurst (Mr. Sims), who spoke to great effect in last night's debate. Other Conservative Members also contributed to the debates, so there is no basis for saying that there has been filibustering or procedural nonsense. The Secretary of State, with his Jekyll and Hyde character, could not contain himself any longer and had to get belligerent and abusive about the Opposition. We all know what happened as a result. If he is looking for someone to blame, he should look no further than himself.

The Bill is really composed of four measures. No doubt my colleague from the Scottish National party, the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan (Mr. Salmond), would echo my view that we should have had separate Scottish legislation. For the proceedings on the Bill to be guillotined compounds the problem. Members representing Scottish constituencies cannot give the legislation proper scrutiny at the all-important Report stage when they should have an opportunity to contribute. For the Secretary of State to say at the Dispatch Box, as he did in opening the debate, that things began to go seriously wrong during the Scottish section of the debate was ludicrous. Apart from Second Reading last autumn, that was the first time that Scottish Members other than the four who served in Committee had an opportunity to speak about the impact of the Bill on Scotland. It ill behoves an English Secretary of State to criticise the Scots for time-wasting when they were taking their first opportunity to talk about the implication of the Bill for Scotland.

I echo the comments about the need for proper timetabling procedures for legislation. Procedure could be much improved if half the legislation which takes up time into the wee small hours at Westminster was hived off to a democratically elected Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh, where it could be properly scrutinised and debated. In the words of Lord Home, which should commend themselves to a Conservative Government, we want more decisions about Scotland taken in Scotland by Scots. The farce of the guillotine and the completely inadequate way that the remainder of this flagship of Government legislation will proceed underscore the need for root-and-branch constitutional reform.

6.5 pm

Mr. Michael Carttiss (Great Yarmouth): "Parliament exists for no other object than that of wasting time". Those are not my words, although I have frequently thought that since I arrived here in 1983; they are the words of the great-grandfather of my hon. Friends the Members for Crawley (Mr. Soames) and for Davyhulme (Mr. Churchill). Lord Randolph Chuchill said that when he was a Member of the House, albeit after the disillusionment of having resigned as Chancellor of the Exchequer from Lord Salisbury's Government when he seemed to think that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, not the Prime Minister, should run the Government. That fact remains; it was ever thus.

I have to register my disquiet at the timetable motion which was moved by my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Health. Visiting Parliament here at the beginning of the 18th century, Peter the Great—incidentally, he introduced the poll tax in Russia in 1717, but it did not last—*[Interruption.]* In response to those comments, I might also say that he was the father of the Russian navy. I happen to believe that when a ship is in stormy waters, the ship's captain should not be thrown overboard while the crew argue among themselves about who should take the helm. There might be a case for removing some of the cargo.

I echo the comments of my hon. Friend the Member for Staffordshire, South (Mr. Cormack), already repeated in this brief debate, who said that there is too much legislation. I believe that it is my function as a Conservative to reduce government rather than have legislation all the time. There is far too much legislation and it is not examined closely and carefully enough.

I am sorry that the hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) is not here because, reluctantly, I have to pay tribute to his speech when moving new clause 1. It was one of the most powerful speeches that I have heard on the Health Service. I found the speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Maidstone (Miss Widdecombe) in support of new clause 1 very moving. It was backed up by irrefutable logic when she talked about the lack of cost-effectiveness. I understood the points made by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Security in response. I understood his difficulty and I went along with him reluctantly on the losing side in the vote.

Mr. Rowe: My hon. Friend will agree that both those powerful speeches related to defects in the present system of delivering care which the Bill is trying to improve.

Mr. Carttiss: I wonder how many other defects in the present system could have been talked about to the benefit of the Bill if we had had more time. I am sorry that my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Health, who moved this deplorable motion, is not present in the Chamber to hear my remarks. Of course, I understand that he has been on duty all night. However, I cannot agree with his comments about the debate on the Scottish parts of the Bill.

I was present in the Chamber for most of that debate. Although I did not agree with Opposition Members, I do not believe that they can be accused of being particularly long-winded. They had points that they wanted to make, and they made them. Although the charge of long-windedness might be more attributable to Welsh Members, I do not believe that any of them were wasting

time when they debated Welsh issues in the Bill. I did not agree with my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State when he referred to the Scottish and Welsh parts of the debate as though they were a waste of time. There is not much point sitting through the night on these matters. Indeed, I am not anxious to sit through the night once more and possibly lose my Adjournment debate on Thursday on the uniform business rate in the way that my hon. Friend the Member for Torridge and Devon, West (Miss Nicholson) lost her Adjournment debate earlier today.

Doctors who make life-and-death decisions will be working all through the night this week—they did so last week and they will do so again next week. We are introducing proposals to change their working conditions radically. The least that we should be prepared to do is to give four days and, if necessary, four nights to what the right hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot) has already described as the most radical reform—which I support—of the Health Service since its establishment.

I am glad that I am not a Parliamentary Private Secretary. However, my brief sojourn as deputy for my hon. Friend the Member for Croydon, North-West (Mr. Malins) assisting my hon. Friend the Minister for Health has not deflected me from voting according to how I think. I believe that it is a disgrace that discussion on the Bill has been cut short.

As the hon. Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke) said, there were nearly 250 amendments to the Bill. It cannot be right to try to squeeze those in during such a short time. My hon. Friend the Member for Staffordshire, South (Mr. Cormack) made some interesting observations about the way in which we should timetable our business and that point often crops up. My hon. Friend the Member for Lancashire, West (Mr. Hind) raised a point of order in which he explained that if we did not debate the guillotine motion we could spend more time discussing the Bill. My hon. Friend the Member for Lancashire, West has now left the Chamber. However, the fact remains that not taking time discussing whether we should be cutting short consideration of an important piece of legislation negates the parliamentary democracy that we are here to defend and support.

A very high-powered Cabinet committee was rightly chaired by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister. She showed her absolute commitment to an improved National Health Service which provides care free at the point of delivery. In parenthesis, I must state that I am sorry that we do not provide eye tests and dental inspections free at the point of delivery, too. If we had had time, perhaps I would have moved an amendment to that effect.

When a Government are temporarily on the ropes, coming back for a knock-out blow that will floor Opposition Members at the general election to which the hon. Member for Livingston referred earlier, it is a good idea to come out fighting. The Government should not say to the referee, "Let us cut out the next 10 rounds."

We have a first-class coast—I am sorry, I meant to say first-class case. I always talk about the coast because that is where I come from and I never miss an opportunity to refer to that excellent place. We have a first-class case for National Health Service reforms and the community care legislation.

The James Paget hospital that I share with my hon. Friend the Member for Waveney (Mr. Porter)—whom I am delighted to see in the Chamber now—has suffered particularly from the system of financing hospital services that dates back to a Labour Government. That system of financing hospital services penalises the efficient provider. By catering for far more patients than it is financed for, the James Paget hospital must cut beds and operations at the end of each financial year. It is a victim of the system of financing hospital services which the Bill will help to correct with its proposals for self-governing trusts and the policy of ensuring that funds follow patients.

I have received many more letters over the past two years about the National Health Service reforms than about any other issue since I became an hon. Member. Opponents of Sunday trading sent me the second highest number of letters and the community charge, although generating a lot of mail, by no means compares with the concern expressed in numerous letters about the NHS, from patients, elderly people and doctors in my constituency.

Earlier I went off at a tangent and declared my allegiance to my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister whom I regard as second to none. I was about to refer to the fact that for a year a Cabinet committee considered ways of improving what Opposition Members must admit is a service that needs significant improvement. Those improvements are not achievable just by pouring more money into the service.

We all agree that the NHS should be improved. That high-powered Cabinet committee deliberated for a year and produced a White Paper in January 1989 entitled "Working for Patients". After a year of video performances the like of which have never been seen before —I cannot imagine what Lord Randolph Churchill would have thought of them—there has been a massive consultative campaign. However, we are now told that, because we had two days on Second Reading and many hours in Committee, we should limit ourselves now to a two-and-a-half day debate on Report and Third Reading of this vital legislation. We could win many arguments in the debates if we were prepared to have them here where they should take place.

Reluctant as I am to join Opposition Members, particularly in view of the behaviour of a handful of them at the end of this morning's proceedings, I must vote against the timetable motion, because in reply to all the letters that my constituents have written to me, and having advanced the reasons why I consider that my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State is right to want to reform the National Health Service, I have told my constituents that in the Houses of Parliament there will be the opportunity to move, consider and debate amendments to the legislation. Even if I do not agree with Oppostion Members, we should debate the points that they raise in the Chamber. If not here, where else?

If we have a debate of only two and a half days limited by the guillotine, I cannot honestly face my constituents and say that amendments to and consideration of this important Health Service reform have received the time that my constituents have every right to expect.

6.20 pm

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): I shall be as brief as possible. I have tabled an amendment to the allocation of time motion which simply extends the time on the first day, that is today, for an hour. It is a gesture for all those

[Mr. Bob Cryer]

wavering Conservatives who will go into the Government Lobby with what they describe as a heavy heart. If they have the chance to vote, they can give us at least another hour without going boldly and courageously into the Opposition Lobby, as the hon. Member for Great Yarmouth (Mr. Carttiss) said that he would. He is scandalised by the way in which this elective dictatorship guillotines parliamentary and, indeed, party rights.

The Secretary of State alleged that new clause 4 was the subject of delay. Four Members could not speak in the debate on that new clause, because the Government moved the closure. It was an important debate about proper, adequate and democratic consultation on the opting-out procedures for hospitals, which will affect so many of our constituents. To suppose that such a major item could simply be disposed of in two or three hours is to live in cloud cuckoo land. Every constituency is affected by the proposals for opting out, either now or in the future.

I wanted to speak to new clause 4. The Westwood hospital for the mentally handicapped in my constituency is set in beautiful rolling acres. A trust is being set up by some officials without the consent of the staff or people in the area. A tiny clique of politically motivated people are setting up the hospital to become a self-governing trust. I believe that they intend to sell off the land to property developers because the hospital is set amidst many rolling acres of great value.

The legislation now involves capital charges and a capital register. It will propel even people of good will who want the NHS to succeed and do not wish to shift out of it through the opting-out proposals to examine their capital assets with a view to flogging them off. In the case of the NHS, valuable potential development sites may be sold.

I wished to speak in the debate, but I and three other hon. Members could not do so.

Mr. David Hinchliffe (Wakefield): Five hon. Members.

Mr. Cryer: Yes—in total, five hon. Members could not speak in the debate. They all had genuine reasons for wishing to participate. That shows the falsehood of the Secretary of State's suggestion that there were attempts to delay the legislation.

Other new clauses will inevitably be curtailed by the fearsome guillotine motion. One deals with controlling excessive charges by private hospitals. We do not like the principle of the Bill, but the Opposition have to make a decision. It is a fairly grey area. Should we continue to oppose the principle or try to ameliorate the worst effects of the legislation by attempting to inject accountability?

We are trying the latter course, but we have been denied the opportunity to pursue that course, not because we have taken a long time but because of the Government's absolute determination to cram the legislation through Parliament just as they have crammed Bill after Bill through the House.

The Clerk's Department and *Hansard* are overloaded with work. *Hansard* Committee reports are being delayed because the whole system is strained by this wretched Government trampling on parliamentary rights. Not only Opposition Members take that view. Several Conservative Members have seen how the legislature is being abused. I shall not take up too much time telling you about it, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but the Government are overstretching the House not only in primary legislation but in secondary legislation. They pour out more statutory instruments than the Labour Government did. The Government are trampling through the legislature powers to enable Ministers to produce delegated legislation. The Minister for Health smiles. I inform her that such pieces of legislation now exceed 2,500 a year. Often they have criminal sanctions, which are signed and authorised by Ministers. Inadequate time is provided on the Floor of the House to deal with delegated legislation. Parliament is stretched and strained. It is time that we re-examined secondary legislation, because the Government have abused the system.

We should have had time to debate private hospital charges. When the business statement was made, I suggested that the guillotine motion should include a little time for us to discuss the fact that some 22 Conservative Members have shareholdings in medical concerns that seek to make a profit out of people's pain and suffering. That is what it boils down to. I suggested to the Chief Whip that it would be handy if we had some time set aside to examine how P and O, British and Commonwealth Holdings, Trusthouse Forte and BET have all put their dirty fingers into privatisation. Such companies have given £1 million to the Tories since 1983. We should put that on the record to show that some hon. Members' votes are not as objective and neutral as might be supposed.

New clause 8 deals with junior doctors. It would limit their week to 72 hours to give them an easy time.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: Easier.

Mr. Cryer: I was being ironic. I know that I should not be ironic, because irony does not show in *Hansard*. The hon. Gentleman is right. I should have said "an easier time." Junior doctors are strained beyond endurance. Life and limb is at risk. On Boxing day, I joined a group of junior doctors outside Bradford royal infirmary who were demonstrating that they were reaching the point of going beyond endurance. I expect that other hon. Members met doctors in their constituencies on the same day. The doctors told me that lives are at risk.

I feel slightly seedy today because I have not had any sleep during the past 24 hours, but junior doctors go without sleep for two or three nights. They deal with the most intricate——

Mr. McCartney: Parts of our body.

Mr. Cryer: Well, human beings are the most intricate items on our planet.

The skill and dedication of doctors is a rare combination, yet we inflict such long hours on them. I wanted to debate new clause 8, because I had discussed the difficulties of junior doctors with those whom I met that day. It is because of the Government's action that junior doctors have to endure that penance for their professional determination. The new clause was another opportunity lost because of the Government's attitude of elective dictatorship. That phrase was used by Quintin Hogg about the Labour Government, who did not have a Labour majority. Yet a Government with an overall majority of 150 is abusing their powers in parliamentary legislation. It is time that that was stopped. I hope that many Members, including Tory Members, will vote against the guillotine motion.

6.29 pm

Mr. Peter Thurnham (Bolton, North-East): The hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) added little to the debate. Whenever he is on his feet, he seems to compete with junior doctors to see who can work the longest hours.

The hon. Member for Ross, Cromarty and Skye (Mr. Kennedy) compared my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State to Jekyll and Hyde, but surely the comparison is more appropriate for the hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook). In yesterday's debate, which I think we all felt was a good debate, he started by saying:

"I stand at the Dispatch Box under the novel burden of speaking to a new clause that has attracted the signatures of more than 30 Conservative Members. I respect their support, in return for which I shall seek to be as non-partisan as it is possible for me to be. I may have to compensate later tonight for that non-partisan spirit."—[*Official Report*, 13 March 1990; Vol. 169, c. 197-8.]

The hon. Gentleman is the Jekyll and Hyde; that is the reason why we are having to debate the guillotine motion now, which we are all sorry to debate, to curtail the Bill, which is what we want to discuss as it contains so many important issues. This gives us a chance to consider the important matter of how the House does its business.

My hon. Friend the Member for Staffordshire, South (Mr. Cormack) commented on the work of Committees. Amendment No. 158 is tabled in the name of my hon. Friend the Member for Gedling (Mr. Mitchell). Perhaps I can remind him of the book "Lobby Fodder" written by the former Member for Gedling, Sir Philip Holland, shortly after he left the House. In it he referred to the history of Standing Committees and said that the original Standing Committees had a membership of only one. That must be the way to proceed rapidly in Committee. There is certainly no opportunity of waffling.

Amendment No. 158 refers to the need for the Audit Commission to have greater involvement. On Second Reading, I pressed for greater involvement of the Audit Commission. I was aware from constituency experience of the need for the Audit Commission to look at the costs and quality of service provided in community care. Bolton faces a crisis in community care because of a £440,000 shortfall in funding for the neighbourhood network homes. I am pleased that the Under-Secretary of State is shortly to visit Bolton, when I hope that he will have an opportunity to look into that. I should have liked time to discuss these problems and how the Audit Commission should address them.

The North-West regional health authority is fixed with a model for how community care should be conducted. It says that the dowry of £18,900 a year which it provides is perfectly adequate to care for people and to provide a reserve, so that those who cannot go into institutions, as they would have done in the old days, can also be cared for. The costs in Bolton are working out much higher, at £22,000 a year, so there is no spare provision to take people in, although there is a desperate need for that facility.

I should like the health authority to consider alternative models. I have pressed for the chairman to visit Brookvale in the neighbouring constituency of Bury, South and see the high standard of care provided there, on a larger scale than neighbourhood network homes, but at a lower cost. It provides the ample therapy services which are so badly needed, within a total cost of £10,000 a year. Admittedly the capital facilities are provided by voluntary donations. I should like to see a similar facility in Bolton, where it is desperately needed as it has an historic lack of provision.

It has not been possible to provide people with care in Bolton, and they have had to be moved elsewhere. Parents, some of whom are frail and elderly, are at their wits' end, unable to care for children who are now in their twenties. They are looking for the provision of those services in Bolton. I should have liked time to discuss that need and the reason for the Audit Commisssion to look closely into why there should be such variations in costs.

Why should the costs be so high for Bolton's neighbourhood network homes when they are so much lower in Brookvale, where the standard of care is so high? The regional health authority says that there is a cushion for costs in its figure of £18,900. If that is so, what is it, and is it adequate to meet the great demand for care from families who need respite services and daytime therapy services? I am disappointed that the debate developed in a partisan way, as the hon. Member for Livingston clearly wanted. It has denied us the opportunity to discuss many of the positive aspects of the Bill and the need for the Audit Commission to look at a whole range of factors in the NHS and community care. For all of us, the Health Service must be a priority issue in our constituency. Clearly, in the next year or two, community care will have a high priority while we work out how the new arrangement will come into place.

I welcome yesterday's debate. I should like more occasions like that and fewer when we are forced to debate a timetable motion to save us sitting up all night. Such behaviour is little understood by the public, who want us to discuss the meat of the issues.

6.35 pm

Mr Jim Cousins (Newcastle upon Tyne, Central): The problem facing the House goes right back to the Bill itself. It puts a whole range of new bits of political and institutional machinery in place, but it does not spell out how they are to be used or paid for. That is why, after four days of discussion of community care in Committee, we identified two central issues, both of which have to do with money, as the hon. Member for Macclesfield (Mr. Winterton) pointed out. One related to income support rates, which are a basic building block of the system, and the other to ring-fencing grants. Yesterday evening we spent a further five hours debating income support rates. I doubt whether a single Member feels that even that issue has been sorted out. As the hon. Member for Macclesfield says, we shall not reach ring-fencing.

Other issues emerged in Committee. On the last day we found that these NHS contracts could, through the back door of the medical negligence system, have some legal status. We were wholly unable to explore the implications of that, although that important point, which also leads back to cash, was there to be resolved.

We discussed the issue of planning agreements, which is the Government's term for the connections between health services and local authority social services. We were unable to establish in Committee how that system was to be put in place. The Under-Secretary of State for Wales kindly offered a little note that he had done to clarify the position in Wales, but we were not told how the system would work in England.

[Mr. Jim Cousins]

Then we had the whole business of NHS contracts. Throughout the Committee stage we pressed for examples to show what those contracts would be like, so that we could see the new creature and sniff it. Finally, the document emerged after the Committee stage was concluded. That is why many more important issues must be discussed and why there are all these new clauses and amendments.

The Secretary of State made a truly remarkable speech starting at 6.45 am. The bluster to which we have become accustomed was there in his style, but the language was entirely of retreat. Markets were out, prices were out and commerce was out. The whole language of the new system that we have spent many months discussing—all of that was out. The whole thing was going to be need-driven and quality-driven. We discovered that the entire financial system of the NHS that had been rejected was to come back in. In a series of throwaway remarks we discovered that there would be safety-netting for the teaching hospitals, that there would be a special deal for London, that there would be a whole series of special procedures to deal with matters that, having been bundled out through the front door, would be brought back in through the back door. And all that we learnt at a quarter to seven this morning in a speech that lasted for an hour.

The interesting thing is that, because of the guillotine, we shall now be unable to explore with the Secretary of State the implications of those very important remarks. Was this a U-turn, or was it simply a giddy fit brought on by the hour? We shall never know. Possibly the Secretary of State himself does not know. Had we had an opportunity to explore the new clauses and the other amendments, we—the Secretary of State and the whole House together—might have clarified the position. With our assistance, we might have learnt what he thought. But we shall not now have that opportunity.

It is interesting that as the Secretary of State was speaking at a quarter to seven this morning I was receiving a message that ward 1 of the Royal Victoria infirmary in Newcastle is about to close. The unit general manager at the hospital is assuring the world that the patients in ward 1, some of whom are seriously ill, could become day patients. That is care in the community with a will.

That brings me back to the fundamental point: will we have an NHS that is refocused on the new needs that all of us, on both sides of the House, are now willing to recognise? I refer to the needs of the disabled and the elderly—needs that go not so much with life itself as with the quality of living. Are we to build on that? Shall we meet those needs by an entirely new means and drive the cash forward on that basis, or shall we go back to the old system of cash limits? This we do not know, and at a quarter to seven this morning the Secretary of State himself was somewhat confused. Perhaps, given the time, that was understandable.

The debate about whether the NHS is to be need-driven or cash-controlled, and about what are to be the priority issues—elective acute surgery or the problems that I have just described—will continue. Those issues will remain to be resolved. The Secretary of State, by this guillotine and by other measures, may eventually get his Bill. He may have all these institutional toys to play with, but it is clear that he has no answer to our question. However, as my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) said, the people have the answer, and they will decide.

6.42 pm

Mr. Kenneth Hind (Lancashire, West): I am grateful for the opportunity to intervene briefly in the debate. It has been obvious to all hon. Members on the Government side that progress during the Committee stage of this Bill was excellent. The issues were being discussed. But then my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Health made a remark that Front-Bench members of the Opposition interpreted as criticism of their handling of the position. They did not want to give their trade union paymasters and supporters outside the impression that they were fighting in Committee on a trench warfare basis; they wanted to give the impression that they were fighting a fierce battle. But what we saw after 10 o'clock last night was nothing more than an attempt to filibuster and, for the benefit of people outside, to place on the Government the blame for the shortage of time. Opposition Members have been trying to indicate that they are fighting this Bill much harder than they really are.

Mr. John Battle (Leeds, West): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Hind: I will give way in good time. No doubt the hon. Gentleman will get his chance.

As I looked round the Chamber earlier, it was clear that everybody wanted to debate the issues that are contained in the thick bundle of amendments, which no doubt we have all read carefully. But last night we had a filibuster. We had a two-hour debate on the changing of boundaries. We had a debate about matters in Scotland. We had debates about all sorts of things, including a speech of one hour and 48 minutes by the hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) who, no doubt, was trying to restore his reputation as a doughty fighter for the Health Service. I am afraid that it came too late.

To me and, I think, to my colleagues it is very sad that if the obvious had not had to be recognised at 4.15 pm today by a decision that the filibustering tactics—the attempts to prevent reasonable debate on many of the items in these amendments—should be ended, we could have had an extra three hours' debate on many of these important issues. But that was not to be. When the hon. Member for Livingston gave way to me, I gave him an opportunity to agree with that. But he was not prepared to accept the inevitable; he wanted to carry on and to state his objections. Consequently, as was pointed out by the hon. Member for Newcastle upon Tyne, Central (Mr. Cousins), we have been denied the opportunity to deal with the issues of junior hospital doctors, contracts with private hospitals, registers of private contractors, joint financing, contracts of competitive tendering, and the provision of residential care. These are all items contained in this bundle of amendments which, with reasonableness on both sides, could have been debated more than adequately in two and a half days. Now the Opposition do not accept the two and a half days that was agreed through the usual channels, whereas at the beginning they did agree. Now their supporters outside are asking them why they agreed to a timetable, and they have had to demonstrate their parliamentary virility by fighting these matters tooth and nail.

Mr. Allen McKay (Barnsley, West and Penistone): Let me point out, for the hon. Gentleman's information, that there was no agreement. Secondly, in two and a half days there are 60 hours, not 17 hours.

Mr. Hind: Clearly the hon. Gentleman and the Government Whips are in dispute over that agreement.

It is a matter of deep regret that, because of last night's tactics, we are being denied the opportunity to debate some of these matters. I am afraid that last night the House of Commons, in the eyes of the public, did itself no good. The public will have seen for the first time the kind of tactics that lead to the need for the guillotine. I hope that they will recognise that, unfortunately, the guillotine is occasionally necessary. I shall go into the Lobby tonight to vote for this guillotine because I know that, by doing so, I can guarantee that, from this point, there will be a sensible debate on important issues.

6.48 pm

Mr. Alex Salmond (Banff and Buchan): Daily, the House of Commons does itself no good in the eyes of the public. Last night was one of the few occasions when it has done itself some good in the eyes of the public.

I shall be brief because other hon. Members will wish to take their only opportunity to comment on the remainder of the legislation. I wish to refer to the arrogance with which the Government have presented the guillotine. The Patronage Secretary and the Secretary of State said that the reason for the guillotine was a breakdown between the usual channels. What commitments were given, if any, is a matter of dispute. For many parties, never mind Members, the usual channels are irrelevant. We are not party to discussions between the usual channels. The Government's argument that we must be punished and denied our rights to comment on part of the legislation because they believe that there has been a breakdown between the usual channels is the ultimate insult to Members who are not responsible for the secret backroom deals between the two Front Benches.

The hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) referred to the procedure that we are asked to authorise, whereby some 100 Government amendments will be taken together, thus depriving us of the right not only to debate them but to vote on them.

There is another pernicious aspect of the guillotine which is without precedent—the nomination of seven favoured amendments among the 100 or more on the amendment paper. The Government, by some mysterious process, have chosen seven amendments to push through without debate. I should like them to say exactly how those seven amendments were chosen. What was wrong, for example, with new clause 72, tabled by my hon. Friend the Member for Angus, East (Mr. Welsh)? Was there any discussion on the Government Front Bench as to why that modest measure should not be given the favoured treatment given to the seven other amendments? That new clause provides for a commission to offer protection, in terms of quality control of community care in Scotland, for the most vulnerable sections of the community—the mentally handicapped.

Obviously the force of the argument behind the seven amendments cannot have caused the Government to accept them, because no argument will be deployed.

Mr. Battle: New clause 12 has also not been chosen. It concerns last night's debate on residential homes and income support. The Minister promised us that we should return to that issue today. Is he afraid to have such a debate because the Government would suffer the same defeat today as they suffered last night on that issue?

Mr. Salmond: The point is well made, and I well understand why the Government are frightened. Even in this debate on the guillotine motion, few Conservative voices have been raised to defend the truncation of debate.

Scottish Members have long since lost the right to decide. On one Bill after another, we have expressed our view of what we believe and what we have learnt from our experience but have found that view swamped by English Members who often, with one or two honourable exceptions, do not even listen to Scottish debates. There is no better example of that than the poll tax legislation, when even the English Tory rebels did not vote against the Scottish legislation because they were not there to hear the arguments. We have lost the right to make decisions on legislation affecting Scotland and we are increasingly losing the right to debate it.

The Bill is an example of Scottish and English legislation being coupled together denying Scottish Members the opportunity to make their points. We are increasingly losing the right even to register our protests on particular aspects of the legislation. What is so pernicious about the guillotine motion is that Scottish Members will not even be able to register their opposition to specific Government proposals or their support for specific Opposition amendments. That is not only intolerable and insupportable—I suggest to the Government that it will not be accepted by the Scottish people.

6.54 pm

Mr. James Couchman (Gillingham): I have only about a minute in which to make a quick point. As a member of the Standing Committee, I remind the House that this important Bill has been discussed in Committee, line by line and clause by clause. I hope that no one will suggest that the Opposition's antics to force the guillotine on us means that the Bill will not have been properly considered in the House. It has been properly considered.

The hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) knows precisely why he has chosen his tactics on Report. The hon. Member for Barnsley, West and Penistone (Mr. McKay) talked of 60 hours being two and a half days, but he knows that that was a delusion. He knows what parliamentary days are because he is a very experienced Member. He should not deny that there were discussions between the Front Benches on how long the Report stage should last—*[Interruption.]* The hon. Member shakes his head, but I have seen letters written by an hon. Member who is sitting on the Labour Front Bench which expressed that conclusion.

6.55 pm

Ms. Harriet Harman (Peckham): The guillotine motion is simply a Government attempt to extinguish debate on this most important of Bills. It is a fitting, if grubby, end to the Bill's passage through the House of Commons. The Government's conduct has been marked from the outset by obstinacy and irrationality. I should like to remind the House of the genesis of the Bill—in a cash crisis in the

[Ms. Harriet Harman]

National Health Service. Instead of responding to public opinion and the demands that the Government should invest sufficient resources in the Health Service to end the waiting lists and rebuild crumbling hospitals and community services, the Government's response was to set up a review. It was a closed review, undertaken by people with closed minds behind closed doors. There was to be no consultation. The Government were not prepared to enter into a debate.

The White Paper was published with the announcement that there was to be consultation on the detail. The Government were not prepared to talk to anyone who had anything to say, except those who could suggest how to make these unworkable plans workable. They talked only to people who would agree with them. Even the presidents of the royal colleges were sent packing. The Bill and the White Paper were deeply unpopular among people who worked in the NHS and above all, among the public. That was the case in every region, in Scotland and Wales and among people from all walks of life.

The Government's response to public opinion was to embark on a campaign of smears and misrepresentation.

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman (Lancaster): No.

Ms. Harman: Yes.

Mr. Couchman: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. The House should know also of the smears offered by the hon. Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman) in her bogus press releases which were issued throughout the land——

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): Order. I thank the hon. Member very much, but that is nothing to do with the Chair.

Ms. Harman: I was interested to hear the hon. Member for Gillingham (Mr. Couchman). What he says certainly does not agree with what the Secretary of State would have us believe, which is that the Committee stage was uncontroversial. Perhaps I could tell Members who were not on the Standing Committee that those press releases merely informed the constituents of members of the Committee of their representatives' actions to damage the the Health Service.

The Government's response to the overwhelming tide of public opinion against the Bill was a campaign of smears and misrepresentation. Let me remind the House of those misrepresentations: that people who were opposed to the Bill must be stupid—they did not understand the Bill; that people who were opposed to the Bill must be dishonest—they understood the Bill but misrepresented it; or that people who were against the Bill must be reactionary and against any change in the Health Service.

The Government tried to back up that campaign of smears and misrepresentation with £2 million-worth of public money spent on videos, travelling road shows and leaflets to try to dislodge from the public's mind its conviction that the Bill's proposals were profoundly against the public interest.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett (Pembroke): Will the hon. Lady acknowledge that the reason why Labour filibustered and disrupted the House last night was that its paymasters in COHSE and NUPE were unhappy with the Opposition for not fighting the Bill in Committee, and gave orders that they had to do so last evening?

Ms. Harman: If the hon. Gentleman was really in touch with the views of voluntary, patient and medical organisations, and with the relevant unions, he would know that they cared as desperately as we did that we should not play into the Government's hands and risk having vital clauses on community care guillotined. We had the support of all those organisations.

The opportunity was presented on Report for right hon. and hon. Members representing constituencies in Scotland and Wales who did not serve on the Committee but whose constituents are crucially affected by the Bill to make their contributions. Much has been said about the speech of one hour 40 minutes made by my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook), but the speech of the Secretary of State lasted one hour 10 minutes. When the Government's campaign of smear and misrepresentation failed, they resorted to cynical assurances and promises that they never intended to keep.

Mr. McCartney: I thank my hon. Friend for giving way to me, as a Member of Parliament representing a constituency in the north-west that is also affected by the Bill, and who has also been denied an opportunity to participate in the debate.

There is before the House a report by the Select Committee on Social Services which was prepared especially for the Bill's Report stage, but which has not yet been debated, despite attempts by members of that Select Committee over the past two days. The Secretary of State has made no attempt whatsoever to introduce that Committee's recommendations into the debate.

What are we to do if the topics coverd by that report are guillotined out of debate tonight? What is to be done if the work of the Select Committee can be so positively ignored after it has been directed by the House to prepare a report for specific consideration at the Report stage of a Bill?

Ms. Harman: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. The guillotine will prevent the House from hearing the views of members of that Select Committee and from voting on an amendment from those hon. Members that has been selected by Mr. Speaker. The Government are anxious to impose the guillotine because it will serve as a fig leaf to cover the Government's trail of broken promises and abandoned assurances that was exposed in Committee. We are to be denied an opportunity to insert into the Bill any of the safeguards promised by the Government.

Last night, the House was given five hours to debate income support. It voted to give protection to the elderly, but it will not have an opportunity to register a similar vote in favour of safeguarding patients who will lose because of the cash limits on drug budgets. Nor will right hon. and hon. Members be allowed to vote on the cash limits on practice budgets, which will also severely harm patients.

The House will be denied an opportunity to write into the Bill the safeguard that patients should have access to local services, or the Government's promise that patients will have a choice of hospitals. Right hon. and hon. Members will not be allowed to vote on the provision of adequate funds for making care in the community a reality. Nor will the House be able to write into the Bill the choice for people entering residential care of whether that care will be in the private or public sector.

The Report stage should give right hon. and hon. Members a chance to participate in debate on important issues on the Floor of the House if they were unable to do so in Committee. The guillotine denies them that opportunity. By doing so it also denies their constituents a voice in a matter of great importance to them. For the Government to take that action when they have no mandate to do so, and when there has been no consultation, is a stain on Parliament and on the Government. We shall vote against the guillotine.

7.4 pm

The Minister for Health (Mrs. Virginia Bottomley): By the time this 62-clause Bill leaves this House, we shall have completed 160 hours of debate. It is an important Bill and one about which right hon. and hon. Members feel deeply, and I shall respond to many of the points made during the debate on the timetable motion.

The hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) argued that no accommodation had been made for many of the points raised in Committee. I dispute that assertion, because many of the suggestions made in Committee have been incorporated. The hon. Member for Ross, Cromarty and Skye (Mr. Kennedy) asked for consultation with the medical practices committee before it is given directions, and two Government amendments to that effect have been tabled today.

My hon. Friend the Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) sought to extend the definition of pharmaceutical services, which is also covered by one of the Government amendments that will be allowed today. Incidentally, I appreciated the remarks of the hon. Member for Ross, Cromarty and Skye concerning the value of many contributions made by right hon. and hon. Members in all parts of the Committee. Certainly my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, Acton (Sir G. Young) made a very forceful contribution. He spoke of the importance of consultation on community care plans, as did the right hon. Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe (Mr. Morris).

It was pointed out that my hon. Friend the Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth), who is well known for his enlightened and benevolent social policies, had written into the Bill a requirement to consult to safeguard the interests of the disabled and the vulnerable. That is contained in an amendment tabled by my hon. Friend the Member for Acton which will be supported.

The hon. Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke) spoke of the importance of the Audit Commission, and that point was also taken up by my hon. Friend the Member for Gedling (Mr. Mitchell). Again, we have taken note of the views expressed in Committee, and such a provision will be included in the Bill. My hon. Friends the Members for Daventry (Mr. Boswell) and for Tayside, North produced clauses on charitable trust funds, which were also accepted by the Government. My hon. Friend the Member for Acton raised the question of university medical academic staff, and his proposals will also be reflected in the Bill.

One proposal made in Committee that it has not been possible to translate into an acceptable amendment at this stage was from my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe) for a cash payment for the disabled. I anticipate that such a provision would meet with the approval of the right hon. Member for Wythenshawe. The suggestion that there should be a system of empowerment certainly received the support of the hon. Member for Monklands, West in Committee. We shall return to that point with an amendment at a later date. As to the establishment of a complaints procedure, we also agreed to an amendment which will be incorporated in the Bill at a later stage.

The question of improving assessment was raised several times in Committee, as was the desirability of linking housing and health services. Again, at a later stage we shall introduce amendments covering precisely those aspects.

The hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) raised the question of the transfer of staff between the National Health Service and local authorities. Again, we shall be bringing forward proposals in that area.

I hope that my right hon. and hon. Friends and Opposition Members will feel that we have responded to a great number of the concerns expressed in Committee. As was made clear then, much of the advice and guidance that has been made available is now being translated into further guidance for the benefit of local authorities and others.

Mr. McCartney: The Minister refers to the advice and guidance that is being taken up. Will she give an assurance that when the Bill goes to another place it will incorporate amendments reflecting the recommendations in the Select Committee on Social Services report?

Mrs. Bottomley: The hon. Gentleman will know that we shall be responding to the Select Committee report. Resources are important, and we have made it clear throughout that adequate resources will be made available. Detailed discussions are taking place between the Department of Social Security and local authorities about the precise nature of the resources. However, it is a misunderstanding of the importance of community care to think that it depends only upon the size of the cheque book. We are seeking to establish assessment, community care plans and inspection units—a framework of care for the frail and the vulnerable which will translate and transform the position of many people who in the past had only the perverse incentive of residential care rather than the range of support in the community for which many hon. Members have campaigned for so long. It is outrageous for hon. Members to argue, as some have today, that there are somehow two Bills which are not closely related. For how long were hon. Members arguing that it was time for the Government to produce proposals implementing the Griffiths report? We now have an ideal opportunity to ensure that people can benefit from enhanced care, better quality patient care and more efficient and effective services in the Health Service and in the community as it is enormously important that local authorities have the opportunity to take up that challenge.

Returning to the points raised by hon. Members, my hon. Friends the Members for Staffordshire, South, (Mr. Cormack) and for Macclesfield (Mr. Winterton) and the right hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot) all spoke about procedure and the use of timetable motions. I shall of course ensure that my right hon. and learned Friend the Leader of the House is made aware of those concerns and thoughts.

My hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Kent asked particularly about new clauses 55 and 56 on access to

[Mrs. Bottomley]

information. Although we cannot meet those precise proposals at this stage, we support the objective of openness. The precise nature of the local authority arrangements compared with health authority arrangements are not entirely transferable, but we hope to incorporate some of the ideas in guidance.

My hon. Friend the Member for Great Yarmouth (Mr. Carttiss) spoke warmly about the health proposals and the implications for hospitals such as the James Paget hospital in his constituency. Many hon. Members feel most strongly that under the new system of money following the patient virtue should be rewarded, and that by having a virtuous circle rather than a vicious circle we shall be in a much better position to provide the care that we of all Governments have provided the resources to achieve.

The hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer), speaking to his amendment, mentioned the concerns of junior doctors and new clause 8. There has been considerable progress in reducing the hours that junior doctors work, but we are determined that all those involved in the deployment of junior doctors—the consultants, the doctors, the royal colleges and the management—should make further improvements in the hours worked by junior hospital doctors, but the hon. Gentleman will understand that we cannot support his amendment.

A timetable motion is always regrettable. However, we have had a lengthy and detailed debate on the Bill. Our discussions in Committee have not properly been recognised for providing many constructive and detailed opportunities to examine the clauses line by line resulting in a number of changes and developments which we are incorporating into the Bill. It is a major Bill which provides a major opportunity to ensure that patients are better cared for and that the endeavours of those who work in the Health Service are properly rewarded and that often monopolistic and monolithic health services are devolved and made responsive to patients. It provides general practitioners with an opportunity to influence far more closely the care that they provide for their patients, and, above all, it is a patients' charter.

It being three hours after the commencement of proceedings on the motion, MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER *put the Question necessary for the disposal of them, pursuant to Standing Order No. 81 (Allocation of time to Bills).*

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 214, Noes 292.

Division No. 123] **[7.14 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Margaret
Beggs, Roy
Beith, A. J.
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Blair, Tony
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Carttiss, Michael
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Faulds, Andrew
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Gould, Bryan
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Heffer, Eric S.
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hoey, Ms Kate *(Vauxhall)*
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howells, Geraint
Howells, Dr. Kim (Pontypridd)
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kennedy, Charles
Kilfedder, James
Kirkwood, Archy
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
McCrea, Rev William
Macdonald, Calum A.
McFall, John
McGrady, Eddie
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
Maclennan, Robert
McNamara, Kevin
Madden, Max
Maginnis, Ken
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Richardson, Jo
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Sillars, Jim
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Smith, J. P. *(Vale of Glam)*
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon Sir David
Steinberg, Gerry

Stott, Roger
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Rt Hon J. D. *(S'ford)*
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mr. John Battle.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amery, Rt Hon Julian
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Critchley, Julian
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fishburn, John Dudley
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Sir Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Hague, William
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Sir Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
Madel, David
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Norris, Steve
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)*
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Price, Sir David
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Rt Hon Nicholas
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, Sir William
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Rt Hon Ian *(Herts N)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thatcher, Rt Hon Margaret
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Tracey, Richard
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Waldegrave, Rt Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Walker, Rt Hon P. *(W'cester)*
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, Sir John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Dr. Mike

Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Alastair Goodlad and
Mr. Tony Durant.

Question accordingly negatived.
Main Question put:—
The House divided: Ayes 287, Noes 210.

Division No. 124] **[7.27 pm**

AYES

Adley, Robert
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amery, Rt Hon Julian
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Critchley, Julian
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fishburn, John Dudley
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Sir Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Hague, William
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Sir Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
Madel, David
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Norris, Steve
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)*
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Price, Sir David
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Rt Hon Nicholas
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, Sir William
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Rt Hon Ian *(Herts N)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thatcher, Rt Hon Margaret
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Tracey, Richard
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Waldegrave, Rt Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Walker, Rt Hon P. *(W'cester)*
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, Sir John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Alastair Goodlad and
Mr. Tony Durant.

NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Margaret
Beggs, Roy
Beith, A. J.
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Blair, Tony
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Faulds, Andrew
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Gould, Bryan
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Heffer, Eric S.
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hoey, Ms Kate *(Vauxhall)*
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howells, Geraint
Howells, Dr. Kim (Pontypridd)
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kennedy, Charles
Kilfedder, James
Kirkwood, Archy
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum A.
McFall, John
McGrady, Eddie
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
Maclennan, Robert
McNamara, Kevin
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Richardson, Jo
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Sillars, Jim
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Smith, J. P. *(Vale of Glam)*
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon Sir David
Steinberg, Gerry
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Rt Hon J. D. *(S'ford)*
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mr. John Battle.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Resolved,

That the following provisions shall apply to the remaining proceedings on the Bill:—

Report and Third Reading

1.—(1) The remaining proceedings on consideration and Third Reading of the Bill shall be completed in two allotted days.

(2) The proceedings on consideration shall be brought to a conclusion at midnight on the first allotted day.

(3) The proceedings on Third Reading shall be brought to a conclusion three hours after their commencement.

(4) Standing Order No. 80 (Business Committee) shall not apply.

Dilatory Motions

2. No dilatory Motion with respect to, or in the course of, proceedings on the Bill shall be made on an allotted day except by a member of the Government, and the Question on any such Motion shall be put forthwith.

Extra time on allotted days

3.—(1) On an allotted day, paragraph (1) of Standing Order No. 14 (Exempted business) shall apply to the proceedings on the Bill, but on the first allotted day it shall apply only for two hours after Ten o'clock.

(2) On the first allotted day, any period during which proceedings on the Bill may be proceeded with after Ten o'clock under paragraph (7) of Standing Order No. 20 (Adjournment on specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration) shall be in addition to the said period of two hours.

(3) If the first allotted day is one to which a Motion for the adjournment of the House under Standing Order No. 20 stands over from an earlier day, a period of time equal to the duration of the proceedings upon that Motion shall be added to the said period of two hours.

Private business

4. Any private business which has been set down for consideration at Seven o'clock on an allotted day shall, instead of being considered as provided by Standing Orders, be considered at the conclusion of the proceedings on the Bill on that day, and paragraph (1) of Standing Order No. 14 (Exempted business) shall apply to the private business for a period of three hours from the conclusion of the proceedings on the Bill or, if those proceedings are concluded before Ten o'clock, for a period equal to the time elapsing between Seven o'clock and the conclusion of those proceedings.

Estimates

5. Proceedings on the Bill or on any private business taken under paragraph 4 of this Order shall not be interrupted for

the purposes of Standing Order No. 53 (Questions on voting on estimates etc.) and if on an allotted day Mr. Speaker is directed by that Standing Order (as modified by the Order of the House [12th March]) to put questions at Ten o'clock he shall put those questions at Ten o'clock or at the conclusion of the proceedings on the private business, whichever is the later.

Conclusion of proceedings

6.—(1) For the purpose of bringing to a conclusion any proceedings which are to be brought to a conclusion at a time appointed by this Order and which have not previously been brought to a conclusion, Mr. Speaker shall forthwith put (so far as they are applicable and notwithstanding any Order of the House relating to the order in which the Bill is to be considered) the following Questions (but no others)—

(a) any Question already proposed from the Chair;

(b) any Question necessary to bring to a decision a Question so proposed (including, in the case of a new Clause or new Schedule which has been read a second time, the Question that the Clause or Schedule be added to the Bill);

(c) the Question that such of the amendments 139 to 141, 158, 256, 275, 276 and 341 as remain to be made be made to the Bill;

(d) the Question that the new Schedule (amendment 269) be added to the Bill;

(e) the Question that all remaining amendments standing in the name of a member of the Government be made to the Bill;

(f) any other Question necessary for the disposal of the business to be concluded;

and on a Motion so made for a new Clause or a new Schedule, Mr. Speaker shall put only the Question that the Clause or Schedule be added to the Bill.

(2) Proceedings under sub-paragraph (1) above shall not be interrupted under any Standing Order relating to the sittings of the House.

(3) If an allotted day is one on which a Motion for the adjournment of the House under Standing Order No. 20 (Adjournment on specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration) would, apart from this Order, stand over to Seven o'clock—

(a) that Motion shall stand over until the conclusion of any proceedings on the Bill which, under this Order, are to be brought to a conclusion at or before that time;

(b) the bringing to a conclusion of any proceedings on the Bill which, under this Order, are to be brought to a conclusion after that time shall be postponed for a period equal to the duration of the proceedings on that Motion.

(4) If an allotted day is one to which a Motion for the adjournment of the House under Standing Order No. 20 stands over from an earlier day, the bringing to a conclusion of any proceedings on the Bill which under this Order are to be brought to a conclusion on that day shall be postponed for a period equal to the duration of the proceedings on that Motion.

Supplemental orders

(7).—(1) The proceedings on any Motion made in the House by a member of the Government for varying or supplementing the provisions of this Order (including anything which might have been the subject of a report of the Business Committee) shall, if not previously concluded, be brought to a conclusion one hour after they have been commenced, and paragraph (1) of Standing Order No. 14 (Exempted business) shall apply to the proceedings.

(2) If on an allotted day on which any proceedings on the Bill are to be brought to a conclusion at a time appointed by this Order the House is adjourned, or the sitting is suspended, before that time no notice shall be required or a Motion made at the next sitting by a member of the Government for varying or supplementing the provisions of this Order.

Saving

8. Nothing in this Order shall

(a) prevent any proceedings to which the Order applies from being taken or completed earlier than is required by the Order; or

(b) prevent any business (whether on the Bill or not) from being proceeded with on any day after the completion of all such proceedings on the Bill as are to be taken on that day.

Recommittal

9.—(1) References in this Order to proceeding on consideration or proceedings on Third Reading include references to proceedings at those stage, respectively, for, on or in consequence of, recommittal.

(2) On an allotted day no debate shall be permitted on any Motion to recommit the Bill (whether as a whole or otherwise), and Mr. Speaker shall put forthwith any Question necessary to dispose of the Motion, including the Question on any amendment moved to the Question.

Interpretation

10. In this Order—

"allotted day" means any day (other than a Friday) on which the Bill is put down as first Government Order of the Day, provided that a Motion for allotting time to the proceedings on the Bill to be taken on that day either has been agreed on a previous day, or is set down for consideration on that day;

"the Bill" means the National Health Service and Community Care Bill.

Orders of the Day

National Health Service and Community Care Bill

As amended (in the Standing Committee), further considered.

[Relevant documents: Eighth Report, Session 1988-89, Resourcing the National Health Service: the Government's plans for the future of the NHS (House of Commons Paper No. 214-III); Second Report, Session 1989-90, Community Care: Future funding of Private and Voluntary Residential Care (House of Commons Paper No. 257); Third Report, Session 1989-90, Community Care: Funding for local authorities (House of Commons Paper No. 277); Minutes of Evidence taken on 17th, 24th and 31st January 1990 (House of Commons Papers No. 148-i, 173-i and 194-i); and the Government's Reply to the Eighth Report of Session 1988-89 (Cm. 851).]

Mr. Robin Cook (Livingston): On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. It may be for the convenience of the House if I say that, in the light of the vote, it is not our intention to move new clause 7. It might also be convenient to the House if we grouped new clauses 9 and 11 together, as they relate to competitive tendering.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): That is most helpful and certainly acceptable to the Chair and, I am sure, the House.

New clause 6

FAMILY HEALTH SERVICES AUTHORITIES AND HEALTH BOARDS (APPEALS FUNCTION)

'(1) A patient who is removed by a general medical practitioner from the patient list of that practice shall have a right of appeal to the Family Health Services Authority.

(2) On receiving an appeal under subsection (1) a Family Health Services Authority or a health board in Scotland shall determine whether:

(a) the decision to remove the appellant was based on a breakdown of the relationship between patient and general practitioner or

(b) the decision to remove the appellant was based on financial or other reasons.

(3) Where the Family Services Authority determines under subsection (2) above that a breakdown of relationship with the patient was not the sole or main reason for removing the patient they shall require the general medical practitioner to restore the patient.'.—*[Ms. Harman.]*

Brought up and read the First time.

7.39 pm

Ms. Harriet Harman (Peckham): I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

The purpose of the new clause is to protect patients. Under the new business ethos imposed on the family doctor service, every patient will have a price tag on his head. For some patients, that price will be too high for their doctor and they will risk being culled from their general practitioner's list.

The tragedy is that the new clause is necessary because there will be pressure to jettison uneconomic patients, which will be exerted in three ways. First, the pressure will come from the new GP contract imposed on the family doctor service. Secondly, pressure will come from the cash limits on the amount of drugs that family doctors can prescribe, and, thirdly, because of cash limits on the funds of those GPs who opt to hold their own practice budgets.

The GPs have been doing their sums, and they have discovered that, in some cases, the removal of a family that refuses immunisation for their children could make a difference of more than £3,000 to them. Doctors are also discovering that they could be better off if they removed from their lists some women who, possibly for perfectly good reasons, do not want or do not need a cervical smear. They have also discovered that they could be better off if they removed from their lists elderly and chronically ill patients who might need night visits.

Mr. A. J. Beith (Berwick-upon-Tweed): Some GPs have discovered that, if they exclude a convent from their lists, they would no longer be penalised for failing to meet cervical smear targets, which would be wholly inappropriate and unnecessary for such patients.

Ms. Harman: The hon. Gentleman demonstrates the inflexibility of the target system.

Doctors have done their sums, they know how things are working out and we must listen to them. Patient organisations share the fears expressed by doctors because they will be made vulnerable in a situation in which they have no rights. At the very least, the Government should accept the new clause, as it would give such vulnerable patients at least some legal protection.

The Government are also making patients vulnerable through the cash-limited indicative drug budget. There is no doubt that that budget will be cash-limited, because the aim of that budget, as stated by the Government, is a downward pressure on spending. The Government refused to accept our amendment that would have meant no cash limits on indicative drug budgets and that no patient would be denied a necessary drug as a result of such cash limiting. For all their assurances, the Government refused to accept our amendment; therefore, their assurances are in flat contradiction of the intention behind that indicative drug budget and their refusal to accept our amendment.

Patients who need a large number of drugs, such as those who suffer from cystic fibrosis, whose drugs can cost as much as £1,000 per month, or patients who need hormone replacement therapy or fertility treatment may find that their GPs overspend their drug budgets and thus risk having their pay docked. In such circumstances, those who use many drugs will soon turn into uneconomic patients—GPs have already expressed their fear about that. Given that the indicative drug budget is a mechanism for downward pressure on spending, it poses a threat to those whose continued presence on GP lists creates an upward pressure on spending.

The Government are also making patients vulnerable through cash limits on fund-holding practices, as those doctors who opt to become fund-holders will have their budgets cash-limited. The Government have repeatedly denied that, but the British Medical Association believes that that is the Government's aim. The White Paper said that the accident and emergency departments of hospitals would be monitored to see whether the patients in those departments are genuine cases instead of refugees from practices where the budget is running out and the doctor has advised patients to avoid a cash limit on the budget by going to casualty in an attempt to be taken in as an accident and emergency case.

[Ms. Harman]

With a cash limit on drugs, hospital tests and treatments, the elderly or chronically sick patient could soon become uneconomic for the GP who is a practice budget holder. The Secretary of State and other Ministers have said that hundreds of applications have been received from GPs who want to become budget holders. The least that the Secretary of State could do would be to place the names of the relevant practices in the Library, so that patients depending on those practices will know whether their GP is planning to opt out.

7.45 pm

I note that the Secretary of State smiles, but why should there be anything to hide? I also want to know about the nature of the applications: are we talking about a vague expression of interest or something much firmer? We should know the details. It is not good enough for the right hon. and learned Gentleman to make assertions and then laugh when we ask for further and better particulars.

The Secretary of State for Health (Mr. Kenneth Clarke): The hon. Lady has said that I was laughing, but my immediate thought was how she would react the moment she got the list of the particular doctors. Given her approach to the Bill from beginning to end, she would circulate the areas of the practices involved with leaflets giving her broad-brush descriptions of our proposals, as she has just done, to try to frighten the patients about that prospect. I disapprove of the approach that the hon. Lady has consistently adopted to our proposals. Those doctors who have expressed an interest in being fund holders—850 practices have done so—would deeply disapprove of the hon. Lady's campaigning style being brought to bear on their patients.

Ms. Harman: The Secretary of State should allow the patients and the community served by those practices to judge for themselves whether they accept our fears or whether they are prepared to accept the Secretary of State's assurances. He does not want us to know the details, because he knows that we share the concerns of the patients and that he is out of touch with them.

On previous occasions, the Secretary of State and other Ministers have asked why doctors would take the decision to be a budget holder if it was likely to be so damaging to their patients. Under the new NHS contract system, GPs will be caught between the devil and the deep blue sea. If they stay as they are, they will lose their most important clinical freedom and right to operate on behalf of their patients—exercising choice about where to go for tests and treatments. If doctors opt for a practice budget, it will be cash-limited, and that will have a chilling effect on the drugs, tests and treatment that they are able to offer their patients. It might even lead to doctors having to cull patients from their lists. Doctors are faced with an invidious choice, and those patients whose GPs become budget holders may be put at risk if they are uneconomic.

Our new clause gives patients a right of appeal. If a patient is not struck off a list because of a breakdown in relations, the family health services authority will have the opportunity to reinstate the patient on a GP's list. We are not talking about those circumstances in which the patient and the GP have a genuine row, but where patients become uneconomic because of the three reasons I have given. In those circumstances, there is a financial disincentive in keeping that patient on the list.

When such cases come to light, it will be no good the Secretary of State blaming the doctors and saying that they represent the rotten apple in the barrel. It is no good the Secretary of State simply accusing us of scaremongering. There is genuine concern among patients and doctors. The new clause is backed by the Consumers Association.

We remain fundamentally opposed to cash limits on indicative drug budgets and to cash-limited practice budgets. There is not a shred of evidence that the family doctor service is extravagant or bad value for money, yet the Government press ahead with a whole range of cash limits to try to cheapen the family doctor service.

The next Labour Government will ensure that the family doctor service is free to put patients first and care before cash. The least the Government should do now is give patients the benefit of the doubt in situations where there is great upheaval in the family doctor service. The new clause would provide a safety net in those circumstances.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: If I respond briefly to the remarks of the hon. Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman), hon. Members may be able to confine their remarks later and thereby help to deal with the shortage of time.

I have considerable respect for the hon. Lady as a political opponent, but at times I find her political style startling, even somewhat unpleasant—[HON. MEMBERS: "Oh!"] She relies on the repeated assertion, in somewhat strident terms, of alleged facts about our reforms which we have demonstrated time and again to everybody else's satisfaction—and I sometimes think to hers—are totally factually untrue.

The hon. Lady revived yet again her usual talk about cash-limited drug budgets leading to people with serious conditions perhaps being threatened with loss of treatment. She knows that we have satisfied everybody, from the BMA onwards, that that is not the case. She used a dreadful phrase about patients being culled from doctors' lists, when we have demonstrated in all the cases that she has raised that talk about it being the consequence of the contract and so on is utter nonsense.

The hon. Lady puts such matters forth in letters, press releases and speeches in chilling tones, regardless of the factual background to what she is talking about and with the deliberate intention of trying to whip up fears, particularly among patients, about the consequences for them of things which she says are in reports.

When the hon. Lady cannot bring herself to make a totally untrue assertion yet again, she has started using the phrase, "Doctors have said that." The *Daily Mirror* is fond of that sort of statement. I am reminded of those cheapjack advertisements making ridiculous claims for some fringe product which say, "Doctors have said that," and then a startling and unsupportable proposition is made on behalf of some dubious product.

Mr. Kenneth Hind (Lancashire, West): My right hon. and learned Friend has made it clear that the underlying impression given by some of the remarks of the hon. Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman) about doctors disposing of patients and so on is that doctors are money-grabbing and uncaring. The bottom line of such remarks must represent a deep criticism of doctors, casting

doubt on their dedication and veracity. Not only do I believe her to be wrong, but there is no reason to believe that doctors would behave in the way she suggests.

Mr. Clarke: I agree with my hon. Friend. As for doctors culling patients, the hon. Lady once cited a case on the Floor of the House which I was able to identify and follow up. She knows that the doctor concerned made no claim that the removal of the patient from his list had anything to do with our review or with the White Paper. I imagine that the hon. Lady has seen the correspondence in that case.

I looked into a similar case in Burnley. After the hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Pike) raised the case with me, the doctor concerned persisted in allegations, although he was unable to substantiate them. In the case cited by the hon. Member for Peckham, the doctor made no attempt to claim to me that the incident that she was exploiting had anything to do with my White Paper or with the contract proposals.

Ms. Harman: Publicity was attracted to the case to which the right hon. and learned Gentleman referred, my having raised it in the House. I am afraid that the doctor withdrew the comments that he had originally made—*[Interruption.]* My assistant telephoned the doctor and asked him to give his version of why the patient in question had been struck off, and he told my assistant that the woman was an uneconomic patient because of her requirement for night visits. He patiently explained to my assistant how the new deputising rules would work and how the patient would mean him being out of pocket. My assistant took a verbatim note—I asked her to take such a note, being myself legally trained—and when the matter was raised in Parliament, the doctor changed his story. That is an honest description of the position.

Mr. Clarke: The hon. Lady now knows that he withdrew it because he could not substantiate the claims that he had made to her assistant. The hon. Lady alleged that the patient—who turned out to have had a long history of a somewhat difficult relationship with the doctor—would be more costly because she required night visits. As the hon. Lady knows, under the former arrangements, for each night visit the doctor concerned received £20·25. Under the new contract, from the beginning of next year he will receive £15 if he uses a deputising service but £45 for each visit made personally or made by a colleague from his practice or from a local group.

In that case, the doctor did not persist in the claim because it was plainly not true. It was clear that the claim that there was some financial motive for removing the patient from the list was a fiction. From the doctor's point of view, it was probably a polite excuse to a patient whom he wished to get removed from his list because patient and doctor were not getting on well.

If the hon. Lady wishes to persist in such matters, she must look at the consequences of the new contract, which she knows, above all else, places obligations on doctors to extend their services to their patients in many cases, for example, by offering initial check-ups, check-ups every three years, and annual contacts for the over-75s and so on. It increases the payments for patients over 65 and 75 compared with the previous position and pays doctors for services that they may choose to offer or targets that they may seek to attain.

We have debated the contract. It is nonsense for any doctor to seek to demonstrate that a particular patient is being removed from the list because the financial attractiveness of that patient is less than it was under the old contract. Only the *Daily Mirror* still pursues that campaign and only the hon. Lady seeks to give it some credibility by persisting in the matter.

If I were to go over the whole question of cash-limited drug budgets, I would encroach on the time available to other hon. Members. It was a total invention from the word go to suggest that drug budgets would be cash-limited. We rely on the White Paper and everything that has flowed from it to disprove that. We have made it clear all along that in no circumstances would any patient ever be refused the medication or equipment that he or she used and that no doctor would be exposed to any risk of penalty for giving drugs or equipment to a patient who needed them. The hon. Member for Peckham knows that those assurances are reliable and have been accepted by everybody. She just likes, for campaigning reasons, to keep a heavy emphasis on cash-limited drug budgets, with references to other patients.

Underlying all that is a problem which hon. Members might seriously wish to address, and that is what happens when the relationship between doctor and patient breaks down or becomes troublesome to one or the other, without necessarily there being any fault on either side. I am not talking about pharmaceutical treatment. It may be, in conversational terms, that the chemistry does not work between a doctor and patient.

Since the NHS began, a doctor has always had an absolute right to ask a patient to withdraw from his list without giving any reason.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): If what the right hon. and learned Gentlemen says is true, why did he not include in the Bill a simple clause saying that a general practitioner shall not do any of the things that we are suggesting a GP might be in a position to do? Had he done that, we would not be having this discussion.

Mr. Clarke: I am not sure that it is right to take away from the doctor the right to say to a patient, "I would rather you left my list", or "I would rather your family left my list." The trouble with the new clause is that it will present the doctor with serious difficulties because it insists that a patient can go through an appeal process and get on to that doctor's list. There is no doubt that the doctor-patient relationship should, wherever possible, be based on a good relationship of confidence and trust on both sides. There may be occasions where a responsible GP has perfectly good reasons for not wanting a patient any more. It is seriously debatable whether it would be in everybody's interests to introduce such an appeal process.

The snag is that, as every doctor knows, there has always been a small minority of doctors who, over the years, have been reluctant to take on certain patients. There is no doubt that under whichever system—it has nothing to do with my reforms or the new contract—some patients impose a much greater workload on the doctor and the practice than others.

8 pm

If there are many chronically sick and elderly patients and patients who have intensive courses of care, there is no doubt that those patients make up the doctor's workload. Most doctors are lucky enough to have their work with

those patients compensated for, to some extent, by a raft of patients on the list who are never ill from one year to the next and whom they never see. The method of paying doctors has always included capitation and a combination of other factors so that the list as a whole is the basis of the GP's remuneration.

There have always been some doctors who have been extremely reluctant to take on to their lists elderly people, the chronically sick and people who might make demands on them at night. The British Medical Association and I would describe as unscrupulous any doctor who took this policy too far. The vast majority of doctors are not like that and accept that it is largely chance that determines their workload. They accept that it is their professional duty to give the best treatment that they can to their patients, in line with their needs. Recently, a few doctors who want to shed their workload and have had difficulty trying to find a reason for shaking off a difficult patient have slipped into the habit of blaming the reforms or the new contracts. I regret that they are being encouraged in that by the hon. Member for Peckham.

The idea that in future we should announce a formal appeal mechanism to allow patients who do not want to be removed from the doctor's list to get on to that list is debatable. In the last resort, if a patient cannot get a doctor—there are some patients who have been on every doctor's list and there is no longer a doctor left who is willing to accept them—there is a provision whereby the family practitioner committee can require a nominated doctor to take the patient on to his or her list.

It is difficult to improve on that system. Sometimes one feels sorry for a patient who has been removed for no apparent reason, and there is nothing that one can do about it. However, I say on behalf of the Government, and personally, that I am not attracted to a full appeal mechanism whereby patients can try to force themselves back on to the list of a GP who may have perfectly good personal or professional reasons for not wanting the patient.

I rose early in the debate because I felt that this issue should be disentangled from the Bill. To campaign and frighten elderly patients by saying that they will be "culled"—that was the word used—from their GP's list because of our proposals is distasteful, disreputable and takes campaigning against the proposals much too far.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. I remind the House that we are debating this issue under tight time constraints.

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): I am grateful to be called immediately after the Secretary of State, who constantly amazes me. I always think of him as a decent man somewhere inside a less decent man, and the decent man is sometimes trying to get out. He had a cheek to talk about unpleasantness on the part of my hon. Friend the Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman) as he has not been at all pleasant in the way in whch he has dealt with medical and ambulance matters in the past few months. I have twice attended debates in the House about the ambulance service from which the Secretary of State has been absent. I am glad that he is here today. His last contribution was more in the line of the decent right hon. and learned Member for Rushcliffe (Mr. Clarke) who, I am sure, uses his best bedside manner on the patients who come to his surgery, as they come to all of us.

I agree immediately with the right hon. and learned Gentleman that the relationship between the general practitioner and his or her patients is absolutely fundamental—just as there is, or should be, a fundamental relationship between any of us who aspire to be reasonable Members of Parliament and our constituents. The analogy is not that far from the truth. The trouble is that the Secretary of State has misunderstood the inevitable overall effect of the Bill, when enacted, on that relationship. As I understand it, he has accurately outlined the present position—any GP can ask any patient or tell the family practitioner committee that a patient will no longer be on his panel. Similarly, patients can remove themselves from doctors' lists. The reserve power that he mentioned works quite well psychologically, and doctors and the officers of the FPC keep some sort of equilibrium. Until two days ago I was unaware that that was the system.

Why do my hon. Friends and I feel it necessary to support an amendment which adds to the system? Is it not true that the relationship between a patient and a doctor is extremely personal and crucial? In another context we use the phrases "in sickness or in health," and "for better, for worse". We all know that at some time any of us might have an interview with our GP which could have the gravest implications for us and our families. We know of friends and relatives who have gone through that.

The Bill could potentially—I believe that it will—transform the fundamental relationship between GPs and our constituents. That means that 60,000 to 80,000 people per hon. Member—perhaps 60,000 or 70,000 of the Secretary of State's own constituents—could be affected. The conditions in which all general practitioners function will be greatly changed. Those conditions will be changed from a structure which many doctors who are middle aged and older have experienced, and in which they were brought up. The younger ones believe that the framework of their chosen profession may not be perfect but it should not be primarily a business concern, involving constant calculations about costs, time and choice of hospital, in the structure presented in the Bill and about which we have heard ad nauseam in the past few months.

The attitude of mind that all GPs must bring to their profession could be transformed by the Bill. If that did not happen, the Government would consider the Bill a failure. Therefore, the circumstances in which doctors meet patients, organise their daily lives, work out their accounts, relate to partners in the same practice, relate to the FPC and consultants in this, that or the other type of new hospital together with other changes that will rapidly come about as a result of the Bill, will transform their attitudes.

The attitude of the patient to the doctor will inevitably change. The Secretary of State has said,—he may be absolutely sincere in this,—that there will be no element of disincentive to dissuade doctors from taking on patients. He upbraided my hon. Friend the Member for Peckham for suggesting such a thing. However, there has been sufficient evidence in Committee, in the House and from general practitioners to show that many patients will not believe that. The Secretary of State is a politician, as we all are, and he knows that it is not a matter of what it is, but what the voters think that it is. That is real politics as we know to our cost and sometimes to our benefit. If there is

a scintilla of suspicion by any patient that the doctor's attitude is being influenced or even controlled by some force that is beyond the doctor's professional opinion, the relationship between them will be ruptured or at the very least it will not be so good as it is under the current system.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I agree with the hon. Gentleman about that, but does he agree with me that he should discourage those members of his party who run campaigns suggesting that doctors will wish to cull elderly patients from their lists? That gives the individual elderly patient a feeling of unease. He wonders, "Will my doctor throw me off his list? Am I somehow an expense to my doctor that he does not want?" That is a fiction, but it is the kind of political campaign which causes unease to patients and damages the relationship between patient and doctor.

Mr. Spearing: The right hon. and learned Gentleman is repeating what he said to my hon. Friend the Member for Peckham. I understand that organisations representing vulnerable people have said virtually the same thing. We do not know the details and consequences of the structure being erected because there has been little experiment or trials with it. General practitioners view that structure with considerable apprehension. On that fact alone, I suggest that my remarks are accurate.

The right hon. and learned Gentleman's premises are fundamentally wrong because the Bill does not necessarily support what general practitioners regard as good, professional medicine and practice. If he had asked them in what way they wanted to improve the medical service, he might have come up with something better.

Mr. Rhodri Morgan (Cardiff, West): My hon. Friend goes to the heart of the matter. The fears of doctors and patients are not thought up by my hon. Friend the Member for Peckham and the *Daily Mirror* in some Pied Piper of Hamlin conspiracy to mislead everyone. We can all look across the water to the United States of America where doctors no longer make house calls because they are compelled to have a commercial attitude. In this country, thank God, someone can still ask for a house call without worrying whether he will be thought to be a burdensome patient. We want to preserve that system, but doctors and patients are worried that it may be lost. That fear has not been dredged up by the *Daily Mirror*—it is deep in the consciousness of all who value the NHS.

Mr. Spearing: I agree with my hon. Friend. I shall conclude with two facts which illustrate both what he has said and the case that I am making.

A few months ago a man came to my surgery. He was ill and he was also nursing a sick wife. He was concerned because he thought that his general practitioner was not providing sufficient medication. He said that his wife was sometimes screaming with pain because painkillers were not available. I thought that he was right. I made inquiries of the City and East London family practitioner committee, which said that some sort of monitoring was taking place and that the doctor in question had been given a communication on the matter.

The doctor's judgment may have been correct—I take it from the FPC that he is a humane and considerate doctor—but the position that I have outlined exists today under the present structure, even before the other criteria proposed by the Secretary of State are introduced.

My second fact, which the right hon. and learned Gentleman cannot deny, is his view—as I understand it from general practitioners—that there will be some movement between good general practitioners and less good general practitioners. I understand that a good general practitioner thinks that about 2,000 patients on a mixed list is about right, given some sort of balance. Is it not a fact—the right hon. and learned Gentleman can deny it if he so wishes—that, as with the hospital structure, he foresees that the good general practitioners will attract more patients and that the not-so-good ones will attract fewer patients?

8.15 pm

I understand from doctors that, once over that figure, time is taken up, pressure raised and the job becomes difficult to do. Market forces do not operate in a doctor's surgery as they do on a production line, but unless doctors have misunderstood the position, they believe that to be the assumption behind most of the legislation—which is at its worst in respect of the opting-out provisions for hospitals that we debated earlier. Time and again we have heard that the most effective and efficient unit will attract more so that unit costs will reduce and everybody will gain —even if they have to go up the motorway in an ambulance. That is the Government's philosophy. It will not work for general practitioners and it will not work for the NHS.

The Government are undermining that tracery of human relationships on which most medicine works and they stand in danger of taking away the nerve trains within the Health Service. It is fatal for the body when the nerve trains are attacked. The Government should have ascertained more about the problems. If they continue with their proposals, the Health Service as we know it today, which has been built up over many years with the support of professional organisations, will be ruined. That will be the responsibility of the right hon. and learned Gentleman, and of his right hon. Friend the Prime Minister who lies behind that dreadful market philosophy.

Mr. Charles Kennedy (Ross, Cromarty and Skye): I shall be brief. As both the Secretary of State and the hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) acknowledged, there is a difficult balance to be struck. Articles about general practitioners have appeared in the *Daily Mirror* from time to time. My concern is not the concern expressed by the right hon. and learned Gentleman about general practitioners. He has proved himself adept in and enthusiastic about doctor bashing, so it is rather ironic for him to rise to their defence like a knight in shining armour.

If too much emphasis is placed on the suggestion that doctors will want to shift patients from their lists—I do not accuse the hon. Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman) of doing that, as the right hon. and learned Gentleman did —there will be genuine anxiety. However, my political concern is that it helps to add to the rhetoric in which the right hon. and learned Gentleman has invested so much time, not least about the contract.

I recognise the practical problems outlined by the right hon. and learned Gentleman, but some reassurance is needed. A nod in the direction of an appeal mechanism would be at least a step forward. However, the problem lies rather deeper than that, in the practical impact of the contract. We have debated contracts with the Secretary of State both in Committee and in the House, and I repeat the

[Mr. Charles Kennedy]

point that it is only logical, given the financial underpinning of the new contract, that, if there is to be an incentive for doctors to move to larger lists, many patients may find treatment inadequate. In areas such as mine, the Borders, and other rural parts, the right of appeal raises the legitimate question whether, as the list sizes of GPs grow to such an extent, the practices will be viable in terms of patient care.

What is the equivalent right of appeal for a patient who may want to move to an adjoining practice but in an area which is sparsely populated or geographically spread? We might be talking about a practice which is 20 miles away. That would not offer people without access to transport facilities the kind of patient choice which the Secretary of State tells us he is anxious to establish through the Bill. Therefore, does the Secretary of State feel that there is a deficiency in the legislation because it does not deal properly with appeals? Although he may not be sympathetic to the right of appeal outlined in the new clause, he may feel that the principle should be enshrined in the legislation.

Two basic points are not adequately addressed by the Bill. The first relates to the resources put into general practice. The Secretary of State outlined how GPs can benefit financially from the range of services offered, the number of voluntary calls, spot checking and so on. If we are advocating a preventative medicine approach, I do not think that enough emphasis has been placed on public campaigns and on public involvement. A golden opportunity has been missed.

In an intervention in the speech of the hon. Member for Peckham my hon. Friend the Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Mr. Beith) spoke about the practical idiocy involved in the new contract when we consider the circumstances of key categories of patients. As the Secretary of State will be aware, that has given rise to much concern.

The extreme example of cervical testing in convents has been mentioned, but there have been many examples, as I am sure the Secretary of State has seen, of single female patients having had unfortunate experiences in trying to establish virginity. We can think of the effect that that would have on the doctor-patient relationship. I hope that that will be taken into account by the Secretary of State, however dismissive he is of the clause as drafted.

Patients should have a greater say and should be conversant with their rights. They should have an input to the range of services and options for treatment offered by their GP. If there is not to be an appeal system, I should have thought that the Secretary of State would have taken the new clause as a green light for a proper patients' charter. The hon. Member for Newbury (Sir M. McNair-Wilson) has played a distinguished role in furthering the issue in recent years, and there has been cross-party support for a charter.

The opportunity has been missed to introduce a patients' charter, whatever the BMA might have said. The Secretary of State has accused those on the Labour Front Bench of using foul means. On a constituency basis, he must be aware that many people are concerned, because uncertainty and change always create concern among patients. Surely he recognises that much of the sting could have been taken out of the issue by the introduction of a charter. Although the Secretary of State dismisses the clause as drafted, many of the issues raised by it are legitimate and highlight deficiencies in the legislation and in the contract which could have been remedied, but sadly have not been.

Sir Michael McNair-Wilson (Newbury): I cannot support the new clause, because the concept behind it is improbable. If my general practitioner did not want me on his list, I could not see myself appealing to remain on it, because the doctor-patient relationship is one of trust and confidence, and if that is damaged the object of having an appeal is unimportant.

If I could catch the attention of the hon. Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman), I think she strayed, perhaps inadvertently, on to a subject which deserves more consideration than it has been given. I agree entirely with my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State that there should be targets for things like cervical smears and immunisation. He is right to set target figures at which the maximum remuneration will be paid.

The question that worries me was addressed in an article in *The Daily Telegraph* only last week by Dr. John Lockley. He put a simple case: if a doctor asked all his women patients whether they would agree to a cervical smear and 79 per cent. agreed, but the effective 1 per cent. said no, he would lose perhaps as much as £1,000 in remuneration because of one or two patients whom another GP might not want on his list.

By the same token, if a GP offered immunisation to mothers of young children and if 89 per cent. agreed to immunisation but the essential 1 per cent. refused, the doctor would lose the remuneration which he might reasonably expect to get because the service had been offered. It would not be the unwillingness of the doctor to provide the service that denied him the remuneration, but the refusal of the patient to take up the service that was on offer. Therefore, it seems difficult to sustain the argument that that will not affect the attitude of doctors or will not put a strain on doctor-patient relationship unless we can find another way of satisfying the requirement of the target.

Dr. Lockley offered a solution. He suggested that, if a lady patient refused a cervical smear, the doctor should be allowed to ask her to sign a form confirming that he had offered the service but that she did not want it. If a doctor could show that he would have crossed the target line, he should be able to obtain the maximum remuneration because in effect he was offering a service which was not taken up. I should like my right hon. and learned Friend to address that point in his reply.

On drug budgets, I have no difficulty in supporting the concept of a GP having a cash-limited drug budget. The medical profession should be as answerable as any other on how it spends money. I declare an interest as a kidney patient and as president of a kidney charity. I am fortunate enough not only to be on dialysis but to receive a drug called erythropoetin as a dialysis patient. That drug has made all the difference to my haemoglobin level, my energy level and, indeed, to my general well-being. Any kidney dialysis patient suffering from anaemia, a very common problem with kidney failure, will want to be on EPO if possible.

My consultant told me that he did not have enough money to afford to give all the renal patients in his ward that drug. He wondered whether I would mind asking my

GP whether he would prescribe the drug for me. I duly wrote to my GP with that request and my GP came to see me. He said, "Of course I'll prescribe it. I know you, and I have treated you ever since your kidneys failed." However, he told me that he was worried because he said that he was not my consultant and the drug is not licensed. He said, "I don't know its side effects, but I have been asked to prescribe it for you wondering to myself whether I am entering into a commitment which may have some unforeseen results." He questioned whether that was calling his professional judgment to account. He wondered whether he should be indemnified or whether he should ask the Department to give a ruling to clarify the position.

8.30 pm

If a consultant can do that with an unlicensed drug, why can another consultant not do the same? Will the GP, with his cash-limited drug budget, be able to absorb that cost which originally belonged to a hospital, but which the hospital is passing to the GP to enable the hospital to provide the drug to more people? That is an important point, although I admit that it affects only a small number of people in terms of kidney patients. However, that is an example of what might happen in future.

Mrs. Alice Mahon (Halifax): I will be very brief. When the Secretary of State said that the only people who were raising alarm were people like my hon. Friend the Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman), he was misleading the House.

Many organisations representing ill people or people who need special services have produced for hon. Members on both sides of the House briefs expressing their fears. I want to refer to a very respected association—the Family Planning Association—which has expressed fears similar to those expressed by my hon. Friend the Member for Peckham.

There have been many reports in the media about patients being struck off a GP's list. Three of my constituents were struck off in as many months. I am very concerned, because they belong to a particular category of people. They were all women with young children, and arguably they would all take up a lot of a GP's time.

In its brief, which it sent to hon. Members on 21 February, the Family Planning Association states that it is

"deeply concerned that women requiring certain treatment due to reproductive health problems could either be at risk of being dropped from their existing GP's lists or find it hard to register with another practice. These women need the security"

of the proposals in the new clause

"which place a legal obligation on . . . authorities to ensure that all people within it's registered population have access to a GP who can meet their needs."

The Family Planning Association refers also to women who need treatment for infertility or for chronic gynaecological complaints such as endometriosis, which require expensive drugs or referrals. Many consultants and GPs consider the profitability of the patient. We cannot get away from that.

The Family Planning Association is also concerned that women between the ages of 25 and 64 who do not want a smear test or have the test elsewhere, such as at a family planning clinic, may find themselves unwelcome because their presence on a GP's list affects the doctor's payment for carrying out the tests. That could also apply to people with HIV or full-blown AIDS, and they could experience difficulty.

I have referred only to a brief from the Family Planning Association because I am deeply concerned that women's health problems will be affected by the Bill. I am sure that other hon. Members could pick a dozen others which stress the same problems. That is not scaremongering: it is telling the truth. Those organisations are responsible, and the Secretary of State should take note of them.

Mr. Michael Morris (Northampton, South): I must declare an interest as I have been married to a general practitioner for 30 years and I am also an adviser to two pharmaceutical companies.

I do not think that the scenario painted by the hon. Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman) is likely to happen initially. However, I emphasise "initially". If it happens, my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Health will have to live with it because he included the provision in the contract in the first place.

I hope that my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State listened carefully to my hon. Friend the Member for Newbury (Sir M. McNair-Wilson). My hon. Friend referred to articles that appeared in the *Daily Mirror*. Articles also appeared in *The Daily Telegraph*, as my hon. Friend for Newbury (Sir M. McNair-Wilson) said, and I would be happy to pass a copy of it to my right hon. and learned Friend if he has not seen it.

The article has a sub-heading

"Pity the doctor who looks after a convent—or a hostel for the handicapped".

We should also pity the GP who has a large ethnic community of women who, for religious reasons, might not want to have smears. The article is considered and understandable. There must be some provision whereby a conscientious objector should not form part of a target. I understand why my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State produced a target that was not 100 per cent. because that allows for some slippage.

However, the distribution of difficult patients is not perfect. However hard a GP tries, in some cases he will not be able to make his target. He will then have to choose. For the moment, the vast majority of GPs will accept those people, but my right hon. and learned Friend will have to address that problem when he considers the pricing and re-pricing of the contract. If not, all hell will be let loose again and that cannot be in anyone's interest.

I made a note on my memo pad of the drug erythropoetin for kidney patients. As I understand it, there is a scandalous situation in the North West Thames regional health authority where that product is on a limited licence and consultants are being told that they can use only a certain amount of the drug on a limited number of patients. That blows apart the whole idea of drugs budgets at the hospital level.

We are all aware of what has been happening in recent years. Hospitals have told people that the minute they leave hospital they will not get any supplies and the GP will have to provide the medicine. I hope that my right hon. and learned Friend will listen with care to the marvellous case history outlined by my hon. Friend the Member for Newbury.

I was not a member of the Standing Committee that considered this Bill. However, I wonder why clause 18 on indicative drug budgets is still in the Bill. My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State is on the record as saying that no patient will go without his or her medicine. However, he has not told us what happens if the

[Mr. Michael Morris]

regional health authority has overspent once all the GPs have finished prescribing. He has not told us whether that money will come from supplementary provisions or from some other health service. My right hon. and learned Friend has had the pharmaceutical price regulation scheme, which has worked perfectly well. He can normally use PACT—prescribing analyses and costs—although I cannot understand why we have not had any PACT for the September to December quarter at level 1. It is extraordinary that the Department of Health, its underlings and its subsidiary and ancillary organisations are falling down. That is another example where something that had been running reasonably smoothly has stopped running for some reason.

I hope that either my right hon. and learned Friend will drop clause 18 altogether or that it will be dropped in another place. We never learn. Some interesting work has been done in the United States on formularies by some people called Moore and Newman. Research in 47 states showed that not only did the states with formularies fail to achieve savings in prescription drug expenditure but they were required to spend more on other services. Against that background, one would think that we would not introduce formularies into this country.

The hon. Member for Peckham spoke about budget holders. I understand that there has been a statement that there will be 850 practice budget holders. The hon. Lady has a point. As sure as eggs is eggs, the names of practices that are budget holders will get out. The Health Service is not exactly the most secure service. It would be far better if practices which wish to take part in pilot schemes openly admit to doing so. The fact will get out, so they might as well say it up front.

It is no surprise to anyone who knows anything about general practice that people are applying for practice budgets. One need only examine the attractive administrative bonuses given to everyone who applies. It is a highly profitable area. Some might phrase it differently, but either way it is not surprising.

My hon. Friend the Member for Newbury was right when he said towards the end of his speech that the relationship between a GP and the patient is special. If, for one reason or another, it breaks down, it is right for both parties that the patient should go to another GP. The allocation system has always worked well to the benefit of both parties. To that extent, the new clause is unnecessary.

Mr. Tom Cox (Tooting): As my hon. Friend the Member for Peckham, (Ms. Harman) said, the new clause is important. The speeches of the last two Conservative Members who have spoken show the breadth of concern on the matter. The Secretary of State should start paying attention. He claimed that all the anxieties and problems raised on this issue have been built up by my hon. Friend the Member for Peckham, but that is not true. Several Opposition Members have given examples of the problems, but the Secretary of State can be in no doubt that many Conservative Members could also give examples of the same problems.

I dealt with the case recently of an elderly constituent who rang her doctor and asked him to visit her. She was told that she was no longer on his list. She was given absolutely no reason. Even the Secretary of State can understand the great fear that that created in her and her family who said, "Look, Mum, don't complain—don't be a nuisance". Is that the way in which our Health Service is developing? Will it develop under the conditions outlined by my hon. Friend and other hon. Members who have spoken about the costing of drugs?

8.45 pm

The Secretary of State says that the problems that we have described do not exist. I have sent several letters in recent weeks to the Secretary of State from medical practitioners in Wandsworth health authority expressing deep anxiety about what is happening. I received a letter yesterday dated 9 March from the chair of the South West Thames regional health authority. She says:

"I know how difficult things are in Wandsworth. If you would like me or the officers to meet with you we will be only too happy to do so."

That was from the chair of the regional health authority which covers Wandsworth. Does the Secretary of State believe that she would write such a letter if she were not worried about the circumstances of that health authority?

I wish to make some specific points about the problems of my constituent. It is all very well to say that if there is a breakdown in the relationship between patient and doctor, the best thing is for the patient to find another practitioner who will take the patient on to his or her list, but how is that done? In the case of my constituent, it took a considerable time to find another doctor who would take that elderly lady on to his list. The new clause is important because no one should be removed from a list until they have been given a reason for their removal and a list of other doctors prepared to take the patient. Otherwise who is supposed to look after patients until they are put on another list?

There should be a right of appeal. We often hear about the rights of working people, as affected by many issues, but where are patients' rights? Why are they not given the right to say that they are not happy with the attitude adopted by their GP and that they want the right to appeal? Patients need more than the right to appeal. Often we are dealing with elderly, disabled people who, sadly, do not always understand procedures. The procedures should be made clear to them and help and advice should be made available so that if they wish to appeal they have the opportunity to do so. If we are really committed to the rights of patients, the conditions outlined in the clause are essential. They should be supported not only by Opposition Members but by Conservative Members who have participated in the debate.

Mr. Hind *rose*——

Mr. Kenneth Clarke *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Does the Secretary of State have the leave of the House to speak again?

Mr. Clarke *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The right hon. and learned Gentleman needs the leave of the House.

Ms. Harman: I thank my hon. Friends who spoke in support of the new clause and the two Tory Back Benchers who made important speeches. The best way to deal with the matter would have been to have no financial disincentive for GPs to keep expensive patients on their lists. Then we should not have to worry about an appeals procedure. Because those legal safeguards are not written

into the Bill to protect people from becoming uneconomic patients, we intend to press the new clause to a Division. I hope that hon. Members who expressed reservations will either vote with us or at least abstain.

Question put, That the clause be read a Second time:—

The House divided: Ayes 197, Noes 264.

Division No. 125] **[8.47 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beggs, Roy
Beith, A. J.
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Blair, Tony
Blunkett, David
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Doran, Frank
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Faulds, Andrew
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Gordon, Mildred
Gould, Bryan
Graham, Thomas
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hoey, Ms Kate *(Vauxhall)*
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howells, Geraint
Howells, Dr. Kim (Pontypridd)
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kennedy, Charles
Kilfedder, James
Kirkwood, Archy
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
McFall, John
McGrady, Eddie
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
Maclennan, Robert
McNamara, Kevin
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Paisley, Rev Ian
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Richardson, Jo
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Sillars, Jim
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Smith, J. P. *(Vale of Glam)*
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon Sir David
Steinberg, Gerry
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mrs. Llin Golding.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fishburn, John Dudley
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Sir Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa

Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Hague, William
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Sir Charles
Jack, Michael
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
Madel, David
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Norris, Steve
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Paice, James
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patnick, Irvine
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Price, Sir David
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Rt Hon Nicholas
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Rt Hon Ian *(Herts N)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Tracey, Richard
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Waldegrave, Rt Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, Sir John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Tony Durant and
Mr. Kenneth Carlisle.

Question accordingly negatived.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: We come now to new clause 8.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am sure you will confirm that the hon. Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman) exercised her undoubted right in refusing me leave to speak twice. Thereby she deprived me of an opportunity to reply. May I assure my hon. Friends that I will answer their points in correspondence, and may I point out that the discourtesy to the House was that of the hon. Lady, not mine?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I have an apology to make to the Secretary of State. I had not realised that a right of reply is accorded to the Minister in charge of a Bill. I was quite incorrect to check him when he sought to reply. I hope that he and the House will accept my apology. I, too, can be wrong.

New Clause 8

Junior Doctors' Contracts

"(1) Subject to subsections 2 and 3 below, a junior hospital doctor employed by an NHS Trust shall not be required to work or be available for work for more than 72 hours in any one working week, averaged over a one-month period.

(2) The Secretary of State may by order reduce the working hours specified in section 1 above in stages to 60 hours

(3) Sections 1 and 2 above shall not apply in the event of:

(a) a state of emergency proclaimed by Her Majesty under section 1(1) of the Emergency Powers Act 1920; or

(b) a major accident procedure or its equivalent being put into operation."—*[Mr. Michael.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

9 pm

Mr. Alun Michael (Cardiff, South and Penarth): I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

Before dealing with the new clause, may I say that, if there was any difficulty, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we placed you in that difficulty. However, following discussions through the usual channels, it was understood that there were to be no further speeches from the Government side.

New clause 8 addresses the problem of junior hospital doctors, particularly in relation to new NHS trusts. Our proposal is that junior hospital doctors should not be required to work more than 72 hours in any working week, averaged over a period of one month, and that the Secretary of State should have power to reduce the working hours specified, in stages, to 60 hours. It may well be felt that even those hours are excessive, but the proposition is that the scandal of junior hospital doctors' hours should be tackled in some way in this Bill. No doubt the Government will hide behind the various circulars on this topic that have been issued, but those circulars will no longer be relevant to hospitals that opt out and become NHS trusts. This provision is needed to make sure that the scandal is tackled.

The extent of the problem is obvious. There is plenty of evidence of it. The results of a recent survey carried out in Bristol show that only 14 per cent. of the junior hospital doctors who took part said that they had made no mistakes as a result of excessive hours' work; 22 per cent. said they had made four or more mistakes; 85 per cent. were aware of one or more mistakes as a result of lack of sleep. The BMA has given evidence to the effect that it believes that figures relating to hours are inadequately represented by the Department of Health. The Department and Ministers have suggested that there has been an improvement over the years. In fact, there is evidence of deterioration.

Long hours—an average of 67 hours on call, and sometimes up to 120 hours—are causing serious concern both for doctors' health and, extremely important, for the health of patients. One junior doctor has said, "After a weekend on duty you feel as if you have just crossed the Atlantic. It is like being jet-lagged. It is not a sensible system for us or for the patient. Would you fly in a plane on a Monday morning if you knew that the pilot had been working since Friday?" Those of us who have been assiduous in attending to our duties in relation to this Bill know exactly what that junior hospital doctor meant. Indeed, this is an appropriate stage in the passage of the Bill to be considering such a scandal.

It may be thought that our method of dealing with legislation is less than perfect, but, as I am sure hon. Members will agree, this is an even more important consideration in the case of doctors dealing with life-and-death matters in our hospitals. The Geneva convention makes it

"a cruel and unnatural punishment to deprive a prisoner of sleep for more than 48 hours."

There is something ludicrous and bizarre about the fact that the hours of truck drivers are half those of people who deal with our bodies and undertake delicate surgery.

There is considerable evidence of stress on junior hospital doctors. The suicide rate is three times the national average, and the divorce rate is twice the national average. Surely those facts give cause for concern. By definition, junior doctors are mainly people of child-rearing age, and there are special difficulties for women who wish to follow this career.

Mr. Andrew Rowe (Mid-Kent): I must confess that I have never understood these hours. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman would be kind enough to enlighten me. Why do junior hospital doctors have such difficulty in fixing their rosters? Is it because senior hospital doctors do not take their fair share of the job?

Mr. Michael: I am sure that there is an element of that in it. This matter will not be put right until a limit on the hours worked by junior hospital doctors forces a proper regime to be arranged in hospitals. This provision needs to be made so that the administration of a hospital and senior doctors have to observe the law. The new clause allows the Secretary of State to use his good offices over a period to bring pressure to bear to make improvements on what we think is a reasonable initial limit.

Rev. Martin Smyth (Belfast, South): Is the hon. Gentleman aware that it is a matter not just of senior consultants not taking their share of the work but of staff shortages in a number of hospitals? I know of one place where, instead of eight staff, there are six to work the roster.

Mr. Michael: That does happen. I am trying to speak briefly on the new clause, so that other hon. Members can take part.

The basic principle is that there should be a limit on the number of hours worked by junior doctors. Matters such as those introduced into the debate by the hon. Members for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe) and for Belfast, South (Rev. Martin Smyth) should be sorted out by hospital administrators, by doctors and by the Department in terms of observance of regulations. As I said, the circular system will not apply in relation to hospital trusts. That is why it is not enough to ask Ministers to take care of this matter by circular. Provision needs to be made in the Bill.

Medicine is now more invasive and intensive than in the past. Nowadays, being on call is identical to being called. It is not a matter of "perhaps" being called; it is extremely likely that doctors will be called during their period on duty. The percentage of junior hospital doctors getting less than five hours sleep shows a worrying progression between 1981 and 1985—in paediatrics, from 33 per cent. to 63 per cent.; in general medicine, from 44 per cent. to 56 per cent,; and in general surgery, from 32 per cent. to 45 per cent.

Moving from the subjective and the descriptive, there have been objective studies, including one by Orton and Gruzelier which stated:

"the risks to patients increase when errors are made by tired doctors, who lack agility in making decisions due to a slowing in cognitive functions. The personal lives of the doctors are compromised, which may lead to psychiatric problems, drug abuse, and broken marriages. Disillusion with hospital medicine may result, and undesirable behavioural traits that permeate future practice and lifestyle may develop. These issues are becoming more pressing as demands grow owing to the exacting requirements of modern technology, as the number of malpractice suits increases, and as pressures mount to treat and discharge patients more quickly."

The report stated:

"In conclusion the reduction in cognitive performance combined with the adverse changes in mood show less than desirable conditions for personal wellbeing and the practice of medicine. Superimposed night duty rosters may be a stress adversely affecting the welfare of both the doctor and the patient."

I am aware of the pressure we face to debate some extremely important issues in the short time remaining to us, but there are few things more important and more obvious than the need to reduce the excessive hours worked by junior hospital doctors. I commend the new clause, which I hope will be supported by both sides of the House.

The extent of the problem was brought home to me by a couple who visited my surgery recently, who said that their daughter, a junior hospital doctor, was being "drained of her life" by the work that she does and the unacceptably long hours that she is required to be on duty. I stress that that was not their daughter's complaint, as she is obviously dedicated to her profession, but the comments of parents who love her and who notice the way that the pressures of the work are affecting her. That underlines the importance of safeguarding patients and the well-being of doctors, whom we do not want to see broken and leaving the profession, and whose skills are needed for many years to come. I commend the new clause to the House.

Mrs. Rosie Barnes (Greenwich): The case for the new clause has been clearly and admirably made, and there is little to add to the remarks of the hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Michael). The problem has been brought to the attention of numerous right hon. and hon. Members through statistical information and press bulletins from a variety of sources. Many right hon. and hon. Members have also received deputations, personal visits, and letters from people who are directly involved.

When I first entered the House, I received a deputation of junior doctors who were prepared to describe off the record some of the errors, including those involving fatalities, that had been made, and clearly that situation must be redressed. There is an archaic if not Victorian element in the number of hours that junior doctors are permitted to work.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Is the hon. Lady saying that the junior doctors she met indicated that deaths have resulted from the number of hours they were required to work? What action did she take?

Mrs. Barnes: The doctors who visited me gave information about the hours that they worked, and were prepared to admit—without giving specific details—that all junior doctors know of errors that had been made, some of which had resulted in fatalities. That will come as no surprise to many right hon. and hon. Members. Doctors' professional code of conduct prevents them from divulging the full details of colleagues who may have been involved in such incidents, but the fact that they occur will not come as a shock to any right hon. and hon. Member who has received information on that aspect.

In the studies that have been drawn to our attention, lack of sleep is blamed for seriously affecting a doctor's ability to make quick and logical decisions. Right hon. and hon. Members have particular reason for knowing the truth of that statement. Although we may make life-and-death decisions one step removed, we are not presented with casualties brought in off the street, a young girl dying from an asthma attack, or someone in a critical medical condition—in all of which cases a wrong diagnosis can make all the difference. Senior registrars and junior doctors in general have to make crucial decisions, and they do make errors when overtired.

Mr. Allan Rogers (Rhondda): When my daughter was a junior doctor, she recounted similar stories. They work horrendous hours of more than 100 per week, and double-back 20 to 30 hours. Those working in casualty departments are subjected to violence and other forms of stress. The hon. Lady is right to say that it is difficult to make the right clinical judgments when one is under such pressure.

Mrs. Barnes: The facts of the situation are well known to many right hon. and hon. Members, and perhaps it is not to our credit that we have allowed the situation to continue for so long. We taken measures to ensure that airline pilots and lorry drivers, for example, are restricted in the number of hours that they work, and their rest times are prescribed. The number of consecutive hours of flying or driving that they can undertake is also strictly controlled. It seems quite wrong that we have made restrictions for those jobs but have not attended to such a vital profession.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Let me make a suggestion to the hon. Lady. If those junior doctors believed that they had evidence of errors and fatalities, if they had made public statements, that would have led to actions in the courts for compensation and the Government would have been bound to act by way of legislative change. On the basis of what the hon. Lady said, if the Government are not willing to move, the way to sort out the problem is for junior doctors to make that information public, as that will lead to actions in the courts for negligence against hospital authorities.

9.15 pm

Mrs. Barnes: Junior doctors have gone to great lengths to make such matters public. Obviously they have a professional code of conduct, but tonight's debate reflects the degree of anxiety about the matter.

Before concluding, I should like to quote extracts from two letters. One is from a senior registrar working at the department of anaesthetics in one of my local hospitals:

"I myself have been unable to stay awake and alert at times when working continuously through the night (often for several nights, and days, at a stretch) and you will appreciate that the life of a patient under anaesthetic depends directly on the anaesthetist's awareness.

I have also literally fallen asleep when driving home, after a Friday morning to Monday evening weekend stint. Thankfully I was stationary in a traffic queue at the time."

I should like to add just one more example to the conclusive evidence that has been presented to the House this evening. A letter from a constituent, after making observations about her nephew, stated:

"It was during the week when my nephew was in greatest danger that I became aware, possibly for the first time, of the situation that Junior Doctors were trying to bring to public attention at Christmas time—namely the unbelievably long hours that they have to work on certain shifts."

A doctor, whom I shall not name,

"came on duty on Friday, 10th March in the morning and stayed on duty until Monday afternoon, 13th March—a total of some seventy-six hours. During this time, there were a number of emergencies on the unit (a heart-attack patient, a seriously ill post-operative patient) as well as the routine checking of my nephew's medication, the changing of his antibiotic prescription, which necessitated the most careful calculation and calibration of the various 'drips' that he was receiving and the constant monitoring of his heart, blood pressure and 'gases' because he was on a ventilator".

Such evidence makes clear the pressures on doctors, patients and relatives observing their work, and we have overlooked it for too long.

Mr. Michael Morris: There is a strong argument in the new market-oriented Health Service for the problem affecting junior doctors to be dealt with and the costs faced.

The only additional point that I would make is that the foundation of the National Health Service was that it should have an equal distribution of consultants by discipline and by geographical region. If the National Health Service trust hospitals are to have different terms and conditions from other district general hospitals, resources will be skewed and we will go back to the bad old system that existed before the war, when all the best doctors, both junior and consultants, went to the better-off parts of the country and decided not to go to the inner cities or the less attractive regions.

I shall listen carefully to what my hon. Friend the Minister says in reply to the debate on the new clause, as it seems to have a great deal of merit.

Mr. Jim Cousins (Newcastle upon Tyne, Central): I am happy to be associated with the Medical Practitioners Union, whose relentless campaigning on this topic has ensured that it has never been allowed to disappear from view. Since 1982, the Government have introduced a series of initiatives, and some progress has been made in getting junior doctors' rosters down to one in three, 84 hours a week. But the progress has not been so marked as the Government like to pretend or as their latest figures suggest. Some of the rosters have been put out of sight by being classified as not being onerous, although they still add up to 84 hours a week, one in three. That is sharp practice. Another technique is to introduce a one-in-three, 84 hours per week roster depending on time off in lieu, which is not then made available. The apparent improvement thus lacks foundation in reality.

It is a matter for regret that, although the Government launched their own study in 1985, they took five years to publish the information, which confused the issue and delayed progress. I recognise that the present ministerial team has made amends and ensured that it was published, but five years is far too long.

What should we do? It is clear that the problem cannot be solved merely by reorganising rosters. We need additional manpower resources—new posts both for junior doctors and for consultants. The 100 extra consultants' posts that the Government have announced make a small contribution, but there is a shortfall in new consultants' appointments anyway and they are offset by consultants' posts which are not in fact available.

Studies in my region illustrate the problem clearly. A northern region special study of orthopaedics, conducted to get the rosters down to the target level of one in three, 84 hours a week—which, in all conscience, is not a wonderful target at which to aim—showed that that would require seven additional junior doctor posts and seven additional consultant posts in orthopaedics. That is in one region alone, and even that will leave a further 320 junior doctors' rosters worse than the target level and still classified as onerous. It is a scandalous situation and it must be dealt with. It can be dealt with, but only by making more junior doctors' and consultants' posts available.

I hope that the Minister will not simply say that she does not like the idea of changing the law in this way. I hope that she will declare her hand and tell us what other positive practical initiatives she proposes in order to make more jobs available.

Mr. Terry Davis (Birmingham, Hodge Hill): The Medical Practitioners Union, which is part of the union to which my hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle upon Tyne, Central (Mr. Cousins) and I belong—the Manufacturing, Science and Finance Union—has campaigned for years for something to be done about the scandal of junior hospital doctors' hours. Last year, a Bill passed by the other place put a limit on the hours worked by junior doctors, but although a similar Bill that I introduced in this House received its Second Reading, it was thwarted by the Government, who put up their Whips to object to the Bill from a sedentary position. They were not prepared to come out in the open and vote against the Bill, so they abused parliamentary procedure and sheltered behind the rules of the House to prevent this scandal coming out into the open and to avoid having to stand up and be counted in the Division Lobbies.

I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Michael) on his clear, detailed and succinct summary of the scandal throughout the United Kingdom. As he said, it is not only a question of the intolerable burden placed on junior hospital doctors, many of whom are not newly qualified. The term can cover doctors well into middle age: indeed, everyone who is not a consultant is a junior hospital doctor. One may be a junior doctor not only for two, three or five years, but for many years. Doctors are having to bear an intolerable burden. We should not allow it, not only because it is against doctors' interests and because it is an unfair and impossible burden for employers to place on employees, but because it is against the interests of patients.

The new clause is a modest attempt to deal with this problem in one part of the Health Service. I question whether self-governing trusts can strictly be called the National Health Service, but the new clause will deal with this scandal at least in them. However, as my hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth will recognise, it will still allow doctors to work 72 hours a week in one continuous shift at the weekend, which is what tends to happen now. If possible, no one should go to hospital on a Sunday, because it is possible that he will receive attention from a doctor who has been working for two days or more. He may have started on Friday morning and worked through to Sunday without adequate sleep.

The new clause is in the interests of patients. We do not have to rely on anecdote or common sense to appreciate what is happening on Sunday evenings in hospitals. We have the recent evidence of a confidential inquiry into post-operative deaths in one region of England. It showed that people were dying because of doctors' fatigue. The inquiry was carried out not by administrators or community health councils but by the surgeons themselves. They found that a significant number of unnecessary post-operative deaths were due to doctor fatigue. Of course, people also die as a result of mistakes made by physicians, and they die in other regions. We shall never know how many people have died unnecessarily in hospital as a result of doctor fatigue. We must do something about this disgraceful scandal.

The hon. Member for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe) asked whether the problem was all the fault of senior doctors —the specialists and consultants. They are partly to blame. Given their central role in the NHS, they could put their house in order if they wanted to. However, they are not the only ones; administrators must take their share of the blame. It is cheaper for hospitals to work doctors for long hours than to employ more doctors. It is cheaper to employ one doctor for 80 hours than two for 40. It would not be tolerated in industry, but the overtime rate for doctors is worse than the standard rate, which is ridiculous and appalling. The problem can be solved given the will to solve it. It was stopped overnight in New Zealand, for instance, by altering the wage structure.

The Government are not willing to spend money where it is necessary to spend it to end this scandal. The Government rely on peer group pressure and on other doctors in the profession. The royal colleges, which have existed, not for 10 or 100, but for hundreds of years, have still done nothing about this. They shelter behind the skirts of Government circulars. But self-governing trusts will not be subject to Government circulars, which is why my hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth is right to concentrate first on an area which no circular will reach

[Mr. Terry Davis]

—on self-governing trusts, the hospitals that will be pressurised by the Government to opt out of local health authority control.

I commend the new clause to the House and I hope that hon. Members will support it in the Lobby.

Mr. Patrick Cormack (Staffordshire, South): Like my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, South (Mr. Morris), I shall be interested to hear what the Minister has to say about this subject. We must recognise that there is enormous public concern about it. Many people have been deeply worried by stories of junior hospital doctors being wholly fatigued when dealing with patients, often in extremely dangerous and difficult conditions. I hope that my hon. Friend will either accept the new clause, which is modest, or say that within two years its aims will be the Government's stated objective.

After all, most of us Members work at least 72 hours a week and we know that if we do that week after week we do not operate at peak efficiency. We should have a great deal of fellow feeling for young doctors.

I know that my hon. Friend is an extremely diligent and hard-working Minister. I hope that from her experience she will agree that the working hours of junior doctors are wholly unacceptable and that that situation should be brought to an end as quickly as possible.

9.30 pm

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: This is a serious problem which requires further action.

I must clear up one misunderstanding. We have made it clear that NHS trusts must follow our guidance regarding junior doctors' hours—they are not outwith the scheme and the guidance. I hope that hon. Members will look at section 5.22 of "Self-Governing Hospitals: an Initial Guide", which makes that clear. Paragraph 6(2)(e) of schedule 2 gives the Secretary of State powers to direct NHS trusts to comply with the guidance.

This is a long-standing problem which requires action on a number of fronts. The new clause suggests that junior doctors' hours should be limited to a maximum of 72 on call or on duty. Hon. Members will be aware, however, that in some specialties one can work onerous hours without being called out that often. I was talking to a psychiatrist to a gaol, who works a one in two and is called out perhaps once a fortnight. A legislative move as suggested in the new clause would mean that that individual could not fulfil his rota commitment even though he was called out perhaps once a fortnight. There are other specialties in which the duties are extremely onerous and the individual may be not only be on call or on duty, but working for unacceptably long hours. We must appreciate, however, that the problem is complex and multi-faceted.

In the past, the royal colleges have felt that individual training posts might be put in jeopardy if they did not include sufficient contact with patients. If the royal colleges reconsider the matter, they may decide that a training post which deprives an individual of any sleep —let alone any capacity for training, education or research —cannot rightly or properly continue to be approved as such. If they can be persuaded to look again at the way in which they approve training posts, it might be an extra lever to improve matters.

There is a difference between the consultant who regards himself as the head of an entourage of juniors following in his wake and the consultant who believes that he has a part to play. After all, the rotas are essentially devised locally by the professionals involved. The consultant may contribute by providing cover himself. It is well known that we want the Health Service to have an increasing number of such medically qualified personnel. That is why an extra 2,500 consultants have been appointed—an increase of 21 per cent. since 1979. The management also has an input regarding the way in which the rotas are organised, the shifts worked or the arrangements for a split site. On some occasions a nurse can undertake some of the tasks that a junior doctor fulfils.

I must make it clear that the blunt instrument of a legislative limit is not appropriate or helpful. I agree with hon. Members that working over-long hours not only makes people go to sleep at work—that may be all right for the hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook), but it is not all right for a junior hospital doctor—is not good for the patients.

Comment has been made about whether the relevant figures are getting better or worse. I have looked at the figures extremely carefully and they are getting better. After 1982, the numbers working the most onerous rotas fell from about 5,000 to about 3,500, and following the initiative by the Secretary of State for Social Security in 1988, there was a further fall, from about 27 per cent. working onerous rotas to 22 per cent., and we think that next September about one in eight will be working the most onerous rotas. Nevertheless, I shall not be content —no hon. Member could feel content—until all such rotas are eliminated. It is not right for junior doctors to work such onerous rotas because we want them to be fit for work.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Will the Minister explain why a junior pilot on an aeroplane is not allowed to work an onerous rota while a junior doctor in a hospital is? What is the distinction?

Mrs. Bottomley: The distinction is that the junior pilot is flying—*[Interruption.]* When we are talking about the hours worked by junior doctors, we are talking about doctors who are not necessarily working. Junior doctors may be on call, in which case they may fall into the category that I described of a person who is on call one night in two but is called out once a fortnight. That is different from the person who is working constantly.

Nor must we overlook the involvement of the junior doctors themselves, because the existence of long continuous rotas is an area where junior doctors can themselves play a part in rescheduling rotas, taking time off in lieu or splitting shifts.

Mr. Terry Davis: The Minister says that a pilot is in a different position from a junior doctor because the pilot is flying. Has she never heard of co-pilots? There may need to be two pilots in the cockpit, one flying and one not flying, or one might be on call.

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North): Will my hon. Friend accept a fact from a former professional pilot—*[Interruption.]* Biggles or not, I shall be happy to be called squadron leader or sir. Pilots, whether first or second pilots, when on an aircraft are flying all the time because a two-man crew requires two people to fly the plane. Pilots'

flying hours are their determining hours of work. My hon. Friend was right to say that doctors are not flying all the time, as it were, whereas pilots are.

Mr. Michael Morris: As a former RAF pilot with a son who has recently been a junior doctor, I must tell my hon. Friend the Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) that he is wrong. The vast majority of junior doctors in our district general hospitals are on call and are being called out more regularly now than they were when my wife trained as a doctor. The degree of work that they must do is increasing all the time. My hon. Friend the Member for Tayside, North is not right to talk about the first and second pilot having to be on duty the whole time. There are many occasions when the second pilot is undertaking tasks which involve him not being on the flight deck all the time.

Mrs. Bottomley: It is clear that we are discussing a subject about which hon. Members feel strongly. The crucial element, to which I have not yet referred, is the need to achieve a balanced policy. It is not possible to legislate overnight to reduce working hours without having a mechanism to ensure that the patients are cared for. That is why the whole discussion of medical manpower must be closely tied in with the issue of junior hospital doctors' hours.

I am pleased to report that I have now received acceptances from all the crucial partners involved in this issue to come to discuss what can be done. We must ensure that each and every element involved in the use of junior hospital doctors is committed to taking the action that is necessary. The royal colleges, the consultants, the junior doctors, the NHS in terms of the management and we at the Department of Health all have a part to play. All concerned will be coming, before Easter, to have discussions about what further action can be taken. I do not believe that a legislative limit is the right way through the problem, but I do not rule out the possibility that at some stage amending the terms and conditions of employment might be an appropriate way through, so I would not rule out that course.

First, however, we must ensure that the progress that we are seeing is implemented. We have a commitment that the most onerous rotas will be further eliminated by next September and we must ensure that that happens. We must draw together a coherent and comprehensive strategy to bring to an end what we all agree is an unacceptable way for junior hospital doctors to work.

Mr. Michael: It must be obvious to the Minister that her reply was as unsatisfactory to some of her hon. Friends as it was to Opposition Members. It was an extremely unsatisfactory reply which, I regret, seemed to demonstrate a commitment to do nothing. I cannot believe that hon. Members would regard the matter as safe in the Minister's hands in the light of that reply.

As the Minister said, this is an entrenched problem. That is why it needs to be shaken free. I hope that the Government and Conservative Members will support the new clause on the basis of accepting the principle; the detail can be refined in another place. I think that all hon. Members who have spoken would agree that the principle needs to be established. It is regrettable that the Minister did not accept the principle. Therefore, I encourage my hon. Friends and Conservative Members to join us in the Lobby.

Question put, That the clause be read a Second time:—
The House divided: Ayes 204, Noes 266.

Division No. 126] **[9.41 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Margaret
Beggs, Roy
Beith, A. J.
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Blair, Tony
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Faulds, Andrew
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Gould, Bryan
Graham, Thomas
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Haynes, Frank
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hoey, Ms Kate *(Vauxhall)*
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howells, Geraint
Howells, Dr. Kim (Pontypridd)
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kennedy, Charles
Kilfedder, James
Kirkwood, Archy
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum A.
McGrady, Eddie
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
Maclennan, Robert
McNamara, Kevin
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris

Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Paisley, Rev Ian
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Richardson, Jo
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Sillars, Jim
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Smith, J. P. *(Vale of Glam)*
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon Sir David
Steinberg, Gerry
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. John McFall, and
Mr. John Battle.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Eggar, Tim
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fishburn, John Dudley
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Sir Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Hague, William
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hayes, Jerry
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Sir Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
Madel, David
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Norris, Steve
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patnick, Irvine
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Price, Sir David
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Rt Hon Nicholas
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Rt Hon Ian *(Herts N)*
Stokes, Sir John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Tracey, Richard
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Waldegrave, Rt Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John

Wells, Bowen	Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Wheeler, Sir John	Yeo, Tim
Widdecombe, Ann	Young, Sir George *(Acton)*
Wilkinson, John	
Wilshire, David	Tellers for the Noes:
Winterton, Mrs Ann	Mr. David Lightbown and
Wood, Timothy	Mr. John M. Taylor.

Question accordingly negatived.

New clause 9

Register of Private Contractors

'(1) The Secretary of State shall maintain a register of private companies available to tender for contracts awarded under competitive tender by an National Health Service Trust, health authority or an health board in Scotland.

(2) A company registered under subsection (1) above shall provide an annual return which shall state:

(a) Any contracts held with National Health Trusts, health authorities, or Health Boards in Scotland.

(b) Any penalties invoked under such contracts.

(c) The total number of employees in post and annual staff turnover.

(d) Any parliamentary consultancies awarded in the preceding six years.

(3) Contracts to be tendered for under this Act shall only be tendered for by private companies listed on its register to be maintained under subsection (1) of this section.'.—*[Mr. Campbell-Savours.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

Mr. Speaker: With this, I understand that it will be convenient also to take new clause 11—*Contracts for competitive tendering*——

'(1) A National Health Service trust, health authority or health board in Scotland shall not award a contract for services to a private company unless it is satisfied that the cost of such a contract is less than the cost of direct provision by its own staff.

(2) In establishing whether the cost of a private contract is less than direct provision, a National Health Service Trust, health authority or health board in Scotland shall have regard to—

(a) any additional charge of value added tax.

(b) any redundancy payments arising from dismissal of staff.'.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: The objective of new clause 9 is to place a responsibility on the Secretary of State to set up a register of contractors, the effect of which would be to provide for greater glasnost in the way in which private contractors operate, wherever they may be in the United Kingdom.

Much controversy surrounds the activities of private contractors. Privatisation is politically sensitive and, so far as the public is concerned, extremely controversial. The industrial side of the National Health Service includes catering, domestic and laundry services. When between 70 per cent. and 90 per cent. of the costs of that industry comprise wages, the only opportunity for profit taking in that industry must come from reducing wages and conditions—and in particular the wages.

A year or two ago, the Treasury produced a report called "Using Private Enterprise in Government". That report stated:

"most of the savings from contracting out arise because contractors offer poorer conditions of employment. Contractors in the ancillary services usually offer similar basic rates of pay ranging from 10 per cent. less to a few per cent. more in some cases, but they eliminate costly bonus schemes and overtime working, provide little if any sick pay and avoid national insurance payments by means of more part-time working."

The truth is that savings to generate profits in those industries in which we require a register to be set up arise because people cut labour costs and the result is discontent and a high turnover of staff.

That is why I pursued the Under-Secretary of State for Scotland, the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth), in Committee. People and those Members of this House who press for contractorisation and privatisation in the NHS are pressing on Government the need to reduce the wages and salaries of people who already work in low paid areas of the NHS.

I understand that many hon. Members have consultancies and directorships in those organisations, whether they be lobbying companies or in direct contact with contractors. I also understand that many hon. Members, and particularly their spouses who are not required to register shareholdings in the Register of Members' Interests, have holdings and are direct beneficiaries of legislation which promotes privatisation. In so far as the Bill is enabling legislation, it will ensure that many thousands more contracts will be let for services.

Under the terms of new clause 9(a) the register would show

"Any contracts held with National Health Trusts, health authorities, or Health Boards in Scotland."

Members might question the need for that. The answer is to be found not in a Government document, but in a document published by the trades union privatisation unit. That document lists the authorities that have had difficulties with private contractors. It identifies the contractors and the services that they were providing.

For example, there are well documented complaints over many months about the laundry service in the acute unit of Croydon health authority. The company involved there was Advance Laundry. South West Surrey district health authority had problems with Allied Medical Catering, which went into voluntary liquidation three months into its contract. Andmarc, another company providing domestic service in North West Surrey health authority, had its contract terminated after just 10 days, during which it could not meet the required standard. Blue Arrow, another company providing domestic service at Parkside hospital in Macclesfield health authority, failed to meet the standards. It pulled out of the contract after just one year. Following the failure of another company, A and E Chapman, to provide adequate service at new East Surrey hospital, the contractors' performance was put under strict health authority scrutiny. Its one year contract was not subsequently renewed.

10 pm

Contract Clean (Southern) in North West Surrey health authority, which provided domestic service, claimed that it had under-estimated costs and quit after a year of the contract. I have pages and pages of companies in this sector employed under rules instituted by the Government, no doubt driven down the route of competitive tendering by more than obliging Members of Parliament asking parliamentary questions to elicit a response from district health authorities.

Many companies listed in the document have either lost their tender or simply been put out by the health authority. Contract Clean (Southern), County Cleaners and

Crothall, are further examples. Crothall failed in many contract areas covering the three areas covered by the clause—catering, laundry and domestic—in every part of the United Kingdom. Its record is appalling.

Endless Hospital Services is another such company. Exclusive is another, which I understand has representatives in the House. The list also includes Express Laundries (Blackpool), Gardner Merchant, Hall Hospital Services, Home Counties Cleaning, Hospital Hygiene Services, ICC Hospital Services, Ideal, Initial Laundry, Kneels, B. A. Lister, Mediclean, OCS, RCO, Reckitt, Royal Jersey Laundry, Spinneys, Sunlight, and Westcott. It is a roll of dishonour. People have taken on contracts who cannot run them properly or meet standards. They have either been forced to leave or booted out of the contract by the district health authority.

Mr. Rowe: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Campbell-Savours: I have no intention of giving way. The hon. Gentleman had weeks in Committee to ask questions on these matters. He did not do so.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett (Pembroke): We did.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: He concentrated on matters which were insignificant.

Mr. Neil Hamilton (Tatton): Is this a COHSE brief?

Mr. Campbell-Savours: No. The information is available to any Member of Parliament who seeks to find out the truth. Anyone can find it. The problem is that Conservative Members sit on their backsides and refuse to address themselves to the truth. The truth is that contractorisation and privatisation in the NHS are appalling failures.

Mr. Donald Thompson (Calder Valley): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Campbell-Savours: No.

I want to move on to paragraph 2(b) of the new clause which deals with the registration of penalties invoked in such contracts. Why do we need to refer to penalties? Why should the register show where penalties had to be paid? The answer is simple. Many companies have been subject to penalties. They include Allied Medical Catering, in South West Surrey health authority. The company went into liquidation. The health authority also terminated the contract of Andmarc. In Kingston and Esher health authority in 1986, Advance Laundry pulled out. Blue Arrow Cleaning Group in Macclesfield health authority pulled out in 1986. Exclusive Cleaning in Bromley health authority pulled out.

In every area of the United Kingdom, and particularly in the constituencies of Conservative Members, this policy has miserably failed. Contractors have been turfed out, and often penalised. It was Sir Whatisname Forte who three or four years ago decided to go into this business until he took a closer look and decided that he could make money from privatisation only by cutting wages. Not even Sir Charles Forte was willing to do that. Where he was unwilling to go, Conservative Members were perfectly willing to press for in this House. Clearly, they do not carry with them the same moral standards, if I may use that word. We are talking about standards.

A Conservative Member who is willing to come to the House and advocate that a privately contracted NHS worker earns only £1·80 an hour, which is indeed the going rate offered by many contractors, is unfit to sit at Westminster. No one in his right mind in the society of the 1990s and living in the real world can possibly advocate such wage levels, yet people do. That is why we took such strong exception to the Under-Secretary of State for Scotland, the hon. Member for Stirling. Before coming to Parliament, he spent his life pushing these appalling contracts that led to low-income families throughout the country suffering. They could not afford to go to work and earn as little money as they were earning. *[Interruption.]* Hon. Members can cringe—[HON. MEMBERS: "We are not cringeing."] Hon. Members can cringe. Let them stand up and defend those wage levels. They are indefensible.

I wish to raise the question of what you referred to yesterday, Mr. Speaker, as public policy. Sponsored Members of Parliament receive no money from their sponsoring union. I receive nothing personally and I claim no expenses, not one penny. The Conservative party has successfully sown a myth in the public mind about what sponsorship means in order to be able to justify their consultancies and directorships, which are based on personal financial remuneration.

If we are to accept the principle of public policy and if a Member who receives personal remuneration is entitled to vote, on what basis can that principle of public policy be extended to cover procedural motions, such as the guillotine motion? It is an important principle. Why should Members of Parliament be able to drive through legislation, not on its principle, but procedurally simply because they will be the financial beneficiaries? Why should they have that right?

We had that argument some years ago in the Committee considering licensing hours. Three Conservative Members voted for a sittings motion. Weeks later, we blocked the Bill on Report on the Floor of the House as a punishment for their moving the sittings motion before the 1987 general election. Hon. Members may remember that. We believed that it was wrong that those with a direct pecuniary interest should use procedure to drive through legislation from which they could benefit directly.

Mr. Bill Walker: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Campbell-Savours: I have absolutely no intention of giving way. [HON. MEMBERS: "Give way."] I gave way to the hon. Gentleman many times last week, and he will be getting a letter from me about it.

It is wrong that people with a direct pecuniary interest who receive money in their back pocket should be allowed to vote. That has happened on this Bill. It is a constitutional outrage that it is happening in the House. If the general public understood the complexities of procedure, but saw it simply as, indeed, it is in practice, they would feel equally outraged. The problem is that they will not learn the truth, but they should know the truth.

I feel strongly about the new clause, but, as many Members wish to speak, I advise my hon. Friends not to push the matter to a Division. Let us have more debate, in the hope that some Government Member will get up and defend the levels of wages paid in the industries about which I have been talking.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: Those of us who served for three months on the Standing Committee that dealt with the Bill enjoyed listening to the hon. Member for Workington

(Mr. Campbell-Savours) make these speeches week in and week out. He was the Robespierre playing to Madam Defarge from Halifax. We have been told that he is incorruptible, but when we examine his interests what do we find? First of all, he is a sponsored member of a Health Service union. Time and time again, he has voted against competition in the Health Service, against competitive tendering, and in favour of union monopoly power.

Did the hon. Gentleman just once stop to think about what he was doing as a union-sponsored Member? What was his interest in voting for union monopoly power? Tonight he has impugned the honour of other hon. Members, but not once did he make such a declaration. He does not consider it wrong that he and his hon. Friends should be sponsored by unions with a vested interest in a Health Service that is not reformed, in working practices that are not changed, and in entrenched monopoly power for one union in the Health Service.

But this applies not only to the hon. Member for Workington. The hon. Member for Halifax (Mrs. Mahon) is sponsored by the National Union of Public Employees, the hon. Member for Wakefield (Mr. Hinchliffe) is sponsored by the National Union of Public Employees, and the hon. Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman) is sponsored by the Transport and General Workers Union. One could do a long roll-call of Labour Members who, week in and week out, have spoken——

Ms. Dawn Primarolo (Bristol, South): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The hon. Member for Pembroke (Mr. Bennett) has just named several hon. Members. It is a courtesy of the House that Members who are to be named are notified. Has the hon. Gentleman notified these Members?

Mr. Speaker: We must not get too wide of the new clause, which concerns the register of private contractors. I think that we have had enough of the other matter.

Mr. Bennett: If the hon. Member for Workington thinks that it is important to have a register of private contractors and that the interests of Members should be looked at, we are entitled to wonder why certain Opposition Members are so keen to defend the status quo. They oppose private contractors because they have a vested interest in supporting union power.

Mr. Bill Walker: The question that I had hoped to put to the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) I shall put instead to my hon. Friend. Does not my hon. Friend find it interesting that the hon. Member for Workington and others appear to believe that it is quite in order for Members of this House to write articles attacking the principles, and sometimes the practices, of privatisation and to accept substantial fees for doing so and then speak in this House about the subject without declaring an interest? Is that in any way different from the activities of any Member engaging in any other activity that ought to be declared?

Mr. Bennett: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. Indeed, he has made the point better than I could have done.

Mr. James Couchman (Gillingham): My hon. Friend will remember that, early in the Committee's proceedings, we willingly and properly declared our interests. Many Government Members did so, as did many Opposition Members, including the hon. Members for Halifax (Mrs. Mahon) and Wakefield (Mr. Hinchliffe). Indeed, that is what convention dictates. Does my hon. Friend remember that three times I had to prod the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) into making any declaration of interest at all?

Mr. Bennett: My hon Friend is absolutely right: the hon. Gentleman did not declare those interests without being prodded into action.

10.15 pm

Mr. Campbell-Savours: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. You know me and you would know that what has just been said is a tissue of lies.

Mr. Speaker: I was not on the Standing Committee——

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Let me finish my point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I was not on the Standing Committee, so I have no knowledge of these matters. May I say to the whole House that this debate is not about Members' interests but about the register of private contractors.

Mr. Campbell-Savours *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) mentioned this matter, and I have allowed a response. We must now return to the kernel of the debate.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Further to the point of order, Mr. Speaker. Will you allow me to deal with the final comment by the hon. Member for Gillingham (Mr. Couchman)? If he wishes to repeat that statement outside the House, I shall prove that I am right by suing him in the courts. Perhaps he would like to take up my offer. If he does so, I promise him a writ. All right?

Mr. Couchman *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. This is developing into a much wider subject than the debate on the new clause. I do not think that a point of order can arise on this matter. The hon. Member for Workington must not allege—I should have stopped him at the time—that any hon. Member has told a lie. Perhaps he will withdraw his comment.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: I referred to a tissue of lies, Mr. Speaker. If you find that term offensive, I will withdraw it, for you.

Mr. Speaker: Let us return to the debate and stick closely to it.

Mr. Bennett: The hon. Member for Workington does not like getting a taste of his own medicine. We shall bear that in mind in future debates, when he may try this on again.

When looking at the new clause, we are entitled to ask what a lack of competitive tendering means in terms of union power. It was interesting that the hon. Member for Workington talked about companies that had lost contracts or failed to deliver. Under the old system, where contracts were carried out by in-house union members, there was no control over the service. There was no opportunity to get a new contract from someone else,

[Mr. Bennett]

because the power was in the hands of the union—the porters and the cleaning staff in the hospital—and there was no competition for the customer, the NHS.

The new system is much better, because it enables district health authorities and hospitals to say that, if a contractor does not provide the services required, he can be turfed out and taken to court if in breach of contract, and the contract will be handed over to someone else. That is a much better system than the old union monopoly power system.

The hon. Member for Workington said that he, as a member of the Confederation of Health Service Employees, receives no money. Of course, the fact that some of those members do not receive the money personally—some of them do—means that that money is used for their election expenses and other things, which the rest of us have to find out of——

Mr. Campbell-Savours: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Bennett: The hon. Gentleman is off again.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: I should like to clarify for the House the fact that no member of COHSE in the House of Commons receives any money personally. The hon. Member for Pembroke (Mr. Bennett) should withdraw his remark. No money is received from COHSE as either expenses or salary. The hon. Gentleman should read what he said.

Mr. Speaker: Order. We seem to be returning to a matter that I said was not in order. Let us keep to the subject of the new clause.

Mr. Bennett: I should like to finish my last point, Mr. Speaker. I did not say that any member of COHSE received the money direct——

Mr. Campbell-Savours: The hon. Gentleman did.

Mr. Bennett: I did not. Hon. Members should listen. The money that those people receive for election expenses means that they do not have to spend money out of their own pocket—taxed income—on election expenses, because they receive it from someone else. The rest of us have to pay out of our own pocket. It is an indirect remuneration. On that point, I finish my speech.

Mr. Jeff Rooker (Birmingham, Perry Barr): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Let us clarify the matter so there is no mistake. It is illegal for a candidate to fund his own campaign.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I think that the hon. Member for Pembroke (Mr. Bennett) has sat down.

Mr. Win Griffiths (Bridgend): When I skimmed through the Bill, I could not see a clause under which I could legitimately raise the point that I wanted to make, but new clause 9 gives me that opportunity. Although my hon. Friend the Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) has been concerned with obnoxious current practices relating to private tendering in the Health Service, I want to raise an issue that could have important implications if the Bill is passed.

At the Princess of Wales hospital in my constituency, a full-time consultant in the pathology department, Dr. Joan Williams, and the chief medical laboratory scientific officer, Mr. David Else, established a private pathology company named Healthcare Diagnostics Ltd. at the science park in Bridgend. While no direct conflict of interests exists at present between their work at the hospital's pathology department and their status as shareholders and directors of a private company, obviously one will arise soon.

The hospital's pathology department is an income-generating department, and Dr. Joan Williams especially is in a position to obtain privileged information from that department and to know of the costs of all the services offered by the hospital to individuals and to private companies who want, for example, blood tests on all their employees. A third of the fees paid go directly to the health authority. In the case of drug screening trials, 100 per cent. of the money goes into the health authority's research budget.

I thought that might have been a one-off case of possible commercial espionage within the Health Service by full-time NHS employees. However, when I publicised the facts of that case, I discovered that at the University of Wales hospital in Cardiff, a similar situation had developed involving Dr. Keith Davies, a top-grade biochemist working for the hospital, and Dr. Stephanie Matthews, a part-time consultant.

They established a private company, Lifecare Advanced Medical Ltd, of which they are shareholders, directors, company secretary, and company chairman. They, too, are in a position to take work from the pathology department of the hospital for which they work. In the case of drug screening trials, shortly after Lifecare was established, the hospital pathology department lost that work by some direct or indirect route—the matter is still in dispute. What is not in dispute is that Lifecare Advanced Medical Ltd was suddenly undertaking the drug screening work that had previously been the responsibility of the hospital's own pathology department.

Dr. Keith Davies is at least partly responsible for setting the charges that are made for that work, so he is in a position to obtain work both for the Health Service laboratory by which he is employed full-time and the private laboratory of which he is chairman and a shareholder.

I can divulge another abuse of Dr. Davies' position. He served on a panel interviewing candidates for the post of a medical laboratory scientific officer with the University of Wales hospital. The same evening, he phoned the candidate who had been offered that job and said, "Come and join us at Lifecare." That was the job that the candidate then took up. That is the kind of scandal that can arise when Health Service employees are involved in private companies competing with the income-generating departments of the Health Service.

Not only should there be a register of private companies allowed to tender, but any such company that has an NHS employee or one of his or her close relatives as a shareholder, director, or whatever, should be disqualified from the register. Individuals who are intent on competing with the National Health Service should decide whether they want to remain employed within the NHS or to run their own private companies. I hope that the Minister who replies to the debate will denounce and reject such activities as unsuitable for NHS employees and that he will undertake to issue guidelines to prevent them from being carried out in the future.

Mr. Rowe: The hon. Member for Bridgend (Mr. Griffiths) has described what prima facie appears to be a clear conflict of interests. If that is the case, I have no hesitation in condemning it. However, in a structure of the size and diversity of the National Health Service, at every level there will be conflicts of interest and it is essential that we are alert to them. For example, we all know that many Health Service personnel augment their salaries by working partly in the private sector. I have absolutely no doubt that that provides them with opportunities for cross-fertilisation.

Mr. Win Griffiths: I agree with the hon. Gentleman that if Dr. Keith Davies was carrying out tests for a private pathology laboratory owned and controlled by someone else for £10 an hour or whatever, there would be no conflict of interests. However, he is the director, company chairman and a shareholder in the private company while he is responsible for getting such work into the Health Service pathology laboratory. The Minister should make it quite clear that that should not be allowed.

Mr. Rowe: I have absolutely no brief for such a practice and I condemn it wholeheartedly if that is the case.

I am sorry that the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) is not in his place—I apologise, he is not in his usual place, and he does not appear to be paying attention. The privatisation publication of his union is unlikely to list the large number of contracts which have been discharged successfully, because the union is interested only in those which have failed to deliver the goods. I happen to find some consolation and comfort in the long list of contracts which have been terminated because they have not reached the standard required by the health authority because it shows that the health authorities are keeping a close eye on the quality of the contractors delivering the service. Throughout the National Health Service millions of pounds are being saved and in many cases a very much higher standard of service is being delivered by private contractors.

There is one element, however, on which I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will be able to reassure me. When the necessary breaking up of the trade union dominated monopoly of services to the health authorities was started, it was written into the law that health authorities had to accept the lowest tender. That was a mistake, as I know from my own experience. A constituent of mine told me that he worked for a highly ethical cleaning company with high standards which made a point of never diminishing the salaries and conditions of service of staff whom they took over. That company added immense value by a combination of training and technology, but when it tried to break into tendering for the National Health Service it found it impossible because it was unable to underbid other contractors. It tendered to break in at the point at which it was paying exactly the same salaries and conditions of service and to improve the service over the 12 months in which it had the first contract until it became apparent that it was offering good value for money, but that was not possible.

I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister can assure me that the new system will not contain such an artificial barrier to high quality services due to some routine rule which dismisses anyone who does not offer the lowest price.

10.30 pm

Mr. John Maxton (Glasgow, Cathcart): I shall be brief because we are trying to keep to a timetable and I suspect that we may be running a little behind.

The case that my hon. Friend the Member for Bridgend (Mr. Griffiths) cited is not unique. Greater Glasgow health board recently employed a person to get its laundry service into shape for privatisation—to prepare the contracts and reorganise the service in a certain area of Glasgow. Then it was discovered that that same man and his son were setting up a laundry company to bid for the contract. What did the health board do? It rightly removed the man from the job that he had been doing, but it did not fire him. Moreover, it did not stop his company from taking part in the tender process. That seems to me to be quite wrong.

My hon. Friend the Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) may sometimes seem abrasive and his remarks may sometimes rile people, but he is right to talk of the sleaze factor in the privatisation process, of which there is a genuine fear. The Opposition and large sections of the public feel that there is something sleazy about privatisation, and "sleazy" is the right word. The Conservative party is advancing an ideology and arguing in favour of what is supposedly a great principle—the principle of privatisation—which benefits it, its friends and supporters and, in some case, its members.

We should remember, too, that in laundry and catering services, competition is almost non-existent. The competition is between the in-house tenderers and large multinational companies which do not compete with each other but carve up the contracts between them. There is no competition at that level; the only competition is against the in-house tenderers.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: But in an industry in which between 70 per cent. and 90 per cent. of the costs are labour-related, surely the real competition has to do with who can secure the lowest costs. That is the real competitive position and that is why I find the whole business so utterly immoral.

Mr. Bill Walker *rose*——

Mr. Maxton: I hope that the hon. Gentleman will at least allow me to answer my hon. Friend the Member for Workington, who referred to a second sleaze factor. The first is that the large multinational companies involved are mostly contributors to the funds of the Tory party, whose election expenses they pay. A lot of nonsense is talked about Labour's election expenses, but the Conservative party spends much more money than we do and the multinationals pay their election expenses.

Mr. Bill Walker: I thank the hon. Gentleman for giving way to me again. He is well aware of the position. Does he suggest that a company such as Fishers based in Aberfeldy in my constituency is part of a multinational company? Where does that company—one of the leading companies in its field in Scotland—figure in his calculations?

Mr. Maxton: Of course, some small companies are involved. No one is suggesting that the multinationals have an absolute monopoly. What I suggest, though, is that 81 per cent. of catering is in the hands of two or three major companies and that they are nearly all contributors to Tory party funds. That is the first sleaze factor.

[Mr. Maxton]

The only point that I want to make—[HON. MEMBERS: "Only?"] It has been a long day. I have been in the House since 8.30 yesterday morning and I must admit that it is beginning to show.

The profits that the companies make and the savings which Ministers claim accrue—they are dubious savings—are almost entirely at the expense of some of the lowest-paid people in the country. That is what we find so disgusting. People in the Health Service who are paid just over £2 an hour, which hardly provides them with a high standard of living, are being forced to take wages of £1·60 or £1·70 an hour. If I take my wife out to dinner, we spend between the two of us what these people are expected to live on for a week. The friends of the Conservatives are lining their pockets at the expense of low-paid workers.

The factors that I have mentioned are what make the process of privatisation sleazy and what give it a corrupt feel. It is a distasteful business, and we will continue to fight it for a long time to come.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Mr. Roger Freeman): The hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) has continued his campaign of attacks on my hon. Friend the Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth). I am sure that I speak on behalf of all my hon. Friends when I say that my hon. Friend has behaved fairly, correctly, honestly and in accordance with the rules of the House.

Mr. Brian Sedgemore (Hackney, South and Shoreditch): Does the Minister agree that if the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth) has operated in accordance with the rules of the House, there may be something wrong with the rules?

Mr. Freeman: I repeat the support that my Government colleagues and all Conservative Members extend to my hon. Friend, and our condemnation of the wholly unjustified innuendoes and attacks made by the hon. Member for Workington.

The hon. Members for Workington and for Glasgow, Cathcart (Mr. Maxton) fail to distinguish between privatisation and contracting. Privatisation is about the change in ownership of assets and services, but we are talking now about contracting. There is a big difference. Contracting can be about services provided within the public sector and from the private sector. The arguments advanced by the hon. Member for Cathcart do not accord well with the reason of our earlier debates. He argues that all contractors are spivs, that they all contribute to the Conservative party, and that something stinks about the whole operation. I do not believe that most hon. Members would sympathise with that argument, nor would anyone observing the debate regard it as a fair representation of what is a sensible procedure.

We have introduced into the NHS compulsory tendering for catering, cleaning and laundry. The Labour party manifesto, I understand, commits the party to ending compulsory tendering in those three services—a process which has saved £110 million for the NHS, money that has gone back into improving patient care.

Most of these services are labour-intensive. Both in-house groups and private companies which tender should seek to make the most efficient use of the staff to be employed. That does not mean only wage rates, but it includes them because this is a free country in which we have a free economy. Other factors are numbers of staff employed, equipment and motivation. All those factors must be taken into account, and that is why some private tenders win. I must tell the House, however, that only some 20 per cent. of all contracts have been won by private sector companies outside the NHS.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: We know why.

Mr. Freeman: I can tell the hon. Gentleman why—because the redundancy payments that private sector companies have to pay must be borne by those companies. Although payment may be spread over the term of the contract, it presents a great impediment to those companies competing for such work.

Mr. Couchman: Does my hon. Friend agree that the fact that direct labour has been successful in winning so many of the contracts is a measure of the old "Spanish" practices which operated before tendering? Direct labour now works much more effectively and efficiently than previously.

Mr. Freeman: I am grateful to my hon. Friend.

Mr. Maxton: What about VAT?

Mr. Freeman: Where VAT makes a difference between the price tendered by a private company and an in-house bid, it is not taken into account. The hon. Gentleman will know that VAT is refunded under the Finance Act 1984. It is fair to take that into account when comparing the cost of an in-house tender with that of a private company.

My hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe) asked me specifically about contracts and quality. There is no question of NHS authorities always being obliged to accept the lowest tender. I admit frankly that other factors must be taken into account. If quality is such a factor, the authority can opt for the higher tender and it must disclose that publicly. I do not believe that we need to amend the law to deal with the position that my hon. Friend described.

The hon. Member for Bridgend (Mr. Griffiths) raised a question which gives cause for concern. If the facts are as presented by him, we must give him the benefit of the doubt. I will study the record. Contracts for consultants and all other NHS employees should provide for the elimination of such conflicts of interest.

Mr. Win Griffiths: The Minister should study the *Official Report* of 1 March, columns 464-69, where I described in great detail what is happening in those two companies. I did not want to detain the House by doing so again today—I just wanted to mention the issues involved. I am glad that the Minister's response has been positive because the potential for conflicts of interest is serious in the cases that I mentioned.

Mr. Freeman: I am sure that the House shares the hon. Gentleman's concern. I will study the record and draw it to the attention of my hon. Friend the Minister at the Welsh Office with responsibility in that matter.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: I wish to tell the Minister the story of a trade union official who attended a meeting between another person and me some four years ago. He was a regional official and he wept as he told me that he had felt obliged to go to the trade union representatives in a hospital in the north of England and tell them that they

should accept wage cuts to ensure that an in-house tender won, thus keeping out an outside contractor. Are the Government really trying to build the kind of Health Service in which trade union officials are driven into such quandaries and have to compromise decades of representing of workers' rights?

Mr. Freeman: It is in the interests of all patients in the NHS not only in those three sectors but in others that such activities—be they cleaning, contracting or laundry activities not of a clinical nature—are tested and shown to represent the most efficient and effective combination of employees in the Health Service.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Garbage.

Mr. Freeman: It is not garbage because that is how we shall ensure that we get value for the £30 billion that the taxpayer spends on the NHS.

We have provided that contracts in the Health Service are open, non-discriminatory, properly timetabled and documented, and that Members' interests are fully and properly declared. I invite the House to resist the new clause.

Question put and negatived.

New Clause 12

SMALL HOMES

'The provisions of section 1(4) of the Registered Homes Act 1984 shall not apply for the purposes of this Act.'.—*[Ms. Harman.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

10.45 pm

Ms. Harman: I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): With this it will be convenient to debate amendment No. 21, in page 42, line 18, clause 39, leave out

'or is not required to be so registered by virtue of the home being a small home.'

Ms. Harman: I can deal with new clauses 12 and 13 briefly because the Minister is aware of the points at issue, which were well aired in Committee. We have tabled them to give her an opportunity to announce what solutions she has to the problems with which they deal, remembering that in Committee we had considerable sympathy from Conservative Members.

New clause 12 would extend the safeguards provided by the Registered Homes Act 1984 to elderly and disabled people who currently have no protection in their private residential care homes because those homes have fewer than four residents.

The Government have said that they do not know how many homes escape registration and how many residents are therefore unprotected by the law because they do not know how many small homes there are. Between Committee and Report I carried out a survey among directors of social services. I asked them how many small homes they estimated there were in their social services areas, and the results of my survey are worrying.

The directors estimate that one in five of all homes in their areas are unregistered because they are small, having fewer than four residents. That means that the safeguards provided by the 1984 Act—about quality of standards, staffing and premises and about the character of the proprieters of homes—do not extend to residents in one in five such homes in Britain. I remind the House that we are talking about people who are vulnerable, elderly and dependent—otherwise they would not be in residential care.

New clause 13 deals with the problem of people setting up registered care homes—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. Is not the hon. Lady referring to amendment 213? I said at the outset that it would be convenient to take that amendment with new clause 12.

Ms. Harman: I apologise, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. Lady need not worry. We are all a little tired.

Ms. Harman: When I saw "213," I thought that it was a typing error and that it should have read "NC 13."

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: No, we are dealing with new clause 12 and amendment No. 213.

Ms. Harman: I am obliged to the Secretary of State for pointing that out, demonstrating that he is still awake.

Amendment No. 213 deals with the problem of people who set up registered care homes but do not disclose that they have criminal convictions which render them unfit to care for elderly and dependent people. There have been numerous cases of dishonest people with criminal convictions failing to disclose those facts to the registration authority. They have been discovered only as a result of some awful scandal—after the residents in their charge have suffered.

There is a clear loophole, but the Government have said that they will address the problem. The problems of small homes and homes being run by people with criminal convictions are related, as I shall illustrate.

Mr. Rowe: There was a great deal of talk in Committee about the television programme, "The Granny Business." The only person against whom a criminal conviction could be sustained, as a consequences of that programme being referred to the police, eventually had all but two of her convictions overturned in the Appeal Court. However, she was found guilty of assault. It is now believed that, although she is disqualified from running a registered home, she still cares for two elderly people. That example seems to make the hon. Lady's case fully and clearly.

Ms. Harman: I thank the hon. Gentlman for giving an example which shows that the safeguards are not working. They cannot be working if, when the registration authority ultimately finds that somebody is unfit to run a registered care home because he or she has a criminal conviction, it deregisters the home, but the person is able to carry on the business of providing residential care. Those people can do so by dropping the number of residents, still claiming income support and running a totally unsatisfactory business at the expense of elderly and dependent people.

I can give another example, the details of which were sent to me by the Association of Directors of Social Services. Olive Waring ran a private home called Oliveen in Blackpool. She was imprisoned in January 1987 for physically abusing a resident. In 1984, Lancashire county council found her running an unregistered home for four people in Jubilee lane, Blackpool. She was fined £1,000 for running an unregistered home, after which she merely

[Ms. Harman]

reduced her number of residents to three and continued to operate. Although Lancashire county council knew about the matter, it could do nothing because the law did not allow it. Last December, Olive Waring was imprisoned on a £30,000 fraud charge involving the forgery of a will of someone who used to live in one of her homes.

That is just one example, but the Minister knows that there are numerous others. There is no problem about dealing with the disclosure of criminal convictions. I hope that the Government will be able to accept the amendment which deals with that issue without any difficulty. It merely extends the safeguards that the Government have already extended to cover people caring for children. We are asking the Government to extend the restrictions and regulations to those who care for elderly people.

The problem is how to deal with small homes. I readily accept that perhaps new clause 12 goes a little too far. NALGO, which organises among its membership the inspectors of private residential care homes, has helpfully made a recommendation that would also be acceptable to the Association of Directors of Social Services. It might be a way forward to give registration authorities the power to enter, inspect and take action against small homes. They are given the power when a problem is identified, but they do not have a duty to require them to register all the small homes which they know to be in their areas. Therefore, when they know that there is a problem they have the power to act, but they are not borne down with extra registration duties when they already have inadequate resources to carry out their present registration functions.

The Bill provides the opportunity to legislate to protect thousands of people who have no protection under the present law. The Government must show not just that they have a vague aim to do something about the matter, but that they intend to act. I want to be sure that we hear from the Government, when the Minister replies, that they have plans to deal with this matter and that the Bill will not become an Act without containing legislative protection for people who are currently guaranteed no protection under the law.

It is late, but I hope that tonight the Minister will not flannel about vague aims and intentions. We want not good words, but action.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: I think that the hon. Lady has confused her papers. She was speaking to new clause 13, which is not on the selection list——

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman) was slightly confused when she started. She was speaking to new clause 12, but became confused with amendment No. 213.

Mrs. Bottomley: The revealing of convictions comes under new clause 13. The hon. Lady was speaking to new clause 13 when she referred to criminal records.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. We are dealing with new clause 12 on small homes.

Mr. Rowe: I agree that it is essential that the size of the home is not used as an excuse for allowing people to avoid inspection. I agree with the proposal that inspection should be carried out only where there are grounds for suspicion.

I want to put on record the fact that a substantial number of people look after one or two elderly people in almost ideal circumstances. They are treated as though they were living in their own homes. That is an extremely good service. I do not want the debate to be taken as some sign that anyone running a small home for one or two people is likely to be some sort of crook.

Mr. Kennedy: The last remark of the hon. Member for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe) was fair, but the 1984 Act contains a significant loophole and the Bill provides an opportunity to close it.

When the question of bringing homes with fewer than four residents under the inspectorate was raised in Committee, the Minister said:

> "That would involve the inspection unit in a great deal of work at a time when they are already embarking on their new tasks, establishing standards and working with those involved to ensure that the policies are effective. That provision would be an additional burden on small units, many of which are already effective."—[*Official Report, Standing Committee E*, 8 February 1990; c. 794.]

I do not doubt the effectiveness of a large number of units in that category, but on the point about inspection and the additional bureaucratic burden I refer the Minister to a quite different matter—recent experience of the poll tax in Scotland. Small units such as those offering bed and breakfast faced considerable difficulty because of commercial rating and the new tax burden on those premises. Within the past week or so, the Scottish Office has announced that units with six or fewer beds operating for 100 or fewer days per year would be exempt. That sort of accommodation is both essential and prolific in the Scottish Highlands. The policing and the bureaucracy to make any sense of the Government's policy will be a major headache. The Government seem to believe that it can be done, although I have my doubts—I believe that they will encounter great practical difficulties.

If the Scottish Office thinks that it can make that policy work in the Scottish Highlands, why does the Department of Health believe that a similar function could not come within the ambit of this legislation, especially as the inspectorate is already in place? Why cannot the inspectorate deal with small units catering for four or fewer people? I should be interested to learn whether the Minister stands by the case that she made in Committee —that she cannot accept the practical implications involved. There is a duty on the Department to provide the funds for additional inspectors. That seems to be the logical accompanying element which is required.

11 pm

Mr. Jeff Rooker (Birmingham, Perry Barr): The hon. Gentleman has had the experience of the poll tax in Scotland, which we have not had in England. I want to ask him a question. One problem will be finding out where the places are. There should be an automatic exemption from poll tax, because residential care is involved. If home owners have to apply for exemption from poll tax, that should enable a local authority to find out the addresses where there are one, two or three people in residential care. The policing part would be done. How has it been dealt with in Scotland where the exemption should be the same?

Mr. Kennedy: The hon. Gentleman makes a fair point. I will give an example to show how ludicrous the position is, without straying from the amendment into the rights and wrongs of the poll tax. I was speaking to someone who

provides residential care. Because of the type of people he caters for, he has to have an overnight matron in order to be registered. The matron rebuilt, with a 100 per cent. local authority grant, a house which is a dwelling place, but if she does not register for the poll tax in the private residential home the owner will not get certification because he does not have an overnight matron. As soon as she registers in the residential home, her house will count as a holiday home, even though she could never let it because she had a grant to rebuild it, and she will have to pay a double charge poll tax on it.

One hopes that the method is sufficiently sophisticated to track down small homes, but when at local authority level one hand literally does not know what the other is doing, it does not fill us with confidence. Perhaps uncharacteristically, for one shining moment, the Minister in her reply on this occasion, unlike others, can fill us with confidence.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: It is a source of disappointment to me that it is not possible within the scope of the Bill to achieve what we all wish—the registration of smaller homes. We might disagree about the type of registration. As I made clear in Committee, I would like it to be minimal, but it is essential that we have the names and addresses of small home owners. When they go through the process of applying for registration, they should complete a form where they have to reveal any previous convictions. When the list of cancelled registrations was circulated by my Department to local authorities, a local authority would be aware if somebody had previously been refused registration or had had his registration cancelled. Those would be important safeguards. None of us wants to under-estimate the valuable work done in many small homes, but we are all concerned about a gap which needs to be plugged.

The difficulty of the new clause is that it could apply only to those for whom the local authority provides care under the terms of the Bill. We would want to find a way of bringing all small homes within the provisions of the Registered Homes Act 1984, whether their residents had been placed by the local authority or independently.

There are many safeguards in the Bill. Under the new regime, a local authority will be placing contracts in which it can specify conditions. For example, it might stipulate that the home should be subject to inspection by the inspection unit which the local authority would have to set up at arm's length. We are making an important provision about complaints procedures; that will help to eliminate difficulties, as will the establishment of case managers. In the present regime, once an individual is placed in a residential home of any sort with income support, there is no need to follow up or monitor that individual. Under a system of case management, it will be possible to keep in closer touch with the individual to make sure that his needs are properly met.

I hope I have made our intention clear. We hope to find a legislative opportunity to bring units with fewer than four residents under control.

We have great confidence that under the new regime there will be far better safeguards for individuals. Indeed, we have a programme designed to try to improve the quality of residential care. We are spending £2 million on the "Caring in homes" initiative. That is a response to the Wagner report. We are seeking to improve standards across the public and private sectors.

I shall refer briefly to new clause 13, which was not selected but which the hon. Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman) mentioned briefly. The hon. Lady will be aware that under the Children Act 1989 arrangements are being made for those responsible for children to be checked to ascertain whether they have criminal records. There is an experimental scheme to provide access to criminal records for those involved in the operation of voluntary child care. We are having discussions to see whether that scheme can be extended further to cover those concerned with the elderly.

I agree that smaller residential homes can make a valuable contribution in the provision of care for the elderly. They often cater for the mentally frail, the elderly and vulnerable people generally. It is important, of course, that proper and sufficient safeguards are in place. I hope that with the commitment that I have given—I am disappointed that it has not been possible to plug the loophole at this stage—the hon. Member for Peckham will not press the matter at this stage.

Mr. David Hinchliffe (Wakefield): Is the Minister able to give us a legislative timescale? My hon. Friend the Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman) has produced an estimate of the number of small homes and *Community Care* referred last month to there being about 1,000 in east Sussex alone. That means that throughout the country there are many small homes. I accept the argument of the hon. Member for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe) that many of these homes are offering excellent care. I would not want to knock them. On many occasions in Committee we were talking about institutions. I believe that smaller homes often offer precisely the sort of provision that is appropriate for many people. I know from personal contact that some small homes offer excellent forms of care. Unfortunately, however, few of the people who run such homes do not have the best motives. Are we to wait for a scandal and an inquiry before we see some action? Can the Minister say when the legislation that she accepts is needed will be introduced?

Mrs. Bottomley: I do not feel able to give the hon. Member for Wakefield (Mr. Hinchliffe) a clear timetable this evening. I hope that it will be possible before long to find a legislative opportunity to introduce an appropriate measure. I think that it will be useful to spend a little longer deciding what form of legislation we think is most appropriate for the units that we are discussing.

I do not think that there is any difference between us on this. There is a need for some controls and I wish to work with others to find a moment at which we can tackle the problem.

Ms. Harman: I thank the Minister for her reply. There is no difference between us on the principle, but there is a difference in our determination that something must be done and the pace at which it must proceed.

I hope that the hon. Lady will accept that she must enter into consultation immediately with all the organisations that she said she would consult when she talked about the issue in response to a probing amendment in Committee. I understand that, so far, she has not engaged in any consultation with those organisations. I hope that she will do so at the first opportunity. The first step is to achieve consensus on registration which is appropriate, sufficient to be meaningful and worth having although less than the full registration procedure for

[Ms. Harman]

homes for more than four persons. That is the first thing that the Minister must do. Having achieved that, she must seek—we shall commit ourselves to do this—the first legislative opportunity.

Given the amount of time that the Government spend legislating in respect of local authorities, I feel that it will not be long before we have a Bill dealing with the powers that local authorities used to have, might have in the future or might not have any longer. When that measure is before us, we can look for an opening for the new clause. Similarly, in respect of criminal records, there are always criminal justice Bills going through the House. We shall assist the Minister by looking for a legislative opportunity, but she must enter into negotiations immediately. We do not want to miss a legislative opportunity because she has not undertaken the consultation. She must be ready with the decision in principle and then look for the opportunity.

New clause 15

ADVISORY COMMITTEE WITH RESPECT TO STANDARDS

'( ).—(1) The Secretary of State shall establish and maintain a committee for advising him with respect to the maintenance and improvement of the quality of goods or services provided by any health service body under an NHS contract.

(2) The committee established and maintained under this section—

(a) shall consist of a chairman and not more than nine other members, appointed by the Secretary of State;

(b) shall include such representatives of the medical and nursing professions and organisations representing consumers as seem appropriate to the Secretary of State; and

(c) shall meet at least twice a year.

(3) It shall be the duty of the Secretary of State—

(a) to consult the advisory committee, and

(b) to consider any representation made to him by the advisory committee,

on any matter pertaining to the quality of any goods or services provided by any health service body under an NHS contract.

(4) It shall be the duty of the Advisory Committee to make recommendations to the Secretary of State with respect to measures which it considers best calculated to maintain and improve standards of goods or services provided by health service bodies.

(5) The Secretary of State may by regulation, approve any recommendations of the advisory committee for the purpose of—

(a) giving practical guidance to health service bodies with respect to maintaining and improving standards of goods or services supplied or received; and

(b) promoting what appear to him to be desirable practices in the provision of goods or services under NHS contracts.

(6) In this section "health service body" and "NHS contract" have the same meanings as in section 4 of this Act.'.—*[Mr. Tom Clarke.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

Madam Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to take the following: New Clause 16—*Advisory Committee: supplementary powers*—

'( ).—(1) For the purpose of ensuring compliance with any regulation issued under subsection (Advisory Committee with respect to standards) (5) above, the chairman of the advisory committee may, at any time, cause an assessment to be made of the working practices of any hospital, establishment or other facility involved in the provision of goods or services under section 4 of this Act.

(2) The results of any assessment carried out under subsection (1) above shall be reported to the Secretary of State by the chairman of the advisory committee.

(3) The chairman of the advisory committee may, with the approval of the Secretary of State as to the numbers and terms and conditions of service, appoint such staff as he may determine to fulfil the duties of the advisory committee under this Act.

(4) There shall be paid out of monies provided by Parliament the remuneration of, and any travelling or other allowances payable to the members of staff of the advisory committee in consequence of the provisions of this Act.'.

New clause 35—*Standards and inspection of community care services*—

"(1) The Secretary of State shall establish a minimum standard for community care services which every individual may expect to receive.

(2) The Secretary of State shall ensure that there is an inspectorate that is sufficiently staffed to ensure that the minimum standards are adhered to by local authorities.

(3) In setting minimum standards under subsection 1 the Secretary of State shall consult those bodies he considers are representative of those who have the experience and knowledge of the provision and need for community care services.'.

New clause 38—*Standards and inspection of community care services (Scotland)*—

"(1) The Secretary of State shall establish a minimum standard for community care services which every individual may expect to receive.

(2) The Secretary of State shall ensure the establishment of a Social Services Inspectorate sufficiently staffed to ensure that the minimum standards are adhered to by local authorities.

(3) In setting minimum standards under subsection 1 the Secretary of State shall consult those bodies he considers are representative of those who have the experience and knowledge of the provision and need for community care services.'.

New Clause 45—*NHS Contracts*—

(1) The acquirer of an NHS contract shall take into account not just price but a broad range of factors when considering which provider should be awarded the contract. This will include the quality of service provided taking into account both patient satisfaction and clinical effectiveness.

(2) The acquirer shall institute a thorough and ongoing monitoring of the contract as it progresses which shall be open to public inspection.

(3) A complaints procedure shall be instituted for both staff and patients with respect to the operation of the contract.'.

New Clause 47—*Clinical Effectiveness*—

'The Secretary of State shall in pursuit of satisfactory systems of measuring clinical effectiveness and quality of treatments;—

(1) create an applied research agency for the NHS;

(2) develop a clinical database to support the epidemiological research it will do;

(3) with the data and methodoligies developed, introduce an ongoing monitoring and audit of clinical practice both to discover and disseminate best practice throughout the system.'.

We will also consider the following amendments: No. 228, in clause 3, page 3, line 11, at end insert—

'1A. In carrying out its primary functions including those provided under Section 4 below, a Regional, District or Special Health Authority or a Family Health Services Authority must ensure that the quality of such goods or services that it may provide, attains such standards of quality as may be determined by the Secretary of State for those particular goods and services and must publish annually a report giving details of its attainments in monitoring and improving quality standards.'.

No. 15, in clause 4, page 4, line 36, at end insert—

'(3) No National Health Service contract shall be valid unless it specifies the quality of service to be provided under the contract and how the quality is to be measured and monitored.'.

No. 21, in page 4, line 36, at end add—

'(3A) The acquirer will—

(a) publish the terms and conditions of any contract agreed with the provider;

(b) institute a thorough and ongoing monitoring and quality assurance programme keeping the local CHC aware of developments;

(c) create a complaints procedure for staff and patients with respect to the contract.'.

No. 33, in page 4, line 36, at end insert—

'(()) The Secretary of State may by regulations, require any health service body acting as a provider to have regard to:

(a) any relevant national codes of practice pertaining to any goods or services provided;

(b) any specific outcome requirements established by him, both applicable generally and in relation to specific clinical conditions, or

(c) any minimum standards of performance on any matter of concern, determined by him,

in respect of any NHS contract to which the provider is a part.'.

No. 4, in page 4, line 42, at end insert—

'(3A) Where any health service body proposes to enter into an arrangement which will be an NHS contract in which it will be the acquirer within the meaning of subsection (1) above, it shall publish a document setting out the standards of goods and services which are proposed to be acquired under that arrangement.

(3B) Prior to making a decision about the standards of goods and services which are proposed to be acquired, a health service body shall seek the views of Community Health Councils within their district on the standards of goods and services, and shall also seek the views of such other persons as seem to them to have an interest in the matter or to be representative of the interest of patients in their district on the matter, and shall, in determining the standards of goods and services, take account of any views or representations received on the matter.'.

No. 5, in page 4, line 42, at end insert—

'(3A) The Secretary of State shall by regulations specify, for each category of services, the standards of goods and services which shall be the minimum standards for goods and services which may be specified by any health service body which is an acquirer in the terms and conditions of any arrangements which is a National Health Service contract.'.

No. 57, in page 4, line 42, at end insert—

'(3A) Any contract made under subsection (1) above shall provide that services supplied by NHS consultants shall be subject to the professional standards of care then in force under the regulations of the Royal College having jurisdiction for the place in which the contract is made.'.

No. 6, in page 5, line 33, at end insert—

'(7A) The terms and conditions of any arrangement which is an NHS contract shall include a statement of the means by which the acquirer will satisfy himself, throughout the term of the arrangement, that the standards of goods and services provided under that arrangement are sufficient to meet the standards specified in the terms and conditions of the arrangement.

(7B) Where the terms and conditions of any arrangement which is an NHS contract include a statement referred to in subsection (7A), it shall be the duty of the provider under that arrangement to make available any facilities, information or services necessary to permit the acquirer to satisfy himself as subsection (7A) requires.'.

No. 135, in clause 28, page 26, line 33, at end insert—

'(2A) No National Health Service contract shall be valid unless it specifies the quality of service to be provided under the contract and how the quality is to be measured and monitored.'.

No. 136, in page 26, line 38, at end insert—

'(3A) The acquirer will—

(a) publish the terms and conditions of any contract agreed with the provider;

(b) institute a thorough and ongoing monitoring and quality assurance programme keeping the local CHC aware of developments;

(c) create a complaints procedure for staff and patients with respect to the contract.'.

No. 37, in page 27, line 22, at end insert—

'( ) Where a reference is made to the Secretary of State under subsections (4) and (5), he or the person appointed by him, shall take into account the distance a patient would otherwise have to travel when determining what is "practicable" under subsection (5).'

No. 45, in clause 5, page 6, line 42, at end insert—

'( ) In exercising his powers under this Section, the Secretary of State shall have particular regard to ensuring that there exists a sufficient range and quality of services both in a local area and nationally to ensure that the functions of the National Health Service contained in the principal Act are carried out.'.

Mr. Tom Clarke (Monklands, West): I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

I shall refer to new clauses 15 and 16, and I hope that the hon. Member for Ross, Cromarty and Skye (Mr. Kennedy) will not mind if I say a few words about new clause 38. Hopefully, I shall not anticipate his speech too much.

Hon. Members who served on the Standing Committee will recall that in Committee my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, East (Mr. Vaz) moved a similar amendment to establish a national inspectorate under the director of patient services. In his excellent speech to the Committee he explained that he had the support of several important bodies and people, including the Royal College of Nursing. At this time in the evening I do not wish to be provocative, so I hope that the Secretary of State will not mind if I mention one last opinion poll. The RCN conducted an opinion poll among Conservative Members. It discovered that 80 per cent. of Conservative Members support the setting of national standards and 70 per cent. support the establishment of a national inspectorate to monitor health care provision. Most people would welcome those views.

We are trying to find ways of ensuring that those views are recognised in the Bill, particularly in view of the clear support for them within the House and elsewhere. When the hon. Member for Ross, Cromarty and Skye speaks to the new clause he will probably broaden the arguments to deal with proper monitoring and inspection of community care in Scotland.

I remind the House that earlier this evening the hon. Member for Great Yarmouth (Mr. Carttiss)—I hope that I spare his blushes—made a thoughtful and courageous speech. He said that many issues which had not been resolved in Committee were meant to be debated on the Floor of the House. They will not be reached because of the guillotine motion. The issue dealt with by the new clause is just such an item. I was glad that the hon. Gentleman made that point and I sincerely welcome what he said.

In Committee, under pressure from my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, East, the Under-Secretary of State for Health said:

"The Government will reflect on how best to improve standards. We do not believe that it should be through a national inspectorate, or through a national accreditation scheme. However, there are ways to improve the service, for example by a national advisory committee. My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State will reflect on and bring forward proposals for such improvement. The health advisory service advises on the quality of care provided to the mentally ill and the elderly. Its work with the mentally ill is

[Mr. Tom Clarke]

under review. It could provide a useful model for advising DHAs, and hospitals with which they have contracts, about standards of care."—[*Official Report, Standing Committee E,* 23 January 1990; c. 347.]

The Committee welcomed that in so far as it went and in anticipation of something more extensive—a bigger commitment—perhaps even a new clause or amendment on Report. So far as I can see, that has not happened. I hope that when the Secretary of State replies he will appreciate that in new clauses 15 and 16 we aim to respond to what we consider to be the Government's assurance to improve standards by enshrining the advisory committee in legislation.

11.15 pm

When the hon. Member for Ross, Cromarty and Skye dealt in his new clause with community care, many of us felt that he was absolutely right. That is why earlier this evening, in the debate on the guillotine motion, I was particularly surprised when the hon. Member for Lancashire, West (Mr. Hind), who unfortunately is not in his seat now but, in fairness, was here for most of the evening, said that the House had discussed Scotland. That comes as no surprise. Scotland is part of the United Kingdom. Scotland is dealt with in the Bill. Community care in Scotland is important. Frankly, we have not debated the matter enough. Therefore, I am pleased that community care in Scotland and the need for proper monitoring and inspections are dealt with in this group.

I hope that the importance of that is not lost on the House. Many people are convinced that community care in Scotland is not properly monitored. Moreover, it is difficult to do because of the present limited nature of joint planning, despite the legislative opportunities that the Secretary of State and the Under-Secretary of State for Scotland have not so far embraced or introduced.

The new clauses would be an ideal opportunity for the Government to show their commitment to standard setting and improving quality within the NHS. New clause 15 would establish the advisory committee and give it the power to establish minimum standards of care. That is terribly important in the light of the evidence of the accident of geography, where in some areas standards are high, yet in others they are not only far too low, but entirely unacceptable for community care.

New clause 16 gives the committee supplementary powers to assess local working conditions to ensure minimum standards. The case for that is self-evident. It is self-evident that we are attempting, particularly in the absence of real advocacy, to ensure that basic standards are met and that there is accountability and proper monitoring. We have a great deal of support for that.

I referred earlier to the Royal College of Nursing. In its evidence to the Select Committee on Social Services, it said:

"Therefore, in order to ensure a high quality of standards of care, the College wishes to see an independent, nationally trained inspectorate working at local level to monitor the care that is delivered by the private, the voluntary and the public sectors. This would be an independent body which would maintain quality and which is neither purchaser nor provider. Precedents for this include the HMI in education and, more recently, the directors of consumer services established in the privatised water, gas, telecommunications and electricity industries to safeguard consumer interests and uphold standards."

The very important point which emerges from that evidence is that we are dealing with consumers. The frail, the vulnerable, the elderly, the physically disabled, the mentally ill and the mentally handicapped are consumers. Unfortunately, because of the restrictions on our debate, we have not had many opportunities—we have had far too few—to discuss those groups in the context of community care. None the less, if there is a commitment to consumers, these new clauses give the Government an opportunity to go beyond mere words, to go beyond a mere oral assertion that they will issue circulars, and so on. We are offering them a statutory opportunity to do the minimum necessary to ensure that the standards of care that are insisted upon are proper and reasonable standards that can be monitored and for which there can be proper accountability.

The amount of money involved is considerable. There is much talk of value for money. We are entitled to an assurance that taxpayers' money is being spent in a way that is consistent with the principle of value for money as well as with the rights of the consumer. For all those reasons, I thought that the excellent case that my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, East and others made in Committee would have persuaded Ministers to accept some reasonable proposals.

Unfortunately, Ministers did not at that stage accept any of our amendments. I recall only one promise from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland—the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth). That is a matter that we shall follow closely, but it is not particularly relevant to these new clauses. Beyond that promise we were offered not just very little but nothing at all, except, as in respect of so many other matters, the promise that, by the time of the Report stage, the Government would have taken advice, would have involved themselves in consultations, and might even surprise us by saying that they agreed to our modest proposals.

In presenting these new clauses, we are giving the Secretary of State an opportunity—not just at the 11th hour but almost at the 12th—to show just a little generosity. Generosity is something that was absent from his dealings with the Committee and the House.

In that spirit I commend the new clauses to the House. I look forward to hearing from the Secretary of State a response that is as positive as I am sure the House would want.

Mr. Tim Devlin (Stockton, South): Amendment No. 57, which stands in my name, deals with two essential points —one is a general point and the other clears up an existing anomaly. Perhaps I should first declare an indirect interest in that my father is a member of the council of the Royal College of Surgeons and joint author of the "National Confidential Enquiry into Perioperative Deaths". I wish to refer to the monitoring role of the royal colleges of surgeons, anaesthetists, obstetricians, gynaecologists and others. It is right to ensure in any Bill of this kind that the services delivered to the public meet certain minimum quality criteria. That is the aim of my amendment.

I shall be interested in the response of my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State to my point about the anomalous positions of the royal colleges of England and those of Scotland. The standard maintenance role of the royal colleges of England is being upset by that of the colleges of Edinburgh and Glasgow. This is a particular difficulty. A member of the Royal College of Surgeons of

England who practises in Scotland is not subject to the authority of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh or Glasgow. Because he is beyond the territorial jurisdiction of the English college, he cannot be monitored from there either.

Similarly, a small number of Scottish practitioners who practise south of the border are beyond the geographical jurisdiction of the Scottish colleges, yet when they are monitored by the English colleges they say that they are members of the Scottish college and therefore do not wish to submit to the jurisdiction of an English college.

This is a small, but important, point. If we want a system in which there is professional peer group pressure to improve standards of health care, that pressure must be exercised through the appropriate royal college. That does not happen with those two minority groups.

Sir George Young (Ealing, Acton): The new clauses and the amendments have the same objective, but they would achieve it in different ways. Amendments. Nos. 4, 5 and 6, which stand in my name, are slightly less bureaucratic than new clause 15 in that they avoid setting up an advisory committee, but their objectives are the same—to use the new regime to drive up standards, to improve the quality of services and to increase confidence in the NHS.

Amendment No. 4 provides the machinery for delivering those objectives—machinery which is not explicit in the Bill. It would require that, for any NHS contract, the acquiring body should consult on the standards of service to be provided under the contract. There needs to be a mechanism for ensuring in each case that the quality of service that patients can expect is understood publicly and that there is a quality yardstick by which a contractor can be assessed. Patients and the organisations which represent their interests have the right to know what they can expect from a contractor in the Health Service. The amendment provides such a mechanism. It would require that the quality standards are consulted upon and made public.

Amendment No. 5 clarifies the regulatory responsibility of the Secretary of State in relation to standards of health care. Where resources are limited, as they always will be, there may be a temptation for a hard-pressed Health Service body to cut corners on standards. Some health authorities and budget-holding general practitioners may therefore be tempted, when entering into contracts for the provision of care, not to specify adequate standards from their contractors. The amendment would limit this temptation by giving to the Secretary of State the role of setting for each category of service minima below which the quality of health care should not fall. At the moment, the Department provides a substantial amount of material regulating the standards of provision, and the amendment simply makes that explicit.

Amendment No. 6 deals with monitoring. The working of contracts for health care should be closely monitored to ensure that contractors meet the standards expected of them and that the terms of the contract are met. The amendment would require that the means by which monitoring and evaluation of quality of care provided under contracts should be set out in the contracts and would require contractors, by statutory duty, to co-operate with monitoring and evaluation procedures. That would help patients to feel secure, in that a system of monitoring and enforcement would guarantee that high standards are maintained and ensure the full co-operation of contractors.

The three amendments are fully consistent with the objectives in the White Paper. They simply seek to write into the Bill a procedure for guaranteeing the high quality of service that we all want to see.

11.30 pm

Mr. Kennedy: New clauses 35 and 38, to which the hon. Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke) was kind enough to refer in his opening remarks, are partly based on the learning curve of the hon. Member for Glasgow, Cathcart (Mr. Maxton) in Committee. They refer to standards of inspection of community care services in Scotland, England and Wales, and take account of the slight differences in the role or existence of the inspectorates in each.

Despite earlier exchanges in Committee, there remains considerable doubt that the Bill's objectives in respect of community care will be fully realised. The Secretary of State might have acknowledged in our earlier debate on the timetable motion that it is regrettable that the House cannot devote more time to important aspects of the Bill. However, I suspect that new clause 15 and other parts of the Bill will have much more of an uphill struggle when they reach the other place, and I shall be watching its progress—and, hopefully, the alterations that are made to it—very closely.

The Bill makes welcome provision for local authorities to publish plans for community care, but there is no proper agreement on a mechanism to ensure that minimum standards are met, and therefore there is nothing positive or indicative for which inspectors can look.

If one considers the education system, it should not be so great a problem as is feared in the minds of Ministers or civil servants at the Department of Health. The education system proves that it is possible to set minimum standards and to operate an inspectorate without necessarily imposing too much centralisation or inhibiting scope for personal initiative and development.

One must question how community care plans will be properly assessed in the absence of minimum standards —particularly as it is more than likely under present budgetary constraints that there will be disagreements between the health authority or health board and the local authority.

The Secretary of State repeated earlier today that heavy reliance is being placed on contract setting to ensure quality of service. The right hon. and learned Gentleman spoke of competition in the hospital sector being based on quality. The same applies to the care in the community approach. The quality control aspects of a contract, whether it concerns health or community care, are currently minimal and are unlikely to provide an adequate safeguard, at least in the short term.

The guidance issued since the Committee stage is encouraging. The word "quality" is used in the very first sentence and recurs throughout. Ministers appear to have become more sensitive to that aspect than they were earlier. Nevertheless, there remains genuine anxiety that minimum standards will be fastened upon by the providers and contractors of care rather than serve as a starting point.

[Mr. Kennedy]

My final point concerns the social services inspectorate. Exchanges between the Minister for Health and me in Committee revealed that in the past few years the number of inspectors in England and Wales has doubled. That is welcome, and it will probably increase further if the Minister is successful in realising her ambition to extend the scope and the role of the inspectorate. However, such a major and fundamental change as the community care aspect of the Bill surely contains scope for a further inspectorate. In Scotland, the need for minimum standards still exist, but the establishment of a proper inspectorate is crucial.

I am indebted to the Royal College of Nursing for its assistance with amendment No. 33. The amendment aims to give the Secretary of State a reserve power to establish a series of minimum standards of care which health care providers would have to observe. In effect, it would establish a safety net for quality in future. There is no time to go into the details of the argument behind the amendment, but perhaps in the short time available I should commend back to the Secretary of State his own words on 10 October 1989 at that marvellous occasion, the Conservative party conference. The Secretary of State referred to the two prime problems which arise if all decisions about acceptable standards are left to individual contracts: first, will the purchaser be in a strong enough position to face a monopoly provider and, secondly, will minimum standards vary significantly throughout the country from Plymouth to Inverness? In his speech at the conference, the Secretary of State listed a catalogue of inexplicable anomalies between districts and regions and concluded:

"These failings are not fair to the patients when the treatment you receive (and the delay you experience) depends entirely on the luck of the draw. Above all, on where in the country you live and whether you have an illness which is well-treated locally or not."

Amendment No. 33 aims to provide a permissive regulatory framework for the Secretary of State to be able to exercise the power to address precisely the problem that he highlighted on that occasion.

Amendment No. 37 expresses the concern that hospitals, particularly in rural areas, will be in a monopoly position under contracts because they are the only providers of a service in that region. What effects will there be on people having to travel, as that clearly will be a logical component of the internal market, and on the fact that the Secretary of State will view a local monopoly in an entirely different way from patients because many patients in rural areas have to travel significant distances to receive treatment? *[Interruption.]* If the hon. Member for Wirral, South (Mr. Porter) finds this boring, I am sure that he can find entertainment elsewhere. Perhaps these are rough and ready arguments because those of us who served on the Committee did not pursue many of the points as we had hoped for a proper debate.

Amendment No. 45 embodies the plea that

"the Secretary of State shall have particular regard to ensuring that there exists a sufficient range and quality of services both in a local area and nationally to ensure that the functions of the National Health Service contained in the principal Act are carried out."

There is genuine anxiety about the future of the service because of the step into the unknown that the Bill represents. Even at this late stage the Secretary of State has a chance to offer some reassurance.

Mr. Michael Morris: I am happy to associate myself with amendments Nos. 5 and 6, in the name of my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, Acton (Sir G. Young), and I hope that they will appeal to my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State. If we are not talking about medical audit, we are talking about performance review. There is a great deal of experience of performance review among professional organisations across the Atlantic and I had hoped that we might learn from that experience.

Certain questions need to be asked. Was the operation necessary in the first place? Was it correctly undertaken? What is the rate of readmission and cross-infection? What was the cost of performing the operation, and was the patient satisfied? Certain initiatives can be taken to guard against inappropriate surgery, unnecessary blood transfusions and the unco-ordinated treatment of intensive care patients. The amendments address the question of who is to check the quality of care. Every other industry in the country has quality control, and I cannot believe that it is right that the NHS should not. That is why I support the amendments.

Mrs. Maria Fyfe (Glasgow, Maryhill): I support the proposals of the hon. Member for Ross, Cromarty and Skye (Mr. Kennedy). I am sure that we can all agree that it ought to be perfectly possible to set minimum standards and to have inspectorates to ensure that they are achieved. The hon. Gentleman cited the example of schools, for which we have minimum standards, and inspectors to ensure that they are met. An even more useful example, perhaps, is the example of the factory inspectorate, which ensures that the conditions in which people work are adequate.

Similarly, we should want to ensure that a large number of criteria are satisfied in relation to the suitability of the conditions in which old people are looked after in small premises. I have been shocked by some of the cases of which I have heard in the course of my constituency work and by the conditions in which some old people have been made to live.

There is also the question of the charge made for services. I heard of one old lady who was persuaded to leave the home in which she was living to go into a private house where her rent was doubled after two months. That old person felt vulnerable and unable to do much about her plight. The attitude seems to be that the Department of Social Services will pick up the tab, and that it does not matter if the public purse is robbed to pay people to provide the services.

There is also a danger to old people's privacy. Some people seem to view old people as having lost all right to be treated as thinking and sentient human beings. They open their mail, listen to their telephone conversations and generally engage in a lot of unwarranted interference that would not be tolerated by someone who was capable of defending himself. But many old people are powerless unless they have a relative to stand up for them.

What about the items that are provided for old people? In one case, for example, a person who was virtually immobile was given only a commode and felt extremely embarrassed and ill at ease. That person could no longer

get to the bathroom because it was so far away. It seems pretty obvious that decent toilet and washing facilities should be provided within easy reach of people who cannot move far.

There is much detail to be worked out in seeking to achieve proper inspection, but it needs to be done if old people are not merely to be set aside and forgotten about as though they have stopped mattering as long as they have a roof over their head. If we do not set standards and establish an inspectorate to check them, local authority social workers may well feel that they simply have to put up with the standards set in their area.

It would depend on what happened to be available. Standards could vary widely, and we could know that some of them were unacceptable but be unable to do anything about it—except to wring our hands and try to shift people around to better accommodation. But old people should not be shunted around like parcels from one place to another. They should be able to end their days in comfort, peace and security. It does not seem too much to ask that old people who cannot look after their own affairs any more should be assured of safety, security and comfort and minimal decent standards.

I hope that the Minister will be able to accede to our request. If the Government can inspect cottages to discover whether they are liable to poll tax, they can surely inspect small homes in which old people live.

11.45 pm

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I have always regarded the hon. Members for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke) and for Ross, Cromarty and Skye (Mr. Kennedy) as among the more sincere hon. Members in the House. However, when they said that they were looking forward to continuing after midnight and how much they feared the imminent approach of the guillotine, I was less than usually convinced that they meant everything that they were saying—they do not look like men dying to go on after midnight.

I am delighted that we have reached the new clauses dealing with quality. As speeches from hon. Members on both sides of the House have shown, there is virtual unanimity on the idea that raising the quality of care and clinical treatment in the NHS and of the care and support that can be given to those who live in the community and require better domiciliary services is at the heart of all our ambitions. Certainly, the notion of raising the quality of the NHS and of domiciliary and residential services in the community is at the heart of the Government's reforms, and of this Bill.

Quality has been the mainstay of all our proposals, and I do not instinctively think about it along the lines of the amendments. That reveals the political division between us on method. I do not begin by thinking of great national committees and quangos to inspect everyone and ensure quality in a service that is already giant and daunting in its complexity and geographical scope. I have always thought that the idea of central Government laying down minimum standards, as suggested by the hon. Member for Ross, Cromarty and Skye, is not very useful, because there is so much variation across the country and among client groups.

Our approach to these reforms has been to build into the organisation and the systems of the NHS and care in the community methods that will stimulate those who work in the service at local level to strive to achieve the highest possible quality in response to the patients and clients whom they serve.

Those of us who were here between 3 am and 6 am today will recall that the Government look to contracts, above all else, to raise the quality of the services provided in the NHS. At times we held what was almost a seminar this morning; at times our exchanges about exactly how we see quality being reflected and defended in the contract system were lively. The hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) laughs. From beginning to end, the hon. Gentleman has not quite understood the contract system in the NHS.

In future, services will be provided locally in pursuance of an agreement between the district health authority or general practitioner and hospitals and community units. Those who want services provided for residents will stipulate what they want—not just their quantity and cost, but most importantly their quality which they can specify and how they will measure it when the service is delivered. In exchange, those who work in the units and deliver the services will sign up to a given level of quality, explain how they propose to measure it, and deliver it in exchange for the resources that they have agreed to receive.

Every contract will stipulate the quality of service. We went over this ground in Committee when I said that I would let Committee members have the first specimen contract as quickly as possible. Those contracts vary in quantity and they have been worked out in different parts of the NHS as people with enthusiasm for the idea have got down to producing the type of contract that should be exchanged between a district health authority of a GP practice and a hospital that sets out what service is meant to be provided and what quality is to be attained.

I want the professions, doctors and nurses to look at the contract to see what they think about it for their particular service. Many doctors and nurses may not like the way in which the quality of their service is described. In that case the royal colleges must lay down how they would like their service to be judged and describe the quality to which they aspire. In that way they will help us to produce good contracts with which they can feel content because they are being asked to deliver something sensible that they should like to achieve and by which they are content to be measured in exchange for the resources that they require.

Fortunately, we are moving away from some of the rubbish that we have had for heaven knows how many hours. We are now coming down to the realities of what is being worked upon in 190 districts in England, Scotland and Wales as they prepare for the reforms.

My hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, Acton (Sir G. Young) tabled amendments Nos. 4, 5 and 6, supported by my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, South (Mr. Morris). They agree with the underlying aim to build stipulated quality into the arrangements for the work of the NHS. I do not like putting the whole thing in a straitjacket as their amendments suggest. I welcome my hon. Friends' attempts to set up, step by step, what should be done and what is required, but I do not want all the units and all the districts to grab the rulebook or the statute while saying that everything must be reduced to this, this and this. We are pursuing the underlying aims described by my hon. Friends.

I know that I frequently describe all our reforms in terms of acute services—I always talk about hip replacements or varicose veins, things for which there are

[Mr. Kenneth Clarke]

waiting lists. I talk about the cold surgery about which most of our constituents are conscious. It is best to describe those services because they are the easiest to describe in terms of contract, quality, arranging the price and such. The contracts on which we must work, however, are those for more complicated services. We want an integrated service between the acute sector and community care. We must work on those contracts involving a mixture of disciplines—for example, doctors and nurses. In those circumstances, one may be talking not about the treatment of a disease, but the management of a condition such as diabetes.

The contractual system at the heart of our reforms will contribute far more to raising the quality of the NHS than the committees and other ideas—the only ideas—produced by the Opposition.

Sir Michael McNair-Wilson: I accept what my right hon. and learned Friend says about contracts being an obvious yardstick of the success of a particular hospital, but he is talking too clinically. Surely the real critic of the efficiency of a service is the patient. He will decide whether the contract was placed in the right hospital and whether the right service was provided. The contract can give only an indication. It cannot supply the playback from the customer that many of us want.

Mr. Clarke: We can steer through all the formalities. We can enter into contracts and alter present structures so that everyone knows what we are talking about in terms of quantity, how soon one will receive one's first outpatient treatment, how much it will cost, the quality stipulated by the GP and how that will be measured by the DHA or whoever thereafter.

What in the end will determine whether it is a success is the patient's judgment of how it works. So we are building in more consumer choice, making GPs more responsive to their patients and the DHAs more responsive to their GPs. The contracts will also be steered to those places where the patients feel most content, either because they particularly want to go to their local hospitals or because they are treated better there in every way, from the appointment arrangements to the follow-up after they have left hospital. That will help to determine what really goes on, will humanise the whole system and help to stimulate higher quality.

My hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, South said that we needed a system of quality control. I could not agree more. It is surprising that of all the health care systems throughout the world, none of them measures the quality of outputs. Indeed, most health care systems never bother to measure their outputs at all. The Labour party in the House typifies what goes on in health care systems throughout the world. They are dominated by the interests of the people who work in them to such an extent that they never bother to ask what is coming out by way of service and quality.

We are introducing a system of clinical audit, and we have the full agreement of the medical profession in doing so. When I was first at the Department of Health a few years ago, for a Minister to suggest to many in the medical profession that we would clinical audit and go in for organised quality control across the system was regarded as a blasphemous utterance. I concede that the Royal College of Surgeons has done valuable pioneering work. The same is true of the Royal College of Anaesthetists, the Royal College of General Practitioners and the Royal College of Nursing. The whole medical profession has swung round, and we are allowing them to organise their own system of clinical audit which will systematically measure the quality of their output.

But I appreciate that there are still concerns about quality in the NHS. Some of those concerns expressed last summer, when all the campaigning was going on, involved people raising fears about the quality of the service as an excuse for trying to stop anything being changed in the environments in which they worked. But that was never the position of the Royal College of Nursing, to which several hon. Members have referred.

As I say, concerns remain. The hon. Member for Ross, Cromarty and Skye said that all I talked about now was interesting but new, and was therefore disturbing, unsettling and worrying to those who worked in the service. We must continue to reassure all concerned that we are striving to raise quality and that they have nothing to fear—either themselves or in terms of the quality of care for their patients—if they join in with us.

Because there are still those fears, which I think are misplaced, I have invited all the medical royal colleges and the other statutory bodies to enter into talks with me about how, even at this stage of the Bill—if necessary, by statutory revision, which will have to occur in another place—we can devise new systems which will enable us to monitor and check to make sure that the higher standards of care are achieved. Those talks are going on now and I trust that they will reach a successful outcome.

Mr. Michael: What a filibuster.

Mr. Clarke: I am not taking lectures from the hon. Gentleman about filibusters. He conducted a filibuster about eight hours ago. Now he can listen to some serious content.

In respect of care in the community, which is a particular concern of the hon. Member for Monklands, West, we are strengthening greatly the social services inspectorate in England.

Mr. Tom Clarke: The Secretary of State must be aware that, although those may sound to him like fine words, they in no way match up to the promises given in Committee. If the Government are as convinced as the right hon. and learned Gentleman claims about the need for quality, let them show it by accepting what is a reasonable new clause. I hope that he will do that. But if he does not, I shall invite the House to divide on the issue.

Mr. Clarke: I am glad to hear that. As I said at the outset, the whole basis of our reforms is aimed at raising the quality of treatment and care in the Health Service and the community services. All that the Labour party can do after hours of debate and months of deliberation is to advocate the setting up of a new Committee. The bureaucratic approach to the Health Service which dominated its policy in the past will soon be swept away. If Labour Members wish to divide on this new clause, I trust that it will be rejected as wholly inadequate to the challenges facing the National Health Service which will be more properly addressed by our reforms, when they are

implemented—on time—at the beginning of April 1991. That is when a better National Health Service will begin to be delivered.

12 midnight

Mr. Tom Clarke: That was as unsatisfactory as the rest of the Secretary of State's speech. I ask the House to divide.

Question put, That the clause be read a Second time:—

The House divided: Ayes 203, Noes 279.

Division No. 127] **[12 midnight**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beggs, Roy
Beith, A. J.
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Blair, Tony
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Faulds, Andrew
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Gordon, Mildred
Gould, Bryan
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hoey, Ms Kate *(Vauxhall)*
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howells, Geraint
Howells, Dr. Kim (Pontypridd)
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kennedy, Charles
Kilfedder, James
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum A.
McFall, John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
Maclennan, Robert
McNamara, Kevin
Madden, Max
Maginnis, Ken
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Paisley, Rev Ian
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Richardson, Jo
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Sillars, Jim
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Smith, J. P. *(Vale of Glam)*
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon Sir David
Steinberg, Gerry
Stott, Roger
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Rt Hon J. D. *(S'ford)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mrs. Llin Golding and
Mr. Frank Haynes.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amery, Rt Hon Julian
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Favell, Tony

Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fishburn, John Dudley
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Sir Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Hague, William
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Howard, Rt Hon Michael
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Sir Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
Madel, David
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Norris, Steve
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)*
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Price, Sir David
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Rt Hon Nicholas
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, Sir William
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Rt Hon Ian *(Herts N)*
Stokes, Sir John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Waldegrave, Rt Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, Sir John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Alastair Goodlad and
Michael Fallon.

Question accordingly negatived.

It being after Twelve o'clock, MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER *proceeded to put forthwith the Questions which she was directed to put at that hour, pursuant to the Order [14 March.]*

Question put, That amendments Nos. 39 to 141, 158, 256, 275, 286 and 341, remaining to be made, be made to the Bill:—

The House divided: Ayes 276, Noes 202.

Division No. 128] **[12.13 am**

AYES

Adley, Robert
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amery, Rt Hon Julian
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & C!'t's)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Buckley, George J.
Burns, Simon
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fishburn, John Dudley
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*

Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Sir Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Hague, William
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hayes, Jerry
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Howard, Rt Hon Michael
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Sir Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
Madel, David
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Moss, Malcolm
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Norris, Steve
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)*
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Price, Sir David
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Rt Hon Nicholas
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, Sir William
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Rt Hon Ian *(Herts N)*
Stokes, Sir John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Tracey, Richard
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Waldegrave, Rt Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, Sir John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Alastair Goodland and
Mr. Greg Knight.

NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beggs, Roy
Beith, A. J.
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Blair, Tony
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Faulds, Andrew
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Gould, Bryan
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Haynes, Frank
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hoey, Ms Kate *(Vauxhall)*
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howells, Geraint
Howells, Dr. Kim (Pontypridd)
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kennedy, Charles
Kilfedder, James
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John

McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum A.
McFall, John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
Maclennan, Robert
McNamara, Kevin
Madden, Max
Maginnis, Ken
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Paisley, Rev Ian
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Richardson, Jo
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Short, Clare
Sillars, Jim
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Smith, J. P. *(Vale of Glam)*
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon Sir David
Steinberg, Gerry
Stott, Roger
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Rt Hon J. D. *(S'ford)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. James Wallace and
Mr. Alex Carlile.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Clause 5

NHS TRUSTS

Amendments made: No. 276, in page 6, line 25, at end insert

'and, without prejudice to the generality of the power, and such regulations may make provision to deal with cases where the post of any officer of an NHS trust is held jointly by two or more persons or where the functions of such an officer are in any other way performed by more than one person'.—*[Mr. Day.]*

No. 139, in page 6, leave out lines 43 to 48.—*[Sir George Young.]*

Clause 34

ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT OF NHS TRUSTS AND FUND-HOLDING PRACTICES

Amendment made: No. 256, in page 39, line 29, leave out '(1)' and insert—

'(1) The enactments specified in Schedule *(Amendments relating to audit of accounts of Scottish health service bodies)* to this Act shall have effect subject to the amendments set out in that Schedule, being amendments—

(a) to extend the functions of the Commission for Local Authority Accounts in Scotland (in this section referred to as "the Commission") to cover Health Boards and other bodies established under the 1978 Act, the Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland and State Hospital Management Committees constituted under the Mental Health (Scotland) Act 1984;

(b) to alter the title and constitution of the Commission to reflect its wider role; and

(c) to make provision consequential on or supplemental to the amendments referred to in paragraphs (a) and (b) above.

(1A)'.—*[Mr. Michael Forsyth.]*

Clause 43

LOCAL AUTHORITY PLANS FOR COMMUNITY CARE SERVICES

Amendment made: No. 341, in page 45, line 26, at end insert—

'(1A) In carrying out any of their functions under paragraphs (a) to (c) of subsection (1) above, a local authority shall consult—

(a) any District Health Authority the whole or any part of whose district lies within the area of the local authority;

(b) any Family Health Services Authority the whole or any part of whose locality lies within the area of the local authority;

(c) in so far as any proposed plan, review or modifications of a plan may affect or be affected by the provision or availability of housing and the local authority is not itself a local housing authority, within the meaning of the Housing Act 1985, every such local housing authority whose area is within the area of the local authority;

(d) such voluntary housing agencies and other bodies as appear to the local authority to provide housing or community care services in their area; and

(e) such other persons as the Secretary of State may direct.'.—*[Sir George Young.]*

Schedule 1

HEALTH AUTHORITIES AND FAMILY HEALTH SERVICES AUTHORITIES

Amendment made: No. 275, in page 60, line 17, at end insert—

'10. After paragraph 12 of that Schedule there shall be inserted the following paragraph:—

"12A. Regulations made by virtue of this Schedule or Schedule 1 to the National Health Service and Community Care Act 1990 may make provision (including provision modifying those Schedules) to deal with cases where the post of chief officer or any other officer of an authority is held jointly by two or more persons or where the functions of such an officer are in any other way performed by more than one person.".'.—*[Mr. Day.]*

Schedule 2

NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE TRUSTS

Amendments made: No. 140, in page 60, line 34 leave out 'any special provision as to' and insert 'a provision to secure'.—*[Sir George Young.]*

No. 141, in page 60, line 42 at end insert—

'(1A) In a case where the order contains a provision made by virtue of sub-paragraph (1)(d) above and a person who is being considered for appointment by virtue of that provision—

(a) is employed by the university or medical or dental school in question, and

(b) would also, apart from this sub-paragraph, be regarded as employed by the trust,

his employment by the trust shall be disregarded in determining whether, if appointed, he will be a non-executive director of the trust.'.—*[Sir George Young.]*

Schedule 4

Amendments of Part III of the Local Government Finance Act 1982

Amendment made: No. 158, in page 69, line 33 at end insert—

'(2) At the end of that section there shall be added the following subsection—

"(6) Notwithstanding that the services provided by health service bodies are excluded from the scope of studies under this section, in undertaking or promoting studies under section 26(1) above relating to a health service body, the Commission may take into account the implementation by the body of—

(a) any particular statutory provision or provisions, and

(b) any directions or guidance given by the Secretary of State (whether pursuant to any such provision or otherwise),

but the power conferred by this subsection shall not be construed as entitling the Commission to question the merits of the policy objectives of the Secretary of State.".'.—*[Mr. Andrew Mitchell.]*

Amendment proposed: No 269—new schedule—

'Amendments relating to Audit of Accounts of Scottish Health Service Bodies

The Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973

1. Part VII of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (finance) shall be amended in accordance with Paragraphs 2 to 13 below.

2. In section 96 (accounts and audit of local authorities), in subsection (4), for the words "Commission for Local Authority Accounts" there shall be Substituted "Acccounts Commission for Scotland".

3.—(1) Section 97 (establishment of Commission for Local Authority Accounts in Scotland) shall be amended as follows.

(2) In subsection (1)—

(a) for the words "Commission for Local Authority Accounts in Scotland" there shall be substituted "Accounts Commission for Scotland",

(b) for the word "twelve" there shall be substituted "fifteen",

(c) for the word "nine" there shall be substituted "eleven", and

(d) after the word "authorities" there shall be inserted "and such organisations connected with the health service".

(3) In subsection (2)—

(a) in paragraph (a)—

(i) after the words "accounts of" there shall be inserted "(i)", and

(ii) after the word "authorities" there shall be inserted the following sub-paragraphs—

"(ii) the bodies mentioned in section 86(1)(a) to (c) of the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978;

(iii) the members of every recognised fund-holding practice;

(iv) the Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland; and

(v) any State Hospital Management Committee constituted under section 91 of the Mental Health (Scotland) Act 1984,";

(b) in paragraph (c), after the word "authorities" there shall be inserted "or, as the case may be, health service bodies"; and

(c) in paragraph (d), after the word "authorities" there shall be inserted "or health service bodies".

(4) After subsection (2) there shall be inserted the following subsections—

"(2A) Subject to section 100(1A) of this Act, in relation to the members of a recognised fund-holding practice, any reference in this Part of this Act to their accounts is a reference only to the accounts relating to allotted sums paid to them.

(2B) In this Part of this Act—

"health service body" means a body referred to in subsection (2)(a)(ii) to (v) above; and

"recognised fund-holding practice" and "allotted sum" have the same meanings as in section 87B of the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978."

(5) In subsection (3), after the word "authorities" there shall be inserted "and such organisations connected with the health service"

(6) After subsection (4) there shall be inserted the following subsections—

"(4A) It shall be the duty of the Commission to make, any such date as the Secretary of State may determine, an offer of employment by the Commission to each person employed in the Civil Service of the State in connection with the audit of the accounts of any health service body whose name is notified to the Commission by the Secretary of State for the purposes of this subsection; and the terms of the offer must be such that they are, taken as a whole, not less favourable to the person to whom the offer is made than the terms on which he is employed on the date on which the offer is made.

(4B) An offer made in pursuance of subsection (4A) above shall not be revocable during the period of three months beginning with the date on which it is made.

(4C) Where a person becomes an officer of the Commission in consequence of subsection (4A) above, then, for the purposes of the Employment Protection (Consolidation) Act 1978, his period of employment in the Civil Service of the State shall count as a period of employment by the Commission and the change of employment shall not break the continuity of the period of employment.

(4D) Where a person ceases to be employed as mentioned in subsection (4A) above—

(a) on becoming an officer of the Commission in consequence of an offer made in pursuance of that subsection; or

(b) having unreasonably refused such an offer,

he shall not, on ceasing to be so employed, be treated for the purposes of any scheme under section 1 of the Superannuation Act 1972 as having been retired on redundancy."

(7) At the end of subsection (6) there shall be added— "or a person who is, within the period of five years beginning with the relevant date, approved by the Secretary of State, acting on the recommendation of the Commission.

(6A) In subsection (6) above, "the relevant date" means the date appointed for the coming into force of Schedule (*Amendments relating to audit of accounts of Scottish health service bodies*) to the National Health Service and Community Care Act 1990."

4.—(1) Section 97A (studies for improving economy etc in services) shall be amended as follows.

(2) At the end of subsection (2) there shall be added "and, in the case of studies relating to a health service body, shall, on request, furnish to the Comptroller and Auditor General all material relevant to the studies."

(3) At the end of subsection (3) there shall be added "and, in the case of a health service body, the Commission shall also consult the Secretary of State and the Comptroller and Auditor General."

5.—(1) Section 98 (expenses and accounts of Commission) shall be amended as follows.

(2) In subsection (1)—

(a) in paragraph (b), after the word "Commission" where it first occurs there shall be inserted "relating to their functions with respect to local authorities"; and

(b) at the end of paragraph (b) there shall be inserted the following paragraph—

"(c) such part of the expenses of the Commission relating to their functions with respect to health service bodies as is not met by grants under paragraph (a) above shall be met by health service bodies in accordance with regulations made by the Secretary of State after consultation with such organisations connected with the health service as appear to him to be concerned."

(3) In subsection (2), after "(b)" there shall be inserted "or (c)"

6. In section 99 (general duties of auditors)—

(a) after the word "authority" in both places where it occurs there shall be inserted "or health service body"; and

(b) in paragraph (a), after the word "Act" there shall be inserted "or, in the case of a health service body, directions under section 86(3) of the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978".

7.—(1) Section 100 (auditor's right of access to documents) shall be amended as follows.

(2) In subsection (1)—

(a) after the word "authority" where it first occurs there shall be inserted "or health service body"; and

(b) after the word "authority" in the second place where it occurs there shall be inserted "or body".

(3) After subsection (1) there shall be inserted the following subsection—

4"(1A) In the case of a recognised fund-holding practice, the reference in subsection (1) above to documents includes a reference to documents relating to all the accounts and records of the members of the practice, whether or not relating to an allotted sum."

(4) In subsection (2), after the word "authority" there shall be inserted "and health service body".

8. In section 101 (completion of audit), after subsection (4) there shall be added the following subsection—

"(5) Within 14 days of the completion of the audit of the accounts of a health service body the auditor shall place on any abstract of those accounts prepared by the health service body by virtue of section 86 of the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978 a Certificate, in such form as the Commission may direct, to the effect that he has audited the accounts in accordance with the provisions of this Part of this Act; and the auditor shall, on so certifying, forthwith send copies of the abstract of the accounts to the Commission, the Secretary of State and the health service body."

9.—(1) Section 102 (reports to Commission by Controller of Audit) shall be amended as follows.

(2) In subsection (1)—

(a) after the word "authorities" there shall be inserted "and health service bodies"; and

(b) after the word "authority" there shall be inserted "or health service body".

(3) After subsection (4) there shall be added the following subsection—

"(5) Without prejudice to subsection (1) above and section 104A(2) of this Act, the Controller of Audit may make a report to the Commission on any matters arising out of or in connection with the accounts of a health service body and shall send a copy of any report so made to any health service body which is named in that report and to the Secretary of State."

10. In section 103 (action by Commission on reports by Controller of Audit), after the word "Audit" there shall be inserted "with respect to the accounts of any local authority".

11. After section 104 there shall be inserted the following section—

"*Audit of accounts of health service bodies: special provisions.*

104A.—(1) Where the auditor of the accounts of a health service body has reason to believe that the body, or any officer of the body—

(a) has made a decision which involves the incurring of expenditure which is unlawful; or

(b) has taken a course of action which, if pursued to its conclusion, would be unlawful and likely to cause a loss or deficiency,

he shall forthwith make a report to the Controller of Audit.

(2) On receipt of a report under subsection (1) above the Controller of Audit—

(a) shall forthwith send a copy of the report to the Commission and to the Secretary of State; and

(b) may, if he thinks fit, send to the Commission and to the Secretary of State any observations which he may have on the report.

(3) The Commission may make a report to the Secretary of State on any matters arising out of or in connection with the accounts of a health service body."

12. After subsection (2) of section 106 (application of sections 93 to 105 to bodies other than local authorities and to officers) there shall be added the following subsection—

"(3) In the application of subsection (2) above to an officer of a health service body, for the words from "96" to "section 105" there shall be substituted "97 to 104A."."

13. In Schedule 8 (provisions as to the Commission), for the words "Commission for Local Authority Accounts in Scotland" in both places where they occur there shall be substituted "Accounts Commission for Scotland".

The National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978

14.—(1) Section 86 of the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978 (keeping and audit of accounts of certain Scottish health bodies) shall be amended as follows.

(2) In subsections (1) and (1A), for the words "by auditors appointed by the Secretary of State" there shall be substituted "in accordance with Part VII of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 by auditors appointed by the Accounts Commission for Scotland".

(3) After subsection (1A) there shall be inserted the following subsection—

"(1B) To the extent that regulations made by the Secretary of State so provide, the requirement in subsection (1A)(a) to have accounts audited shall not apply to the accounts for any year of a recognised fund-holding practice if those accounts are submitted to a Health Board and summarised in the Board's accounts."

(4) Subsection (2) shall cease to have effect.'.—*[Mr. Michael Forsyth.]*

Question put, That the schedule be added to the Bill:—

The House divided: Ayes 270, Noes 56.

Division 129] **[12.27 pm**

AYES

Adley, Robert	Bendall, Vivian
Alexander, Richard	Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Alison, Rt Hon Michael	Benyon, W.
Allason, Rupert	Biffen, Rt Hon John
Amess, David	Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Amos, Alan	Body, Sir Richard
Arbuthnot, James	Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*	Boscawen, Hon Robert
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*	Boswell, Tim
Atkins, Robert	Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*	Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*	Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Baldry, Tony	Bowis, John
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*	Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Batiste, Spencer	Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bellingham, Henry	Brazier, Julian

Bright, Graham
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fishburn, John Dudley
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Sir Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Hague, William
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hayes, Jerry
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Howard, Rt Hon Michael
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Sir Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
Madel, David
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Moss, Malcolm
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Norris, Steve
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)*
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Price, Sir David
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Rt Hon Nicholas
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, Sir William
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Rt Hon Ian *(Herts N)*
Stokes, Sir John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Tracey, Richard
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Waldegrave, Rt Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, Sir John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Alastair Goodlad and
Mr. Tony Durant.

NOES

Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Ashton, Joe
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Beggs, Roy
Beith, A. J.
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Blair, Tony
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Clay, Bob
Cousins, Jim
Cryer, Bob
Dalyell, Tam
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fearn, Ronald
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Gould, Bryan
Graham, Thomas
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Kennedy, Charles
Kilfedder, James
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Loyden, Eddie
McCartney, Ian
Maclennan, Robert
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Meale, Alan
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Redmond, Martin
Richardson, Jo
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rowlands, Ted
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Sillars, Jim
Skinner, Dennis
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Steel, Rt Hon Sir David
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Rt Hon J. D. *(S'ford)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Wallace, James
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Alex Salmond and
Dafydd Wigley.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Question put, That all remaining amendments standing in the name of a member of the Government be made to the Bill:—

The House divided: Ayes 272, Noes 187.

Division No. 130] **[12.39 am**

AYES

Adley, Robert
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fishburn, John Dudley
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Sir Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Hague, William
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hayes, Jerry
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Rt Hon Michael
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Sir Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
Madel, David
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Moss, Malcolm
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Norris, Steve
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)*
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Price, Sir David
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Rt Hon Nicholas
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, Sir William
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Rt Hon Ian *(Herts N)*
Stokes, Sir John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Tracey, Richard
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Waldegrave, Rt Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, Sir John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Alistair Goodlad and
Mr. Tony Durant.

NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashton, Joe
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beggs, Roy
Beith, A. J.
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Blunkett, David
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David

Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dixon, Don
Doran, Frank
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Faulds, Andrew
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Haynes, Frank
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hoey, Ms Kate *(Vauxhall)*
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howells, Geraint
Howells, Dr. Kim (Pontypridd)
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kennedy, Charles
Kilfedder, James
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum A.
McFall, John
McKelvey, William
Maclennan, Robert
McNamara, Kevin
Madden, Max
Maginnis, Ken
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Nellist, Dave
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Paisley, Rev Ian
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmors)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Richardson, Jo
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Short, Clare
Sillars, Jim
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Smith, J. P. *(Vale of Glam)*
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon Sir David
Steinberg, Gerry
Taylor, Rt Hon J. D. *(S'ford)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Tony Banks and
Mr. Allen McKay.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Clause 1

REGIONAL AND DISTRICT HEALTH AUTHORITIES

Amendment made: No. 93, in page 2, line 7, leave out 'purposes' and insert 'coming into force.'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Clarke.]*

Schedule 1

HEALTH AUTHORITIES AND FAMILY HEALTH SERVICES AUTHORITIES

Amendments made: No. 70, in page 58, line 15, at beginning insert

'Except in so far as regulations otherwise provide'.

No. 69, in page 58, line 31, at beginning insert

'Except in so far as regulations otherwise provide'.

No. 94, in page 59, line 5, leave out 'Practitioner' and insert 'Health'.

No. 95, in page 59, line 6, leave out 'Practitioner' and insert 'Health'.

No. 96, in page 59, line 11, leave out 'Practitioner' and insert 'Health'.

No. 97, in page 59, line 23, leave out 'Practitioner' and insert 'Health'.

No. 98, in page 59, line 46, leave out 'Practitioner' and insert 'Health'.

No. 99, in page 60, line 6, leave out 'the principal' and insert 'this'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Clarke.]*

Clause 4

NHS CONTRACTS

Amendments made: No. 100 in page 5, line 19, at end insert—

'(6A) A determination of a reference under subsection (3) above may contain such directions (including directions as to payment) as the Secretary of State or, as the case may be, the person appointed under subsection (5) above considers appropriate to resolve the matter in dispute; and it shall be the duty of the parties to the NHS contract in question to comply with any such directions.'.

No. 101, in page 5, line 20, leave out 'By his determination of' and insert

'Without prejudice to the generality of his powers on'.

No. 102, in page 5, line 22, after 'may', insert

'by his determination in relation to an arrangement constituting an NHS contract'.

No. 103, in page 5, line 27, leave out from 'the' to first 'as' in line 28 and insert

'directions included in the determination by virtue of subsection (6A) above may contain such provisions'.

No. 104, in page 5, leave out lines 32 and 33.—*[Mr. Kenneth Clarke.]*

Clause 28

NHS CONTRACTS

Amendments made: No. 234, in page 27, line 29, at end insert—

'(7A) A determination of a reference under subsection (4) may contain such directions (including directions as to payment) as the Secretary of State or, as the case may be, the person appointed under subsection (6) considers appropriate to resolve the matter in dispute; and it shall be the duty of the parties to the NHS contract in question to comply with any such directions.'.

No. 235, in page 27, line 30, leave out 'By his determination of' and insert

'Without prejudice to the generality of his powers on'.

No. 236, in page 27, line 32, at end insert
'by his determination in relation to an arrangement constituting an NHS contract'.

No. 237, in page 27, line 39, leave out from 'the' to second 'as' line 40 and insert
'directions included in the determination by virtue of subsection (7A) may contain such provisions'.

No. 238, in page 27, leave out lines 46 and 47.—*[Mr. Michael Forsyth.]*

Clause 5

NHS TRUSTS

Amendments made: No. 71, in page 6, line 5, after 'and', insert
'subject to paragraph 5(2) of Schedule 2 to this Act'.

No. 72, in page 6, line 22, after 'trust', insert
'(including the validation of proceedings in the event of a vacancy or defect in appointment).'—*[Mr. Kenneth Clarke.]*

Schedule 2

NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE TRUSTS

Amendments made: No. 73, in page 61, line 8, at end insert—

'(2) If an order makes the provision referred to in sub-paragraph (1) above, then, at any time during the period referred to in that sub-paragraph, the NHS trust shall be regarded as properly constituted (and may carry out its limited functions accordingly) notwithstanding that, at that time, all or any of the executive directors have not yet been appointed.'.

No. 74, in page 61, line 26, leave out 'the retention of' and insert
'prohibiting or restricting the disposal of, or of any interest in'.

No. 75, in page 61, line 42, at end insert—

'(3) In such circumstances and at such time or times as may be prescribed, an NHS trust shall hold a public meeting at which such document as may be prescribed shall be presented.'.

No. 105, in page 62, line 44, after 'trust' insert
'eiher for the general or any specific purposes of the NHS trust or for all or any purposes relating to the health service'.

No. 106, in page 62, line 45, at end insert—

'(2) The reference in sub-paragraph (1)(c) above to specific purposes of the NHS trust includes a reference to the purposes of a specific hospital or other establishment or facility which is owned and managed by the trust.'.

No. 107, in page 63, line 50, at end insert—

'Making of charges

21A. In each of sections 81 (Charges for more expensive supplies) and 82 (Charges for repairs and replacement necessitated by an act or omission of the person supplied etc.) of the principal Act, in paragraph (a)—

(a) after the words "Secretary of State" there shall be inserted "or an NHS trust"; and

(b) after the word "him" there shall be inserted "or, as the case may be, by the trust".'.

No. 108, in page 64, line 7, at end insert—

'(3) In subsection (5) for the words from "Area or District" onwards there shall be substituted "body responsible for the hospital if that body and the special trustees agree; and in this subsection the body responsible for a hospital is,—

(a) in the case of a hospital vested in a NHS trust, that trust; and

(b) in any other case, the District Health Authority exercising functions on behalf of the Secretary of State in respect of the hospital".

(4) After subsection (5) of that section there shall be inserted the following subsection—

"(5A) Where property is given in pursuance of this section on trust for any purposes of an NHS trust for which trustees have been appointed under section 11(1) of the National Health Service and Community Care Act 1990, then, if those trustees and the NHS trust agree, the property may be held, administered and applied by those trustees instead of by the NHS trust."

(5) In subsection (6) of that section for the words "or to special trustees" there shall be substituted "to an NHS trust or to special trustees or trustees for an NHS trust".'

No. 274, in page 64, line 11, at end insert—

'(2) After subsection (2A) of that section there shall be inserted—

"(2B) in preparing its annual accounts in pursuance of subsection (2) above, an NHS trust shall comply with any directions given by the Secretary of State with the approval of the Treasury as to—

(a) the methods and principles according to which the accounts are to be prepared; and

(b) the information to be given in the accounts.".'

No. 109, in page 64, line 18, at end insert—

'Use and development of consecrated land and burial grounds

24A. Section 128 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971 (use and development of consecrated land and burial grounds) applies to consecrated land and land comprised in a burial ground, within the meaning of that section, which an NHS trust holds for any of its purposes as if—

(a) that land had been acquired by the trust as mentioned in subsection (1) of that section; and

(b) the trust were a statutory undertaker, within the meaning of that Act.'

No. 110, in page 64, line 26, leave out 'purported' and insert 'purporting'.

No. 111, in page 65, line 3, at end add
'and any such order may include provisions corresponding to those of section 8 of this Act'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Clarke.]*

Clause 7

SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISIONS AS TO TRANSFER OF STAFF

Amendments made: No. 170, in page 8, line 4, leave out 'and'.

No. 171, in page 8, line 7, at end insert—
'and

(d) for the purposes of section 146 of and Schedule 13 to the Employment Protection (Consolidation) Act 1978, the number of hours normally worked, or, as the case may be, the hours for which the employee is employed in any week under either of those contracts shall be taken to be the total of the hours normally worked or, as the case may be, for which he is employed under the two contracts taken together.'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Clarke.]*

Clause 11

TRUST FUNDS AND TRUSTEES FOR NHS TRUSTS

Amendment made: No. 112, in page 11, line 31, at end insert—

'(7) In section 98(1) of the principal Act (accounts and audit) after paragraph (d) there shall be inserted—

"(dd) any trustees for an NHS trust appointed in pursuance of section 11 of the National Health Service and Community Care Act 1990; and".'.
—*[Mr. Kenneth Clarke.]*

Schedule 3

FINANCIAL PROVISIONS RELATING TO NHS TRUSTS

Amendments made: No. 226, in page 65, line 25, at end insert—

'(1A) An NHS trust may not mortgage or charge any of its assets or in any other way use any of its assets as security for a loan.'.

No. 113, in page 66, line 18, after 'of' insert
'or to provide and manage'.

No. 114, in page 66, line 23, after 'of' insert

'or to provide and manage'.

No. 227, in page 66, line 45, leave out from beginning to end of line 5 on page 67 and insert—

'7. An NHS trust may not invest any money held by it except in securities of the Government of the United Kingdom or in such other manner as the Secretary of State may with the consent of the Treasury approve.'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Clarke.]*

Clause 29

NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE TRUSTS

Amendments made: No. 239, in page 28, line 46, after first 'and', insert

', subject to paragraph 5(2) of Schedule 7A,'.

No. 240, in page 29, line 21, after 'trust', insert

'(including the validation of proceedings in the event of a vacancy or defect in appointment),'.

No. 241, in page 30, leave out lines 1 to 9.

No. 184, in page 31, line 26, leave out 'and'.

No. 185, in page 31, line 31, at end insert—

'and

(d) for the purposes of section 146 of and Schedule 13 to the Employment Protection (Consolidation) Act 1978, the number of hours normally worked, or, as the case may be, the hours for which the employee is employed in any week under either of those contracts shall be taken to be the total of the hours normally worked or, as the case may be, for which he is employed under the two contracts taken together.'.—*[Mr. Michael Forsyth.]*

Schedule 6

SCHEDULES TO BE INSERTED AFTER SCHEDULE 7 TO THE NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE (SCOTLAND) ACT 1978

Amendments made: No. 243, in page 72, line 39, at end insert—

'(1A) In a case where the order contains a provision made by virtue of sub-paragraph (1)(d) and a person who is being considered for appointment by virtue of that provision—

(a) is employed by the university or medical or dental school in question; and

(b) would also, apart from this sub-paragraph, be regarded as employed by the trust,

his employment by the trust shall be disregarded in determining whether, if appointed, he will be a non-executive director of the trust.'.

No. 244, in page 73, line 5, at end insert—

'(2) If an order makes the provision referred to in sub-paragraph (1), then, at any time during the period referred to in that sub-paragraph, the NHS trust shall be regarded as properly constituted (and may carry out its limited functions accordingly) notwithstanding that, at that time, all or any of the executive officers have not yet been appointed.'.

No. 245, in page 73, line 23, leave out 'the retention of' and insert

'prohibiting or restricting the disposal of, or of any interest in'.

No. 246, in page 73, line 39, at end insert—

'(3) In such circumstances and at such time or times as may be prescribed, an NHS trust shall hold a public meeting at which such documents as may be prescribed shall be presented.'.

No. 247, in page 74, line 39, after 'trust' insert

'for purposes relating to any service which it is their function to provide, administer, or make arrangements for, which purposes shall include any purposes relating to a hospital or other establishment or facility which is provided or managed by the trust.'.

No. 248, in page 76, line 41, at end insert—

'(1A) An NHS trust may not grant any security over any of its assets or in any other way use any of its assets as security for a loan.'.

No. 249, in page 78, leave out lines 7 to 16 and insert—

'7. An NHS trust may not invest any money held by it except in securities of the Government of the United Kingdom or in such other manner as the Secretary of State may with the consent of the Treasury approve.'.—*[Mr. Michael Forsyth.]*

Clause 15

PAYMENTS TO RECOGNISED FUND-HOLDING PRACTICES

Amendments made: No. 76, in page 16, line 1, leave out from 'to' to 'Authority' in line 2 and insert

'pay to the relevant Regional Health'.

No. 77, in page 16, line 3, leave out from 'them' to end of line and insert

'an amount determined in accordance with the regulations as the basic cost of the drugs, medicines and listed appliances'.

No. 78, in page 16, line 19, at end insert—

'(7A) In the application of subsection (7) above to the members of a practice whose relevant Family Health Services Authority has a locality in Wales, for the reference in paragraph (a) of that subsection to the relevant Regional Health Authority there shall be substituted a reference to the Secretary of State.'—*[Mr. Kenneth Clarke.]*

Clause 32

FUND-HOLDING PRACTICES

Amendments made: No. 242, in page 36, line 33, leave out 'reimburse' and insert 'pay to'.

No. 250, in page 36, line 35, leave out from 'them' to 'supplied' in line 36 and insert

'an amount determined in accordance with the regulations as the basic cost of the drugs, medicines and listed appliances'.—*[Mr. Michael Forsyth.]*

Clause 18

INDICATIVE BUDGETS FOR DOCTORS' PRACTICES

Amendments made: No. 79, in page 18, line 7, leave out 'pharmaceutical services' and insert

'drugs, medicines and listed appliances'.

No. 80, in page 18, line 22, leave out 'pharmaceutical services' and insert

'drugs, medicines and listed appliances'.

No. 81, in page 18, line 23, leave out 'services' and insert 'items'.

No. 82, in page 18, line 30, leave out 'pharmaceutical services' and insert

'drugs, medicines and listed appliances'.

No. 83, in page 18, line 34, leave out 'pharmaceutical services' and insert

'drugs, medicines or listed appliances'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Clarke.]*

Clause 33

INDICATIVE BUDGETS

Amendments made: No. 251, in page 38, line 33, leave out 'pharmaceutical services' and insert

'drugs, medicines and listed appliances'.

No. 252, in page 39, line 3, leave out 'pharmaceutical services' and insert

'drugs, medicines and listed appliances'.

No. 253, in page 39, line 5, leave out 'services' and insert 'items'.

No. 254, in page 39, line 13, leave out 'pharmaceutical services' and insert
'drugs, medicines and listed appliances'.

No. 255, in page 39, line 17, leave out 'pharmaceutical services' and insert
'drugs, medicines and listed appliances'.—*[Mr. Michael Forsyth.]*

Clause 19

Amendments relating to funding of health authorities etc.

Amendment made: No. 84, in page 20, line 7, after 'above', insert
'or by virtue of section 15(7)(a) of the National Health Service and Community Care Act 1990'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Clarke.]*

Clause 20

Extension of functions etc. of Audit Commission to cover the health service

Amendment made: No. 85, in page 21, line 46, at end insert—

'(8) Without prejudice to any express amendment made by this Act, on and after the day appointed for the coming into force of this subsection, any reference in any enactment (including an enactment comprised in subordinate legislation) to the Audit Commission for Local Authorities in England and Wales shall be construed as a reference to the Audit Commission for Local Authorities and the National Health Service in England and Wales.'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Clarke.]*

Schedule 4

Amendments of Part III of the Local Government Finance Act 1982

Amendments made: No. 115, in page 67, line 33, leave out from '(3C)' to 'the' and insert—
'In subsection (3A) above "allotted sums" has'.

No. 116, in page 68, line 21, *[Schedule 4]*, leave out from 'practice' to 'the' in line 23.—*[Mr. Kenneth Clarke.]*

Clause 34

Accounts and audit of NHS trusts and fundholding practices

Amendments made: No. 257, in page 39, line 30, after 'with', insert 'the following provisions of'.

No. 258, in page 39, line 39, leave out 'subsection' and insert 'subsections'.

No. 259, in page 49, line 9, at end insert—

'(1B) In preparing its annual accounts in pursuance of subsection (1), and NHS trust shall comply with any directions given by the Secretary of State with the approval of the Treasury as to—

(a) the methods and principles according to which the accounts are to be prepared; and

(b) the information to be given in the accounts.'.

No. 260, page 40, line 10, after '(4)' insert
'Until the day appointed for the coming into force of subsection (1) above,'.—*[Mr. Michael Forsyth.]*

Clause 21

The Medical Practices Committee

Amendment made: No. 117, in page 22, line 13, leave out from '(4)' to 'with' in line 14 and insert
'After consulting the Medical Practices Committee, the Secretary of State may give the Committee directions'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Clarke.]*

Clause 36

Scottish Medical Practices Committee

Amendment made: No. 261, in page 41, line 4, leave out from '(1A)' to 'with' in line 5 and insert
'After consulting the Medical Practices Committee, the Secretary of State may give the Committee directions'.—*[Mr. Michael Forsyth.]*

Clause 22

Distribution of general medical services

Amendment made: No. 118, in page 22, line 31, at end insert—

'(2) At the beginning of subsection (2) of that section (the Medical Practices Committee to select the persons whose applications are to be granted) there shall be inserted "Subject to subsection (2A) below" and after that subsection there shall be inserted the following subsection—

(2A) If, in the opinion of the Medical Practices Committee, a medical practitioner is required for a particular part of the locality of a Family Health Services Authority, then, in such circumstances as may be prescribed,—

(a) the Authority (instead of the Committee) shall, in accordance with regulations, select the medical practitioner whose application they wish to be considered by the Committee; and

(b) the Committee shall not consider any application from a medical practitioner who is not so selected; and

(c) any medical practitioner who has made an application but is not so selected may appeal to the Committee on a point of law;

and if the Committee allow an appeal under paragraph (c) above they shall remit the application to the Authority for reconsideration."

(3) In subsection (4) of that section (applications under section 30 may be granted subject to certain conditions), after the words "subject to" there shall be inserted "(a)" and at the end of the subsection there shall be added "or

(b) prescribed conditions limiting, by reference to hours or the sharing of work, the provision of general medical services for which the applicant will be entitled to be remunerated;

and an order under subsection (1A) above may make provision as to the extent to which account is to be taken under the order of medical practitioners whose ability to carry out remunerated work is limited by virtue of conditions imposed under paragraph (b) above".(4) In subsection (5) of that section (appeals to the Secretary of State) for the words following "Secretary of State", in the first place where those words occur, there shall be substituted "on a point of law; and, if the Secretary of State allows such an appeal, he shall remit the application to the Medical

Practices Committee for reconsideration".

(5) Subsection (7) of that section (directions on a successful appeal) shall be omitted.

(6) In subsection (8) of that section (matters to be taken into account) for the words from the beginning to "in any case" there shall be substituted "In any case where medical practitioners have to be selected from a number of applicants, the Medical Practices Committee or, where subsection (2A) above applies, the Family Health Services Authority shall".

(7) In section 34 of the principal Act (regulations for Medical Practices Committee)—

(a) in paragraph (b)(ii) for the words "under section 33 above" there shall be substituted "or the Medical Practices Committee under section 33 above and, where such an appeal is allowed, the reconsideration of any application"; and

(b) at the end of the section there shall be added the following subsection—

"(2) Regulations under this section may make provision for, and in connection with, the variation of any condition imposed under subsection (4) or subsection (5) of section 33 above.".'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Clarke.]*

Clause 37

DISTRIBUTION OF GENERAL MEDICAL SERVICES

Amendment made: No. 262, in page 41, line 25, at end insert—

'(2) At the beginning of subsection (2) of that section (the Medical Practices Committee to select the person whose applications are to be granted) there shall be inserted "Subject to subsection (2A)" and after that subsection there shall be inserted the following subsection—

"(2A) If, in the opinion of the Medical Practices Committee, a medical practitioner is required for a particular part of the area of a Health Board, then, in such circumstances as may be prescribed,—

(a) the Board shall, in accordance with regulations, select the medical practitioner whose application they wish to be considered by the Committee; and

(b) the Committee shall not consider any application from a medical practitioner who is not so selected; and

(c) any medical practitioner who has made an application but is not so selected may appeal to the Committee on a point of law;

and if the Committee allow an appeal under paragraph (c) they shall remit the application to the Board for reconsideration."

(3) In subsection (4) of that section (applications under section 20 may be granted subject to certain conditions), after the words "subject to" there shall be inserted "(a)" and at the end of the subsection there shall be added—

"or

(b) prescribed conditions limiting, by reference to hours or the sharing of work, the provision of general medical services for which the applicant will be entitled to be remunerated;

and an order under subsection (1A) may make provision as to the extent to which account is to be taken under the order of medical practitioners whose ability to carry out remunerated work is limited by virtue of conditions imposed under paragraph (b)".

(4) In subsection (5) of that section (appeals to the Secretary of State) for the words following "Secretary of State", in the first place where those words occur, there shall be substituted "on a point of law; and, if the Secretary of State allows such an appeal, he shall remit the application to the Medical Practices Committee for reconsideration".

(5) Subsection (7) of that section (directions on a successful appeal) shall be omitted.

(6) In subsection (8) of that section (matters to be taken into account) for the words from the beginning to "in any such case" there shall be substituted "In any case where medical practitioners have to be selected from a number of applicants, the Medical Practices Committee or, where subsection (2A) applies, the Health Board shall".

(7) In section 24 of the 1978 Act (Regulations for Medical Practices Committee)—

(a) in paragraph (b)(ii) for the words "under section 23" there shall be substituted "or the Medical Practices Commiteee under section 23 and, where such an appeal is allowed, the reconsideration of any application"; and

(b) at the end of the section there shall be added the following subsection—

"(2) Regulations under this section may take provision for, and in connection with the variation of any condition imposed under subsection (4) or (5) of section 23.".'.—*[Mr. Michael Forsyth.]*

Clause 39

PROVISION OF ACCOMMODATION AND WELFARE SERVICES: AGENCY ARRANGEMENTS

Amendments made: No. 198, in page 42, line 4, leave out '21(1)(a)' and insert '21(1)'.

No. 186, in page 42, line 7, after 'circumstances)' insert—

'(a) in paragraph (a)'.

No. 233, in page 42, line 8, at end add 'and

(b) at the end of that paragraph there shall be added "and

(aa) residential accommodation for expectant and nursing mothers who are in need of care and attention which is not otherwise available to them".'.

No. 202, in page 42, line 43, at end insert—

'(2A) at the end of subsection (2) of that section (under which the arrangements must provide for the local authority to make payments in respect of accommodation provided) there shall be added "and the local authority shall recover from each person for whom accommodation is provided under the arrangements the amount of the refund which he is liable to make in accordance with the following provisions of this section".'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Clarke.]*

Clause 40

EXCLUSION OF POWERS TO PROVIDE ACCOMMODATION IN CERTAIN CASES

Amendments made: No. 336, page 43, line 38, after 'that', insert

'in such cases and subject to such conditions as may be prescribed.'.

No. 337, in page 43, line 38, leave out 'the case of' and insert 'relation to'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Clarke.]*

Clause 53

EXCLUSION OF POWERS TO PROVIDE ACCOMMODATION IN CERTAIN CASES

Amendments made: No. 338, in page 52, line 29, after 'that', insert

'in such cases and subject to such conditions as may be prescribed.'

No. 339, in page 52, line 29, leave out 'the case of' and insert 'relation to'.—*[Mr. Michael Forsyth.]*

Clause 41

CHARGES FOR ACCOMMODATION PROVIDED BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Amendments made: No. 214, in page 44, line 5, leave out '(2) and' and insert '(1A) to'.

No. 215, in page 44, line 5, at end insert—

'(1A) In subsection (1) (which relates to a person's liability to pay for accommodation) for the words from the beginning to "the accommodation" there shall be substituted "Subject to section 26 of this Act, where a person is provided with accommodation under this Part of this Act the local authority providing the accommodation shall recover from him the amount of the payment which he is liable to make".

(1B) In subsection (2) (which requires the authority managing premises to fix the standard rate) after the word "payment" there shall be inserted "which a person is liable to make" and at the end of that subsection there shall be added the words "and that standard rate shall represent the full cost to the authority of providing that accommodation".

(1C) In subsection (3) (which makes provision for people who are unable to pay at the standard rate)—

(a) the words "(disregarding income support)", and

(b) the words from "Provided that" to the end of the subsection,

shall be omitted.'.

No. 216, in page 44, line 10, leave out 'subsection (3) or'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Clarke.]*

Schedule 7

Provisions arising out of removal of Crown Immunities from Health Service Bodies

Amendment made: No. 86, in page 78, line 37, at end add

'or a National Health Service trust established under Part I of that Act or the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978'. —*[Mr. Michael Forsyth.]*

Clause 57

Health service bodies: taxation

Amendment made: No. 87, in page 56, line 5, at end insert—

'(5) At the end of Schedule 3 to the Inheritance Tax Act 1984 (gifts for national purposes) there shall be added—

"A health service body, within the meaning of section 519A of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988".'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Clarke.]*

Clause 60

Regulations, orders and directions

Amendment made: No. 88, in page 56, line 37, at end add

'and at the end of that section there shall be added the following subsection—

"(5) Without prejudice to the generality of subsection (4) above, any power which may be exercised as mentioned in paragraphs (a) and (b) of that subsection may make different provision for different areas.".'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Clarke.]*

Schedule 8

Minor and Consequential Amendments

Amendments made: No. 89, in page 88, line 18, leave out 'At the end of' and insert 'In'.

No. 90, in page 88, line 18, at end insert

'(enactments conferring functions assisgned to social services committee), in the entry relating to the Children Act 1989, in the second column after the words 'health authorities' there shall be inserted "National Health Service trusts"; and at the end of that Schedule'.

No. 91, in page 88, line 45, at end insert—

'The Adoption Act 1976

In section 2 of the Adoption Act 1976 (local authorities' social services) in paragraph (a) (as set out in paragraph 1 of Schedule 10 to the Children Act 1989) after the words "health authorities" there shall be inserted "National Health Service trusts".'.

No. 119, in page 89, line 2, leave out '63 of the National Health Service Act 1977' and insert—

'41 of the National Health Service Act 1977 (arrangements for pharmaceutical services)—

(a) for the words "supply to persons who are in that locality" there shall be substituted "provision to persons who are in that locality of";

(b) in paragraph (b) after the words "health authority" there shall be inserted "or an NHS trust" and the word "and" at the end of the paragraph shall be omitted; and

(c) after paragraph (c) there shall be inserted "and

(d) such other services as may be prescribed."

(1A) At the end of section 43 of that Act (persons authorised to provide pharmaceutical services) there shall be added the following subsection—

"(3) No arrangements for the provision of pharmaceutical services falling within section 41(d) above shall be made with persons other than those who are registered pharmacists or are of a prescribed description." (1B) In section 63 of that Act'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Clarke.]*

No. 263, in page 90, leave out from beginning of line 37 to 'for' in line 38 and insert—

'(5) In section 27 of that Act (arrangements for provision of pharmaceutical services)—

(a) in subsection (1)—

(i) for the word "supply" there shall be substituted "provision";

(ii) in paragraph (b), after the word "Board" there shall be inserted "or by an NHS trust";

(iii) at the end of paragraph (c) there shall be inserted—

"; and

(d) such services as may be prescribed,"; and

(iv) for the words "services provided in accordance with the arrangements are" there shall be substituted "provision of drugs, medicines, appliances and services in accordance with the arrangements is";

(b) in subsection (2), after the word "mentioned" in the second place where it occurs there shall be inserted ", or to whom services mentioned in subsection (1)(d) are to be provided,";

(c) in subsections (3)(b), (c) and (d) and (4), before the word "services" in each place where it occurs there shall be inserted "pharmaceutical"; and

(d) in subsection (4)(d)".'.

No. 264, in page 90, line 39, at end insert—

'(5A) In section 28(2) of that Act (persons authorised to provide pharmaceutical services)—

(a) after the word "medicines" in the first place where it occurs there shall be inserted "or the provision of pharmaceutical services";

(b) after the word "undertake" there shall be inserted "(a)";

(c) for the word "supplied" there shall be substituted "provided"; and

(d) after the word "dispensed" there shall be inserted—

", and

(b) that all services mentioned in section 27(1)(d) provided by them under those arrangements shall be provided,".'

No. 265, in page 91, leave out lines 43 and 44 and insert—

'(17) in section 105 (orders, regulations and direction) of that Act—

(a) after subsection (1) there shall be inserted the following subsection—

"(1A) Subsection (1) does not apply to orders made under section 12D(1) or paragraph 23(1) of Schedule 7A.";

(b) in subsection (4), after the words "10(3) to (5)" there shall be inserted the words "12A(1), 12A(7), 12E(1), 12G(2),"; and

(c) at the end of the said subsection (4) there shall be inserted the words "paragraph 22(1) of Schedule 7A and paragraph 3 of Schedule 7B".'.

No. 266, page 91, line 45, at end insert—

'(za) in the definition of "Health Board", for the word "board" there shall be substituted the words "Health Board";'.

No. 267, in page 92, line 3, leave out 'and'.

No. 268, in page 92, line 6, at end insert—

'and

(d) after the definition of "the Research Trust" there shall be inserted—

""Special Health Board" means a Special Health Board constituted under section 2;".'.—*[Mr. Forsyth.]*

No. 120, in page 97, line 6, at end insert—

'*The Children Act 1989*

.—(1) In section 21 of the Children Act 1989 (provision of accommodation for children in police protection ect.), in subsection (3) after the words "vested in the Secretary of State" shall be inserted the words "or otherwise made available pursuant to arrangements made by a District Health Authority".

(2) In section 24 of that Act (advice and assistance for certain children)—

(a) at the end of subsection (2)(d)(ii) there shall be added the words "or in any accommodation provided by a National Health Service trust"; and

(b) at the end of subsection (12)(c) there shall be added the words "or any accommodation provided by a National Health Service trust".

(3) In section 29 of that Act (recoupment of cost of providing services etc.), at the end of paragraph (c) of subsection (8) there shall be added the words "or any other hospital made available pursuant to arrangements made by a District Health Authority".

(4) In section 80 of that Act (inspection of children's homes etc.).—

(a) in subsection (1)(d) after the words "health authority" there shall be inserted "or National Health Service trust"; and

(b) in subsection (5)(e) after the words "health authority" there shall be inserted "National Health Service trust".

(5) In section 85 of that Act (children accommodated by health authorities and local education authorities), in subsection (1) after the words "health authority" there shall be inserted "National Health Service trust".'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Clarke.]*

Schedule 9

ENACTMENTS REPEALED

Amendments made: No. 121, in page 99, line 8, column 3, at end insert—

	'In section 41(b) the final word "and".'

No. 123, in page 99, column 3, leave out lines 13 and 14.

No. 122, in page 99, line 24, column 3, at end insert—

	'Section 33(7).'

No. 270, in page 99, line 45, column 3, at end insert—

	'Section 2.5(7).'.

No. 271, in page 99, line 47, column 3, at end insert—

	'Section 86(2).'

No. 92, in page 100, leave out lines 19 to 24.

No. 272, in page 101, line 10, at end insert—

'1990 c. 00.	The National Health Service and Community Care Act 1990.	Section 34(4).'.

—*[Mr. Kenneth Clarke.]*

Clause 62

SHORT TITLE, COMMENCEMENT AND EXTENT

Amendment made: No. 340, in page 57, line 11 at end insert

'subsection (2A) of section 39.'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Clarke.]*

Title

Amendment made: No. 273, in line 5, after 'amend' insert

'Part VII of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 and'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Clarke.]*

Bill to be read the Third time this day.

PETITION

Roads

12.49 am

Mr. Humfrey Malins (Croydon, North-West): The petition that I wish to present has been signed by more than 4,500 of the inhabitants of Norbury and Thornton Heath in my constituency of Croydon, North-West and urges the Secretary of State for Transport not to proceed with any new carriageways or major road widenings in Norbury or Thornton Heath which would damage those communities.

The petition is strongly supported by Norbury councillors Colin Johnston, Brian Kendall and Roy Hodges and by the local action group Norbury Against Trunk Roads, all of whose members work tirelessly on behalf of local people. Recently, the mayor of Croydon and I led a march of 2,500 Norbury people to demonstrate our united opposition to the proposals.

The petition reads:

Wherefore your petitioners pray that your honourable House urge the Secretary of State for Transport to recognise the great concern caused to the communities in Norbury, Thornton Heath, and in southern Streatham, by the proposals for new carriageways and widening of the A23 that are contained in the South London Assessment Study, Stage 2b. We also have concern for those proposals which similarly threaten other communities in London. We request that the Secretary recognise our concerns and that the manner of this recognition be as follows:

1. That he should dismiss all the options in the South London Assessment Study which propose major construction of roads, or major widening of roads and proposals which will damage communities and the natural environment.

2. That he should seek instead to promote investment in making substantial improvements in the Public Transport infrastructure.

And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

To lie upon the Table.

McGimpsey Judgment (Irish Supreme Court)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Goodlad.]*

12.52 am

Mr. Ken Maginnis (Fermanagh and South Tyrone): I am grateful to have been allowed this early opportunity to bring to the attention of the House the Supreme Court case of McGimpsey and McGimpsey *v.* Ireland in which judgment was obtained on 1 March, but I am disappointed that the Government have not seen fit to require a Law Officer to respond to the debate. That is not to impugn the ability of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, and I acknowledge that the Attorney-General is on the Treasury Bench, but a legal matter which impinges on the very right of the people of Northern Ireland to exist should be of such concern to our Government that they should wish to give a legal response.

The outcome of the case to which I refer is that the Irish Republic is now deemed to have a de jure claim—an unequivocal legal claim—to Northern Ireland. It does not matter what our Government believe to be the position—and for the past four years they have encouraged us to understand that our rights as British citizens are most firmly enshrined in the Anglo-Irish Agreement—the ruling of the Irish Supreme Court is that nothing in any legislation can overrule the constitutional imperative to achieve a united Ireland.

I wish now to outline the background to the case. When the Anglo-Irish Agreement was signed on 15 November 1985 it provoked from Michael and Christopher McGimpsey exactly the same traumatic reaction as it engendered throughout the entire Unionist community. But while they identified with and joined in Unionists' protests against the unjust imposition of the diktat, they were soon convinced that only through legal action could there be any hope of proving just how dangerous and deceitful the agreement was. Being historians who had taken a special interest in Irish affairs, they came to the conclusion that the best chance of success would be through the Irish Republic's courts.

While a similar action against the agreement to be taken by Enoch Powell in the High Court in London would soon run into the sand because the United Kingdom does not have a written constitution, the McGimpseys' initiative was based on the fact that the Irish Republic certainly does have one. Moreover, the Irish constitution had previously been the basis of legal challenges in respect of other international agreements entered into by the Government of the day. Boland *v.* An Taoiseach 1974, concerning the constitutionality of the Sunningdale agreement, provided some basis for argument but it was eventually the case of Crotty *v.* An Taoiseach 1987 which provided the real impetus for the McGimpseys. In it, the Supreme Court had ruled that the Government of the Republic did not have the competence to implement the Single European Act without the approval of the Irish people through a referendum.

The crux of the Crotty argument was that no aspect of foreign policy could be ceded by the Government of the Republic to another Government—or, in this case, to the European Community. Articles 28 and 29 of the Irish constitution precluded any fettering of the power of the Government to conduct external affairs of state.

Article 2 of the Irish constitution reads:

"The national territory consists of the whole island of Ireland, its islands and the territorial seas."

To mount a successful challenge the McGimpseys therefore had to prove that article 2 of the Irish constitution was intended to be a legal claim and not merely a political aspiration and, if that was so, that the Anglo-Irish Agreement restrained the Republic's Government from pursuing that legal claim in so far as it recognised the de jure right of the United Kingdom Government to govern Northern Ireland, and hence to dictate the foreign policy for that part of the island.

The right hon. Member for Bridgwater (Mr. King), when Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, appeared to believe that article 1 of the Anglo-Irish Agreement was a de jure acknowledgement of the United Kingdom's right when he spoke about it "copper-fastening the union." But the testy reaction of the Irish Foreign Minister, Peter Barry, showed that this was not the Republic's perception. Whatever the real truth, the McGimpseys were increasingly convinced that it could be proved only by obtaining a judgment in the Supreme Court of the Irish Republic.

Thus it was in 1987 that the two brothers put their theory to me and I agreed to help them to co-ordinate the necessary action to finance and promote their case. As the case progressed through the legal system, more and more people, including many politicians from the Republic, suggested that the premise that article 2 of the constitution was "a legal claim" would be disproved. These opinions were based on a judgment given at a time when the Criminal Law (Jurisdiction) Bill 1977 was passing through the Irish Parliament and the Irish Government had sought a Supreme Court ruling on its constitutionality.

Then, Justice O'Higgins had been understood to say:

"This national claim to unity exists not in the legal but in the political order".

Perhaps that was the perception in the mind of our Government when they signed the 1985 diktat, but, as I said earlier, they should have been alerted when Barry squealed at Secretary of State King's "copper-fastening" comment. This apart, we all felt a definitive judgment was necessary and we presumed that the outcome would prove our case.

If the McGimpseys were correct in their "legal claim" thesis, Unionist fears of being subsumed within a politically united Ireland would be justified, but at least the hated agreement which was inevitably going to trundle us there more quickly should be deemed unconstitutional and would, we reasoned, have to be abandoned.

On the other hand, we accepted that if the "political aspiration" argument was correct there would be an end of Unionist fears, the Northern Ireland Office would be proved right and Unionists would have to come to terms with that. The atmosphere of suspicion and distrust—the Unionist siege mentality—which has pervaded our community since the Irish Republic's constitution was adopted in 1937 would change and the basis for new relationships would be created. The Unionist community approved that strategy and provided the funds necessary to mount the challenge.

The essential features of the Dublin Supreme Court's judgment are that articles 2 and 3 of the Irish constitution

constitute a legal claim of right over the jurisdiction of Northern Ireland; that the Republic can give only de facto recognition of British sovereignty over Northern Ireland and is constitutionally prohibited from acknowledging this de jure. I trust that the Minister can assure me that he will place a copy of the judgment in the Libary so that right hon. and hon. Members can read it and judge its implications for themselves.

On the legal claim, it is significant that the Supreme Court saw fit to overrule specifically its earlier decision in the Criminal Law (Jurisdiction) Bill judgment. It is generally felt among lawyers in the Irish Republic that that is quite a remarkable step for the court to have taken given the sensitivity of the matter. This is only the sixth occasion the Supreme Court has ever expressly departed from its earlier ruling.

It is also interesting that, although article 3 is now taken to preclude the Republic from legislating with respect to Northern Ireland

"pending the reintegration of the national territory",

the court states that that restriction

"in no way derogates from the claim as a legal right to the entire national territory."

Furthermore, the express language of articles 2 and 3 constitute an

"express denial and disclaimer to the Community of Nations"—

that the present border—

"is or can be accepted as conclusive of the matter"

so as to prevent any question of estoppel arising in international law. In turn, that reinforces the "legal claim of right" interpretation of articles 2 and 3.

The court then concluded that the recognition of Northern Ireland accorded by the Anglo-Irish Agreement was de facto only. Chief Justice Finlay states:

"There can be no doubt but that the only reasonable interpretation of article 1 taken in conjunction with the denial of derogation from sovereignty contained in article 2(b) of the Anglo-Irish Agreement is that it constitutes a recognition of the de facto situation in Northern Ireland, but does so without abandoning the claim to the reintegration of the national territory."

The House should note the next sentence well:

"These are essential ingredients of the constitutional provisions in articles 2 and 3."

They are the essential ingredients enshrined in the Anglo-Irish Agreement—that should be clear to everyone. Obviously it will be clear to the Attorney-General.

Here is a clear and unequivocal statement that the Anglo-Irish Agreement enhances the Republic's "legal claim" by virtue of the "essential ingredients" and the "constitutional imperative" of achieving unity. It follows that no Irish Government can ever de jure recognise the existing status of Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom as that would be manifestly unconstitutional. So the McGimpseys won the argument that the Irish had abandoned their hard-line nationalist claim to Northern Ireland contained in articles 2 and 3, but who could have guessed that the Supreme Court would have been able, in those circumstances, to endorse the Anglo-Irish Agreement as being complementary to that point of view? The answer to that is, most of the Unionist leadership. From comments that I have heard from the Minister's colleagues, however, it appears that they wish to ignore reality.

Let Unionists not appear to be the only people who appreciate the full significance of the judgment. Hon. Members can refer to *The Times* article by Dr. Conor Cruise O'Brien on 10 March in which he suggested to Her Majesty's Government that they suspend the agreement. He went on to remind readers:

"As a general principle, it may be affirmed that no government should conclude an agreement concerning a part of its territory with another government that is laying claim to that territory. A government which breaches that principle inescapably gives the impression that it is on the way towards accepting the other government's claim."

The Irish Times on 5 March carried an article by Dr. David Gwynn Morgan, a legal expert. He made the startling but logical assertion that the consequence of the court's decision was that

"an Irish government is simply not legally competent to reach certain kinds of compromise with the Unionist majority."

Hence, one must ask if it is competent to make arrangements on an ongoing basis with this Government, except for the purpose of implementing the "constitutional imperative" spelt out by the Supreme Court to unify the island.

Virtually every informed scholar and journalist who has written on the issue is agreed that our Government's credibility and integrity will be called into question if they do nothing about the fraud that has been perpetrated against them. Even *The Irish News*, a respectable if strictly anti-Unionist daily paper in Northern Ireland, concluded in its 12 March edition that the McGimpseys may have lost the battle but should win the war. John Hume's biographer, writing in *The Belfast Telegraph* on 9 March, acknowledged the injustice of the situation.

There is one way forward. It is for the Government of the Irish Republic to volunteer, or to allow themselves to be persuaded, to amend or revoke articles 2 and 3 of their constitution by putting the matter to a referendum. The McGimpseys and I suggested that we would be willing to go to meet the opinion-formers in the south, including political leaders, to put the case. Unfortunately, Mr. Haughey, who has consistently boasted about how generous he would be if Unionists would only come to talk with him, has responded by slamming the door in our faces. He would, he said on Tuesday, consider meeting us, but then he firmly precluded discussion about the one topic on which we need to talk.

This House was persuaded to accept in the debate on 26 and 27 November 1985 that the Anglo-Irish Agreement would bring peace, stability and reconciliation. Who other than those of us who are close to the reality of the situation could possibly have voted against that? In less heady moments, the Government assured the House that the three tangible benefits would be the recognition, for the first time, of the de jure status of Northern Ireland within the United Kingdom until such time as the majority voted otherwise; the extradition of terrorists; and an end to megaphone diplomacy.

The court case has made it clear that the first is not on offer. Will the Minister explain that to Unionists? Extradition is, most of us believe after Tuesday's débâcle, firmly on the back burner. Let him explain that to the widow of a murdered prison officer and to the families of all the other victims. And when we hear the raucous, yet self-righteous, tones first of Peter Barry and now of Gerry Collins before every meeting of the conference threatening what will be demanded and insisted upon, how does this Government live with that indignity?

If some in this House cannot or will not believe that the agreement is dead because it is being propped up for appearance's sake, perhaps they can at least accept that it

[Mr. Ken Maginnis]

is meaningless. When I was first sent to this House in 1983, the honest to God decent people who sent me here thought that this was a place where they would get justice. Enoch Powell always insisted that this Parliament was the final arbiter, but Harold McCusker died believing otherwise. On behalf of the people of Northern Ireland, I ask the Minister to tell us who is right. Are we to continue to be sold out for political expediency or will the Government now recognise, in the light of the McGimpsey judgment, their obligation to justice and the people I represent?

1.10 am

Mr. Ivor Stanbrook (Orpington): With the leave of my hon. Friends the Member for Fermanagh and South Tyrone (Mr. Maginnis) and the Minister, I wish to say a few words about the subject of this debate.

The constitution of the Irish Republic suffers from all the defects of written constitutions in that it embodies national ideals, vague aspirations and noble objectives, but has to respect certain major legislation which it inherited from this country. It also comes within the common law tradition. As a result, when its Supreme Court interprets the constitution, it provides many opportunities for obscurity and tendentious interpretation to cover almost any decision that the court may see fit to take, even those which are purely politically motivated. That is the crux of the problem that we have faced in recent years in relation to the actions of the courts in the Republic.

The McGimpsey case illustrates the ambiguity. The court treated the Single European Act as law within the terms of article 40 of the constitution. It was treated as law because the court accepted that a derogation of the sovereignty of the Irish Republic was all right because it was properly done and was, after all, a treaty. However, the Anglo-Irish Agreement, which is also supposed to be an internationally binding treaty and must be respected by all sovereign states party to it, is not law for this purpose. Why? After studying the constitution, the court concluded that provision for the Anglo-Irish Agreement came out of the section of the constitution that allowed for the mere ordering of peaceful international relations. That was the basis of authority for the Irish Government to conclude that that agreement with the United Kingdom was an international treaty, but it did not reach the status of law for the purpose of the constitution. That ambiguity is reflected in the constitution in articles 2 and 3. It is difficult to construe the meanings of those two articles, but the message is repeated in article 1 of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, which states that there will be

"no change in the status of Northern Ireland."

My right hon. and hon. Friends, the leaders of the Government, assigned that agreement with those very words and have paraded it as if, at last, the Irish Republic has accepted that Northern Ireland is a part of the United Kingdom. It has done nothing of the sort. The phrase that there will be

"no change in the status of Northern Ireland"

makes one ask, what is its status? Under Irish law, the status of Northern Ireland is that it is a part of Ireland, not the United Kingdom. Under British law its status is that it is a part of the United Kingdom. That ambiguity has never been resolved and, politically, the British Government have asked us to accept that the meaning should be that attributed to it by British courts, whereas we all know that the meaning attributed to it by Irish courts, such as in this case, is quite different.

Due to that ambiguity and the many times that we have allowed Irish courts to get away with—and forgiven them for—the errors which, according to our jurisprudence, they continually make, we have enabled them to block off all possibility in law of the extradition of terrorists from the Irish Republic. Under the most recent judgment, a finding of fact was made which will be instanced in future to show the impossibility of extraditing people to the United Kingdom because they may be beaten up when they arrive in United Kingdom jurisdiction.

Previously there was a finding, allowed and confirmed by the courts, by the Attorney-General that in the case of Father Ryan no extradition could take place because there was no chance of his getting a fair trial. That ambiguity is at the heart of the Anglo-Irish Agreement. It is a tragic mistake that has been confirmed by the recent experience that we have had to endure.

1.15 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Dr. Brian Mawhinney): I do not have too much time to respond to this interesting debate. I congratulate the hon. Member for Fermanagh and South Tyrone (Mr. Maginnis) on obtaining such an early Adjournment debate on this important subject. I also congratulate him on his speech. He asked me to place a copy of the Supreme Court judgment in the Library, and I shall see that this is done.

The hon. Gentleman indicated his belief that the recent judgment of the Irish Supreme Court in some sense substantially changed Northern Ireland's position and that, perhaps, Unionists had never before understood article 2 of the Irish constitution to be a legal claim on the north.

I cannot accept that argument. I fully understand the sense of dismay felt by many, including Unionists, at the clear affirmation in the judgment that articles 2 and 3 constitute a legal claim to Northern Ireland. But Unionists have always known that the claim was legal and territorial. They did not need the Irish Supreme Court to spell it out. When the hon. Gentleman and I were growing up in the Province, Unionists were not referring to article 2 as some sort of political aspiration. If they had believed that, they would have been much less agitated. It was precisely because they believed that the article did lay legal claim to the Province that Unionists were so upset and offended —as, indeed, were others in the United Kingdom. In fact, the hon. Gentleman may remember the report from an all-party committee of the Dail, chaired by George Colley, a Fianna Fail deputy if I remember correctly, which reported in 1967 and which proposed a number of Irish constitutional amendments, including the desirability of converting articles 2 and 3 into a political aspiration using the words:

"The Irish nation hereby proclaims its firm will"

—and so on.

After all, a constitutional document, almost by definition, has to be seen and understood in a legal sense. Most people accepted this. While it may come as a shock to many that this understanding should have been confirmed in such stark terms in 1990, it cannot be said to be a surprise.

The hon. Gentleman postulated that the judgment changed something fundamental in our relationship with the Irish Republic in general and rendered meaningless article 1 of the Anglo-Irish Agreement in particular. I shall deal with each claim in turn.

It is not my responsibility to defend the Irish constitution. It is for Irish Ministers to consider and, if they feel it necessary, to explain this territorial claim in light of that country's signing of the Helsinki Final Act. Our two countries have differing historical perceptions and constitutional frameworks, and as we are entitled to ours, so they are to theirs. It is also for Irish Ministers to relate article 2 of their constitution to their signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

Rev. Ian Paisley (Antrim, North) *rose*——

Dr. Mawhinney: I cannot give way, as I have little time left.

That notwithstanding, both Governments value the Anglo-Irish Agreement, its aims and its modus operandi. Whatever the constitutional facts, in practice it has proved to be an important treaty.

I cannot accept that the hon. Gentleman is seriously asking the House to believe that the Supreme Court judgment actually makes any difference in reality to the United Kingdom's unwritten constitution or Northern Ireland's safe inclusion within it. As far as we are concerned, Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom and is clearly so in international law. He said that it does not matter what the Government believe, but in the United Kingdom—that includes Northern Ireland —what Parliament and the Government believe is all important.

Article 1 of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, which is an internationally binding treaty, is not and cannot be affected by a judgment of the Irish court. In signing the Agreement, the Irish and British Governments recognised the reality of Northern Ireland's position within the United Kingdom, whatever the different de jure positions.

I say that because the nub of article 1 is not a definition of the status of Northern Ireland but says that that status cannot be changed save by the freely given consent of the people of the Province. Willingness to contemplate change carries with it de facto recognition of the position from which change might occur. I hasten to add that the British Government's view is that there will be no majority for change in the foreseeable future. In other words, the declaration on status in the Anglo-Irish Agreement is simply aligned with reality. The reality is that the status of Northern Ireland is British.

Lest the hon. Member thinks that I theorise, let me point out to him that we are having this debate in the House of Commons, not the Dail. It is in this forum that decisions affecting Northern Ireland are taken—as is affirmed by article 2b of the Anglo-Irish Agreement. And the court judgment makes no difference to that reality either. I accept that the Irish Government have not abandoned any aspiration to unity. They have accepted, however, that this aspiration can be realised only on the basis of the consent of the people of Northern Ireland. This position holds, irrespective of the Irish constitution and the Supreme Court's interpretation of it.

Let me summarise. The people of Northern Ireland and the United Kingdom have lived with this territorial claim for over 50 years. The United Kingdom Government have never accepted it, do not accept it and have said so, as I do again tonight. We regard it as having no validity in international law. It has never had any practical effect on Northern Ireland's position as part of the United Kingdom.

Nor do I lend credence to the view that the court judgment will serve to sustain the Provisional IRA in its campaign of violence. PIRA does not recognise the legitimacy of the Government, institutions or constitution of the Republic. It cannot therefore be argued that it will be influenced by some legal interpretation of a part of that constitution.

I wish to make one final point. In light of what I have said, the Government believe that it would be wrong to suggest that this judgment should in any way affect prospects for political progress in Northern Ireland. As the talks offered are without precondition, Unionists may legitimately——

The motion having been made after Ten o'clock and the debate having continued for half an hour, MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER *adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to the Standing Order.*

Adjourned at twenty-two minutes past One o'clock.

House of Commons

Thursday 15 March 1990

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PRIVATE BUSINESS

REDBRIDGE LONDON BOROUGH COUNCIL BILL *(By Order)*
Order for Third Reading read.
To be read the Third time on Tuesday 20 March at Seven o'clock.

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL (NO. 2) BILL *(By Order)*
Order read for resuming adjourned debate on Question proposed [26 February],
That the Bill be now considered.
Debate further adjourned till Thursday 22 March.

HYTHE, KENT, MARINA BILL *(By Order)*
Read a Second time and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

PENZANCE SOUTH PIER EXTENSION BILL *(By Order)*
Order for Second Reading read.
To be read a Second time on Tuesday 20 March at Seven o'clock.

Mr. Speaker: As the remaining 12 Bills have blocking motions, with the leave of the House, I shall put them together.

SHARD BRIDGE BILL *(By Order)*

VALE OF GLAMORGAN (BARRY HARBOUR) BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*
Orders for Second Reading read.
To be read a second time on Thursday 22 March.

ADELPHI ESTATE BILL *(By Order)*
Order read for resuming adjourned debate on Question proposed [27 February],
That the Bill be now read a Second time.
Debate further adjourned till Thursday 22 March.

EXMOUTH DOCKS BILL *(By Order)*

LONDON DOCKLANDS RAILWAY BILL *(By Order)*

LONDON UNDERGROUND (VICTORIA) BILL *(By Order)*

LONDON REGIONAL TRANSPORT (PENALTY FARES) BILL *(By Order)*

LONDON UNDERGROUND BILL *(By Order)*

CATTEWATER RECLAMATION BILL *(By Order)*

HUMBERSIDE COUNTY COUNCIL BILL *(By Order)*

CLYDE PORT AUTHORITY BILL *(By Order)*

LONDON LOCAL AUTHORITIES (NO. 2) BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*
Orders for Second Reading read.
To be read a Second time on Thursday 22 March.

Oral Answers to Questions

NATIONAL FINANCE

ECOFIN

1. **Mr. Coleman:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the proceedings of the most recent meeting of ECOFIN.

The Economic Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Richard Ryder): My right hon. Friend the Chancellor and I represented the United Kingdom at the Council of Economic and Finance Ministers on 12 March. The main topics discussed included the implications of German economic and monetary union, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the revision of the financial perspective, the problem of fraud against the Community budget and the report of the European Court of Auditors for 1988.

Mr. Coleman: I am grateful to the Minister. Can he tell us how he intends to persuade our European partners to locate the new European Bank for Reconstruction and Development in London particularly with such a grudging attitude about Europe on the part of the United Kingdom —for example, our reluctance over the social charter and the exchange rate mechanism? Can he tell us what powers of persuasion he has?

Mr. Ryder: Our case is irresistible. It is so irresistible that we have produced the excellent brochure that I have with me. I shall be more than happy to send the hon. Gentleman a copy. Over lunch last Monday my right hon. Friend the Chancellor was able to raise the matter as part of the lunchtime agenda. The case for bringing the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development to London is clear. More than 520 foreign banks are already located in London. It is Europe's financial centre, and the centre of the Eurobond market, and we do more banking work with eastern Europe than any other banking capital in Europe. I hope that I have the hon. Gentleman's support and the support of the entire House in trying to get the EBRD to London.

Mr. Soames: In my hon. Friend's distinguished contribution at the ECOFIN meeting, did he have the opportunity to tell his colleagues on that body of the substantial support in industry in this country for full British membership of the European monetary system?

Mr. Ryder: The conditions for Britain's entry to the exchange rate mechanism were clearly spelt out at the Madrid summit last summer. As many people have already said, the question is not whether we should enter the ERM, but when.

Mr. Hoyle: If the case is so overwhelming, will the Minister explain what will be said about the deficit on invisible earnings? For the first time since those figures have been recorded, they are in deficit——

Mr. Ryder *indicated dissent.*

Mr. Hoyle: The Minister may shake his head—does he deny that the figures are in deficit? If he wants to deny it, he should get up and say so. Will he tell us what this incompetent and inept Government will do to remedy this sad state of affairs?

Mr. Ryder: This question relates to ECOFIN. That matter was not discussed last Monday at the ECOFIN meeting.

Manufacturing Productivity

2. **Mr. Tredinnick:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the growth during the 1980s of manufacturing productivity in *(a)* the United Kingdom and *(b)* other major industrial countries.

The Chief Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Norman Lamont): The average annual growth of output per person employed in United Kingdom manufacturing industry between 1980 and 1988 was 5·3 per cent., compared to 3·4 per cent. for the other Group of Seven economies.

Mr. Tredinnick: I thank my right hon. Friend for his reply. Is he aware that unemployment in the east midlands has fallen by 20 per cent. in the past year? Is he further aware that employment in manufacturing has increased by 18,000 since 1983? What are the figures for manufacturing output? Have they increased under this Government? How do they compare with the figures under the previous Labour Government?

Mr. Lamont: Manufacturing output has increased. Manufacturing productivity has been a remarkable success story. It has grown faster in this country than in any other G7 country, including Japan and the United States. It has grown at twice the rate of the 1970s and it is higher than it was in the 1960s. That helps to explain the remarkable success of industry in my hon. Friend's constituency and in neighbouring areas.

Mr. Robert Sheldon: Will the Chief Secretary accept this, the last of my pre-Budget recommendations: that the 25 per cent. capital allowance for plant and machinery is hopelessly inadequate, given the level of inflation and the value of capital equipment, which deteriorates over the first year of its life? That level is not an investment incentive; it is an investment disincentive. Will the Chief Secretary seek to remedy it?

Mr. Lamont: I always listen carefully to the right hon. Gentleman, and I note what he describes as a late Budget representation, although it seems to be a little wide of the original question.

Mr. John Townend: Does my right hon. Friend agree that for productivity to increase there must be more investment in manufacturing and research and development? Is he aware that in east Yorkshire and Hull an enormous amount of development is taking place? In my constituency, BP has just finished a new acetic acid plant costing £250 million and has announced plans for a research laboratory, which will employ over 200 scientists and high-paid technicians.

Mr. Lamont: I am pleased to hear the good news from my hon. Friend's constituency. He is right that productivity is related to investment. However, it is related not to investment alone but also to good management and good industrial relations, which have improved remarkably.

Inflation

3. **Mr. Steinberg:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he expects to have zero inflation.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. John Major): I shall set out my forecast for inflation next week.

Mr. Steinberg: The fact is that the Government have no chance of getting inflation down to zero per cent., even though that was the stated aim of the previous Chancellor of the Exchequer. It will not fall significantly from the present rate of inflation. Many of my constituents are suffering great hardship because of the Chancellor's and the Government's policies. Many of them are facing hardship because of increases——

Hon. Members: Too long.

Mr. Speaker: Order. In fairness to the House, the hon. Gentleman should ask a single question.

Mr. Steinberg: Inflation has been fuelled by high interest rates, high rents, high gas and water prices and the dreaded poll tax.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I think that that is about enough.

Mr. Steinberg *rose—[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. It is not at all fair to the hon. Gentleman's colleagues for him to ask several questions.

Mr. Major: I thought for a moment that the hon. Gentleman was trying to talk out Question Time. The reality is that without utilising our present interest rate policy there will be no chance of bringing down the rate of inflation to a level that is tolerable for most people. To that end we shall continue to sustain monetary policy. It is important that we do so for economic and social reasons. The hon. Gentleman mentioned the community charge. It is perfectly true that the dramatic burst of spending by local government will raise the retail prices index, but much of that comes from local authorities of which the hon. Gentleman approves.

Mr. Budgen: Will my right hon. Friend accept my congratulations on the way in which, to date, he has borne down on inflation? Does he agree that it will be far more difficult in future to resist the demands of those, from every section of the community, who recommend and enjoy inflation, and who will look to him for a major relaxation of credit before the next general election?

Mr. Major: I share with my hon. Friend the belief that it is vital to take whatever action is necessary to bring inflation down.

Mr. John Smith: Is the Chancellor aware that all three local authorities in the Mid-Staffordshire constituency—two of which are Conservative—have set poll tax levels

—*[Interruption.]* I have selected a constituency in which the Conservative party has a 14,000 majority. Surely that is perfectly fair. The three authorities have set levels significantly higher than the previous rate bills and far higher than the Government's ludicrous guidelines. Do not those examples and others throughout the land show clearly that the Secretary of State for the Environment was perfectly correct when he said that the poll tax would have a devastating impact on the retail prices index? Does the Chancellor agree with his colleague?

Mr. Major: The right hon. and learned Gentleman was uncharacteristically unreasonable in omitting from the beginning of his question the fact that the Labour county council covering that area has dramatically increased its expenditure. He also did not mention, for example, the quite astonishing and unreasonable community charge of more than £600 to be set by Labour-controlled Lambeth.

Sir William Clark: Will my right hon. Friend remind the House what the rate of inflation was before 1979? Does he agree that if the Labour policy about which we know was implemented, we should have hyperinflation and a run on sterling?

Mr. Major: There is no doubt that Labour's policy would cause a run on sterling—and we have yet to find out precisely what Labour's policy will be in individual aspects. The Labour Government's inflation record speaks for itself. Their best month was still higher than our worst.

Income Tax

6. **Mrs. Gorman:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he has recently received any representations about the relationship between incentives to work and the level of income tax.

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Peter Lilley): My right hon. Friend has received a number of representations about income tax.

Mrs. Gorman: I thank my hon. Friend for his reply. Does not the incentive effect of lowering direct taxes more than offset any loss to the Treasury because it increases the general buoyancy of the economy? Will he apply that logic to women who may wish to go out to work and who would be encouraged to do so if they were allowed to offset some of the costs for help in the home or with children?

Mr. Lilley: I am sure that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor heard that late pre-Budget representation. All that I can do is to refer my hon. Friend to my answer to a similar question in the previous Question Time.

Mr. Nicholas Brown: Surely a better answer for the Financial Secretary to give to his hon. Friend the Member for Billericay (Mrs. Gorman) would have been to say that the Government's tax policies are specifically designed to advantage the well-off rather than the generality of the community. If he had wanted to give his hon. Friend an alternative answer, he could have said that the parliamentary Labour party was absolutely right and that next Tuesday, the Government would abolish the tax on workplace nurseries.

Mr. Lilley: I can answer the hon. Gentleman's question a little more fully by referring to the past and not to the future. The previous Labour Government had tax rates of 83 per cent. on the rich, but only 30,000 people paid them. Now that we have reduced the rates to 40 per cent. at the same level of income, 190,000 people pay them. People in the top 5 per cent. of incomes are paying 30 per cent. of the total income tax burden against only 24 per cent. at the end of the Labour regime. If anything, we have soaked the rich to everyone's satisfaction.

Mr. Tim Smith: Does my hon. Friend agree that one person's tax relief is another person's tax bill? Introducing a new tax relief erodes the tax base. Will my hon. Friend, therefore, concentrate on the Government's long-term objective of reducing the standard rate of tax and thereby helping all taxpayers?

Mr. Lilley: I recognise my hon. Friend's point, which continues a fruitful discussion that we had at a recent Adjournment debate. *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. Will the House settle down please? It is very difficult to hear at this end of the Chamber.

Mortgage Interest

7. **Mrs. Wise:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the total amount of mortgage interest paid by owner-occupiers for 1988; and what is the comparable amount in 1989.

Mr. Major: The total of interest payments depends both on interest rates and the amount of mortgages outstanding. Of the growth from £22·1 billion in 1988 to £32·4 billion in 1989 nearly half was due to the increase in the stock of mortgages.

Mrs. Wise: Does the Chancellor of the Exchequer accept that the squeeze on home owners has put more than 400,000 of them into some form of arrears, and that the position of many of them and of the poorest will be worsened when the poll tax comes in? What does he intend to do to relieve that burden of debt?

Mr. Major: As the hon. Lady will know, the vast majority of borrowers are still keeping up with their mortgage payments, and I expect that to continue to be the case. Borrowers in serious difficulties account for less than 1 per cent. of the total number of borrowers.

Mr. Oppenheim: Bearing in mind the fact that for years and years the Opposition steadfastly opposed the sale of council houses, that even now Labour councils put obstacles in the way of people who want to buy their council houses and that under this Government there has been a record rise in home ownership, does not concern for the plight of the home owner sound rather odd coming from the lips of Opposition Members?

Mr. Major: My hon. Friend is correct in his observations, in particular that owner-occupation has risen dramatically. The demand for it continues and it will continue to rise.

Mr. Beith: Does the Chancellor recognise that the only way to get interest rates down without pushing inflation up is to combine membership of the exchange rate mechanism with a tighter fiscal stance? Since the Labour party is not prepared to do that, why does not he give it a try on Tuesday?

Mr. Major: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for his advice, but he will understand that I have no intention of responding to it now.

Mr. Conway: Does my right hon. Friend think that those who now have a mortgage, who may want a different house, or those who aspire to have a mortgage, would benefit if we were to embrace the policy to freeze new mortgages advocated by the Opposition's environment spokesman, the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould)?

Mr. Major: What is certainly true is that the Opposition's policies would create a mortgage queue, which would help no one who wishes to become a home owner.

Mrs. Beckett: Does the Chancellor realise that many home owners who are struggling not to fall into arrears will find his complacency deeply worrying? Has he taken no notice at all of the recent Policy Studies Institute report, which suggests that about 1 million people are in serious housing debt, especially as that report was published before the most recent mortgage and rent increases?

Mr. Major: The hon. Lady misjudges me if she thinks that I am complacent or unconcerned about the issue, but the reality is that only a relatively small number of borrowers are in difficulty. When that occurs, I hope that they will take the advice of their lender, whether a bank or building society, and I hope that, wherever possible, that lender will enable them to meet their mortgage payments by extending the mortgage. That is frequently the position. It has been in the past and I expect that it will be so in the future. But there is no doubt whatever that a premature move to bring down interest rates would not be to the benefit of the economy, would not assist us in bringing down inflation and would not assist mortgage holders either.

Mr. Wilkinson: Notwithstanding the necessity to maintain a tight monetary policy, I remind my right hon. Friend that many families in outer London face acute hardship because of great difficulty in keeping up with their mortgage payments and the rising cost of commuter fares. In his forthcoming Budget, will he ensure that he does not rely on monetary policy alone to restrain inflation? His predecessor's obsession with monetary policy was very damaging.

Mr. Major: As my hon. Friend knows, he will receive the answer to that question within a few days.

Mr. Speaker: Question No. 8 Mr. Cunliffe?

Question No. 9. Mr. John P. Smith? [HON. MEMBERS: "Where are they?"]

Question No. 10. Mr. Randall?

Mr. Skinner: They are all in Staffordshire.

Mr. Speaker: Order. It is always a help to the Chair if hon. Members who cannot be here to ask their questions inform the Chair.

Non-oil GDP

11. **Mr. McAvoy:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportion of non-oil gross domestic product, non-oil taxes and national insurance contributions represented in *(a)* 1978-79 and *(b)* 1989-90.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Non-oil taxes and national insurance contributions amounted to 34·1 per cent. of non-oil GDP in 1978-79 and 37·1 per cent. in 1988-89, the latest available year.

Mr. McAvoy: Will the Minister admit that under the Tories, tax take has increased as a proportion of GDP? Will he further admit that the Tory claim to have reduced taxes is entirely bogus, given that the Government have reduced taxes only for the rich and increased them for the rest of us? Does the Minister think that the poll tax will help to reduce the overall burden of tax?

Mr. Lamont: I am sure that I speak for all my hon. Friends when I say that if the Labour party were to choose to fight the next general election on which party would deliver tax cuts, we know who would win it. The hon. Gentleman is not on a good point, when the Labour party has voted against every tax cut that the Government have ever made. Is reducing the rate of income tax from 33p in the pound to 25p in the pound a tax cut or not? If we had simply carried on with the tax regime that we inherited, with the same rates, bands and allowances, and adjusted them for inflation, a married man on average earnings would be paying nearly £20 a week more. That is the tax burden that we had under the Labour party.

Mr. Anthony Coombs: Does my right hon. Friend agree that the virtuous circle brought about by the Government's low tax policies has meant more growth, more incentive and therefore a higher tax take for the Treasury? Does he further agree that, should the Labour party have the opportunity, unlikely as it seems, to put its policy of higher taxes, a wealth tax and an investment tax into operation, that would damage the good of the economy and therefore that increased tax take?

Mr. Lamont: My hon. Friend is right, and the truth of what he says is shown in the rise in average living standards, which have gone up by nearly one third for the man on average earnings in the past 10 years, in contrast to the stagnation in living standards under the Labour party. In addition to the tax burden, the Labour Government also had a debt burden, which could not be financed out of taxes because the tax rates were penally high, so they had to finance borrowing out of inflation, which lowered living standards.

Dr. Marek: The Chief Secretary is adept at talking about tax cuts, but he talks only about income tax, when the total tax take has increased under the 11 years of this Government. As a result, total tax as a percentage of GDP is higher than it was when the Labour party was in office. If the Tory party is not to be permanently saddled with the tag of being the tax, tax and tax again party—[HON. MEMBERS: "No."] Oh yes. The tax, tax and tax again party. Will the Chief Secretary give an estimate of when the tax level that existed under the Labour Government will come about as a result of the Tory Government's policies?

Mr. Lamont: That is a little bit like being lectured on celibacy by Mae West.

Mr. Colvin: Does my right hon. Friend accept that he has had it straight from those on the Opposition Front Bench that their policies, if they were elected, would be to put up the rate of tax, reduce the tax revenue to the Exchequer, and plunge the country back into the depths from which we rescued it in 1979?

Mr. Lamont: That is absolutely right. If we had a borrowing requirement burden similar to that which we had under the previous Labour Government, that alone would be the equivalent of 14p on income tax.

Mortgages

12. **Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the monthly payment on an average mortgage in July 1988; and what was the comparable figure in February 1990.

Mr. Lilley: The figures are £128·63 and £190·31.

Mr. Hinchliffe: Does the Minister share my concern about the clear connection between the huge increases in mortgage repayment figures and in homelessness? Is he aware that in Yorkshire and Humberside, during the 10 years of the present Government, homelessness has increased by 860 per cent? What are the Government doing to get to grips with the appalling human consequences of a high interest rate policy?

Mr. Lilley: We all recognise that high interest rates mean that families have to cut spending on other things for the time being. The level of repossessions in the past year was below that for the previous four years.

Mr. John Marshall: Does my hon. Friend agree that rising interest rates are an international phenomenon from which we cannot insulate ourselves? Does he further agree that a policy of increasing public expenditure as practised by Labour councils and advocated by the Labour Front Bench team would lead only to higher interest rates?

Mr. Lilley: My hon. Friend is correct. No Labour Government to which Opposition Members could point —let alone a Conservative Government—have succeeded in reducing inflation without a period of high interest rates.

Mr. Chris Smith: The Financial Secretary must be aware that millions of families are facing mortgage bills that are £100 more than they were two years ago. In Mid-Staffordshire, the average is £50 extra a month. It is no comfort to such families to be told that it is an international phenomenom. When will the Financial Secretary and the Government end the exclusive reliance on interest rates as a mechanism for taking demand out of the economy?

Mr. Lilley: I recognise the difficulties of people with high interest burdens. We should remember, however, that under this Government living standards for the average family with two children and on average earnings have increased by 32 per cent. more than inflation. The index takes account of mortgage interest payments. Under the Labour Government, the increase was only 1 per cent.

Valuation Offices

14. **Mr. Key:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many staff are currently employed in Inland Revenue valuation offices.

Mr. Lilley: There are 5,748 staff currently employed in the Inland Revenue valuation offices.

Mr. Key: Given the many appeals against business revaluations in my constituency and throughout rural England, is my hon. Friend satisfied that the valuation offices can cope with the increase in revaluations and appeals effectively and to the advantage of the taxpayer?

Mr. Lilley: We are confident that the burden of revaluations and appeals will be met by the valuation offices. I appreciate that my hon. Friend has a problem with the local valuation office that is due to close in Salisbury. I assure him, however, that his constituents will be served satisfactorily from Swindon and Southampton.

Mr. Skinner: Is the Minister aware that the Inland Revenue is being swindled out of £1 million a day by employers who are taking insurance contributions and not passing them over to the relevant authorities? Is he further aware that if the Government used as many inspectors to follow those employers as they do to hound one-parent families out of their DSS benefit, they would retrieve much-needed money for the Exchequer?

Mr. Lilley: I must tell the hon. Gentleman that that is not the responsibility of the valuation offices. I rather thought that he would ask whether the valuation offices would be able to cope with revaluing everybody's house every year according to its rising capital value if a roof tax were imposed. I have to tell him that they would not be able to cope, and nor would the British people.

Mr. Roger King: My hon. Friend took my supplementary question out of my mouth with his latter comments. As the point bears repeating, will he estimate how many people it would require to value every property in every street to implement a roof tax?

Mr. Lilley: My hon. Friend clearly has powers of telepathy. I am grateful to him for prompting me. I assure him that it would need armies of valuation officers to revalue everyone's house every year to impose an ever-rising roof tax on them. It would put taxation through the roof.

Confederation of British Industry

17. **Mr. Duffy:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he expects to next meet the director-general of the Confederation of British Industry; and whether the current level of interest rates will be on the agenda.

Mr. Ryder: My right hon. Friend will be addressing the CBI's annual dinner on 17 May.

Mr. Duffy: As now is the time—or so the House has been led to believe—when the economy will begin to turn the corner, inflation will be brought under control and interest rates will begin to edge downwards, what prospects will the Chancellor of the Exchequer offer to the CBI at the dinner in May? Will it still be a story of "Great Expectations" or will he own up, at long last, to "Bleak House"?

Mr. Ryder: When my right hon. Friend the Chancellor has the pleasure of dining with the CBI in May, he will be able to remind it that in the 1980s we had low inflation compared with the 1970s. The highest rate of inflation under this Government is lower than the best achieved by Labour—*[Interruption.]* The underlying strength of the British economy is as great as that of most other countries in the western world. Investment has been increasing by 40 per cent. in the past three years. Profitability has hit record

levels. Manufacturing productivity in Britain in the 1980s has been higher than for 20 or 30 years—*[Interruption.]* Moreover, the British growth rate in the 1980s is far higher than in the 1970s, when the hon. Gentleman's party was in office.

Mr. Speaker: Order. There seems to be a carnival atmosphere. I ask the House to settle down.

Mr. Bill Walker: Does my hon. Friend agree that the Confederation of British Industry has enjoyed a period of sustained growth—the longest since the second world war—and a longer period of sustained and increasing profits than at any time since the second world war? Does he further agree that wages are a much more important factor in arriving at costs than the cost of borrowing money will ever be?

Mr. Ryder: My hon. Friend is right to say that the 1980s have been a period of great economic success, not least in Scotland. He is also right to warn against high unit labour costs. Those high costs prevent Britain from becoming even more prosperous and prevent employers from taking on more people at their places of work.

Interest Rates

18. **Mr. Turner:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the effect of the Government's policy on interest rates.

Mr. Ryder: Fifteen per cent. interest rates are tightening demand.

Mr. Turner: Will the Chancellor confirm that his team is at the top of the OECD inflation table entirely because the right hon. Gentleman keeps scoring own goals through his high interest rate policy?

Mr. Ryder: To be fair to him, I do not think that the hon. Gentleman has been well briefed for this question. Britain is not top of the OECD inflation league by a long chalk. Many other countries in Europe have higher inflation rates than Britain, as do others in the OECD.

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: Does my hon. Friend agree that one factor in this complex consideration is that if we were to join the exchange rate mechanism, interest rates would become a much more important element in combating inflation than they are ever at the moment?

Mr. Ryder: My hon. Friend is trying to entice me down an incredibly attractive path, but I shall resist the temptation. As he knows, the question is not when—*[Interruption.]*—not whether, but when we shall join the ERM. He also knows that we shall pursue the conditions set out at the Madrid summit last summer. As soon as those conditions have been met, we shall enter the ERM.

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: The Minister will be aware that, as a result of high interest rates, many home owners are considering remortgaging packages, which may appear to them to be attractive. Is he aware of a difficulty here? At present home owners get tax relief on that part of the mortgage with which they acquired their property and on home improvements, provided that they were carried out before 1988. Is he aware that if they remortgage they lose out on tax relief on that part which involves the home improvements scheme? That is a very important consideration. Will the Minister make a statement or, if he wishes to reflect on it, will he write to me?

Mr. Ryder: I shall certainly pass on the hon. Member's Budget recommendation to my right hon. Friend the Chancellor. The hon. Gentleman is right to this extent: high mortgage rates cause a great deal of anxiety to people with mortgages, particularly young married couples. As soon as we can get inflation on a sustained downward path, interest rates and mortgages will follow.

Mr. Knapman: Does my hon. Friend agree that the short-term pain of high interest rates is preferable to the long-term pain of inflation—£1,000 in 1960 had a purchasing power of only £160 in 1980? Does he agree that we must never allow that to happen again?

Mr. Ryder: We must never allow it to happen again, but it will if the Labour party ever gets a chance or a sniff of office. Their record in the 1960s and the 1970s showed that they do not care at all about high inflation and how it affects people with mortgages and savings. The rates of interest and of inflation in the 1970s were a particular problem to elderly people with savings. It is to them that the Labour party would mete out its policies if it ever won office again.

OECD

22. **Mr. Madden:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer which OECD countries have, by latest estimates, trade deficits that are bigger as a percentage of gross domestic product than the United Kingdom.

Mr. Ryder: Information on the current account deficit in the United Kingdom is contained in the Central Statistical Office's latest balance of payments press release of 13 March 1990, and on United Kingdom gross domestic product in the CSO's national accounts press release of 21 December 1989. Figures for each of the other OECD countries are published by OECD in the December 1989 issue of "Economic Outlook".

Mr. Madden: Cutting through all that verbiage, is not the reality that Britain's trade deficit is the largest in Europe and that this is a shameful record for the Government's economic policies over the past 11 years? Does the Minister remember that the former Chancellor, the unlamented right hon. Member for Blaby (Mr. Lawson), used to pooh-pooh the trade deficit by saying that it could be financed by invisible trade? What is the Government's excuse for the present shameful trade deficit?

Mr. Ryder: The hon. Gentleman refers to Britain's trade deficit. Many other countries in the western world have a trade deficit, including the United States, Italy, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Iceland, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and Australia. The truth is that the British trade deficit is improving; the volume of manufacturing exports was up by 11 per cent. last year and the CBI believes that there will be further improvement in the months ahead. The hon. Gentleman is even gloomier than normal.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: Will my hon. Friend speculate on the effect on Britain's trade performance if the Government were to support every inflationary wage

demand in sight, increase income tax and increase corporation tax—all policies supported by the Labour party?

Mr. Ryder: To be fair to the Labour party, I am not sure whether it supports those policies. The Labour party has refused to say what its policies are. We have opinions from the Labour party, but no policies.

Mr. Boateng: We are used to the excuses of the Economic Secretary and this Government for our failures in relation to visible earnings. Will the hon. Gentleman give us what will no doubt become the usual excuse for our failure to secure a satisfactory position in relation to invisible earnings? Why do we, for the first time since the Napoleonic war, have a deficit in our invisible earnings? Is it because the right hon. Lady and her Government have succeeded in doing to our country's economy what Napoleon never did—destroy it?

Mr. Ryder: If the hon. Gentleman reads the press releases, he will find that during the past year invisibles have been erratic, but we hope that their performance will improve this year. The hon. Gentleman should read the details of the press releases from the CSO rather more carefully than, I fancy, he has to date.

Mr. Dickens: Does my hon. Friend agree that, day in and day out in this House, we are subjected to the Opposition rubbishing British industry? Is not the truth of the matter that the industrial base of this nation is as strong as ever, and that we are importing goods so that we may value-add to them and sell them at a profit? This nation is outstripping the rest of Europe in production and in the creation of jobs. Why do the Opposition keep rubbishing our industry?

Mr. Ryder: The short answer is that my hon. Friend speaks for Britain, and the Labour party does not.

PRIME MINISTER

Engagements

Q1. **Mr. Butterfill:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 15 March.

The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher): This morning I presided at a meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House, I shall be having further meetings later today.

Mr. Butterfill: Will my right hon. Friend join me in welcoming the decision of Mr. Jacques Delors, president of the European Commission, in rejecting the proposals for new labour laws as part of the social charter of the European Community? Does not that show that she was right in being the first to speak up against these damaging proposals, despite the fact that they were being put forward so enthusiastically by the Labour party and its Socialist allies? Is not it a shame that—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Briefly, please.

Mr. Butterfill: Is not it a shame that when this was first reported in the national newspapers the comment that my right hon. Friend was "isolated" made the front page, whereas now the item makes only page 11?

The Prime Minister: I join my hon. Friend in being grateful that greater realism and common sense are coming into Brussels. It would be quite absurd to create a common market and then to tie it up with bureaucracy and Socialism. With regard to our sometimes being isolated, as we were in respect of the social charter, I should say that we got the right result then, and many people who criticised us at the time are now taking our view. So we were right.

Mr. Hattersley: Following the tragic events in Iraq earlier today, may I make it clear that the Opposition will support the Government in taking the strongest possible action, consistent with international law, in response to the barbaric execution of Mr. Farzad Bazoft? We are, of course, aware of the importance of doing all that we can to protect Mrs. Daphne Parish and Mr. Ian Richter. The Government, by their actions as well as their words—*[Interruption.]* Some of us regard this as a grave matter. As I am sure the Prime Minister agrees, the Government, by their actions as well as their words, must express the sense of outrage that is felt throughout the country.

The Prime Minister: I agree with the right hon. Gentleman that this is a very grave and serious matter. The Iraqi Government's action is an act of barbarism which is deeply repugnant to all civilised people. We extend our sympathy to Mr. Bazoft's family and colleagues. I agree that we must consider Mrs. Parish, who is still in prison in Iraq, as well as Mr. Richter, on whose behalf we have made many representations. The right hon. Gentleman will know that my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary will be making a statement after questions, so I think that further details should be left until then.

Q2. **Mr. Malins:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 15 March.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Malins: Does my right hon. Friend share my disappointment at the decision of the Irish Supreme Court to release two IRA terrorists? Does she further agree that that could damage the Anglo-Irish Agreement and that the action is an unjustified attack and slur on the Northern Irish prison service?

The Prime Minister: I very much agree with my hon. Friend. The suggestion that anyone extradited to Northern Ireland would be maltreated is grossly offensive and totally unjustified. The Northern Irish prison service is run by dedicated and courageous people who do a very difficult job. I fear that such a judgment may encourage terrorists to the view that they will probably find a safe haven in the Republic of Ireland, and that is very serious.

Q3. **Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 15 March.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Dr. Thomas: Does the Prime Minister know that she recently scored 66 per cent. in a popularity poll in Lithuania—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. May we have the rest of the question, please?

Dr. Thomas: Will she reciprocate that affection by declaring her support for the right of the Lithuanian people to negotiate their independence and their return to full statehood?

The Prime Minister: I am very pleased to hear the news that the hon. Gentleman has given to the House. Those people, along with many others, are fighting Socialism. They know the poverty of Socialism and they are trying to get rid of it. The matter must now be taken up in discussion with President Gorbachev. I hope that the outcome will be satisfactory to everyone.

Q4. **Mr. Arbuthnot:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 15 March.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Arbuthnot: Is my right hon. Friend aware that the Government's determination to keep their spending under control is one factor that keeps public investment flooding into this country? Since the last thing that we want is to call in the International Monetary Fund to bail us out again, as happened under Labour, will she reaffirm that she intends to stick to her courageous line?

The Prime Minister: I agree with my hon. Friend that we get a great deal of inward investment from Germany, Japan and other investors because they know that the Government will continue to pursue sound economic polices, to have the right industrial law, to resist nationalisation, to privatise more industries and to have lower taxes than we have had at any time since before the war. All those things are vital to investors and to the prosperity of the country.

Mr. Nellist: Will the Prime Minister reconsider her reply at Question Time on Tuesday that not paying the poll tax is anti-democratic and a bad example to set to all young people? Does not she realise that 42·5 per cent., or over 205,000, of the people in Glasgow, are not paying the poll tax, and that they and the millions who are about to join them in England and Wales are deeply insulted by her remarks, because it is for their children and their families that those who can't pay won't pay? I and others on this side of the Chamber are proud to stand alongside those people in Scotland.

The Prime Minister: Deliberately to disobey a law, properly passed through all its stages in Parliament, is thoroughly anti-democratic and contrary to the rule of law, and leads to all the acts of dictatorship against which the House stands firmly. I repeat what I said: it is anti-democratic and against the rule of law. It sets a bad example to children and young people and should never be propounded from the House.

Q5. **Mr. Cash:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 15 March.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Cash: Has my right hon. Friend noted that the Labour-controlled county council in Staffordshire, which runs the education of that county, has produced results showing that 11 per cent. of all who leave school do so without educational qualifications? Should not the people of Staffordshire closely examine the way that that county council runs its affairs, to ensure that it gets the retribution that it deserves in the forthcoming election?

The Prime Minister: I agree with my hon. Friend. Whether in central, county council or district council government, we all have a duty to obtain the best value for money, whether it is the community charge or taxpayers' money. High-spending councils often do not get the best value for money in education or other services. Our community charge plans will enable people to scrutinise their local councils more competently to ensure that their money is well spent and to take action if it is not, and if the community charge is too high. Our education reforms will give parents more say in the education of their children and enable them to see how well they are doing. That is thoroughly to be recommended.

Q6. **Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 15 March.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Cohen: Last week the Prime Minister told me that home repossessions were one third of 1 per cent. Has not the Council of Mortgage Lenders said that the number of people who are six to 12 months in arrears has risen by 29 per cent., and that 500,000 families are now two to six months in arrears? Are not the Government's high interest rate policies to blame, and will they do anything about it in next week's Budget? Should not new home buyers have been warned that they are home owners only on borrowed time?

The Prime Minister: As I told the hon. Gentleman last week, 99·2 per cent. of people are able to pay their mortgages in the normal way. Of course, some are in difficulty. If they are in difficulty with building societies, in most cases the building societies will extend the mortgage or make other arrangements to enable them to pay. That is frequently done. Frequently the value of the asset for which they are receiving the mortgage has increased considerably since they first took out the mortgage.

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman: Is my right hon. Friend aware that industry in the north-west has undergone a resurgency since she took office? Unemployment has fallen substantially, not least in my constituency of Lancaster, where it fell by 0·4 per cent. in the past month alone.

The Prime Minister: I agree with my hon. Friend. Industry is far stronger now. Restrictive practices have gone, the rate of investment in industry is higher and exports are increasing. Today's news from the unemployment front is that there are now more jobs than ever before: nearly 27 million. We have one of the lowest unemployment rates in Europe. On the day that the unemployment figures were announced, Opposition Members used to be the first to get up to ask about them. But they never ask about them now, because we have one of the lowest unemployment rates in Europe. We have created more jobs than they have, and that tells its own story.

Q7. **Mr. Flynn:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday, 15 March.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Flynn: Will the Prime Minister join the Life Assurance and Unit Trust Regulatory Organisation and independent consultants in denouncing the wickedly dishonest advertising and overselling of personal pensions? Already, over 1 million people are likely to be worse off because they have been misled, taken the Government bribe and left SERPS. Will the Prime Minister guarantee that when the time is right for those cheated 1 million to return to SERPS, there will be a full-blooded Government advertising campaign to inform them of the truth?

The Prime Minister: I totally reject the hon. Gentleman's premise and the language in which he expressed it. People are perfectly free to take out personal pensions. They take a burden off SERPS, which is why they receive a certain amount from it when setting up pensions. Many people have exercised their choice. I recognise that choice is anathema to Socialism, which is why Socialism will be rejected in this part of Europe as it has been in eastern Europe.

Q10. **Mrs. Mahon:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 15 March.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Lady to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mrs. Mahon: Is the Prime Minister aware that the privatised British Telecom is charging people £80 in certain areas before it will install a telephone? Does she think that that is a good advertisement for the privatised system, remembering that people do not get the £80 back until they have paid four consecutive bills? That is a disgrace. Does she agree that things were better when BT was public?

The Prime Minister: If the hon. Lady looks at the record of British Telecom since it has been privatised she will find that it is giving a much better service. Because of the regulatory regime, it has not been able to increase its prices by anything like the rate of inflation, so in real terms prices have gone down since privatisation. That is good news for all telephone users.

Mr. Farzad Bazoft (Execution)

3.30 pm

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Douglas Hurd): Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a statement about Mr. Bazoft.

The Iraqis executed Mr. Farzad Bazoft this morning. Her Majesty's consul-general visited him early this morning.

I can recall no recent case in which such a strong and unanimous view was expressed across the world in favour of clemency. That view has been ignored. The House will wish to express its total revulsion. [HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."] At a time when the international scene shows many signs of hope and humanity, we have been reminded that there are still regimes capable of a pitiless disregard for human rights.

I have instructed our ambassador to return home. We are suspending all planned ministerial visits.

We are stopping the training of Iraqis on Ministry of Defence courses. Students on these courses will return to Iraq without completing their courses.

We shall seek support from the Twelve and from our friends and allies in condemning Iraq's action.

I am sure that I speak on behalf of the whole House when I extend to Mr. Bazoft's family our deep sympathies on this tragic outcome. We shall continue to work for the release of Mrs. Parish and Mr. Ian Richter from their harsh sentences in Iraq.

We made a strenuous and prolonged effort by many means to save Mr. Bazoft's life. The comments that we have made have throughout been measured and reasonable. By their action, the Iraqi authorities have blackened the name of Iraq across the world.

Mr. George Robertson (Hamilton): We on this side of the House join the Foreign Secretary in the sense of shock and anger that he has expressed about the execution of Mr. Farzad Bazoft and we join in his condolences to Mr. Bazoft's family.

The whole House of Commons stands united in condemning this act of unspeakable brutality, an act which displayed a ruthless contempt for justice, for humanity and for united world opinion. This is not only a crime against one man who this morning was so callously put to death, but represents a real threat to every other person who may go to Iraq.

It is also right at this time to remember the indefensible gaol sentences passed on Mrs. Daphne Parish and Mr. Ian Richter, and we must continue all efforts to have them freed.

We offer the Government our full support in the action that they are taking, and we welcome the intention of involving our European partners in seeking further ways of putting pressure on Iraq.

Does the Foreign Secretary think that here in Britain he should now ask the Iraqi ambassador immediately to go home, as a clear indication of the disgust of the British people at what has happened? Should not we carefully reconsider the extensive trade credits that we offer Iraq, and cancel all trade missions from this country to Iraq? Today's execution was an act of calculated violence by a bloodstained dictatorship which will delay any chance of the Iraqis' return to the civilised world community.

Mr. Hurd: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for the way in which he has handled the matter. We have considered the three specific extra points that he made. He suggested that we should send home the Iraqi ambassador. I do not want to take steps that might lead to the permanent exclusion of our embassy staff from Baghdad. We have more than 2,000 British subjects there and, like the Opposition, we are thinking in particular of Mr. Richter and Mrs. Parish, to whom the hon. Gentleman referred.

We have already considered the matter of credit. We must take into account that economic measures in which we would not be joined by others will not alter the stance of the Iraqi Government, and might do more harm than good. The hon. Member also mentioned trade missions. Such a mission was due to leave today from the Birmingham chamber of commerce. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry has withdrawn support and subsidy from the mission. I understand that the Birmingham chamber of commerce has also withdrawn its support.

Mr. David Howell (Guildford): Will my right hon. Friend accept that his measured response to this outrage and the actions of this monstrous regime is exactly right in the circumstances? Will he also accept that, while others may urge that sanctions through trade or a complete break of diplomatic relations might express their justifiable feelings of outrage, such measures would be less effective and might end up doing no harm to Iraq and damaging this country more? Will he work hard with our Community partners to ensure that the combined effort and power of the European community is directed to bringing to bear on the Baghdad regime the lesson that it has offended the civilised rules of humanity and international order?

Mr. Hurd: I am grateful to my right hon. Friend and to those Foreign Ministers and others, including the Secretary-General of the United Nations and many others, who have intervened to urge clemency in the past few days. I agree with my right hon. Friend's comments. I shall have an opportunity the day after tomorrow at the meeting of EC and Gulf Ministers in Muscat to drive home the point that he made.

Sir David Steel: (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale): We on this Bench fully endorse the Foreign Secretary's sentiments. Would not it be wise to remind ourselves that Mr. Bazoft was a journalist who was in the process of investigating the apparent deaths of hundreds of Iraqi people in an explosion? This secretive and revolting regime has an appalling human rights record towards its own people. In consultation with European partners, will the Foreign Secretary go beyond seeking their condemnation and ask them collectively to consider whether Iraq is suitable as a normal trading partner to which we give credit facilities?

Mr. Hurd: I will certainly discuss the matter with them. In honesty, I do not think that that line of thought is likely to make much progress. The right hon. Gentleman has made an important point. Mr. Bazoft was a journalist. He said in court that he was acting as a journalist and nothing more on the occasion when he was arrested. In the last hours of his life, he repeated that account to the consul-general.

Mr. Michael Marshall (Arundel): Will my right hon. Friend accept that it is a duty on each and every hon. Member of the House to express his revulsion at this atrocity? Will he further accept my confident assertion that those from this Parliament attending the Inter-Parliamentary Union conference in two weeks' time will wish to express their sentiments in that regard directly to Iraqi parliamentarians?

Mr. Hurd: I am grateful to my hon. Friend: I think that that would be an excellent contribution.

Mr. Jim Sillars (Glasgow, Govan): May I join in the expressions of revulsion? Having heard the Iraqi ambassador on the radio earlier today, may I ask the right hon. Gentleman to put it clearly on record that any confession extracted by Saddam Hussein's regime will carry no validity anywhere in the world?

Let me also take the right hon. Gentleman up on the question of continued extended credits. Are not they an expression of normal relations between states? Is not it the case that we cannot continue to have normal relations with Iraq under the present circumstances? Should not we withdraw the credits as an expression of this state's particular revulsion?

Mr. Hurd: I have expressed our revulsion, in which every hon. Member shares. But in going on to consider economic measures such as the hon. Gentleman proposes —it is perfectly natural that he should make such a proposal this afternoon—it is also right that the whole House should think through their consequences. Would such economic measures remove the regime? Obviously not. Would they in any way affect its policies? I have to tell the House that in my judgment they would not. Would they do more harm than good to Britain? I think it possible that they would. Those are the considerations that the House must carry in its mind before it judges these matters.

Sir Dennis Walters (Westbury): Does my right hon. Friend accept the widespread support for the statement that he has made? Will he note that some of us who spend a great deal of time trying to work for better relations between this country and Arab countries share his sense of shock and disappointment? I believe that it is right not to break diplomatic relations, because that would not help British interests or Mrs. Parish, who is in gaol in Iraq. At the same time, we should recognise that Arab countries such as Jordan and Egypt, and the PLO, did their best to prevent this horrid act from taking place.

Mr. Hurd: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. His comments coming from a long-standing and sincere friend of the Arab world, will carry particular weight. I am certainly grateful to the three Arab leaders whom he mentioned, who certainly did their best to avert this disaster.

Mr. Merlyn Rees (Morley and Leeds, South): The Foreign Secretary said, did he not, that soldiers from Iraq —members of the armed forces training here—would be sent home. I understand that it is also normal for policemen to be training at the various academies of the police forces in this country. Will the Foreign Secretary ask the Home Office to see whether policemen are here as well and ensure that they, too, are sent home, because it is their job to carry out the law that we in the House so strongly oppose?

Mr. Hurd: I shall look into the point that the right hon. Gentleman raises with my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett (Pembroke): Is my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary aware that six Conservative Members were in Iraq when Mr. Bazoft was arrested last September and we went to see the deputy Prime Minister of Iraq about the case of Mr. Ian Richter. When the deputy Prime Minister referred during those discussions to a political prisoner in our own gaols, we pointed out that the man in question was in prison for murder. Will my right hon. Friend confirm that there will be no deals with Iraq to exchange prisoners, and that this country does not interfere in our criminal justice system?

Mr. Hurd: My hon. Friend is quite right. I have unfortunately had occasion to explain this to Iraq off and on for about eight years of my ministerial career. It is certainly true that the Iraqis hope, from time to time, to make such deals. We have had to explain—in various personal cases of great difficulty, in which the Government and the whole House felt for the people in prison in Iraq —that we are not going to trade our justice in that way.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. We have a very heavy day ahead of us. I will call two more hon. Members from each side; then we must move on to business questions.

Dr. David Owen (Plymouth, Devonport): Does the Foreign Secretary agree that this callous and brutal act tramples on the values of a free and international press and reminds us that Iraq has used gas not only against its own citizens but against Iran and that it continues to manufacture gas? Should not it now be on the conscience of the world to take action on that country's dismal record on the whole question of poisonous gas?

Mr. Hurd: The right hon. Gentleman knows about poisonous gas and about human rights, and he will know that we have been among the foremost in urging precisely that.

Mr. Michael Latham (Rutland and Melton): Although the House will wish to accept the judgment of my right hon. Friend about the action he has taken, will he confirm that the return of our ambassador to this country could be prolonged? If we are not going to take action to remove any Iraqi staff from this country, no normal relations should take place with them until the people concerned are released from their country.

Mr. Hurd: We shall judge the length of time that it would be sensible to keep Her Majesty's ambassador here. I entirely agree with my hon. Friend's main point.

Mr. George Galloway (Glasgow, Hillhead): The Iraqi regime has besmirched the name of its people by the judicial murder this morning—as any state which commits judicial murder does. Will the Secretary of State accept that the House in general welcomes the cautious approach that he has taken in response——

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): No.

Mr. Galloway: My hon. Friend says no, but the truth is that caution has been absent from much of the rhetoric since last week, and in my view that has been extremely damaging. People who know that part of the world have listened with a sense of increasing gloom to the gunboats being started up and the sabres dusted down in certain quarters. That is entirely counter-productive, and a man has paid for it with his life.

Mr. Hurd: I hope that the hon. Member will agree that what has been said, not just by Ministers but by hon. Members on both sides of the House, on the subject on several occasions during the past week, has been measured. Anything less would have fallen well below what was required of the subject we were discussing.

Mr. Tony Banks: What about the morality?

Mr. Hurd: Neither the Government nor the Opposition are responsible for what appears in parts of the media, and I am not in a position to comment on that. I think that our stance, and what hon. Members have said, was the least that could have been expected upon such occasions, and I do not think that we have anything to regret. I have tried to use measured words, which I think express the deep disgust that we all feel.

Mr. Tim Smith (Beaconsfield): Is my right hon. Friend aware that his measured and balanced statement this afternoon will be widely welcomed? While it is obviously essential that that barbaric act should be condemned in the strongest possible terms, we also have to think of the interests of Ian Richter, Daphne Parish and the 2,000 Britons who work in Baghdad. Can my right hon. Friend deny the rumours that are apparently being put about that Mr. Bazoft was a member of special branch?

Mr. Hurd: I agree with my hon. Friend's first point. I welcome the opportunity to comment on the rumours that are circulating. I understand from my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary that Mr. Bazoft telephoned the Metropolitan police on four occasions—once in 1987, twice in 1988 and once last year—as a member of the public offering information on subjects that were unconnected with Iraq. He had no contact with special branch, and the police did not consider the information he gave was worth pursuing but his calls were logged in accordance with routine procedure. There were no further contacts, and there were no further meetings. None of that seems relevant to this morning's tragedy.

Business of the House

3.47 pm

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Tim Renton): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a statement about the business for next week.

MONDAY 19 MARCH—Second Reading of the War Crimes Bill.

Motion on the Rate Support Grant (Scotland) Order.

TUESDAY 20 MARCH—My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer will open his Budget statement. European Community documents relevant to the Budget debate will be shown in the *Official Report*.

The Chairman of Ways and Means has named opposed private business for consideration at seven o'clock.

WEDNESDAY 21 MARCH AND THURSDAY 22 MARCH—Continuation of the Budget debate.

FRIDAY 23 MARCH—Private Members' motions.

MONDAY 26 MARCH—Conclusion of the debate on the Budget statement.

Tuesday 20 March: Relevant European Community documents

(a) 9487/89	*Annual Economic Report 1989-90*
(b) Unnumbered	*Final version of Annual Economic Report as adopted by the Council*

Relevant Reports of the European Legislation Committee

(a)	*HC 15-xxxviii (1988-89), para 2*
(b)	*HC 11-ix (1989-90), para 2*

Dr. John Cunningham (Copeland): Has the right hon. Gentleman yet had time to reach a conclusion about the requests from all parties in the House for a debate on the Harrods-House of Fraser scandal? Is not it inadequate to leave the matter as it was left—dealt with in a brief statement by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, who seemed to dismiss this disgraceful episode in an offhand and inadequate manner?

• Is not it in the interests of everyone in Parliament, including the Government, and of the reputation of industry and our financial institutions, that the matter should be properly discussed and debated in Parliament? I emphasise that requests for a debate came from hon. Members in all parts of the House. The Government have had time to consider the matter. I hope that we can have an early and positive response so that the House can hold an essential debate.

Why are the Government delaying debates on important poll tax orders? Has the Patronage Secretary seen the petition on the Order Paper from the impeccably Conservative Berkshire county council drawing attention to the unfair treatment of Tory boroughs such as Wandsworth and Westminster by the Secretary of State for the Environment? Since even Tory Berkshire county council is now calling for the Government's revenue support grant decisions to be reconsidered, and since the Prime Minister remains—almost alone, but nevertheless remains—convinced that the poll tax is a good idea, why are the Government so reluctant to allow time to debate those matters?

Mr. Renton: There is no question of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry being, as the hon. Gentleman put it, offhand in his attitude towards the House of Fraser report. He made a statement and answered questions about it last week in the House.

Hon. Members will be aware that the Select Committee on Trade and Industry is looking into the Department's investigative powers under the Companies Act 1989 and the Financial Services Act 1986. My right hon. Friend will be submitting an additional memorandum to the Committee on the merger policy and company law issues arising from the House of Fraser report.

I cannot hold out the prospect of a debate in the immediate future, although there will be debates throughout next week on the Budget statement. However, as the hon. Gentleman knows, the matter is being discussed through the usual channels.

On the question of the community charge, it is correct that the House has had a number of opportunities in recent weeks to debate matters relating to it. I cannot promise a specific date, but I shall certainly pass on the views that the shadow Leader of the House has expressed to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment. To add a rider, I hope that, during that debate, we shall have an opportunity to debate the position of the 31 Labour Members who have made plain their opposition to paying the community charge and who are thus clearly committing themselves to illegality.

I see that one of those Members, the hon. Member for Dunfermline, West (Mr. Douglas), has now resigned the Labour Whip. I wonder when the other 30 will do so, and whether, if they do not, the shadow Leader of the Opposition will put his foot where his mouth is and withdraw the Whip from those 30 Labour Members of Parliament.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I draw the attention of the House to the fact that the business immediately after this is guillotined and that it is to be followed by opposed private business, with further business after that. I ask hon. Members please to ask one question. If they could hold their questions until next week, that would be even better.

Mr Graham Riddick (Colne Valley): When are we likely to have a statement from the Secretary of State for the Environment on which local authorities will be community charge-capped? Can my right hon. Friend confirm that local council budgets will, on average, increase this year by well over 30 per cent? Is it not clear that some local councils, particularly Labour councils, are taking the opportunity of the changeover to the new system of local government finance to set unnecessarily high community charge levels? Does my right hon. Friend agree that we must cap those authorities?

Mr. Renton: I agree with my hon. Friend. It is becoming increasingly clear that it costs a lot more to live in a Labour-controlled local authority than in a Conservative-controlled local authority. Labour counties are setting an average precept that is £82 above the standard spending assessment, as compared with £26 in Conservative counties. However, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment has made it clear that we shall not hesitate to cap authorities that insist on budgeting excessively, and that we shall force them to cut their spending plans.

Mr. Donald Anderson (Swansea, East): Next week?

Mr. Renton: No, it will not be next week. I cannot speculate on the operation or timetable of any capping scheme, but it is being considered carefully by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment.

Mr. James Wallace (Orkney and Shetland): The Patronage Secretary is no doubt aware of the concern in the highlands and islands of Scotland about the apparent withdrawal of European regional development fund funding, following the announcement this week. Does he agree that the claim and counter-claim between the Secretary of State for Scotland and Commissioner Millan is doing nothing to resolve that confusion or to dispel the concern? Will the Secretary of State for Scotland come to the House next week and make a statement to clarify the situation and to say what the Government are doing to ensure that important regional development funding comes to the highlands and islands after 1992?

Mr. Renton: I have listened carefully to the hon. Gentleman. Because of the pressure of business next week, I cannot promise that my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland will be in the House to make the statement next week, but I shall pass on the hon. Gentleman's views to him.

Mr. Richard Tracey (Surbiton): Will my right hon. Friend initiate an investigation so that some explanation can be given of how an hon. Member of this House, together with others, can hold a press conference in this House urging a breach of a law that was passed by this House? The public might think that this is a madhouse, with respect.

Mr. Renton: And indeed, as my hon. Friend might have said, the hon. Member in question, who is unfortunately no longer in the Chamber, was photographed with members of the Militant anti-community charge protesters. That was disgraceful—[HON. MEMBERS: "Poll tax."] The anti-community charge protesters. That was a disgraceful abuse of the premises of this House. I hope that the hon. Member in question will speak for himself in any forthcoming debate.

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): Has the Patronage Secretary had a chance to read Professor Grieve's report on homelessness? Is he aware that its indentification of the cause of homelessness is the Government's withdrawal of massive funds from local authorities, thus preventing them from building any homes? Is he aware that it is a scandal that in London——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The right hon. Gentleman may be aware of it, but is the question about business next week?

Mr. Banks: Precisely. I want to know whether the Patronage Secretary is aware of the crisis of homelessness in London and elsewhere and whether we shall have an urgent debate on homelessness, because the country demands to know what the Government are going to do about this obscenity.

Mr. Renton: The hon. Gentleman has a great capacity for getting very excited. He will know very well that we have recently made a grant of £1 million to the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux specifically to look into the growth of homelessness. The hon. Gentleman and I might find common cause in believing

[Mr. Renton]

that it is the break-up of families that leads most of all to the increase in homelessness. That is a worrying matter in today's society.

Sir John Stanley (Tonbridge and Malling): Is my right hon. Friend aware that, in the debate on 18 January on the previous community charge report, at column 427, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment said specifically that there would be a debate on the transitional relief scheme in January? Will my right hon. Friend tell the House why there was no debate in January or in February? Will he give a clear undertaking that this extremely important report, in which the assumptions for the community charge are grossly underestimated, at the expense of our constituents, will be debated?

Mr. Renton: I think that my right hon. Friend may be incorrect in saying that the specific commitment was to a debate in January. However, I am aware of the question of a debate on transitional relief. I cannot promise a specific date, but I shall pass on my right hon. Friend's concerns to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment, who will bear them very much in mind.

Mr. William Ross (Londonderry, East): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware of the decision in the Dublin Supreme Court on 1 March, which demanded that there was a "legal imperative" on the Dublin Government always to seek a united Ireland? In the light of that, can we have an early debate, as the consequences of that judgment showed through in the judgment on extradition this week?

If we had that early debate, Unionist Members could explain to the House and to the Government exactly what the consequences of those judgments are, especially since last night, the Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the hon. Member for Peterborough (Dr. Mawhinney) made it very clear that he did not have the slightest idea what the consequences were.

Mr. Renton: I have listened carefully to the hon. Gentleman, but he is being somewhat unjust to my hon. Friend and a little precipitate, since last night's Adjournment debate dealt specifically with that important constitutional case.

Mr. Harry Greenway (Ealing, North): Will my right hon. Friend arrange an early debate on local government planning procedures, so that I can bring before the House the new practice of Labour-controlled Ealing council of charging people £10 a sheet for information relating to planning applications, and the fact that a constituent of mine had to pay £142·50 for copies of planning applications relating to the conversion of one small house in Northolt? That should be brought before the House, since corruption appears to be involved.

Mr. Renton: My hon. Friend is always extremely assiduous in bringing to the House his concerns about his constituency and, most particularly, about the extravagances of Ealing council. I hope that his council will take careful note of the remarks that he has just made.

Mr. Andrew Faulds (Warley, East): As the appalling and murderous activities of the Isreaeli forces continue in the occupied Arab territories, when will the House be able to debate that specific issue without having to try to pursue it, submerged as it usually is, in the broader range of a general foreign affairs debate?

Mr. Renton: I know well, from the days when I was a Minister at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the hon. Gentleman's concern about all middle eastern issues, particularly the Palestinian-Israeli issue. There have been a number of foreign affairs debates in the House recently, and I am sure that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs will take careful note of the hon. Gentleman's points, particularly on the Palestinian issue.

Sir Dudley Smith (Warwick and Leamington): Is my right hon. Friend aware that the difficulties that we faced on Tuesday night about residential homes for elderly people underline the great problem that Britain faces of an aging population—problems which will extend to the end of the century and into the next one? As many difficult points need to be addressed, would not it be to the great advantage of the House to have a debate in the not-too-far distant future on how Britain will cope with a developing aging population?

Mr. Renton: My hon. Friend is right. That is a matter of great concern and the problem will get worse in the decade ahead. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Security made it clear during the debate on Tuesday night that he recognised the concerns that had been expressed, for example, on income support for those in residential homes, and said that he would make a thorough assessment of the position and look carefully at the levels and structure of income support limits for future upratings. My hon. Friend will have an opportunity to raise such matters in the forthcoming debates on Report and Third Reading of the Social Security Bill.

Mr. Harry Ewing (Falkirk, East): Is the Patronage Secretary aware that I admire his and the Prime Minister's enthusiasm for insisting that my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition and Opposition Members take action against those of our colleagues who intend to break the law? In view of that enthusiasm, will the right hon. Gentleman arrange for the Prime Minister to make a statement next week explaining to the House what action she intends to take against those of her hon. Friends who are reported to have broken the law—or does that principle apply only to Opposition Members?

Mr. Renton: The hon. Gentleman's question is not clear. We have recently had a debate about the position of hon. Members in relation to the Register of Members' Interests. I am not otherwise aware of any hon Members to whom the hon. Gentleman might be referring.

Mr. Paul Marland (Gloucestershire, West): Is my right hon. Friend aware that a prayer has been tabled by myself and others against the substantial increase in the cost of firearms licences? Will my right hon. Friend find time in the not-too-distant future to debate that matter?

Mr. Renton: I note my hon. Friend's remarks, and I know of his interest in the subject. There was new legislation on firearms last year. The question whether there should be a debate on these matters is perhaps best left to a discussion through the usual channels, but I shall bear my hon. Friend's remarks in mind.

Mr. Ron Brown (Edinburgh, Leith): Since a constituent of mine, Mr. Roger Randall, is having grave difficulty in bringing in his wife from Manila, will the right hon. Gentleman have this matter investigated, or can we have an early debate about his circumstances and those of many people who suffer from the racist attitude that is prevalent in the Government and many embassies?

Mr. Renton: I wholly disagree with the hon. Gentleman's remarks, which I find insulting. Having been a Minister with responsibility for immigration at the Home Office for two and a half years, I know full well how careful are the Home Office and the immigration department, which will also resent the hon. Gentleman's remarks, to see that the immigration controls that they operate are free and fair and not racist.

The hon. Gentleman knows perfectly well that he should discuss the case of his constituent who wishes to bring in his wife from Manila with my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department, or with the immigration and nationality department at Croydon. I hope that he will, on second thoughts, withdraw his divisive remarks.

Mrs. Ann Winterton (Congleton): The introduction of the community charge has thrown up one anomaly for married couples. Will my right hon. Friend give time as soon as possible to a debate on the fact that, in the year in which independent taxation for married women is introduced, married women upon whom the community charge is levied as individuals do not qualify for capital disregard for rebate purposes? It is logical, fair and just that they should so qualify. Could we have a debate as soon as possible, especially as this would be of interest to so many pensioner couples who save for their retirement?

Mr. Renton: I note the important point raised by my hon. Friend. Even if there is not soon time for a specific debate on that subject, she could find an opportunity to raise it when the House debates the Budget statement next week.

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): Could we have a statement next week on progress in the sale of the skill centres? No doubt the Chief Whip will recall that, when a statement was made, the House was told that the valuable land on which many of the skill centres stand would be subject to leasing arrangements. Is the Chief Whip aware that these will now be given to Astra Training Services Ltd. a curious company which seems to be run by civil servants. Is it not time that the Government came clean to the House and exposed the nefarious arrangement by which valuable assets are being given away to the private sector?

Mr. Renton: The hon. Gentleman often sees nefarious arrangements where other people see perfectly ordinary and straightforward arrangements. I shall pass on his comments to my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Employment and the hon. Gentleman might find an opportunity to raise this matter in an Adjournment debate.

Mr. Andrew Bowden (Brighton, Kemptown): Millions of people are concerned about animal welfare. Because of the recent, almost weekly, reports about the despicable treatment of captive wild animals by money-grubbing organisations such as Chipperfield, will my right hon. Friend arrange for a debate on animal welfare?

Mr. Renton: I have great sympathy with my hon. Friend. Animal welfare rightly touches the hearts of all of us. I cannot promise a debate next week, but I shall see that my hon. Friend's remarks are passed on to my right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

Mr. Gerald Bermingham (St. Helens, South): The Patronage Secretary will have heard the question asked earlier this afternoon about early retirement. He may recognise that there is a growing volume of evidence in favour of early retirement. Can we have a debate on that subject soon, and will the right hon. Gentleman invite the Prime Minister to attend, so that she might take the advice that she might be given on that occasion?

Mr. Renton: I had the feeling that the hon. Gentleman was planning to take early retirement, either enforced or otherwise, at the next general election. We shall see whether there are any opportunities. If he wishes to discuss his case, perhaps he should raise the matter in an Adjournment debate.

Mr. Toby Jessel (Twickenham): On the Budget statement, is it within our terms of reference to discuss the effect on the economy of the excellent weather this year, which has enabled people to turn down their heating and save on their heating costs, thereby reducing their cost of living, but which cannot be measured within the cost of living index, thereby exalting the real cost of living?

Mr. Renton: Much as I should like to claim credit for warm weather as part of Conservative policy, I am not wholly certain that Opposition Members would allow me to do so. I am sure that my hon. Friend, with his inventive and ingenious mind, will find a suitable opportunity to raise the matter, perhaps on the day devoted to the economy during the Budget debate.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): In view of the revulsion felt in the United Kingdom, which was expressed on both sides of the House during the exchanges over the killing in Iraq, would the Patronage Secretary arrange as soon as possible another statement to update us next week on what action will be taken by Britain? Is he aware that, in questioning on any such statement, many of us would wish to dispute the misguided view that has been advanced by one or two hon. Members, again on both sides of the House, that there was misrepresentation? We believe that the spotlight that the British media turned on the repression and denial of human rights in Iraq was fully justified. The full responsibility for the murder which has taken place is with the hangman in Baghdad.

Mr. Renton: Of course I share—every Member of the House will share—the hon. Gentleman's feeling of revulsion at the execution. I point out to him that my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has just made a statement on the matter. I think that the hon. Gentleman should bear in mind that one of our prime concerns now must be the welfare, and, one hopes, the eventual release, of the British people who are still in captivity in Iraq, particularly Ian Richter and Mrs. Parish. That is an aspect which my right hon. Friend must keep in mind before he comes to the House again to make a statement.

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North): Has my right hon. Friend seen early-day motions 696 and 715? Can we have an early opportunity to debate these motions?

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman should know that only one of those motions may be printed in *Hansard.*

Mr. Walker: May we have an opportunity to debate early-day motion 696 at an early date?

That this House notes that the Right honourable Member for Islwyn may have missed more than one boat on Friday 9th March, when his party in Scotland at their conference in Dunoon failed to accept his leadership and voted to support motions on proportional representation and on unilateral disarmament; and further notes this North-South divide is made worse by the Scottish Labour Party proposals for the roof tax and the rating of farm buildings, farmland and woodland, and the compulsory purchase of estates and holiday homes, all of which have not as yet been embraced by the Labour Party in England.

The motion concerns

"roof tax and the rating of farm buildings, farmland and woodland, and the compulsory purchase of estates and holiday homes"

in Scotland. These are measures which apply to Scotland only, thus creating a north-south divide. The proposals have not yet been embraced by the Labour party in England. It is important that we Scots have an early opportunity to debate measures that are designed to affect only Scotland.

Mr. Renton: I very much agree with my hon. Friend. It would be useful if my right hon. and learned Friend the Leader of the House, when he is back from his important visit abroad, could find time for such a debate. It would be useful if the debate embraced roof tax in Scotland and the Scottish Labour party's attitude to defence, given that it has voted to continue unilateral disarmament, which is clearly an embarrassment to the Labour leadership. It shows that its new multilateral policy, especially in Scotland, is only, dare one say, sporran deep.

Mr. Harry Cohen (Leyton): As the Government fiddled the poll tax grant in favour of Westminster and Wandsworth for crude party-political purposes and forced residents in boroughs such as the one in my constituency, Waltham Forest, to subsidise Tory Wandsworth, can we have an early debate on the matter so that I can ask for our money back?

Mr. Renton: I notice that the hon. Gentleman's charge in Leyton has been fixed at £438, which seems to be very high. That is doubtless due to Labour extravagance. I hope that the hon. Gentleman, as an active representative of his constituents, will do all that he can to persuade the Labour council to reduce the charge in future years by implementing more prudent spending policies.

Mr. James Cran (Beverley): Could my right hon. Friend find some time to discuss the Baxter report, dealing with the levels of radiation to which the work force is exposed in non-nuclear industries, which is the important feature? The report suggests that the present permitted levels are far too high. The House has a long and honourable record of considering health and safety matters that apply to the work force. A debate on the report would be yet another opportunity to demonstrate exactly that.

Mr. Renton: My hon. Friend makes an important point, but I must say to him also, not next week. However, I shall do my best to ensure that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment is well aware of his remarks.

Mr. Alex Salmond (Banff and Buchan): Will the Patronage Secretary consider the case for an early debate on the crisis in the Scottish fishing industry? When I tackled the Leader of the House on this subject two weeks ago, he seemed to hold out the prospect of such a debate. However, since then, via the vehicle of a written answer, the Government have announced measures that intensify the crisis facing Scottish fishermen and fish processors. Those processing workers are among the lowest paid industrial workers in the country. When will we have a debate to discuss the measures that are needed to stabilise that vital industry in its hour of need?

Mr. Renton: I have listened carefully to what the hon. Gentleman has said. I remember that he did indeed raise this matter at business questions two weeks ago. I understand that fishermen are facing a difficult year, but claims of a crisis in the fishing industry are not supported by the facts. Fishermen are benefiting from rising prices, which have helped to offset reduced catches. However, I shall, of course bring the hon. Gentleman's remarks to the attention of my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton (Macclesfield): Will my right hon. Friend give a more positive and serious response to the question asked earlier by my right hon. Friend the Member for Tonbridge and Malling (Sir J. Stanley), relating to the almost fraudulent inadequacy of the transitional relief scheme for the community charge? It really is inadequate. A debate should be held in the House before the community charge is implemented.

I refer especially to my constituency of Macclesfield, which is a well-run Conservative authority, but which is having to return a community charge of £428, as against Wandsworth's charge of just £148. That is dishonest and wrong to my constituents.

Mr. Renton: I am sure that my hon. Friend is using his best endeavours to ensure that the local authority in his constituency is doing its utmost to bring down the level of its expenditure——

Mr. Winterton: It has done.

Mr. Renton: —and the level of revenue raising that it is planning. The question asked by my right hon. Friend the Member for Tonbridge and Malling (Sir J. Stanley) related specifically to the timing of a debate on transitional relief. As I said to him, and I repeat to my hon. Friend, I cannot promise a specific debate, but I shall certainly pass on his comments to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment, who I am sure will try to accommodate my right hon. and hon. Friends at an early opportunity.

Mr. Max Madden (Bradford, West): Will the Patronage Secretary make urgent arrangements for a debate on Members' Interests, relating especially to members of Select Committees? I make that request following yesterday's request from the Select Committee on Defence to the Select Committee on Members' interests, asking for that Committee to consider the rules, practices and

conventions relating to members of Select Committees, including the Chairs of Select Committees, who hold interests that are relevant to the terms of reference of those Committees. Such a debate would be extremely helpful and would—I hope—dispel the rumours that are circulating in the House, that at least three Chairs of Select Committees hold such interests.

Mr. Renton: The hon. Gentleman is an experienced Member of the House and knows the procedures to be followed on these matters. If he has points to make or thoughts to be followed, he should direct them to the Select Committee on Members' Interests, where I am sure they will be carefully looked at in accordance with the proper procedure.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): Is the Patronage Secretary aware that, when we have a debate on the poll tax and the transitional provisions, as requested by his right hon. and hon. Friends, it will become increasingly apparent that, if all the local authorities in Britain, including Derbyshire, Cheshire and all the rest, received the same kind of relief—82p in the pound—that Wandsworth has received, every single local authority in Britain would have a poll tax of less than £200 per head? [HON. MEMBERS: "Name them."]—If we got 82p in the pound in Derbyshire, as opposed to the 38p——

Mr. Speaker: Order. Those are arguments that might be made if we had such a debate.

Mr. Skinner: Yes. It is a very important argument——

Mr. Speaker: Order. Did the hon. Gentleman hear what I said about the pressure on time today?

Mr. Skinner: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: Will he please ask a question about the business for next week?

Mr. Skinner: So will the Patronage Secretary bear in mind that those figures would show that every local authority in Britain would have a poll tax of less than £200? If it is right for Wandsworth and for Lady Porter's Westminster, it should be right for the rest of the local authorities.

Mr. Renton: The community charge in the area that the hon. Gentleman represents shows once again the extravagance of Labour councils. Bolsover, I see, has a community charge of £353; North-East Derbyshire has one of £420. This proves once again that those who live in Labour authorities will find themselves paying a lot more than those who live in Conservative authorities.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): Has the Patronage Secretary noted the repeated requests that I have made for a debate on wages in the Refreshment Department in the House of Commons? Is he aware that, because of the low wages being paid by Parliament to its own employees in that Department, there are now a large number of vacancies? Many people will not work here because they can earn far more working in other establishments in London. What does the Patronage Secretary think about these matters? Does he show the same indifference as the Leader of the House?

Mr. Speaker: Order. That has little to do with business questions; the hon. Gentleman must ask for a debate next week.

Mr. Renton: I did indeed listen to the hon. Gentleman raise this matter with my right hon. and learned Friend the Leader of the House last week. He then received a very full answer from my right hon. and learned Friend, and I do not think that there is anything that I can add to what the hon. Member has already been told.

Mr. Harry Barnes (Derbyshire, North-East): The standard spending assessment for North-East Derbyshire, for the district alone, is 17p in the pound. That is why the figure is so high, as mentioned by the Patronage Secretary. Can we have a debate on the poll tax's wider implications, the democratic and constitutional implications of the operation of the poll tax, when, for instance, masses of people are missing from electoral registers—in England, 90,000 or so since the last register, and masses of people in the major cities in Scotland?

The biggest constitutional scandal that we face in this country concerns what is happening to the electoral register and the manipulations taking place in the country. In Finchley, the franchise is being fiddled by 5 per cent. of the people being missing from the electoral register.

Mr. Renton: I must point out to the hon. Member that I do not think that the words "democratic and constitutional" should play any part in his remarks to the House. He is a member of the non-payment compaign against the community charge; therefore, he is encouraging people to take both non-democratic and non-constitutional action. I think that he should reverse that stance before he addresses such remarks to the House.

Mr. Barnes: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Member may not like what was said, but I will take points of order in a minute.

Mr. Julian Brazier (Canterbury): Will my right hon. Friend consider giving early time for a debate on a vicious attack on my agent, Joanna Trapman, who is recovering from a major operation? She was assualted in our constituency offices by 60 left-wing activists. Could we also consider, in the course of a debate, the encouragement that those activists are getting from 30 Opposition Members?

Mr. Renton: The whole House will sympathise, and I am very sorry to hear what my hon. Friend says. I hope that he will carry the best wishes of the House to his agent and that she will recover very quickly from the attack.

Sir Peter Emery (Honiton): May I ask my right hon. Friend to nudge the memory of the Leader of the House next week on the assurance that he has given about a debate on European legislation and the Select Committee on Procedure's report on dealing with legislation? This is a matter of considerable importance to the House. I believe that hon. Members on both sides of wish to have a debate and I urge that, if it is not to be next week, we may have assurances next week that it will be soon after Easter.

Mr. Renton: My right hon. and learned Friend, who is very assiduous in these matters, will no doubt read *Hansard* very soon after returning from representing Her Majesty the Queen at presidential inaugurations in both Brazil and Chile. He is very concerned to improve procedures in the House for the scrutiny of European legislation, as my hon. Friend knows, and he will read my hon. Friend's comments with great care.

Points of Order

4.24 pm

Mr. Harry Barnes (Derbyshire, North-East): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The Patronage Secretary deliberately attacked me in response to the question that I asked, claiming that I was part of some mass non-payment campaign advocating that people should not pay. That is not my position. I believe that the measures within the legislation are draconian and would present great problems to people who did not pay. I will not pay, on exactly the grounds presented about the democratic and constitutional nature of the measure. As an elected representative of the people, I believe that I have a moral duty to oppose it.

Mr. Speaker: That is certainly not a point of order.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: This is exactly what happens when we get non-points of order of that kind.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett (Pembroke): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. Would the hon. Gentleman like to advise Government Members which labour laws we should ignore?

Sir John Stanley (Tonbridge and Malling): In response to my business question to the Patronage Secretary, in which I stated that *Hansard* contained a clear commitment by the Secretary of State for the Environment that there would be an early debate on the transitional relief scheme audit, the Patronage Secretary said that I might have misunderstood my right hon. Friend. On 18 January, my right hon. Friend said:

"It will not be debated until we consider the transitional relief scheme orders later this month."—[*Official Report*, 18 January 1990; Vol. 165, c. 427.]

If my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State wishes to change his position on that undertaking about a debate, is it not the well-established practice that he should forthwith come to the House and make a statement clarifying his position?

Mr. Speaker: I think that is a matter for the Patronage Secretary to report to the Leader of the House.

BILL PRESENTED

Term and Quarter Days (Scotland)

Mr. Bill Walker presented a Bill to regulate, in relation to Scotland, the dates of Whitsunday, Martinmas, Candlemas and Lammas; and for connected purposes: And the same was read a First time and ordered to be read a Second time tomorrow and to be printed. [Bill 101.]

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS, &c.

Ordered,

That the draft Transport (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 1990 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.—*[Mr. Chapman.]*

Orders of the Day

National Health Service and Community Care Bill

Order for Third Reading read.

Mr. Speaker: Before calling the Minister, I remind the House that this is a three-hour debate.

4.26 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Michael Forsyth): I beg to move, That the Bill be now read the Third time.

This Bill stands for everything that the Labour party cannot stand. It stands for choice for patients. I am delighted to see that the hon. Member for Glasgow, Cathcart (Mr. Maxton) agrees with me on both points.

Mr. John Maxton (Glasgow, Cathcart): No.

Mr. Forsyth: It stands for greater freedom, flexibility and responsibility for general practitioners and for individual hospitals. It stands for a shift away from centralisation and bureaucracy in the NHS—the centralisation and bureaucracy with which the Labour party is so closely identified when in government and in opposition. It stands, too, for a partnership between the public sector, the private sector and the voluntary organisations for strengthened management and accountability and for standards and quality of care. The Government have set out to build a patients' charter, and this Bill sees us well on the way to achieving that.

Throughout the passage of the Bill, the hon. Members for Peckham (Ms. Harman) and for Livingston (Mr. Cook) had nothing constructive to say on the future direction and organisation of the Health Service. They relied on a campaign fostering misinformation, suspicion and anxiety among patients, instead of putting forward constructive arguments and an alternative proposal. Their entire campaign was based on myths. The first of these myths was that indicative budgets would mean that the patients would not get the drugs that they needed. I see that at least one hon. Gentleman still subscribes to that ridiculous view.

Last year, in the nine months between the publication of the White Paper in January and the meeting of my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State with the BMA, we saw in general practitioners' surgeries up and down the country irresponsible leaflets from the BMA and others, and we heard speeches from Labour Members arguing that patients would not be able to get the drugs that they needed. To the credit of the BMA, at a meeting with my right hon. Friend on 27 September it said that it now accepted that, in fact, patients would be able to get the medicines that they required. So far as I am aware, that is not the view of the Opposition. I hope that they will make it clear today that the Labour party now accepts that patients will be able to get the drugs they desire as a result of indicative budgets being introduced.

Mr. James Couchman (Gillingham): A fair amount of misconception arose because of the reference in the White Paper to

"placing downward pressure on expenditure on drugs".

Might it not have been better to have said, "downward pressure on the growth of expenditure on drugs"?

Mr. Forsyth: My hon. Friend makes his own point. He must be aware that, for example, through prescribing generic equivalents it is possible to bring downward pressure on expenditure without affecting the quality of patient care.

Ms. Harriet Harman (Peckham): We would accept the Minister's assurance that patients will not lose because of cash-limited drug budgets if he had accepted our new clause, which merely sought to write into the Bill the guarantee that he is trying to give us. Guarantees given in the House are worth nothing; they need to be written into legislation. If the Minister means what he says, why did he call on his hon. Friends to vote down our amendment?

Mr. Forsyth: In Committee I pressed the hon. Lady to say whether she supported the existing system for controlling GP prescribing. She did not seem to recognise that there is in place a system based on peer review and that there are appropriate penalties for doctors who overprescribe. She should recognise that there is nothing different about indicative budgets. If the hon. Lady is still arguing that there is a risk to patients, she is out of line not only with this side of the House but with the BMA and with doctors themselves, and is becoming increasingly isolated as she peddles these myths.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett (Pembroke): My hon. Friend is absolutely right. I have here a copy of a letter, dated 27 February, which the hon. Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman) sent to all local medical committees. First, I question whether it was in order because it was a circulated letter and I do not think that the rules of the House allow circulated letters to be printed on House of Commons notepaper—*[Interruption.]* Opposition Members are always keen to be in order, yet we know how often they misuse the facilities of the House. The first thing the hon. Lady said in her letter to medical committees was:

"GPs' drug budgets will be cash limited."

Mr. John Battle (Leeds, West): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. If a hon. Member feels that another hon. Member has infringed the rules of the House in the way that he has used the stationery, there is a proper procedure for that to be reported. That has not been undertaken. Therefore, is it in order for the hon. Member for Pembroke (Mr. Bennett) to castigate my hon. Friend?

Mr. Speaker: I do not know whether it is alleged that this was an individual letter or a circular. If there has been an infringement of the rules, it is a matter for the Services Committee.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. You will recall that I referred the matter to you on a previous occasion, when the hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) did precisely that. It is a circular letter and I shall be happy to refer the matter to the Select Committee on Privileges.

Mr. Forsyth: My hon. Friend the Member for Pembroke (Mr. Bennett) is right to focus attention on the arguments of the Opposition. Everyone, including the BMA, accepts that indicative budgets will not result in patients not being able to get the drugs which they require.

Mr. Allen McKay (Barnsley, West and Penistone) *rose*——

Mr. Forsyth: I am not giving way. I have already given way generously on that point.

The next myth that has been peddled by Opposition Members is that GPs who become fund holders will run out of money and will turn away expensive patients. *[Interruption.]* The hon. Member for Peckham smiles and takes pleasure repeating it. That myth has caused needless anxiety to thousands of patients and elderly people who are in great distress. It is totally without foundation. It was made clear in Committee that GPs who become fund holders will have made available to them funds to take account of the nature of their patients and of their past expenditure.

If GPs exceed their budgets, patient care will not be threatened or diminished. I hope that the hon. Member for Peckham will now acknowledge that. As became clear in Committee, the worst that could happen to a fund holder who had exceeded his budget would be that he could no longer be a fund holder. He would then revert to the status quo.

Ms. Harman: The Minister knows that Opposition Members are worried about cash limits on GP budget holding because they fear that patients will not necessarily get the treatment, drugs and the tests that they need. The doctor will not just be thinking about patients and their clinical needs; he will be looking over his shoulder at his budget. If the Minister wants us to accept the guarantee that he has given in the House, why did Conservative Members speak and vote against our new clause, which would have added that guarantee to the Bill?

Mr. Forsyth: The hon. Lady continues to repeat her accusation, despite the clear evidence of the facts. The facts are that a GP's budget will be determined by his past expenditure and the profile of his patients. If a GP exceeds his budget, patient care will not in any way be threatened or diminished. The hon. Lady also argued that no GP was interested in the scheme, and that it was a crackpot scheme that had been invented by people who were out of touch—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Robin Cook (Livingston) *rose*——

Mr. Forsyth: I will not give way to the hon. Gentleman. I will happily give way to the hon. Lady. who can reject—*[Interruption.]*

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): Order. For the moment the Minister has the floor.

Mr. Forsyth: I am not giving way to the hon. Gentleman. I will give way to the hon. Lady when I have made my point, and she can reject the point when she knows what it is. I can tell by the way that the hon. Member for Livingston is jumping up and down that we are beginning to draw blood.

The hon. Gentleman is just as guilty. He has associated himself with the view that the proposals in the White Paper are not supported by the medical profession, and both he and the hon. Lady have made speech after speech saying that the Government are out of touch with the profession. My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State answered a parliamentary question on the subject yesterday. His answer showed that almost 900 GP

[Mr. Forsyth]

practices are impressed enough with the scheme to want to take matters further and to ensure that their patients have the possible benefits from the scheme.

Ms. Harman: The position remains that there is no support among GPs for the concept of fund-holding practices. I accept the Secretary of State's assertion that many GPs have put their names forward to become fund holders. However, that is because they are choosing between the lesser of two evils. They regard fund holding as the only way to escape from the restrictions on their right to referral, which will clamp down on them if they do not become fund holders.

Mr. Forsyth: The hon. Lady refutes one myth by embarking on the next. She accepts that nearly 900 GPs are queueing up—even before the Bill has been enacted—to become fund holders or budget holders. They are doing so because they recognise the benefits for their patients and the opportunities for their practices. The hon. Member for Livingston completely misread the demand for the proposals, and also for self-governing hospitals.

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North): Does my hon. Friend agree that GPs who have shown an interest have come forward voluntarily—that is certainly the case in my constituency—because they believe that what is proposed is in the best interests of their patients and their practices?

Mr. Forsyth: That is right, and in my hon. Friend's constituency there is a proposal from a hospital to become an NHS trust. We now have twice as many proposals in Scotland as the target we set when the White Paper was published.

Mr. Allen McKay: Although the Minister talks about the number of GPs who are in favour of the scheme, is he aware that GPs are queueing up in my area to throw money in the till to take the Secretary of State to court to prevent him from implementing these proposals?

Mr. Forsyth: GPs who put their money in that direction, because they believed that my right hon. and learned Friend was acting improperly, were not only proved wrong in that respect, because they lost their action, but have throughout been proved wrong in their opposition to our proposals.

The third myth that we had in Committee from the hon. Member for Peckham and her hon. Friends was that GPs would no longer be able to send patients to hospitals which were, in their judgment, required to meet those patients' clinical needs. In trying to rescue her position on the previous myth, the hon. Member for Peckham repeated the third myth about GPs not being able to send patients where they thought they should be treated.

That assertion is completely and utterly untrue. We made the position clear in Committee on many occasions, as we have throughout the period since the White Paper was published. In view of those assurances, I hope that the hon. Lady will now withdraw from the position that she has taken all along. General practitioners will be able to send their patients to the hospitals where they believe that their clinical requirements require them to be sent. I say that without qualification. That has been made clear throughout our debates on the Bill and it is wholly irresponsible of the hon. Member for Peckham to continue to go about the country repeating statements that are, frankly, not true.

Ms. Harman: If the Minister would have us accept that patients and their GPs will retain the choice that they now have—to decide where patients should be referred in the patients' best clinical interests—why did the Government refuse to accept our amendment which would have written into the Bill a provision saying that, irrespective of the NHS contract system, patients may go where they and their GPs choose, rather than on the basis of some contract based on some previous pattern of referral?

Mr. Forsyth: I hope that people throughout the country are listening to what the hon. Lady is saying because on three major issues—[HON. MEMBERS: "Answer."]—about which she and her party have caused anxiety throughout the country, the only justification that she offers for her position, in the face of the assurances that she has been given, is to say, in effect, "If that is the case, why did you not accept our new clause?" That new clause was not needed as part of the Bill and it was no excuse for the campaign that the hon. Lady has waged throughout the country.

Ms. Harman: Now answer my question.

Mr. Forsyth: My answer is that the Opposition new clause was not necessary. It would not have been desirable to write on the face of the Bill the rules for referral when those rules should clearly be left to the judgment of medical practitioners according to their individual patients' needs.

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones (Ynys Môn): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Forsyth: No, I will not give way to the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Robin Cook: The Minister says that there is no need to write the assurance that he is giving into the Bill because referrals will be decided locally in the process of negotiation. How on earth can the Minister expect the House to accept his assurance that any GP will be allowed to refer any patient to any hospital of his choice when he just said that that can be done only subject to local negotiation in relation to local rules?

Mr. Forsyth: I credit the hon. Gentleman with some understanding of the Government's proposals. He knows well that a GP's referrals will be based on a contract which will be negotiated either by the GP himself, where he is a budget holder, or by the health board. He also knows that if a GP wished to send a patient to a hospital where there was no contract, he would be able to do so if it was an emergency case—[HON. MEMBERS: "Ah!"]—in the absence of a contract. If it was not an emergency case, there would be time to negotiate a contract.

The key issue is whether the GP would be able to send the patient to the hospital of his choice, and the answer is yes. It is totally irresponsible of the hon. Member for Livingston to go round the country telling people that that is not the case when it is.

Mr. Cook: The Minister did not answer my question simply by saying that the answer was no. Consider two cases, first that of a patient who wishes to go to a particular hospital where his fund-holding GP has not placed a

contract and where that GP is not prepared, and does not have the money in his budget, to place a contract. How does that patient get into that hospital?

Consider, secondly, the many GPs—still a wide majority who have not applied for fund-holding practice budgets—whose district health authorities have not negotiated contracts for the hospitals to which they wish to refer their patients. There may be time, with a non-emergency cases, to take that step. But what do they do if the district health authority says, "No, thank you very much, but we have spent our allocation for the year and we do not propose to negotiate a fresh contract. You will have to send your patient to a hospital where we have placed a contract"? What happens to freedom of choice then?

Mr. Forsyth: Freedom of choice continues to be exercised by the GP. The hon. Gentleman knows well that a contingency fund is made available to meet exactly the example of his second case. In his first example, he was asking not about doctor choice but about patient choice. The key point is that where a doctor believes that a patient should be referred to a hospital, wherever it is in the United Kingdom, whether or not a contract exists, arrangements can be made for that choice to be exercised and for the patient's needs to be met.

Ms. Harman: The Minister will live to regret saying that.

Mr. Forsyth: The hon. Lady says that I shall live to regret that, as though I had just annunciated some new doctrine. My right hon. and learned Friend has been saying it all over the country for months. The fact that we arrive at the Third Reading of the Bill and a Labour Front-Bench spokesperson is still learning that is indicative of the poverty of opposition that we have enjoyed during the passage of the measure.

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones *rose*——

Mr. Forsyth: The argument of hon. Members for Peckham and for Livingston that GPs would not refer patients to where they thought were the best hospitals for them is an insult to the medical profession. Not only are GPs under a moral obligation to do what is best for their patients; they are under an ethical and legal obligation to do so, and it is wrong to suggest otherwise.

We have heard a number of other myths from the Opposition. We had the myth that self-governing hospitals or NHS trusts would withdraw key services. The hon. Member for Peckham has been telling people all over the country that they will no longer be able to get maternity services—that self-governing hospitals will not wish to run such services because they would not be profitable.

The hon. Lady knows well, after more than 109 hours in Committee, that the NHS trusts will operate under contract to the health boards or health authorities, that those authorities in those contracts will specify the range and quality of service to be provided and that the hospitals will need to provide those services if they are to see their resources.

It is totally irresponsible of Opposition spokespersons to go round peddling such myths, saying that people will lose local services, when the effect of NHS trusts will be that the quality of services will be defined for the first time and hospitals will be held to account for delivering them.

Ms. Harman *rose*——

Mr. Forsyth: I have been very generous.

Ms. Harman: It is ludicrous for the hon. Gentleman to say that he has been generous when much of his opening speech has been spent attacking our assertions.

The White Paper acknowledged that under the NHS contract system, district health authorities would be able to place contracts outside their districts and require patients to travel to those hospitals for treatment. That is why, in the White Paper, the concept of core services—services to which patients should have guaranteed local access—emerged. But that concept of core services did not find its way into the Bill, and the Government rejected an Opposition new clause which would have inserted in the Bill the promises made by the Government in the White Paper.

Nothing in the Bill guarantees local access to vital facilities such as maternity and child health care and services for the elderly and mentally ill. There is nothing in the Bill to stop district health authorities requiring people in their areas to travel to obtain those services.

Mr. Forsyth: I despair. If we had put in the Bill everything that is needed to reject every accusation made by the hon. Lady, it would run to 600 clauses rather than 60. She talks about core services. In Committee, one of the few Opposition Members who played a constructive role was the hon. Member for Ross, Cromarty and Skye (Mr. Kennedy). What is a core service in his constituency might not be a core service in a hospital in the middle of a city. It would be ludicrous to try to define core services in legislation. The health authorities will be responsible for the contract and for defining core services.

Mr. Charles Kennedy (Ross, Cromarty and Skye): May I just express relief that we are not on television at the moment? What does the Minister have against me?

Mr. Forsyth: I could tell the hon. Gentleman, but if I did the hon. Member for Peckham might insist that I put it in the Bill. I would not wish the hon. Gentleman to have such a permanent monument.

The truth is that Opposition Members understand the argument and support us. They support us on quality of care, efficiency of the delivery of care, more information for consultants and GPs, further devolution of management to hospital and unit level, flexible accounting systems to reflect clinical-led doctor-patient choice and medical audits.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): Rubbish.

Mr. Forsyth: The hon. Gentleman says rubbish. He implies that the Opposition does not support us on those things. I have here a document produced by the hon. Members for Kirkcaldy (Dr. Moonie) and for Strathkelvin and Bearsden (Mr. Galbraith), who cannot be with us today. It is entitled "Working for Patients—A Critique." It is published by the Labour party in Scotland. Under a section entitled "What's Good in the White Paper" and under the heading "Quality of Care", it says:

"This has largely been taken from Labour's White Paper."

Under the heading "Efficiency in the Delivery of Care", it says:

"Yet again this is taken from Labour's White Paper."

Under the heading "More Information Available to Consultants and General Practitioners", it says:

[Mr. Forsyth]

"We welcome this, because it will improve services."

Under "Further Devolution of Management to Hospital and Unit Level", it says, surprisingly:

"This should be done and is being done already within the current structure. We would issue hospitals with their own budgets, but only WITHIN health boards. Savings should go back to the health board".

The difference between us and the Opposition is that although we both believe in devolving budgets the Government believe that the budgets and savings should remain at local level so that those who provide care can use them effectively.

Under the heading, "A Flexible Accounting System to Reflect Clinical Led Doctor/Patient Choice", the document says:

"We support money following patients."

That is not what the hon. Member for Peckham told us in Committee.

Ms. Harman: Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Forsyth: No.

Mr. Edward Leigh (Gainsborough and Horncastle): Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Forsyth: If my hon. Friend will allow me, I must insist on reading out the Labour party's policy document because it is so sensible. Under the heading "Audit", it says:

"Again taken from Labour's White Paper. Why has it taken the Government so long to be interested in this?"

I know that the Labour party in Scotland is unilateralist on defence, but I had no idea that its position extended to supporting the provisions in the Bill.

Ms. Harman: We support money following the patient. The problem is that in the Bill the patient will follow the money because the patient will go where the contract is. If we had a system of fund allocation that recognised where patients were treated and compensated the hospital that treated them, it would be one thing. But the patients will not be able to go to a hospital unless a contract has been placed there. Where is medical audit in the Bill?

Mr. Forsyth: I am sure that if the hon. Lady had a word with the hon. Member for Livingston, the Front-Bench spokesman on health, or the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy, they would be able to explain the position.

The biggest threat to the NHS would be the election of a Labour Government. The Labour Government cut, cut and cut. They cut nurses' pay and they cut capital spending by a third. They closed one hospital every week and cut expenditure on the Health Service from 5 per cent.——

Mr. Tom Clarke (Monklands, West): Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Forsyth: No. I have given way generously.

Mr. Clarke: How much longer?

Mr. Forsyth: The hon. Gentleman complains that I am taking too much time.

Mr. Clarke: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. The Minister's remarks were based on the reply that he gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Falkirk, East (Mr. Ewing) the other day. My hon. Friend produced information which showed that what the Minister said was a complete distortion. Will he withdraw it now?

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. That is not a point of order, but it is a good opportunity for me to remind the House that a Third Reading deals with what is contained in the Bill. I hope that hon. Members—*[Interruption.]* Order. I call both sides to order. I hope that from now on hon. Members will debate precisely what is in the proposed legislation.

Mr. Forsyth: I realise that it is a painful experience to describe Labour's record but I accept your strictures, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I shall return to the substance of the Bill.

In contrast to what appears to be the Opposition's position, the purpose of the Bill was set out clearly in the foreground to "Working For Patients" by the Prime Minister. She spelt out in one short sentence the key thinking behind our proposals. She said:

"The National Health Service will continue to be available to all, regardless of income, and to be financed mainly out of general taxation."

We are building a National Health Service on that principle. It will be more responsive to patients' needs by devolving decision making to local level, to general practitioners, to NHS trusts, and to district, region and health board level, where appropriate. We shall direct resources to where a patient's need is met. I am delighted that the hon. Lady now says that she supports the money following the patient.

We shall end the efficiency trap in which doctors and units that provided a good service ran up against the barriers of their budgets. The money did not come in on the backs of the patients. The position at present is that the patient follows the money and that is why the reforms are necessary. We are building a streamlined management in the NHS because we believe that a better-run Health Service can better care for the sick. We are emphasising quality of service through our proposals on audit and guidance on matters such as waiting areas, appointment areas and choice of consultants.

In our proposals on care in the community, we are ensuring that there are clear lines of responsibility and a system of funding which enables the many elderly people who wish to remain in their own homes to do so. We shall end the perverse system of funding that makes putting people into residential care a more attractive option for many local authorities.

Mr. David Hinchliffe (Wakefield): Will the Minister outline what action the Government have taken in the Bill to develop alternatives to institutional care? It is all right to say that the Bill ends the perverse incentive to institutional care, but what alternatives are there for vast numbers of elderly people? The Government are doing nothing about developing alternatives or genuine community care.

Mr. Forsyth: I disagree with the hon. Gentleman. He must recognise that the changes that we propose end the incentive for local authorities to recommend a residential placement where care and support, perhaps through home help or other provision, could have enabled an elderly person to remain at home. That is a fundamental change which will bring considerable benefit to many thousands of elderly people.

The Labour party emerges from our proceedings on the Bill as a party with nothing new to offer the Health Service. It has shown itself wedded to the vested interests of the trade unions. It has no vision of what the National Health Service should strive for during the 1990s, and the opposition that we have had has been a catalogue of political drum-beating, with no coherent strategy on the table.

Our record is one of success, dedication and commitment to the National Health Service, its staff and its patients. That is why we can take our reforms forward confident in the knowledge that we can translate words into actions.

Under this Government, more resources have been made available to the National Health Service than ever before in its history. We have more doctors and nurses, and a record number of patients are being treated. We have a record of which to be proud. The Bill will ensure that our success and commitment can be built upon during the rest of the decade.

The Bill deserves the support of the House in the interests of millions of patients throughout the United Kingdom. It is the charter for patients that we promised when we published the White Paper. It is a charter for choice, quality and freedom for the patient, and I commend it to the House.

5 pm

Mr. John Maxton (Glasgow, Cathcart): The Minister is right: we have emerged from the earlier stages of the Bill into this Third Reading debate. I do not have the exact poll figures before me, but it is worth noting that, back in December last year, the Labour party was about 9·5 per cent. to 10 per cent. in the lead. We are now 21 per cent. in the lead in the United Kingdom as a whole; and in the area in which the Minister has an interest as chairman of the Conservative party in Scotland our lead is 31 per cent. and rising, despite all his efforts. After the Prime Minister's disastrous visit to Scotland last weekend, we can assume that our lead will soon be considerably greater.

The Minister made a disgraceful speech. It had nothing to do with the Bill. He spent the whole time talking about what the Labour party had said and what the Labour party was doing and made no reference to the Bill. Moreover, he took some 35 minutes to do that, although he and his colleagues have imposed an unnecessary and unwanted timetable upon our Third Reading debate under which discussion is limited to only three hours. I know that many of my hon. Friends, and some Conservative Members who still have reservations about the Bill, want to make some comments on it, and I shall therefore try to keep my remarks brief.

First, let me place on record my thanks, and the thanks of all Labour Members and of the vast majority of the British people—who have the highest regard for the National Health Service and believe that this Bill will damage it—to my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook), who has led the opposition to the Bill. He has ensured that the issues have been placed eloquently, clearly, constructively and forcefully before both the House and the general public, and the general public believe my hon. Friend much more readily than they believe the Secretary of State.

I also thank my hon. Friends the Members for Peckham (Ms. Harman), for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke) and for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Michael) for their assistance, and my hon. Friend the Member for Barnsley, West and Penistone (Mr. McKay) for his work as Whip on the Committee. I also thank all those organisations representing the medical profession, patients, local authorities and the broad spectrum of medical care in Britain, which oppose the Bill and which have briefed us so usefully.

I shall leave the community care aspects of the Bill largely to my hon. Friend the Member for Monklands, West because it is probably now acknowledged that he is one of the greatest experts on the matter in the country.

In his Second Reading speech, my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston made clear our fundamental opposition to the Bill. Nothing that has happened since then—in Committee or on Report—has lessened that opposition. If anything, we are now more worried about the future of the Health Service than we were before. Despite our opposition in principle to the Government's proposals, we attempted in Committee to amend the Bill sensibly and by rational argument.

We attempted to look into what the Minister has described as the "myths". We claimed that there was a hidden agenda and we tried through amendments to give the Government an opportunity to dispel those so-called myths. In the end, all our arguments, and all the arguments of those representing doctors, nurses and other medical workers, carers and patients, were rejected. The Government rejected all our amendments. The only amendments that they considered with any sympathy were those tabled by Right-wing ideologues on their Back Benches, who were trying to persuade them that they were not going nearly far enough to privatise the Health Service in Scotland.

Mr. Andrew Rowe (Mid-Kent): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Hon. Members: Give way to a Right-wing ideologue.

Mr. Maxton: I would hardly describe the hon. Gentleman as a Right-wing ideologue, although there are one or two of them present today.

The Minister today did what he and his colleagues have done throughout the Bill's passage, and uttered a lot of honeyed, hypocritical words about choice and improving the service. The Government know that the National Health Service is the most popular public body in the country. They know that they cannot openly express their real views on it—particularly the real views of the Under-Secretary of State for Scotland—or openly reform it as they would if they were following their natural ideological bent. They know that to do so would be electorally disastrous. Thus, they hide their true intent behind sweet words and devious legislation.

But the people of Britain do not believe them. At least a small part of their present low-standing in the opinion polls—as I said, they are 21 per cent. behind Labour—is due to the fact that the public know what their true intentions are.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: Does not the hon. Gentleman realise that the same thing will happen to Labour's lead in the opinion polls now as happened in 1984-85 and in 1982, when the public see——

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. That has nothing whatever to do with the Bill. Mr. Maxton.

Mr. Maxton: I think that I agree, Madam Deputy Speaker, with *The Guardian*, if I may briefly——

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. What is good for one side is good for the other. The House should come back to the Bill.

Mr. Maxton: I shall, of course, accept your ruling, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The Secretary of State has said that the Bill represents the most major reform of the National Health Service since its inception. He is right. The Bill is designed to create a structure for the Health Service which will allow the Government to push it ever faster towards the sort of profit-led care that is prevalent in the United States, in which they believe, despite all their sweet words. We shall have hospitals managed as separate units, health authorities forced to operate market structures, general practitioners operating their own budgets and others working with indicative budgets. When we tabled amendments to dispel all those so-called myths, the Minister would accept none of them.

All that will fragment the Health Service and mean that each part of the service will be forced to work financially separately from the others. Of itself, the Bill does not give us the commercial system that the Tories instinctively want, but taken with the financial restraints that the Government are imposing on the system, it will create an atmosphere in which sections of the public will accept the gradual erosion of a universal Health Service that is free at the point of use. Let me give two examples. In February last year, the Secretary of State said that his proposals for opt-out hospitals would encourage local pride in our hospitals and give the local people more ability to take the big decisions in their own part of the service. Those were fine words, but when the Bill was printed it merely said:

"The Secretary of State may by order establish . . . National Health Service trusts."

Both for England and Wales and for Scotland, we tabled amendments in Committee and on Report that were designed to give employees, patients and local people the right to decide, or to be consulted, on the future of their hospital. Not one of those amendments was accepted. The Bill remains unchanged, and legally the Secretary of State for Health and the Secretary of State for Scotland may force hospitals to opt out, with no consultation and against the wishes of the majority of people in their area.

The Secretary of State for Health (Mr. Kenneth Clarke): The hon. Gentleman is following the example of his hon. Friend the Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman) and supporting his allegation by saying that we did not take amendments in the Bill, as if that gives it some sort of credibility. His hon. Friend is a lawyer, but I do not think that the hon. Gentleman is; however, I am sure that he is an experienced parliamentarian, and realises that legislation is necessary to give a Government and a Secretary of State legal powers which they otherwise lack. One does not write political slogans all over legislation or answer political allegations made by the Opposition. Because some unnecessary amendment was thrown out, that is not a basis for inventing all kinds of groundless allegations and for saying that they are sustained because they are not contained in the law.

Mr. Maxton: That was a remarkable intervention by the Secretary of State. It was an intervention by an English lawyer, but in Scotland what is carried out is in the Bill and has to be in it. If it is not, the Bill has no statutory or legal standing.

Mr. Clarke: That is not true.

Mr. Maxton: It is true. If the Secretary of State does not understand Scottish law, that is a great pity.

Whatever assurances the Secretary of State has given, and whatever he may say, the simple fact is that we now have no idea what will happen in Scotland about possible opting out. I shall give a Scottish example.

A new hospital is being built in Ayr. The consultants who work in the hospital were called to a meeting—they did not ask for it—by the general manager of the Ayrshire and Arran health board. They were dragooned by him, or it was strongly suggested that they might like, to write to the Scottish Office to seek futher information about National Health Service trust status for that hospital. The vast majority of them have made it quite clear that they were opposed to the whole concept of opting out. Only six of them were in favour and that was because they had been given a clear hint—I do not know whether it was by the Scottish Office or by the general manager—that, if they did opt out, the second phase of the hospital was likely to be built more quickly than if they remained within the National Health Service.

There is certainly now a rumour circulating in the area that consultants at the hospital have expressed support for opting out. I think it was late yesterday morning when the junior Minister from the Scottish Office, the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth), said that four hospitals in Scotland have expressed an interest in opting out. He refused to name them. Perhaps he can tell us now whether Ayr hospital is one of them. I give the Minister the opportunity to do so.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: A number of hospitals are in discussions with the Scottish Office. A number of consultants and others have expressed an interest in self-governing status.

Mr. John Home Robertson (East Lothian): They had their arms twisted.

Mr. Forsyth: They have expressed an interest. They come to the Scottish Office and say that they want to find out more about the proposals and whether they will benefit their patients. It is perfectly reasonable for them to do so. However, they expect us to maintain confidentiality.

It is wholly irresponsible for the hon. Member for Glasgow, Cathcart (Mr. Maxton) to go around telling tales of the kind that he has just related to the House. Frankly, they are mischievous. He knows that we are not in a position to respond without breaking our undertaking to maintain confidentiality. It is another example of myth and mischief-making and has nothing to do with any argument of principle about the Bill.

There are people, for example at the Royal Scottish National hospital, who see a benefit in these trusts.

Mr. Maxton: The length of that speech was ridiculous. I take it that the answer to my question about the hospital in Ayr was yes. The Minister could have said that more quickly than he did.

Yes, that hospital is one of the four that the hon. Gentleman mentioned, and I have just described the circumstances. The Minister said that he has to maintain

confidentiality. Does that mean that people in Ayr and the people that that hospital will serve are not entitled to know that it is considering opting out?

What does that have to do with consultation? What does it have to do with local people taking decisions in their own area and being able to decide what happens in their own hospitals? The Minister is prepared to keep all those things under his hat.

I do not want to take up the same amount of time as the Under-Secretary of State, so I shall move on. It is claimed that the reforms will create patients' choice, because the patients will take the money with them—we are in favour of that if there is any money to take—to buy whatever services they require from the GP or the hospital. The Government claim that they will provide the money, as they do at present, but for how long? As they restrict budgets and control expenditure, they will force GPs into fund-holding status and force hospitals to opt out.

Patients who require expensive, lengthy treatment may find that the GPs or the hospitals say that they are sorry, they would like to treat them but that the health board cannot pay sufficient money for their services. They will say, "If you care to top it up yourself, we can help you." People who can afford to pay will pay out of their own pockets or take out insurance policies. Those who cannot afford to pay will be forced to accept second-rate health care.

The Government believe that, ultimately, choice depends upon the resources available. At no stage of the Bill's consideration would they give any guarantee about improving or even maintaining resources for the NHS.

The NHS is not inefficient, as the Government constantly claim. There are no more massive savings to be made by so-called efficiency improvements. It is already underfunded. It now has a structure that will allow the Government to exploit the fears of sick people and to make them accept a commercially driven health service —whatever their denials, that is on the hidden agenda of the Bill. The present structure of the NHS does not allow for such a development but the new structure will.

The Bill, taken together with the Government's drive to privatise services—from cleaners, laundry services and catering to pharmacies, medical records, laboratory services and radiography—make it obvious what road the Government are taking the Health Service down by devious means.

The British public are on our side on this matter. They want a Health Service that does not depend on income —one which will provide equal service to all, whether rich or poor. Every opinion poll bears that out. The public have rumbled the Government's true intention in the Bill. If they insist on going ahead, they will pay the political price that they so richly deserve. We shall continue to oppose the Bill by all legitimate means. I ask my hon. Friends, hon. Members from other Opposition parties and those Conservative Members who have expressed concern during the passage of the Bill to join me in voting against giving the Bill a Third Reading.

5.17 pm

Sir David Price (Eastleigh): At this late stage I shall, for the first time, make a few comments on the Bill. When the House was debating Second Reading I was, as the Scottish say, "No weel"—I was in bed with the 'flu and could not take part.

I read the *Hansard* report of the Second Reading debate carefully and I detected a common criticism in many of the speeches, to the effect that my right hon. Friends were wrong to put together in the same Bill the implementation of the recent White Paper, "Caring for People" and the reforms in the management of the NHS. I reject that criticism and I welcome the fact that reform of the NHS and reform in care in the community have been brought together in the same Bill.

My reason is simple. In the real world—not the world of parliamentary debates—health care is a complete spectrum. It goes from the person's home through various degrees of hospital treatment, to the acute ward and back again. For example, schizophrenics suffer many degrees of disability. Even people with AIDS have episodic conditions that require them to go into an acute ward, to come out and to be cared for in the community. Therefore, it is right that we should consider the whole spectrum.

Both the White Papers on which the Bill is based concentrated on

"the organisation and management of all direct patient care services".

That is my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State's description, not mine. That concentration is reflected in the Bill.

The most important factors in any consideration of the future of health care are these. First, we must assess the trend in the demand for services. Secondly, we must calculate, as best we can, the various options by means of which those demands can best be met. The Select Committee has drawn attention to the gap, which I believe is growing, between rising demand and rising resources. My right hon. and learned Friend has scolded the Committee on numerous occasions for doing so. However, we are merely doing what any market researcher would do —or, to put it in military terms, time spent on reconnaissance is never time wasted.

The Select Committee has also drawn attention to the importance of better information about the outcome of health care. In that, I suggest, may lie one way of achieving a more productive use of the large resources that are now devoted to health care.

The Government argue, in my judgment perfectly reasonably, that if existing resources can be used more effectively, the need for additional resources becomes less urgent. Their method of achieving that desirable end is through the establishment of what, in the jargon, we call an internal market within a wholly, or nearly wholly, publicly financed Health Service.

That is an entirely novel concept. It has not been attempted anywhere else in the world. Therefore, no one can say with confidence that it will work; nor, conversely, can anyone say with confidence that it will not work. That is why the Select Committee took a cautious view of the Government's proposals. Nothing that has happened throughout the passage of the Bill—I have read most of the Committee proceedings—has led me to drop the caution that the Select Committee felt collectively—

Ms. Dawn Primarolo (Bristol, South): If it is impossible to say with confidence that the internal market will or will not work, ought we to interfere with the massive range of services that the hon. Gentleman has so clearly identified are provided for community care, right through to hospital

[Ms. Dawn Primarolo]

services? Ought we to interfere if we cannot be sure that such interference will not be to the detriment of such important services?

Sir David Price: That is a fair point. That is why the Select Committee recommended in various reports before the Bill was introduced that trials should take place. That remains my view. When the Bill is implemented, in practice my right hon. and learned Friend will be conducting trials. Hospitals that opt for trust status will be volunteers. Furthermore, doctors who decide to opt for budgets will again be volunteers. It may not be the planned trial that I would personally like, but it will nevertheless be a trial by volunteers. The problem is that statisticians will tell us that it is not a random sample. However, there is far more of a trial element in the proposals than is recognised outside Parliament.

If we face a resource problem over the future of the National Health Service, I believe that we face an even greater resource problem over care in the community. On a number of occasions throughout this Parliament I have tried to draw attention to the great unsatisfied need out there for care in the community. The need is far greater than is generally realised. We are given some guidance on that by the report of the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys on the disabled. Far more people are crying out for help than is recognised in any official statistics. I intend to quote from evidence that was given to the Select Committee two weeks ago by the Alzheimer's Disease Society. I could, however, give 50 or 100 more examples of a similar nature. The society's evidence stated:

"The Alzheimer's Disease Society believes the White Paper"—

upon which the Bill is based—

"fails overtly to recognise the scale, growth and awareness factors that are going to drive increased demand for improved provision in the next ten years for people suffering from dementia (Alzheimer's disease being the most common form), let alone their carers, mostly family members, husbands, wives, sons or daughters. The Society estimates the pressure on carers is going to increase by a factor of four."

I leave the House to reflect upon the consequences of that estimate.

That takes me logically to the funding problems arising out of care in the community policies. They are dealt with in parts III and IV of the Bill. With this debate in mind, the Select Committee published an urgent report entitled, "Community Care: Funding for Local Authorities." I commend it to the House. For reasons of brevity, I shall not take the House through the report. However, I draw its attention to two of our comments. In the introduction we said:

"Sir Roy Griffiths has pointed out one major difference between his proposals for the future of community care and those set out in the Government's White Paper:

'I had provided a purposeful, effective and economic four-wheel vehicle, but the White Paper has redesigned it as a three-wheeler, leaving out the fourth wheel of ring-fenced funding'."

The ring-fenced funding issue is one that we must continue to pursue. In our report to the House we also said:

"Almost all the evidence we have received expresses regret, or dismay, that the Government has not decided to 'ring-fence' local authorities' resources for community care."

Every written submission that we have received has been along the same lines.

I hope that the Government will think again about this major problem of ring fencing. It does not require an additional amendment to the Bill; it can be done administratively. In view of the difficulties that the Government are experiencing over local government finance, I urge them to welcome our proposals and embrace them. I hope that they will do just that.

5.26 pm

Dr. Kim Howells (Pontypridd): The people of Wales will be disappointed with and angry about the Bill. They will be disappointed because they will regard it as a missed opportunity to do much for the National Health Service that could have been done right now. It is a missed opportunity, in that it will lead to an experiment instead of to solid policies that would improve the NHS as it stands.

I do not defend all National Health Service practices; I am sure that many other hon. Members have sat at night, as I have done, in miserable hospital waiting rooms. I have been unable to receive service when my children needed it. However, the NHS has come to be seen as part of our heritage—as something that is indivisible from our definition of a civilised society.

People are angry about the Bill. Their anger is reflected in the political polls. They believe that the Bill poses a real threat to that part of their heritage. They believe that it threatens the whole basis of the NHS: that, when somebody is ill or requires treatment, he receives it free of charge and that the treatment he receives is the best that is available at the time, wherever he needs it.

My constituents, and the constituents of many right hon. and hon. Members, see hospitals falling apart before their very eyes. They do not believe that the Bill will result in waiting lists disappearing overnight, or even within years. They see no end to the Government's terrible tendency throughout the last 10 years to depend on the goodwill of hospital personnel and of people outside hospitals to spend their spare time on the streets collecting for vital pieces of diagnostic machinery and other machinery that is used for treatment—machinery that cannot be bought because of the shambles of this Government's administration of the NHS. People want to know what the Bill will do about it.

I believe that the Bill will do nothing. The weasel words it contains will try to encourage the staff of hospitals not to do what they should be doing—improving their own standards of excellence and practice—but to be out in the streets as part-time charity workers trying to raise money for vital pieces of equipment. That is not good enough and it will be reflected at the next general election—indeed, I hope that it will be reflected in a couple of week's time.

When patients go to hospitals after the Bill becomes law, will they find that there is a different reception for them when they go into the out-patients' or casualty departments? I am afraid that they will be met by the same junior doctors who have probably been awake for so long on duty that they cannot diagnose the condition of their own socks, let alone the condition of someone else's heart.

People will ask how the Bill will affect the position of patients who have been turned out from long-term care facilities. I and others have seen such people wandering the streets because there is not sufficient back-up resources or finance to look after them when they have been turned out. What will the Bill do about that? I cannot see that it will do anything.

Ms. Primarolo: As I mentioned earlier, I am a member of a district health authority. In preparation for the Bill, and to improve its corporate image, Bristol and Western district health authority is to spend £7,000 on new uniforms for the reception area of the hospital. That may not be a huge amount, but it is a lot of money when it comes to the closure of beds or wards. We can expect glitter, but no service.

Dr. Howells: I could not agree more with my hon. Friend. Just two weeks ago, I spent long hours at the side of the bed of my two-year-old son. I had plenty of time, as did every other parent in the ward, to contemplate the peeling paintwork on the walls, the antiquated cots and the cracked windows. That is the condition of hospitals in my constituency, which is by no means exceptional.

I and many other parents have had such a chance to contemplate what we see around us and such contemplation is good for increasing awareness of what is needed and what is not needed. We do not require glitter or corporate images. That £7,000 could have been used to purchase paint for the parents' waiting area. Currently, the nurses chip in to buy paint for it and they do the painting themselves because there is no money for it in the hospital budget. What will the Bill do about that? It will do nothing.

When one spends time in hospital, it is interesting to talk to the staff and to the consultants, who are beginning to understand the "hidden agenda" of the Bill, as my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Cathcart (Mr. Maxton) described it. I know what the hidden agenda is. It is a screenplay that will impose on the House at some future date a hefty Bill called the Privatisation of the National Health Service Bill.

All the signs of that hidden agenda can be seen in the Bill. Let us look at the words—"trusts", "fund-holding practices", "originating capital debt", and "indicative budgets". The contracts between general practitioners and hospital trusts start to resemble the arrangements that Sainsbury might make for purchasing a slightly battered carcase of meat from a wholesaler or a case of hazelnut yogurt that requires some salmonella-infected pots to be removed.

Patients are not commodities, and people do not regard themselves as the financial part of an equation that can be worked out by accountants. The NHS was not created for that and that is not why it has been run since. People in Wales have rejected those ideas time and time again in every election and by-election. I am sure that the people of the rest of the country will do the same.

5.34 pm

Mr. Michael Morris (Northampton, South): Once again, I must declare an interest as I am married to a general practitioner and I act as an adviser to two pharmaceutical companies.

It does not give me great pleasure to make this speech, because I recognise that my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Health and my hon. Friends the Minister for Health and the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health are motivated by a desire to improve patient care; I want to put that on record. The sad thing is that the Bill will not achieve that aim. If its objective were to produce a dramatic improvement in the financial management of the National Health Service, as a member of the Public Accounts Committee I should give it three cheers. However, it represents an attempt to create an internal market driven by a decision to cash-limit the whole of the NHS, and that is a big change. Medical appraisal will no longer be the key determinant. Once the Bill reaches the statute book, cost and not patient need will be the driving issue. That is why I oppose the Bill in principle.

If the Bill had resulted in a level playing field with some in-built mechanism whereby wage costs were automatically funded by the Treasury, progress would have been made. However, when I looked at the Bill, I related it to the most recent report of the Comptroller and Auditor General—report No. 566, which was produced in July 1989. In paragraph 5 on page 1, the Comptroller and Auditor General said:

> "Health authorities have faced uncertainties concerning pay levels which are decided at national level and price increases, which have tended to be greater than the average for the economy".

That rather blows a hole in my right hon. Friend's recent statement that price increases in the NHS did not have to include an allowance for mortgage interest increases. We must remember that any report from the Comptroller and Auditor General has to be agreed by the Department responsible, so that report must have been agreed by the Department of Health.

At a sitting of the Public Accounts Committee, I asked the chief executive of the National Health Service whether he was constrained by cash limits. The answer was yes. I asked the Treasury whether it was likely that the difference between the allowance for wage cost increases of about 5 per cent. and the actual cost of nationally agreed settlements would be made up by the Treasury and the answer was no.

Against such a financial background one has to ask specifically why, at almost every turn, the key people who can make people well again—the doctors—are treated with such disdain. It is a foolhardy person who ignores the advice of the royal colleges. I hope that their advice will not be ignored in the other place. No patient will be made better by 4,000 new accountants; they are more likely to be made better by 400 new consultants.

I hope that the regulations that will ensue from the Bill will ensure that at the very least—my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State did not have the chance to make this point yesterday—there is proper medical representation as of right at every tier of authority. I also hope that the medical advisory committees will be extended to cover all health authorities and National Health Service trusts, because that is a key issue.

My hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Scotland, the Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth), raised the question of indicative drug budgets. Given that the Government have shifted their position, why on earth is clause 18 still in the Bill? The pharmaceutical price regulation scheme controls the profitability of the pharmaceutical industry and prescribing analyses and costs are being used on a trial basis by a number of family practitioner committees, available as a control mechanism to help GPs with prescribing difficulties.

I am not convinced about cash limits on prescriptions. I have asked many times what will happen when all the GPs in a region overspend. Where will the money come from? Will it come from some other aspect of patient care or out of the Government's contingency budget? In a

[Mr. Michael Morris]

telling intervention the other evening, my hon. Friend the Member for Newbury (Sir M. McNair-Wilson) gave a concrete example of a hospital, with licensed medicine only on partial release, being restricted because the North West Thames health authority had said so. Similar cases have been reported in the press. The reality is that there are constraints on prescribing and the Government must get their act together and ensure that that does not happen on the ground. It is no good saying that it does not, because it is happening at the moment.

Why do we not learn from the experience of countries such as the United States where much research covering 47 states, not just some minor town, shows that restricted formularies lead to more money being spent on hospital care? If people do not use modern medicines, more people go into hospital care. For my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State to say that generic medicine is just the same shows a degree of ignorance that is not right in a Minister of the Crown in this important area.

This is the fourth reorganisation of the NHS since I have been a Member of the House, but Ministers have failed to understand that they must take the people with them if they are to make changes which will affect the largest employer in Europe. They may have to argue, discuss and take difficult decisions but, as sure as anything, they must take the people with them. It is outstanding that the great majority of employees in the NHS at any level are not in favour of the changes.

The opportunity in the Bill for devolution to a lower tier is greatly to be welcomed. We all have a district general hospital crying out for some independence, but instead we have the NHS trust, some transatlantic concept. I do not know how many hospitals will take that up. At first there were 350. That figure dropped to 120 and it now stands at around 80. My guess is that we shall be lucky to have 50. As my hon. Friend the Member for Eastleigh (Sir D. Price) said, we had a skewed sample. How much better it would have been to start with a properly structured sample so that we could have had a reasonable test market to see whether the proposal worked; if it did, it could have been extended.

The Bill is full of dangerous precedents. It is full of the bureaucracy that the Public Accounts Committee has grown to question. I have been reading the contracts for health services, and they are only the beginning. I have spent 10 years on the Public Accounts Committee trying to get rid of this sort of stuff. I have clearly failed dismally. One aspect of the Bill that could be welcomed is medical audit. The other evening some hon. Members raised the question of quality of care, to which my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State seemed to respond. That should be written into the Bill. I do not agree with the Opposition's suggestion that there should be a committee which will meet only twice a year. Such quality control should take place all the time. However, I think we are all at one on the importance of the quality of care and I hope that that will be written into the Bill in another place.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Mr. Roger Freeman): I do not want my hon. Friend to conclude and suffer in agony for the rest of the short debate in the belief that our intention is to cash-limit the NHS, in particular at national, regional FPC and individual doctor level. My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State made that clear in Committee, on which my hon. Friend did not serve. But for the avoidance of doubt I repeat that there is no intention to cash-limit the family Health Service in the sense that drugs and prescriptions are part of that service. I hope that my hon. Friend will accept that. I appreciate his powerful arguments, which are largely a repeat of what he said on Second Reading, but I hope that he will accept my assurance on behalf of the Government on that narrow point.

Mr. Morris: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. I think that he has clarified the point, but I shall have to consider carefully what he said.

We did not discuss amendment No. 118 on the medical practices committee on Report. Why on earth do we have to upset the medical practices system which has worked perfectly well for years? Everybody is satisfied with it, but now we are to have some sort of subjective assessment which will turn it upside down.

The Bill does not destroy the NHS, and anyone who suggests that it does is way off beam, but it does not enhance it. Millions of hours will be spent as a result of it, but, sadly, waiting lists continue to grow. We all know —it is better that we say it—that in the next few weeks and months more wards will be closed. Things will not get easier. Every survey shows the grave disquiet felt by the public.

It cannot be right that the House has to keep producing early-day motions to save the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson hospital for women or the Mount Vernon skin graft hospital. It cannot be right to have Jimmy Savile charging round the country trying to save Stoke Mandeville hospital. Just down the road from here we have the world's leading hospital, the Maudsley, yet there too there are cuts. That is a crazy way to go on. I hope that all that will be considered in another place.

We get our health care pretty cheap in Britain, at about 6·1 per cent. of GNP. It is the most cost-efficient health service among 18 industrial nations. The Bill will be good news for accountants and lawyers, but I sincerely question how it will benefit patients. I remain unconvinced, so I shall oppose it.

5.47 pm

Mr. David Hinchliffe (Wakefield): We have had some excellent contributions so far. The hon. Member for Northampton, South (Mr. Morris) said that the Bill will not destroy the NHS. But I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Pontypridd (Dr. Howells) that it is a paving measure that will move us towards American-style private health care. Conservative Members may not understand that, but the people do. They can see the real agenda and they know what they want to avoid.

I want to concentrate on the forgotten part of the Bill —community care. That is an afterthought. I thought that the Under-Secretary of State for Scotland would sit down without mentioning it. That has happened before and I thought that it would happen again. But he referred to it in passing, so I could not say that he did not.

The Government have had 10 years to develop a strategy for community care, but the Bill is a major disappointment. It is a missed opportunity. The more one looks at the events of this week and in Committee, the more one can see that the legislation is full of holes. It will be only a matter of time before we have inquiries and

recommendations, which will make us get down to looking at the issues that the Opposition and some Conservative Members have pointed out during the Bill's passage.

The main feature of the Bill is the way in which the Government have put their free market ideology before what is needed in the development of community care. The Government talk about their wish to establish a flourishing independent sector but also about the avoidance of unnecessary institutional care. It is clear from all the evidence that those principles are contradictory, because the private sector is interested in one thing only —the provision of institutional care, as that is where the money can be made. The Bill financially discriminates against directly provided local authority care, and that will add to the problem and further stimulate the private sector. At the same time, the Government expect the local authority to provide for the many people rejected by the private sector because they need levels of care that the private sector will not provide, or they cannot afford to pay the price for which the private sector asks.

Is a market model appropriate to community care? My hon. Friend the Member for Pontypridd has, on a number of occasions, asked whether a market model is appropriate for the provision of health care. I reject a market model in the caring of vulnerable, elderly, handicapped and dependent people, because it is a licence for exploitation. As we have said on several occasions, the type of provision that the Government are prepared to fund, through what was previously open-ended income support, is unplanned provision, ill-thought-out provision, in mansions and large houses. The bulk of provision on the south-east coastal belt does not reflect the needs of our society. It is unplanned. It is there because there are empty bed-and-breakfast establishments for substantial parts of the year. People think that they can make some money by shunting in people who require community care. That is all wrong and the Bill should have tackled that problem.

Provision is aimed only at institutional care. There is no attempt to develop alternatives by the private sector. Businesses do not see any means of making money in that way.

Ms. Mildred Gordon (Bow and Poplar): Does my hon. Friend agree that there is no programme for rehabilitation of severely disabled people who no longer need acute care in hospitals and no proper provision for the funding of their care in the community? In Tower Hamlets, at least 10 severely disabled people who are ready to leave hospital and live at home cannot do so because such care would cost about £40,000 a year each. There is constant conflict as to who will pay for that—the Health Service or the social services. There are demarcation disputes about who will do the nursing jobs.

One young ex-service man of 28, who is completely disabled from the neck down, has been found a flat, which has been empty since last June. Conflicts such as those that I have described are preventing him from leaving hospital and now the housing department is saying that it cannot keep the flat for him any longer. I am sure that my hon. Friend will know of many such cases. The policy has not been thought out, and provision has not been properly made. The money is not there and many people have to remain in hospital occupying beds when that is no longer necessary and they could live happy lives in the community, if that were done properly.

Mr. Hinchliffe: My hon. Friend has made a clear and eloquent case. Such cases are not confined to her constituency. Every hon. Member who takes an interest in what is happening in his area is aware of such cases. The problem that we have to get over is the Government's tunnel vision about what is needed by elderly and handicapped people. Through that tunnel vision, they see only the institutional model, so people such as the young man whom my hon. Friend described are pointed in one direction only. The cards are stacked against any alternative to that person being in an institution or hospital care. We have to get away from that.

Mr. Rowe: I am listening with great attention, as I always do, to what the hon. Gentleman has to say. Will he agree on two points? First, the thrust of the Bill is to provide an assessment and a care manager, the purpose of which is to keep people out of institutional care. Secondly, in many authorities, mine included, the thrust of the development over the past 10 years has been to diminish residential care as a priority placement.

Mr. Hinchliffe: The hon. Gentleman is most consistent, because he has made that point in interventions in my speeches at least four times during the passage of the legislation, and I shall make the same response. An assessment by a social worker, or whoever, is based on what is available. My criticism of the Bill is that it encourages the provision of only institutional care, rather than preventive, domiciliary care. That is my central concern.

In Committee, the Opposition made the point, several times, that the worst practice is rewarded by the market model system developed by the Government. The larger the home, the more profitable the venture, and the more people who can be packed in, the more money will be made. Home owners will agree with that. I have already referred to the new nursery home in my constituency, with 100 beds. That is not a home. I should not want to live somewhere with 100 beds, The people setting up the home told me that they had that many beds because they could make economies of scale—the more one gets in, the more money one makes. That is wrong. It is not in the interests of the people whom we should be representing.

Mr. Allen McKay: This is a growing problem. My local authority has received six planning applications for extensions of existing homes or the building of new ones. Those places will have between 80 and 100 beds. They are not homes: they are institutions.

Mr. Hinchliffe: My hon. Friend is right. He knows the sort of homes that we are talking about. We are going back 20 or 30 years, to the workhouse environment where people were packed in. We should be sensitive to people's needs.

The crux of the matter is a point that I have tried to raise on several occasions and that will be understood by my hon. Friends who served on the Standing Committee. It is whether caring for profit in such circumstances is morally right. Are we happy about attracting into provision of care for the elderly and handicapped organisations such as Stakis plc, a hotels, leisure and property group, or Kunick plc, an amusement arcade group? What relevance have amusement arcades to the

[Mr. Hinchliffe]

care of handicapped people? What expertise in caring for demented and senile individuals, who may be doubly incontinent, have such people?

Buckingham International, a disco and leisure company, is now to move into the private care market. Are those the people whom we want to be caring for our mothers and grandmothers—dependants and the vulnerable? Are those the companies that we want to attract to a welfare state based on a market model? Ladbroke now has over 1,000 beds in caring provision. Boddingtons and Vaux Breweries are also moving into this sector. What relevance do breweries have to caring for the handicapped and elderly? Univent Ltd. has become well known for its practices. When residents in its homes go into hospital, it clears out their possessions, shoves them in a cellar and gives the bed to somebody else. That is the practice that the Government are encouraging with this market model. Is that appropriate?

Mr. Dennis Turner (Wolverhampton, South-East): In the midst of the changes in residential care, when we have to be ever more careful and conscious of the accommodation being made available and the people and organisations that lie behind it, where is the ethic responsibility of social services within the Bill, or the resources that will be necessary for them to do the policing of the new major administrative roles? We know that the Government have made no provision for resources for the new personnel who will be needed, so they will not be policed. The authority in my constituency has estimated that when the Bill is enacted it will need £2 million to £3 million to do the job in the way in which the Government say it should be done. It knows, however, that that will not be possible. As we know that there will be a lack of resources, we should tell the people now what the real position will be. People will not receive the services that they need and social service departments will lose out.

Mr. Hinchliffe: My hon. Friend has an excellent track record in local government and speaks with experience of the problems that are being faced at the grass roots. He is right to say that the resources will not be available to enable authorities to provide the services that are needed. Resources must be concentrated on the alternatives to institutional care. In that respect, the Government have tunnel vision.

The White Paper referred to enabling individuals to have choice and the Government have claimed that the advent of private care homes has given people choice. I do not know how many hon. Members have spoken to their constituents to learn what choice means. It means that now and in future, where there is a vacancy in a home, one person will take the vacancy. That is the reality of the present choice.

If there were real choice, there would be the option of not going into a home. People would be able to remain in the community. They would be able to remain in their own homes where they have lived all their lives. They would be able to stay in their own communities. They would not have to be shunted into an institution miles away from their families and friends. Instead, the Government have hammered alternative care and options to the institution, which means living in large groups miles away from families and friends. They have hammered the home help and meals-on-wheels services, sheltered housing and every real attempt to keep people out of institutional care. As a result, the market has been stimulated. That was the aim behind the Government's policy.

What should the Bill have done? It should have provided for genuine community care, developing options to the institution that were based on a real choice, which would enable people to stay where they have always lived. The Bill should have introduced planning and the co-ordination of community care to replace the shambles and ragbag that exists between different Government Departments and departments at local level.

We need a community care Minister. There is no reference to such a Minister in the Bill. The establishment of such an office is a policy commitment of the Labour party. I am proud to say that that will shortly be Government policy in this place. A legal duty should be placed on local authorities—this idea was resisted by the Government in Committee—to develop options to institutional care. I return to the argument of the hon. Member for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe): we must ensure that social workers make genuine assessments and not those that are restricted by what is available in the way of institutional homes. Assessments should be based on what is available in a person's community, to keep him or her out of an institutional home and in his or her own home as a member of the community.

Mr. Ian McCartney (Makerfield): As I understand it, my hon. Friend is saying that a home care service should be provided, not merely a home help service. He is advocating the development of skills through the home help service, with opportunities for training and retraining.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. I am sorry to stop the hon. Member, but he is attempting to divert the hon. Member for Wakefield (Mr. Hinchliffe) from the provisions that are set out in the Bill. Perhaps the hon. Member for Wakefield will speak to the Bill.

Mr. Hinchliffe: My hon. Friend the Member for Makerfield (Mr. McCartney) has read my mind completely. He said exactly what I intended to say.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I am pleased that the hon. Member for Makerfield (Mr. McCartney) has read the mind of the hon. Member for Wakefield. That means that the hon. Member for Wakefield does not have to repeat what his colleague said.

Mr. Hinchliffe: I want to see the development of options to the model that we have been promised by the Government. It is a conservative model of what we have had for far too long. Other countries have developed options. They do not believe that when a person reaches a certain age or has a certain degree of incapacity he or she must leave the family home and go into an institution.

We must have more sheltered housing. We need very sheltered housing. My hon. Friend the Member for Makerfield has described the domiciliary support that is needed. There should be support seven days a week in a person's own home if that is needed. Why should not the person to whom my hon. Friend the Member for Bow and Poplar (Ms. Gordon) referred have that sort of support? In many instances it would be cheaper for the public purse to provide it instead of shunting such people into an institution. We should be thinking of transforming

residential care into a completely different model. We should facilitate community care and stop incarcerating people.

The Government have ducked the challenge of having a completely different vision of community care. They have failed to meet the challenge of keeping people in the community. We should look to future provision and ensure that community care means care in the community, not away from it. On that basis, the Government have failed completely.

6.6 pm

Sir Michael McNair-Wilson (Newbury): I shall not take up the remarks of the hon. Member for Wakefield (Mr. Hinchliffe), who has an enviable knowledge of the community care part of the Bill. I begin by saying that I support the Bill and the concept behind it, which is to open all the facilities in the National Health Service to all the patients within it. Such a concept is long overdue. It will enable a measure of choice to be introduced in the care of patients. The patient will be able to choose whether he is cared for locally or at a distance, and that will have a bearing on the time that he may be asked to wait for an operation. That choice should have been there all along.

I must, however, chide my Front Bench colleagues. They keep telling me that the Bill is a patients' charter. It may be that I am sensitive because I helped to produce a patients' charter, as the hon. Member for Ross, Cromarty and Skye (Mr. Kennedy) kindly reminded us last night, with the Association of Community Health Councils. A patients' charter can be produced only by patients and patients' organisations. The best that the Bill can do is be a patients' charter produced by a Government who think that they know what patients want. I assure my right hon. and hon. Friends that what the patient wants and what he gets may be rather different things.

I regret that to some extent CHCs have been downgraded as a result of the Bill. We have not put an institution in their place that will speak for patients as I think the voice of the patient should be heard. I hope to return to that subject in later debates.

In the end, what is the Bill about? It is about better service for the patient or it is about nothing. It is about better care from the general practitioner, and an extension of the service that the GP can offer his patient. It is about better hospital care, more consultants in the NHS and making better use of resources. Some may say that if I make such a statement I imply that the Health Service is of a poor standard. It is not. I know that the NHS is a political hot potato that we like to kick around in the Chamber, but the NHS is doing a superbly good job. I can say so because, as I think everybody knows, I am dependent on the Health Service for my life. I declare my interest: I am a kidney dialysis patient. I receive kidney dialysis three times a week through the NHS. I am the president of a kidney patients' charity. I have, therefore, considerable experience of the Health Service.

I listened to the hon. Member for Pontypridd (Dr. Howells) telling us about the hospital in which his son, sadly, is being treated. He referred to broken windows, peeling wallpaper and so on, and he placed the blame for that on the Government. I have been in many NHS hospitals, and some are good and some are bad. Some are well decorated and some are not, It amounts to good management or bad management. In some instances those who run a hospital notice such things and in others they do not. We are all guilty because we often find that we live in shabbier surroundings than we imagined when we compare those circumstances with others elsewhere. Let us not imagine that the Government decide whether a ward is painted or whether someone hangs pictures and makes the place more attractive for patients. Very often such matters are for the people who run our hospitals.

Mr. Martin Flannery (Sheffield, Hillsborough): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Sir Michael McNair-Wilson: I shall not give way because time is short and I know that others wish to contribute to the debate.

I am sorry that the Government do not appear to want to follow through my next point. If we are to decide whether our hospitals are coming up to the standard that we expect, we must consider whether there should be a separate hospitals inspectorate. Although it may be a bureaucratic concept that may not find favour on the Treasury Bench at the moment, I ask my right hon. and hon. Friends to give it a little more thought. Perhaps a third body, such as the Health Advisory Society, which looks at mental hospitals, could be applied to the overall realm of the National Health Service and might help to raise standards and to identify the sort of problems that some of us notice when we go round hospitals and wonder why they are not as we would wish them to be.

If the Bill is about treating patients, in the end it is also about creating a form of accountability for the resources used to treat patients. Therefore, I welcome the idea of clinical audit and the fact that the Audit Commission is to have a say. By definition, all resources in the National Health Service are precious. It is a demand-led service, where the demand is infinite. If the demand is infinite, clearly the resources available to us will always be limited. No hon. Member should imagine that somebody somewhere in this or any other political party will be able to find all the resources that the Health Service will need one day. They will not. I have heard the hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) say just that. Whichever Government are in office, they will have to impose some limits on the resources that are available.

The important point, which I believe the Bill addresses, is getting the most out of resources and making all those who spend the resources conscious of the fact that they are spending something precious. Therefore, I welcome the cash-limiting of the drugs budgets. That must be right. I also welcome hospital trusts, and budget-holding practices. I welcome anything that makes those who are spending public money ask themselves whether they are getting the most from the money that they are spending. No practitioner, no matter what he is doing, who handles public money can divorce himself from the cost of the treatment that he intends to provide. Of couse, the cost is not, and should not be, the dominant consideration, but it must play a part.

As I have said, resources are the one thing that must be treated as what they are—precious gold. They must be used as prudently and as economically as possible, so that the greatest number of people can benefit from them. To that extent, the concept that now appears to have all-party support—although I did not know that until this evening —of the money travelling with the patient is of the greatest significance. If the money travels with the patient, that

[Sir Michael McNair-Wilson]

means that the money goes with the treatment. That has the corollary that once the Bill becomes law, a patient who goes outside his region for treatment will take the resources with him, out of the district. That must introduce a new thinking into the minds of district health authorities.

Perhaps the House will allow me to illustrate what I am trying to say in terms of kidney dialysis facilities. In the United Kingdom, we have 1·2 kidney dialysis units per 1 million of population, whereas in the Federal Republic of Germany there are 5·8 such units; in France there are 4·1; in Italy there are seven; and in Spain there are five units per 1 million of population. Even in the German Democratic Republic, there are 3·5 units. The fact that those countries have more centres per 1 million of population also discloses that they also have more kidney specialists for their populations. Because of the small number of centres in this country, many patients must travel long distances. Plenty of Health Service studies show that both acceptance of new patients and treatment rates are inversely proportional to the distance of the patient's home from the treatment facility.

A renal consultant has written to me stating that the ethos of the Bill

"may promote change . . . One would expect that a District exporting all its (valuable) renal patients might wonder why it does not keep those patients and treat them for itself. In addition, the District might also look at the cost of ambulance services required for shipping patients to the remote centre"—

that is the kidney dialysis centre—

"and decide that these charges could be turned into a clear saving. It is thus possible that a certain number of patients would between them generate sufficient funds to establish a new Unit and pay for a new Consultant Nephrologist.

I am hearing from the patient organisations that British patients would prefer to be treated in small centres where relationships with individual doctors and nurses are maintained rather than in vast centres where they are lost in anonymity."

I suggest that as a result of the Bill that renal consultant's hopes will become a reality. I admit that that is a small example, but it underlines the potential of the Bill. Therefore, for that reason as well as for the others that I have given, I shall support the Bill on Third Reading. However, I add just one caveat. Perhaps it was a good idea to take the Health Service and the community care elements together in the same Bill, although I am one of those who believe that they should have been in two different Bills. But I am still worried about the co-ordination between health and community care. I believe that we shall have to return to that subject and I shall look forward to suggestions made in another place which may return to us as an amendment at some future date.

6.15 pm

Mr. Charles Kennedy (Ross, Cromarty and Skye): Over the past decade—and longer—this has been a Government of reforming zeal on so many fronts. Much of that zeal has been well placed, such as the sale of council houses and the encouragement of democracy in trade unionism. However, the zealotry has now begun to blind common sense, not least in relation to the National Health Service. Ten years in office can cocoon a Government from reality.

To paraphrase the earlier critical speech from the Government Back Benches, the hon. Member for Northampton, South (Mr. Morris) pointed out what is manifestly the case, yet the public are not behind the Bill one iota. At times the Government would do well to remember the Churchillian dictum of trusting the people. They may well find that, when the people next have an opportunity to give a national verdict on the Government's continuing reforming thrust, not least in relation to health and welfare services, they will lose badly, but deservedly.

My fundamental objection to the Bill is its lack of intellectual honesty. There are two reasons why the Government have felt it necessary to introduce a Bill to reform the National Health Service. The first is straightforward: the Health Service is both big and bureaucratic. It is the biggest civilian employer in western Europe. Anything like that is bound to attract the disdain of a Government such as this, who do not like to respond to, or to have to deal with, any group in society that can wield the kind of power that the National Health Service can.

Secondly, and derived from that, the Bill is a response to political frustration. After 10 years of being told that the Government are spending more, employing more, treating more and building more, the public do not believe them. From the evidence in their own communities, the public do not believe the rhetoric of Ministers at the Dispatch Box. Largely out of the sense of frustration, the Prime Minister insisted on a political and legislative response. She split the Department of Health from the Department of Social Security, downgrading the then Secretary of State for Health and Social Security. She then dismissed him and brought back the previous Minister for Health, who has had to pull together this ill-assorted ragbag of ideas and try to present it as a coherent political philosophy when, in its basic analysis, it is not, because it is a response to political rather than patient needs.

My principal objection to the Bill is that it seeks to impose on the main providers of health care a costly and untried administrative structure, which is designed in the first instance not to improve health care or to increase the resources given to health care, but to impose a sense of structured competition in a totally inappropriate form and setting. In so doing, Ministers have made it clear that they do not have sufficient regard for the professionals who are the Health Service or, indeed, for the patients who are dependent upon it. If they had, they would have built in throughout the Bill far more consultation and far more guaranteed representation for both those groups. At every stage at which these arguments have been raised—at times they have not just been Opposition arguments but have been supported by Government Back Benchers—they have been resisted throughout the Committee stage and the truncated Report stage in the last few days. I shall touch very briefly on a few of the issues that arise.

The National Health Service contracts will remove clinical responsibility from doctors. They will remove the proper voice in health care that I believe patients should have—I agree with the hon. Member for Newbury (Sir Michael McNair-Wilson), who has done so much in this field—and at the end of the day they will hand over final control and major decisions to administrators. That will create monopolies, which I suggest will add to costs.

Self-governing trusts will break the link between the community and the hospital, undermine planning in terms

of both health care and staffing, and force people to travel for treatment that they should rightly expect in their locality, not least in rural areas, without giving them or the staff any direct democratic say in the decisions.

General practitioner budgets, particularly in the light of the new GP contract, can only undermine the essence of the relationship between patient and doctor, which has been one of the greatest strengths of the NHS and is the interface—horrible word—between the vast bulk of the population and the family doctor service.

I agree with Government Back-Benchers that the Government have refused to write in a guarantee that drug budgets will never be used to reduce expenditure on drugs. The Minister gave some assurances at the Dispatch Box on this matter, but they do not appear in the Bill.

The Minister makes a face. I know the reason that the Secretary of State enunciated why they have been unwilling to write things in at certain times, but let us go beyond that on this question of drug budgets. This was a major opportunity to take a significant step forward down the line of generic substitution, of looking at patent life in a European Community context with a view to a better deal for the United Kingdom pharmaceutical industry, which, at a time when our balance of trade is disappearing over the cliff, is one of the major net contributors to British exports. But, unfortunately, the Government have not chosen to go sufficiently down that road. This is an extremely sad missed opportunity.

On health authority membership, the Government announced earlier this week a shake-up in the membership of health authorities throughout England and Wales. It was a disgraceful announcement in terms of the number of people with proven links to the Conservative party—we have been over this before in the course of the Bill—and business backgrounds. I do not object to business backgrounds, but all too often the criterion for appointment, or, more important, the criterion for not reappointing somebody who has served on a health authority, is, first and foremost, their political orientation rather than their professional commitment to a good National Health Service.

Mr. McCartney: The position is that a majority of the members of our health authority do not live in, work in or belong to the community for which they are the authority. After this Bill is passed and local authority representation is removed, there will be a majority of people on that body who do not live or work in or have any connection with the community to which they are appointed.

Mr. Kennedy: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman. That is a serious and genuine complaint, which has been repeated in many other parts of the country. I can only say, given the difference in geography and demography between our two parts of the country, that I hope it does not begin to happen in the Scottish Highlands, because it would be farcical to have somebody sitting in Glasgow on the Highlands health board.

Mr. McCartney: A modern-day Highland clearance.

Mr. Kennedy: That is one way of putting it.

On the question of medical teaching—sadly, we were not able to come back to an all-party amendment on this matter on Report—there is, as the Minister knows, continuing concern and anxiety, particularly for the big teaching hospitals attached to and aligned with some of our great universities, about the role of those who are both in the academic sector and aligned or attached to the National Health Service. The Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals has expressed particular concern about this. Given the educational lobby in another place, this is a matter on which the Government will be subjected to significant scrutiny, and I hope that there will be constructive amendment at that stage in the Bill.

I come to medical practice committees. The hon. Member for Northampton, South had some caustic remarks to make about this and I quite agree with him that it is gratuitous and unnecessary to take powers to reduce the number of doctors, if necessary by imposing directions on the MPCs. In particular, it will be disadvantageous to both the inner cities and the rural areas. It is striking at one of the real success stories in the British Health Service since 1947, which is the growth in the number of general practitioners and the expansion of the family doctor service in accessible areas in every community.

Rural dispensing committees are also abolished—a decision made by the House with hardly any discussion, which is not at all a good way to go about legislation.

Coming, finally, to the community care section, while the principles behind it are welcome, even though the Government had to be dragged kicking and screaming over the Rubicon, not least where local authority input is concerned, and only after excessive delay, there is no provision, as the hon. Member for Eastleigh (Sir D. Price), the distinguished Vice-Chairman of the Select Committee on Social Services, made clear, for ring fencing, an essential concept of the Griffiths report. There are no national standards.

The provision for the funding of residential homes is known by all—indeed, at one stage earlier this week, for a few magic moments, by a majority of the House—to be inadequate. There is no proper provision for carers and, in the context of one of the admittedly more minor amendments that was moved last night, no proper protection yet for residents in homes of four people or fewer through their being subject to proper scrutiny by the inspectorate. Within Scotland, there are no moves to introduce a proper inspectorate.

This Bill has been a response to political pressure. It has been born out of governmental frustration rather than a genuine, formative effort to improve the National Health Service. It did not feature as a manifesto commitment. I think that the Government are wildly out of touch with so much connected with this measure, and that they will reap the return from that at the ballot box in the next election.

6.27 pm

Mr. Quentin Davies (Stamford and Spalding): I felt very privileged to take part in the work of the Committee that considered this Bill because I believe that it is one of the most important Bills going through the House in this Parliament, in the essential sense that it will have an enormous impact on the welfare and, indeed, the lives of our constituents.

I paid great attention to the Report stage and it is now clear to the House, and will be clear to the country, that the essential political difference between the parties in this House on the Bill is extremely simple. On the one side, the Government have decided that, after 40 years, it would be sensible to introduce a number of radical reforms into the

[Mr. Quentin Davies]

NHS, not merely or even largely to improve the efficiency of the service, although improving value for money becomes ever more important the more money is allocated to the NHS and the greater the share of the Government's budget and of national income is absorbed by the NHS. But it is also necessary to get rid of some of the major perversities that have emerged within the operations of the NHS. Those perversities have, for example, led to a number of hospital managers having an incentive to reduce the throughput of their hospitals and to local authorities feeling that there is an incentive to dump people into institutional care as a first, rather than a last, resort.

One of the great human benefits of this Bill will be that, for the first time, an attempt will be made to assess individual needs and, wherever possible, to support people in their own homes rather than consign them to institutional care, however dedicated and competent that care may be. The Government believe that it is now possible to introduce into the National Health Service a greater measure of patient choice and to make the system fundamentally more responsive to patient needs and demands.

The Opposition's position has been equally clear. Throughout the discussion on this Bill, in Committee and on Report, the Opposition have opposed, almost in every particular, any change in the 1948 structure—as though it were a crime even to touch that structure, and as though that structure represented a sacred totem. Perhaps to certain hon. Gentlemen and hon. Ladies of the Opposition it is a sacred totem. To a visitor unfamiliar with the British political debate it might seem that such blind defence of the NHS reflected a very large measure of satisfaction with the workings of the service. Of course, we know that nothing could be further from the truth. Throughout this Parliament the Opposition have subjected us to an endless litany of complaints about its operation. How does the Labour party explain this fundamental contradiction—on the one side, defence of the NHS in its present form, and on the other, the most serious, and often vituperative, complaints against its operation?

Mrs. Alice Mahon (Halifax): In respect of the complaints against the NHS, we say to the Government quite simply, "Fund it properly."

Mr. Davies: I am glad that the hon. Lady mentioned funding. That is precisely how the Labour party, at least during the first two years of this Parliament, attempted to reconcile the contradiction to which I have drawn attention. We all remember how, in 1987, 1988 and 1989, we continually heard from the Opposition the suggestion that there was nothing wrong with the NHS except that it needed more money—as though throwing more money at it would solve its problems. Over the past two years something very interesting has happened. In 1988 Opposition leaders were regularly calling for the expenditure of another £1 billion or another £2 billion on the service—some Opposition Members seem to like multiplying round figures. In fact, the Government have come forward with £3 billion, £4 billion and £5 billion more.

Mr. Chris Mullin (Sunderland, South) *rose*——

Mr. Davies: I will give way to the hon. Gentleman in a moment. I have observed—I hope that the hon. Gentleman who is about to intervene will show that I am right—that recently the Opposition have ceased their attempts to outbid the Government in respect of financial plans for the NHS.

Mr. Mullin: It is not just the Opposition who have been saying that the Health Service is underfunded. According to the local Tory newspaper in Sunderland, the chairman of the Northern regional health authority, who was appointed by the Government, said last week:

"Fundamentally we are underfunded consistently. It is absolutely frustrating to feel so useless."

The person who made that comment is not a supporter of the Labour party.

Mr. Davies: Had the Government accepted the funding arrangements that the Labour party suggested for the NHS two years ago, the service would be funded at a lower rate today than is actually the case. The increase in expenditure on the service has been considerably greater than was demanded by the Opposition only two years ago.

Throughout the Committee stage and Report stage debates I listened with great attention, but entirely in vain, for the slightest suggestion by Opposition Members that if, by mischance, they were to come to power they would spend more on the NHS than the Government are planning to spend. I will give way to any hon. Member who is prepared to give a specific commitment to spend on the NHS more than the Government are currently planning to spend. I notice that not a single Opposition Member—least of all, the hon. Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke)—is attempting to catch your eye, Mr. Speaker, or mine with a view to answering that challenge.

The hon. Member for Halifax (Mrs. Mahon) drew attention to the ruse by which the Labour party attempts to cover the contradiction in its attitude towards the NHS. That party gives the impression that, somehow, it will come up with more money than the Government have provided. That notion has been exploded, and, against this background, the Labour party's opposition to every element of the reforms being suggested by the Government is fundamentally mindless.

Mr. Frank Field (Birkenhead): If even half of the hon. Gentleman's assertions are true, it must be galling for him. He is telling us how much the Government are spending on the NHS, but no one outside believes him. It is absurd to try to get the Opposition to outbid the Government on the question of funding arrangements. This Bill is about the delivery of health care. Our stance is that the Health Service has been a tremendous success story. Let us set the proportion of GNP spent on the Health Service against mortality and morbidity rates. Britain gets a good deal, and the electorate understands that. Surely it would be sensible to ask in what ways we can improve the service. Instead, what we have is a pig-headed decision that certain schemes, without even having been tried out, are to be introduced on a massive scale. I am therefore grateful for the hon. Gentleman's contribution. I hope that many people outside are listening, because the more he says, the fewer there will be who think that the Health Service is safe in his and his hon. Friends' hands.

Mr. Davies: The hon. Gentleman has raised a number of important points which I am only too pleased to address. I am glad that he, too, has come to the conclusion

that it would be pointless to conduct this debate on the basis of the two sides trying to outbid each other in terms of promised NHS expenditure. That would indeed be futile. I believe that the Labour party's commitments have lost all credibility. Nevertheless, I repeat that there is a fundamental contradiction between the Opposition's defence of the NHS in its present form and their continuing complaints about the workings of the service. The only answer that the Opposition can give is to say that the problem is one of funding and that they are in a special position to resolve that problem. Now that the Labour party has dropped the claim that it will spend more money on the NHS, that means of reconciling the contradiction falls away. Thus is exposed the hollowness of the arguments that we have heard throughout this debate.

I have the highest regard for the hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field), but I hope that, before we next have a debate on Health Service matters, he will spend a little time in the Library. I urge him in particular to look at the OECD figures on life expectancy and infant mortality of which, obviously, he is unaware. In 1948, when the National Health Service was introduced, this country was in the OECD's top quartile for life expectancy, for men and women, and in the bottom quartile for infant mortality. We are now in one of the two most unfavourable quartiles in respect of both. That is a serious relative deterioration in the general health of the British population. I say "relative" because, in absolute terms, the health of the population has improved greatly.

Mr. Frank Field: It is slightly barmy to make such comparisons. In the period after the second world war much of Europe was starving. Therefore, we would expect that to show up, particularly in the infant mortality figures. It is not comparing like with like to compare us with the rest of Europe in that period and then at present.

Mr. Davies: It is a good rule that one should attempt to display elementary familiarity with figures before one quotes them in the House.

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman (Lancaster): Is my hon. Friend aware of the startling discrepancy in expectation of life within quite a small region? For example, the expectation of life in the north-west as a whole is well below the national average, whereas in Lancaster it is above the national average because we run our affairs properly. That is one of the fallacies of the National Health Service. There are enormous discrepancies even between adjoining districts. That is one problem which the Bill will address and cure.

Mr. Davies: I congratulate my hon. Friend on health achievements in her constituency.

I welcome the Bill not because it enshrines some useful reforms but because the Government have resisted the temptation to replace one monolithic, global, systematic structure, introduced in 1948 and apparently valid for all time, with another monolithic, global, systematic structure, also apparently valid for all time. The Government have adopted an extremely pragmatic approach and have introduced a number of radical but specific reforms into a structure that continues to enshrine the basic principles of the NHS.

The Government have not been afraid to look round the world and to learn from foreign experience when it had something to teach us. To a certain extent, the fund-holding practice concept owes something to the system of health management organisations in the United States. Clearly, the introduction of self-governing hospitals will produce a structure more akin to that in continental countries such as France and Germany.

The Government have also learnt from analyses over many years of the experience of the NHS. Elements of the Bill reflect some of the thinking of Professor Enthoven in his famous report and reflect his concept of an internal market. They also reflect much of the thinking which that report inspired.

The Bill brings in useful and vital reforms. I have already mentioned some. If their operation is properly monitored and controlled, they should provide a basis for continuing uprating of the National Health Service. That is vital because we cannot legislate for the NHS once and for all and then forget about it for the next 40 years. It deserves, and will receive, detailed continuing attention. The Government did a good day's work for the country when they introduced the Bill, and I am proud to support it.

6.42 pm

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones (Ynys Môn): The debate has demonstrated graphically the ideological gulf between the Government and the Opposition. Unfortunately, the Minister, the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth), used the debate simply as debating practice. It seemed as though he wanted to earn brownie points from his friends on the Front Bench rather than tell us about the merits or demerits of the measure. I contrast that speech—34 minutes of doing nothing other than baiting the Labour party—with the compassionate speech of the hon. Member for Pontypridd (Dr. Howells). He and I share a background from which we can say that the National Health Service is part of our heritage. We are conscious that the Bill will undermine the philosophy upon which the Health Service was founded.

One reason why the hon. Member for Stirling refused to give way to Opposition Members was that he forgot to tell the House that, despite the fact that the Government have introduced a number of sweeteners to persuade doctors to accept budgets, we still get letters from the British Medical Association telling us that the proposals for budgets are flawed. The BMA also tells us that support for the Bill, even among Conservative voters, is declining dramatically and that a majority of Conservative voters do not believe the Government's rhetoric.

In Committee I was concerned about the way in which Ministers defended the principle of setting up NHS trusts. The Government referred to them as centres of excellence. None of us wants any hospital to be other than a centre of excellence. If hospitals are compared, and one is regarded as a centre of excellence, it must mean that the others are not. We are worried because the principle enshrined in the Bill will create two tiers of hospitals. The hospitals which become trusts will become centrepieces of the Government's new philosophy, while other hospitals will be starved of cash.

The desperate shortages in key services and key personnel within the Health Service have not yet been addressed on Third Reading. There is a shortage of physiotherapists, clinicians, speech therapists, occupational therapists, community psychiatric nurses and pharmacists. The position in speech therapy is disgraceful.

[Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones]

Speech therapists are paid less than almost every other similar profession. Speech therapists are despondent because, after four, five or six years of training, they have no proper career structure and their work is not properly valued by the Government, because they are grossly underpaid.

In recent months I have spoken to speech therapists who are so disgruntled about their pay that they are changing profession and becoming teachers. How can that be in the interests of the Health Service? Teachers are underpaid, yet speech therapists are moving to that profession. I urge the Government to do something about rates of pay for speech therapists. Many health authorities are in a Catch 22 position. Even if they had the cash to employ more speech therapists, not enough people are going into training. I urge the Government to consider that.

On the NHS side of the Bill, the philosophy of contracting within the new Health Service after 1991 will be meaningless in rural areas. Even if NHS trusts are established, there will be no opportunity for a meaningful relationship between a hospital and the provision of services by contract. By their very nature, hospitals in rural areas are monopolistic. There cannot be competition between them. The provisions on the setting up of NHS trusts are irrelevant to the people of Wales.

I know that other hon. Members want to speak, but I wish to touch briefly on community care. Although I welcome in principle the provision transferring assessment procedures to local authorities, I am concerned whether there will be proper funding for the service.

I commend to the House the words of the hon. Member for Eastleigh (Sir D. Price) who is the Vice-Chairman of the Social Services Select Committee. He quoted from Sir Roy Griffiths's report on ring fencing. I would also like to quote from the social services inspectorate report on the implementation of the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986. The summary of the report says of funding:

"The lack of resources made available by Central Government (despite provision for the Act being made in recent Rate Support Grant settlements) was a reason given by a number of SSDs to explain why they had allocated little, or not as much as they would have liked, to the operation of the Act."

That must be a case for ring fencing. Although the Government have made general provision, under the rate support grant, for allocation of funds, local authorities have found themselves constrained and have failed to send the resources where they should have gone—to implement the 1986 Act. The only answer to that is ring fencing.

I appreciate the point made by the Minister in Committee about the danger of eroding the independence of social services departments and local authorities in how they allocate their funds. However, the other cases are unanswerable. The rate support grant system means that local authorities will have to prioritise their spending. I urge the Government to think again to ensure that the grants for social services departments are ring-fenced for community care.

6.52 pm

Mr. Edward Leigh (Gainsborough and Horncastle): Unlike the hon. Member for Ross, Cromarty and Skye (Mr. Kennedy), I do not believe that the genesis of the Bill came from the desk of some Right-wing ideologue in the Adam Smith Institute.

Mr. Robin Cook: You know them all.

Mr. Leigh: I do not know them all. With my hon. Friend the Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth), I wrote a booklet for the No Turning Back group. We were the first to talk about the principle of money following the patient. That was not the genesis of the Bill; that lies in the creation of the National Health Service.

No one doubts the sincerity of the Labour party's defence of the NHS. It views the NHS as a monument to Socialism—and there are precious few left. I am pleased to see the right hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot) in his seat. I remember him saying that he wished that the wartime spirit could return. Actually, the creation of the NHS was less the work of the Attlee Government than that of the wartime coalition and the Beveridge report.

I say that the genesis of the Bill lies in those days, and not in the work of some ideologue, because the NHS badly needs reforming and modernisation.

Mr. Flannery: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Leigh: I will not give way; I have only two or three minutes.

The principle of the NHS is based on a highly centralised structure, which was common in those days in all our nationalised industries and, indeed, in Government Departments. That structure has developed into the regional and district health authorities that we know so well, and it is now creaking at the joints. I suspect that, if we were now faced with a Labour Government, they would be implementing many of the reforms that we are discussing today. No one who looked into a crystal ball in 1979 would have believed that, 10 years later, a Conservative Government would be spending £28 billion on the NHS—more than they spend on defence. No one would have believed it possible that we would now be treating 30,000 more patients every week than 10 years ago. However, those are the facts.

This debate is not about ideology, but about balancing priorities with resources. The Bill is—I hope the phrase is appropriate—a fundamentally and gradualist and Fabian measure. It is not a radical privatising measure, by any stretch of the imagination. Let us look at the core elements of the Bill—for instance, indicative drug budgets. The genesis of that proposal lies in the cash limits that the last Labour Government placed on health authorities, but these are not even cash limits. Is it unreasonable for the House—the guardian of the £28 billion that we give on behalf of our constituents to the providers of the NHS—to insist on accountability and cost control? That is the essence of indicative drug budgets.

Nor do I think it unreasonable for us to seek to modernise the NHS by bringing more choice and accountability down to the grass roots and away from the centralised structures to which I have referred. That is the basis of self-governing hospitals and of fund-holding practices. There is nothing radical in the Bill, in the sense

of NHS privatisation. The Bill will introduce a more businesslike approach, but it is not about making the NHS into a business.

I regret the phrase "internal market", because it sets the alarm bells ringing on the Opposition Benches. We were not talking about an internal market; in a sense, that is a contradiction in terms. We were talking about providing a better service for the public. The Bill will achieve that, and that is why I will support it tonight.

6.57 pm

Mr. Tom Clarke (Monklands, West): The hon. Member for Gainsborough and Horncastle (Mr. Leigh) has confirmed my conviction that all Conservative Members who made serious speeches either had strong reservations about the Bill or—in at least in one case—opposed it.

In a telling withering speech, the hon. Member for Northampton, South (Mr. Morris)—who was interrupted by several hon. Members who had not even heard the speech—gave an analysis of the Bill that I considered profound. He said that the Government have failed to take the people with them: surely that is self-evident. It is one of the problems that we have in trying to ensure a reasonable debate on the Bill.

The Bill is the baby—many would say the folly—of the Secretary of State for Health. We attempted in Committee —whatever he has said since—to be constructive and helpful, and to offer alternatives. However, none of our amendments was accepted. That is not surprising because of the self-imposed infallibility of the Secretary of State, which is—so far as I know—shared only by the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth). However, we in Scotland understand that aberration, even if we do not agree with it.

The Secretary of State's obsession is not surprising. After all, he told *The Independent* on 25 September 1989:

"I have been spectacularly more successful than any of my predecessors."

When a Gallup poll commissioned by the British Medical Association suggested——

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: Read on.

Mr. Tom Clarke: I will be even fairer to the right hon. and learned Gentleman by quoting what he told *The Daily Telegraph*——

Mr. Kenneth Clarke *rose*——

Mr. Tom Clarke: I will not give way to the Secretary of State. The Under-Secretary of State for Scotland spoke for 34 minutes, and would not give way to me. My speech is much shorter. I am being fair to the Secretary of State by quoting what he said to *The Daily Telegraph* so that we fully understand his approach to these matters. When a Gallup poll commissioned by the BMA suggested that only 15 per cent. of all voters approved of the Government's proposals, the Secretary of State said:

"That poll shows that three out of four people are mistaken."

I will now reluctantly give way to the Secretary of State, but it will be the last time, in view of the limitation that the Government have imposed on me as well as on other hon. Members.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: The hon. Gentleman is free to criticise my views, but he should not take half-sentences to attribute ridiculous allusions to me. On his first point, he knows that I said that I had been more spectacularly successful than any of my predecessors in achieving increased spending on the National Health Service out of the Treasury. That is factually correct. I did not make other generalised boasts, as the hon. Gentleman made it sound.

On the second matter, the hon. Gentleman knows that I explained that poll by saying that it measured the success of the BMA in misleading the public and therefore leading to so many members of the public being mistaken. I do not object to the hon. Gentleman attacking my views fairly, but using half sentences in such a ridiculous fashion does not help anybody.

Mr. Tom Clarke: The House will respect my view that the injury time that the Secretary of State has taken might be deducted from the Minister when he replies to the debate. I have no desire to distort the views of the Secretary of State. Why should I? Last night, despite his fine words, there was massive support for our modest new clause. But he persuaded enough of his troops to oppose it and to support him after what had been a squalid response on his part.

There are no positive measures in the Bill to deal not just with the crisis in the NHS, which hon. Members in all parts of the House have identified, but with the enormous problem of community care, to which the hon. Member for Eastleigh (Sir D. Price) referred in some detail. The hon. Member for Ynys Môn (Mr. Jones) was right to draw attention to the Government's disgraceful approach to the non-implementation of the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986.

If the Government really believe in community care, they have the basis on which to work, and in that respect they need not listen only to me. The Department's inspectorate produced a devastating report about non-implementation and the Government's disgraceful role in that lethargy. I invite the Secretary of State and the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland to try to defend themselves against what is said in that report about their lethargy. Despite the Government's fine words, there is nothing in the Bill for carers. The Government regard care as a commodity; carers are part of the market philosophy which we are supposed to support.

Our debates in Committee confirmed that we are confronted by a Government who will not listen. Not only will they not listen to hon. Members, but they will not even take note of what was said in the Griffiths report. It is not surprising that we said little about community care in Committee and in this restricted debate on the Floor of the House. After the Griffiths report was submitted, the Government held on to it for 20 months before commenting. Then they tried to find every way possible round the report's central recommendations.

Although the lack of debate about Griffiths and community care is no accident, we are still left with the problems of community care—of people leaving long-stay psychiatric hospitals and going into non-existent community care, of the trenchant criticisms of the Audit Commission, of the reality of people who must live in cardboard homes with cardboard hopes. Faced with those problems, the Secretary of State is like a man caught between washing and wringing his hands and offering no positive response. My hon. Friends the Members for Wakefield (Mr. Hinchliffe) and for Pontypridd (Dr. Howells) made that clear in their remarks.

[Mr. Tom Clarke]

We invited the Secretary of State to address the important issues involved in community care, to which Griffiths and others referred, and to do so on a level playing field. We met with no success, even though the right hon. and learned Gentleman claims to be committed to the mixed economy.

Between the statutory and independent sectors, all the advantages are going to the private sector. If anybody doubted that, proof came in the debate on income support. With income support and housing benefit denied to local authorities, the Government—although they say that they understand the problem—are so dogmatic, even on that issue, that they will not take on board the will of the House.

A few hours after that debate and the House taking its decision, some of us saw on television the Secretary of State for Social Security. I admit that it was a confusing time and that he did not appreciate why such a strong rebellion had taken place. Like many, I found his interview unusual and I did not understand what he said. Indeed, I got the feeling when the interviewer asked

"Mr. Newton, how are you going to respond to this decision?"

that not even Isaac Newton could have understood what the Secretary of State was trying to tell us.

The issues that have been raised on community care are absolutely clear, even though the Government pretend that they are not. The case for ring fencing—for earmarking funds—is overwhelming, and it is shameful of the Government not to have accepted that view. In their rejection of the mixed economy in a real sense and in their attitude to proper provision for local authorities, the Government are influenced overwhelmingly by dogma, as we have witnessed in other areas of Conservative legislation. We saw it with the social fund, and the difficulties that local authorities, voluntary organisations and others are facing with the social fund apply to the Bill.

That is why it is not surprising that the voluntary organisations are reminding us that the Government are declining to accept their responsibilities. The Spastics Society, the YMCA and the Salvation Army tell us that they are bursting at the seams because the Government, having failed to accept their responsibilities, are leaving it to the wider community—to charities and others, everybody but themselves—and are adopting a mean-minded approach which the British people find thoroughly unacceptable.

We have in the measure not one but four Bills. We have had one on health and community care for England and Wales, and likewise one for Scotland. Nobody can pretend that there was adequate consultation or that the views of the people of those nations were taken into account by the Government before bringing their proposals forward. When Conservative Members objected even to the short debates initiated by my Scottish and Welsh hon. Friends, English Members who were fair-minded enough to listen to those debates found that they were constructive, and they confirmed that more time should have been provided for discussion of the Scottish and Welsh issues raised by the Bill.

The opinion polls show that the Bill has little support among the people. That applies to the provisions on opting out, to what the Government have said about the role of junior doctors and to cash limits for drugs——

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman: There is none.

Mr. Clarke: If there is none, why is that not written into the Bill? The Secretary of State and the Under-Secretary of State for Scotland have been at their most unconvincing on that point, when they have pretended that on those matters the British public have been misled and that my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook), brilliant though he has been, has persuaded 55 million people about something. If the Government really believe what they have been saying, why have they not been prepared to write it into the Bill? I shall tell the House why.

One of the most compelling speeches that I have heard in our ridiculously restricted debates was that of my right hon. Friend the Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot) yesterday. He referred to the debate in July 1946 when Aneurin Bevan, introducing the concept of the National Health Service into the House, said:

"Quite frankly, I do not believe that they ever intended to have a universal health service."—[*Official Report*, 26 July 1946; Vol. 426, c. 467.]

Those words are just as true in 1990 as they were in 1946, and the Secretary of State and his hon. Friends know it.

There is a colossal division of opinion about the NHS. There is a great gap between the Government and the Opposition, as Opposition Members have said both in Committee and today. In fairness to several Conservative Members, it is clear that many of them do not go along with the Bill either. I only hope that they will join us in the Division Lobby tonight. But the battle will go on beyond that. It must go on because we are committed to keeping, improving and expanding the National Health Service as Nye Bevan saw it. We wish to introduce real community care supported by the community, not based on the "community couldn't care less" attitude and the prospect of community neglect which we find unacceptable.

There is another aspect to that difference of philosophy. The Prime Minister has said:

"Let our children grow tall—and some grow taller than others."

The Bill is a continuation of that logic. It is the catechism of inequality—let our people grow old and some will be better cared for than others; let our people go sick and some will have better provision than others; let people develop disabilities and some will be supported and some not; let people care for their elderly or sick relatives and we shall ignore them.

We are sending to another place a Bill which has been inadequately debated and the subject of the minimum consultation which amounted to a sham. It is a mean-minded Bill which is fatally flawed, unworthy of the House, and repugnant to the vast mass of the British people. In asking the House to oppose Third Reading, the Opposition send a clear signal to all the people of Britain that the forthcoming Labour Government will remove this shabby measure from the statute book with the speed and urgency that its miserable contents invite.

7.12 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Mr. Roger Freeman): The Bill was introduced into the House on 7 December last year by my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Health. It has had some three and a half months of detailed debate and scrutiny. On behalf of the Government, I thank all hon. Members from both sides of the House who have made constructive comments during the passage of the Bill. I

particularly thank my hon. Friends the Members for Newbury (Sir M. McNair-Wilson), for Stamford and Spalding (Mr. Davies) and for Gainsborough and Horncastle (Mr. Leigh) for their powerful speeches in support of the Bill on Third Reading.

The Bill is based on five key principles. It might be helpful to run over them. First, it is based above all on the need to provide better patient care. The patient comes first and last. [HON. MEMBERS: "Last."] No, the patient comes first and last.

Secondly, the NHS will continue to be financed under the Conservative Government by the taxpayer and it will be largely free at the point of delivery. It will remain a universal Health Service. The myth repeated again tonight by the hon. Members for Wakefield (Mr. Hinchliffe) and for Pontypridd (Dr. Howells) that there is a hidden agenda and that we intend to privatise the Health Service is not true. The Health Service will remain a national service, financed from public funds and available to all. The public do not want the NHS to be privatised and they will not be given a privatised NHS.

We have heard nonsense about hospitals opting out of the NHS for three and a half months. It is not true. We are delegating greater authority to hospitals, and hospitals to be known as NHS trusts—indeed, units other than hospitals—will have greater freedom to operate but will remain in the NHS.

My hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, South (Mr. Morris), who is here, made a powerful speech on Second Reading and again tonight. We all respect his views. He is in a minority. [HON. MEMBERS: "Is he?"] We shall see whether he is in a minority. His argument that the family practitioner service is to be cash-limited is simply not true. My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State and I have given him an assurance on many occasions that the drug service will not be cash-limited, neither at doctor, family practitioner, regional nor national level. I repeat that assurance.

In 1990-91 the family practitioner service is forecast to grow in cash terms by almost 13 per cent. That reflects the fact that there are pressures each year for more and better drugs, which cost more in real terms. It is not our intention to cut the drug budget in real terms—it will continue to grow. But we intend to bring downward pressure on the rate of growth of the drug budget. I believe that many doctors will agree that clinical responsibility can and should march side by side with doctors accepting financial responsibility. It is no longer reasonable to argue that, whether they work in general practice or the hospital service, doctors should have no account of the costs of the service. It is unrealistic.

Mr. Alfred Morris (Manchester, Wythenshawe): Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Freeman: I hope that the right hon. Gentleman will be brief, because of the limitation on time.

Mr. Morris: I am conscious of the limitation on time. Before this Bill leaves the House of Commons and, therefore, before the Minister concludes his speech, can we have a definitive statement of the Government's attitude to the plight of poor, vulnerable and elderly people in residential homes who face eviction? The Minister will recall that new clause 1 on that subject was carried with all-party support. Can he at least, before concluding the debate, give an assurance that there will be no evictions? Can he also make a statement on the Government's attitude to the whole issue?

Mr. Freeman: I understand the right hon. Gentleman's position. The House has voted and declared its position clearly on the matter. He will know that it is a prime responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Security. He said clearly at the Dispatch Box that he understood the feelings of the House. In due course and at the right time and place he will lay before the House and develop the thoughts that he outlined during that debate.

My hon. Friend the Member for Newbury was absolutely right about the third principle behind the Bill, which is better value for money. In response to a seated intervention from the hon. Member for Sheffield, Hillsborough (Mr. Flannery), he said that improving the quality of the NHS is not only about more money. The Government have provided more money. It is about managing resources better. [HON. MEMBERS: "Oh, no."] Hon. Members may groan but it is absolutely true. Many countries around the world envy the National Health Service because it provides good value for money—it is an excellent service—but we are interested in and admire the steps that we are taking to get even better value for money.

The hon. Member for Glasgow, Cathcart (Mr. Maxton) said that the National Health Service "is not inefficient". I hope that he is not burying his head in the sand and saying that no measures to improve the efficiency of the National Health Service are appropriate; of course they are. We need to get better value for money from the £30 billion of resources that we put in, as my hon. Friend the Member for Gainsborough and Horncastle said.

The fourth principle is that we need to provide—and will provide—greater choice for patients, not only in the selection of their general practitioners but in elective surgery and in the hospital to which they go which may not be their own local hospital. The agreement and approval of the patient is required before he travels to another hospital, but it is humane and sensible to offer him the chance to do so because that will reduce waiting times for others at hospitals which are not so fortunate. That is a sensible measure, which will improve the quality of care.

Moreover, we are offering choice for the elderly—real choice this time. That is something about which the hon. Member for Wakefield and my hon. Friend the Member for Eastleigh (Sir D. Price) have expressed concern. I shall come later to my hon. Friend's point about ring-fencing. We shall be offering real choice to the frail elderly rather than simply the choice of going into residential care. We intend them to have a real choice between staying at home with proper domiciliary care and going into residential care.

My hon. Friend the Member for Eastleigh raised an important point about ring fencing, which was not addressed at length in the debate. He raised the matter on Second Reading and my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State and my ministerial colleagues carefully considered his arguments. In fairness, there are two important arguments against ring fencing in relation to the care of the frail elderly and the mentally handicapped that my hon. Friend did not address. First, there is no evidence that personal social services depts are in any way faring badly in relation to other local government departments in

[Mr. Freeman]

terms of the relative share of resources that is available to them. There is no evidence that money is being diverted into other activities.

Secondly, if we pursued my hon. Friend's argument to its logical conclusion, all aspects of expenditure by social services departments would have to be ring-fenced. That would be a complete denial of the responsibility and flexibility that we have awarded to local authorities.

Sir David Price *rose——*

Mr. Freeman: My hon. Friend will forgive me if I do not give way; I am just about to conclude my remarks.

We believe strongly that flexibility in local authorities should be preserved.

The fifth and last general principle concerns the delegation of authority in the National Health Service. That is what lies behind our proposals. We are talking about delegation not to, but from, the Secretary of State —to the National Health Service trusts, to general practice fund holders and to smaller, more businesslike district health authorities. We have great confidence in the staff who work in the Health Service, of whom there are almost 1 million. That is why we propose to delegate greater authority to them.

We have heard almost no constructive suggestions from the Opposition about reforming the National Health Service. The solution of the hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) is simply to throw more cash at it. The only two commitments that I can find in the Labour party's election manifesto are to the abolition of compulsory competitive tendering, which would cost £100 million, and to steps that would lead inevitably to the abolition of private medicine and income generation in the Health Service, which would cost a further £100 million. The first consequence of the hon. Gentleman's appointment as Secretary of State for Health—which will not happen—would be the loss of £200 million, or £1 million on average per district health authority. As for the suggestion of the hon. Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman) that we should have activity budgets, it is not well thought out. The Labour party has not explained where the money is coming from to fund greater activity in hospitals. But our proposals for money to follow patients are well thought out.

We are confident that at the next general election, the only poll that counts, the public will realise that our reforms—which will have been in place for two years in the case of the general contract and one year in the case of the reforms themselves—have worked and are beneficial. Not only is the National Health Service safe in our hands; it will become a better National Health Service in our hands. I invite the whole House, especially my hon. Friends, to support the Bill.

7.25 pm

Mr. Alfred Morris (Manchester, Wythenshawe): There is scant time left, but the House ought to have a definitive statement from the Government about their attitude to an amendment—new clause 1—that was supported on both sides of the House, the case for which was brilliantly argued by my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook). The proposal had all-party support. Before the conclusion of the debate, can we at least have the plain assurance that no elderly person will be evicted from residential care simply because he or she lacks money?

It being three hours after the commencement of proceedings, MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *put forthwith the Question already proposed from the Chair, pursuant to the resolution [14 March].*

The House divided: Ayes 293, Noes 215.

Division No. 131] **[7. 26 pm**

AYES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amery, Rt Hon Julian
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cope, Rt Hon John
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Critchley, Julian
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fishburn, John Dudley
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Sir Norman
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Hague, William
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hayes, Jerry
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Rt Hon Michael
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Sir Charles
Jack, Michael

Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
King, Rt Hon Tom *(Bridgwater)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
McNair-Wilson, Sir Patrick
Madel, David
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Sir Hal
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Moss, Malcolm
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Norris, Steve
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, Rt Hon John
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Riddick, Graham
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Rt Hon Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, Sir William
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Rt Hon Ian *(Herts N)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Rt Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Walker, Rt Hon P. *(W'cester)*
Waller, Gary
Walters, Sir Dennis
Ward, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, Sir John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. David Lightbown and
Mr. Irvine Patnick.

NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashdown, Rt Hon Paddy
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunningham, Dr John
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Eadie, Alexander
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Gould, Bryan
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Harman, Ms Harriet
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hoey, Ms Kate *(Vauxhall)*
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howells, Dr. Kim (Pontypridd)
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kennedy, Charles
Kilfedder, James
Kirkwood, Archy
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum A.
McFall, John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
Maclennan, Robert
McNamara, Kevin
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliot

Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Reid, Dr John
Richardson, Jo
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Sillars, Jim
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Smith, J. P. *(Vale of Glam)*
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon Sir David
Steinberg, Gerry
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Winterton, Nicholas
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mr. Ken Eastham.

Question accordingly agreed to.
Bill read the Third time, and passed.

Tees and Hartlepool Port Authority Bill
(By Order)

Order for Second Reading read.

7.39 pm

Mr. Stuart Bell (Middlesbrough): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The Tees and Hartlepool Port Authority Bill is essentially a Government measure. It is a public measure. It is part of Government policy to privatise the ports of the land.

The Minister for Aviation and Shipping, who is in his place now, has made various statements to the effect that the Government cannot find time to put these privatisation measures through the House properly. He has therefore urged companies or authorities such as the Tees and Hartlepool port authority to use the private route. Similar statements were made by the previous Secretary of State for Transport. Two years ago, he urged the docks, including Tees and Hartlepool, to take the private route. That was confirmed by the Minister for Aviation and Shipping.

My submission to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that this should not be private business. Lord Graham made the same point earlier in the week in another place. He said that the River Tees Barrage and Crossing Bill that was before the other place should not be dealt with in this way. We believe that it is an abuse by the Executive of the legislature and that by means of private business the Executive are endeavouring to implement Government business.

Sir Michael Shaw (Scarborough): Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I believe that the procedure is absolutely correct in this instance. My hon. Friends—

—

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. It would be more appropriate for the Chair to rule on whether the procedure is appropriate.

I am grateful to the hon. Member for Middlesbrough (Mr. Bell) for having given notice that he intended to raise the point. Mr. Speaker has considered the matter. He is satisfied that the Bill is proper to be proceeded with as a private Bill, since it is concerned with the regulation of an authority that was established by means of a private Act. If hon. Members consider that it is undesirable for the change of status of the authority to be brought about in this way, their appropriate course is to vote against the measure.

7.40 pm

Mr. Richard Holt (Langbaurgh): I beg to move, That the Bill be now read a Second time.

When the Tees Navigation Act was passed in 1808, the position was slightly different from what it is today. There was a clear and essential need to establish an effective management body to help the traders on Teesside to develop their foreign and domestic trade. However, ever since 1808 there has been state regulation of the port.

It is interesting to note from a historical point of view that the people who were originally entrusted by law in 1808 with looking after the well-being of the Tees and Hartlepool port authority's predecessor were the 44 burgesses who were riparian owners of the land on either side of the river. In this age of feminine equality, it is

interesting to note that four of the 44 were ladies. That shows that, in the north-east, we were ahead of the game then, as we are ahead of the game now.

The parallel with the present is relevant. The trade prospects for this community, and for the north-east as a whole, are being restricted. This fresh initiative will sweep away the legislative shackles which are restricting the development of trade.

The docks under the control of the Tees and Hartlepool port authority have changed beyond all recognition, but the legal restrictions on its activities are essentially the same as they have been for 180 years. The movement of goods through the European market is now dominated by the requirement of manufacturers and customers for door-to-door, time-definite deliveries. Port facilities are no longer gateways between home and foreign markets but links in a continuous transport chain within a single worldwide market. Ports cannot stand still in the face of change.

The Bill will change the status of the authority to that of a normal commercial enterprise and will release it from the constraints of "trust" status. Only then can our third largest port compete effectively in the modern world of a single European market.

Trust ports are a peculiarly British concept. They are to be found only in this country. They have developed by virtue of circumstances rather than as a result of any express policy or planned development. The ports of Tees and Hartlepool together handle between 30 million and 40 million tonnes of goods each year—mainly oil, ore, cars, steel, forest products and containers. They form the third largest port undertaking in the United Kingdom, coming only after London and Sullom Voe, and employ 828 people.

At present, the authority is allowed to use its money only to maintain the ports. It could, if it wished, gold-plate the cranes on the quayside. It has enough money to do so. In his Adjournment debate, the hon. Member for Middlesbrough (Mr. Bell) described the authority as being run in an exemplary fashion, with an impressive record by any standards. Despite that commercial success, within its present limitations the law prevents it from expanding. The port has the potential to become a driving force for commercial expansion in the north-east, creating new wealth and new jobs.

Mr. Frank Cook (Stockton, North): The hon. Gentleman emphasised the fact that the Tees and Hartlepool port authority can invest only in port-related activities or in port development. However, in 1984-85, the port authority did not feel that it was bound by the alleged restriction and invested in property, finance, aviation, air travel, timber importing, transport, display signs, storage, security fencing and engineering. If the restrictions are as tight as the hon. Gentleman says, why is it that, only five years ago, the port authority could invest in such a wide range of products?

Mr. Holt: The reason is that the authority has a wise and good management. The law as it stands at the moment says:

> "Powers are exercisable only for the conservancy, maintenance and improvement of the harbour and the facilities afforded therein or in connection therewith and for the reclamation of land."

Mr. Cook: Is the hon. Gentleman saying that the port authority broke the law?

Mr. Holt: I am saying that, within that constraint, the Tees and Hartlepool port authority properly invested money in areas that were within that definition. If it wanted to open a fish and chip shop to sell the excellent fish of Whitby, which is in the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Scarborough (Sir M. Shaw), it would not be allowed to do so under the current legislation. It wants to expand and grow. It does not wish to be held back by the 1808 and subsequent legislative restrictions that have been placed upon it.

The port has the potential to become a driving force for commercial expansion in the north-east of England as a whole, creating new wealth and new jobs. I find it strange —indeed, perverse and bizarre—that Opposition Members are seeking to stifle the opportunity that is presented by the Bill. The authority currently has cash reserves of nearly £30 million and last year made a profit on trading of over £10 million, despite the Labour party's efforts to encourage a damaging strike.

The authority is simply not allowed to utilise its money effectively, and yet—within sight of the authority's land —there are development projects and even an enterprise zone in which the authority would dearly love to invest, if only it were allowed to do so. Teesside is at the forefront of the Government's urban regeneration policies. All of us from that area will vouch for that.

Over recent years, THPA has contributed to the success of most of the Teesside development corporation's flagship schemes and it is now time for it to be allowed to invest in other projects. The success of schemes such as the Hartlepool marina and the Tees offshore base, which are joint ventures with the Teesside development corporation, testify to the active role that the authority is waiting to play in regenerating the area that I and my colleagues have the honour to represent in the House. The restrictions of trust status are an absurd anachronism which cannot be allowed to continue.

Last year, the Government freed the port industry from the burden of the dock labour scheme—not before time, as I shall hear from many of my colleagues. That has done much to put United Kingdom ports on an equal footing with their continental competitors, but much more still needs to be done. The Tees and Hartlepool port authority is determined to capitalise on the new opportunities provided by the single European market and by the expansion in world trade. It has today announced the creation of two new companies to spearhead its expansion drive in the north-east: THPA Distribution and Services Ltd. and THPA Developments Ltd.

Mr. Ronnie Campbell (Blyth Valley): Can the hon. Gentleman tell the House how much imported coal will come up the river once the port gets on the go?

Mr. Holt: As the hon. Gentleman knows, a great deal of coal comes into the port now for the British steel industry on Teesside. I understand that, beyond that, there are no plans for the importation of coal.

The creation of the new companies is one of the first practical steps towards creating new wealth and jobs in the north-east, but their success depends on the authoritiy being able to cast off the straitjacket of trust status now so that full preparations for 1992 and beyond can proceed immediately. That can be achieved only—I repeat, only —by the Bill.

[Mr. Holt]

The implications of the Bill will be widespread for the region. Under the twin curses of the dock labour scheme and trust status, the number of people employed by the authority has declined steadily and will continue to do so until the authority is given the freedom to expand, reversing the trend of many years by employing more and more people in a wider range of jobs. The new jobs will not only come directly from the port itself. The increased investment in the area and the injection of many millions of pounds into the local economy will have a knock-on effect, creating a host of jobs in the construction, transport, leisure and other industries.

The Labour party has tried to peddle the myth that reconstitution will deprive the local community of a say in how the port is run. Let me explode that myth now. The port is not owned by a company, by the local authority or by the Government, so it is accountable to nobody except its board. That board is appointed by the Secretary of State for Transport from people who have particular areas of expertise, but who are not appointed as representatives of the local people.

The port is not accountable financially or otherwise to the Secretary of State—indeed, it is not accountable to anyone else. The board can make decisions and it is accountable to no one. After the Bill has been passed, the plc will be responsible to its shareholders. The authority has deliberately chosen a method of issuing the shares of the new company that will ensure that the local community has a major stake in it. It guarantees that the shares will go to the staff and to local pension funds, and I am sure that the trustees of the Cleveland county council pension fund will see the wisdom of investing in this good thing, and will do so as soon as they can.

Mr. Neville Trotter (Tynemouth): Is my hon. Friend aware that business in the north-east is very much behind his proposal that the future success of the port is vital to the interests of the north-east and that there is a strong feeling of support from north-east business for the Bill? Does he further agree that one of the traditional weaknesses of the north-east has been the lack of commercial headquarters? By means of the Bill, will he not create a further commercial headquarters which can show success in other directions as well as the success that it has already shown in managing the port?

Mr. Holt: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. He of all people from the north-east of England has a wide knowledge of industry and commerce. He is constantly in touch with all the people in the region—*[Interruption.]*—who are responsible not just for shouting from the other side, but for creating wealth and jobs, and giving other people the opportunity to earn a living. My hon. Friend is right to make the point that the whole of the north-east of England, except a few Opposition morons—most of whom are sitting in the Chamber this evening—is waiting for the Bill to be passed.

The authority's commitment to Teesside needs no emphasis by me, but is confirmed by the inclusion in the Bill of every statutory safeguard that is contained in present legislation for the port, the users and the region. The Bill, as I have said, is supported by everyone in the area who recognises the great potential of a reconstituted port in the private sector. Over 100 of my hon. Friends have put their names to an early-day motion backing the Bill, which is almost unique.

The leader of the county of Cleveland's Conservative group has described it as

"an initiative which will benefit the people of Cleveland greatly"

and as

"an opportunity to generate wealth and create much needed employment".

That support has been echoed by all the leading local Conservatives in Cleveland, as well as by the Confederation of British Industry regionally and nationally. Although he obviously cannot take a view on a private Bill, I hope that later this evening my hon. Friend the Minister for Aviation and Shipping will confirm that the Government's policy is still that commercial enterprises fare best in the private sector.

In an area that hon. Members of all parties recognise needs more self-generated investment to build on the high level of investment already provided by the Government and the private sector, there exists a commercially successful organisation which is bursting at the seams with potential investment for the region.

Mr. John Prescott (Kingston upon Hull): You were supposed to have said that with emphasis.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Holt: I am quite happy for Opposition morons to make as much noise as they like. They have no logical arguments and they have not put many questions to me.

There exists a commercially very successful organisation—*[Interruption.]* Ridicule is no comment; it is merely the means by which Opposition Members show their ignorance of what is happening in the north-east of England. The Bill will rid the authority of the disablement of trust status, allowing it to expand and, at the same time, it will give the local community a major stake in one of the greatest assets of Teesside—its port. I am sure that such widespread support will be reflected by hon. Members. It is essential for the development of commerce and jobs in the north-east that hon. Members allow the Bill to go forward to receive the detailed scrutiny of a Select Committee. I ask the House please to support it for the good of Cleveland, the north-east of England and Britain as a whole.

7.58 pm

Mr. Ted Leadbitter (Hartlepool): More than 25 years ago I took an interest in what was happening in the ports on the Tees and in the bay in which Hartlepool is located. I can recall vividly our many vexing and taxing debates on the Bill that set up the first estuarial authority in England. The Bill inculcated disgust in the minds of many people because at that time the port of Hartlepool was suffering the consequences of a deep depression. We suspected that the proposals that were to become the Tees and Hartlepool Port Authority Act 1966 would leave Hartlepool defenceless.

We debated in the Grand hotel in Hartlepool—not that we needed any sustenance. The challenge was there and we accepted that certain interests were involved. There was an arrogant presumption that those in positions of authority in the port world knew far better than any elected Member of Parliament what was best for the area. Unfortunately, the converse is always true. An elected Member has an

obligation to look at the broad background of matters of concern to the people whom he or she represents. The authority officials do not have that remit. They are there to make the port work and, if they are good at their job, they are outstandingly essential. The two roles are complementary. The elected Member represents the broader background of issues and interests and the port officials who seek to run the port at a profit have the specialist professionalism. Those are highly interesting roles in the development of any business or public utility, industry or agency that is accountable to the Government.

I distrusted the Bill because it did not appear to contain an undertaking to keep the port of Hartlepool alive. Rather, it suggested the repeal of legislation that protected the port. I had to come here as a new Member and, for the first time, sit among experienced Members and say, "I object." That was great fun. It worked magic. The Bill just went back. I did not realise that the Chairman of Ways and Means had powers to bring it back quickly. The Bill stayed its course and the Parliamentary Commissioner was awfully decent about it. Then I introduced a clause to protect Hartlepool. But I am not so green now. My naivety and lack of experience then was accompanied by a spot of good fortune, but this time I bring to the House a considerable amount of experience.

Why, when the argument for an estuarial authority was so good 25 years ago, do we want to change it now? The Rochdale report made a number of excellent recommendations that benefited British ports. The port that I represented was saved and the Tees and Hartlepool port authority has gone from success to success and has been blessed with good management, despite the oddballs. There are a couple there now, but they are of no account in the end because, like all of us, they come and go and serve their time in the middle.

Did someone sit down one bright morning in Queen's square, Middlesbrough and say to himself, "I think we should go in for privatisation"? I do not think anyone did that. The Minister said, "It's time you did some good thinking and got rid of the old-fashioned dock labour scheme." We thought that we were fighting for a principle. We thought that we should keep the scheme since it had done the dockers a reasonably good turn in their time. It got them over the transitional period of depression that scars the working lives of people in our ports and in our industries.

But some of us forgot that the first stepping stone to privatisation was the pre-emption of something else. The Government have a policy on privatisation. I happen to be a senior Chairman in the House. I notice that one of my colleagues has now left the Chamber. I hope that he will not return because we do not want his vote tonight.

The Government's administrative wheels are a little clogged up and they have introduced three private Bills as test cases. I suspect that the Tees and Hartlepool Port Authority Bill is an agent provocateur for the Government. One or two of those involved may be on the list of the good and the great and a couple of knighthoods might come along in a few years' time. I do not object to that as a means of rewarding people for services done, but it is nice to mention it.

Why privatisation? The port is highly profitable. It has between £20 million and £30 million in cash floating around. It has about £60 million worth of assets. Its capital returns are running at about 18 per cent. The volume of traffic is as outstanding as the hon. Member for Langbaurgh (Mr. Holt) said. We do not quarrel about small matters of fact like that, only about a change of approach. Some talk about political philosophy, but I prefer to talk about good common sense.

Why should a highly successful trust authority want to venture into the questionable waters of privatisation? The hon. Member for Langbaurgh said that everybody wanted this change. The hon. Member for Tynemouth (Mr. Trotter) is here, although he comes from a place somewhat foreign to our Teesside. Still, we are pleased to see him back in the country, interfering in our little local matters.

The local authority, the county council, Hartlepool council and other district councils do not agree with the port authority. I have here a letter signed by Mr. D. B. Winney, the director of ABBA Shipping Limited, Union dock, Hartlepool. He says in his letter, which was published in a newspaper:

> "The Port Authority have, in recent years, in any case not felt bound by the alleged restriction of being an 'estuary-wide port organisation' because in 1984-85, they invested funds in companies, some of which were well outside Cleveland County, who were involved in property, finance, aviation, air travel, timber importing, transport, display signs, storage, security fencing and engineering."

That is what Tees and Hartlepool port authority is doing now, under the Act. The authority has not rebutted that accusation and it takes a great interest in such newspaper articles.

That poses a question: what is it that the port authority cannot do in the private sector because of the restrictions of the Act? Hon. Members are briefed on debates, and if any hon. Member can tell me that he has been advised by the port authority that it is not true that it has engaged in these private ventures, I shall come to the House and apologise because I will have been misled by a respectable employer.

Mr. Frank Cook: That is very fair.

Mr. Leadbitter: It is fair.

I have another question: why are we going through this arduous task, this highly expensive exercise, of a private Bill? In December 1989, as my hon. Friend the Member for Middlesbrough (Mr. Bell) said, he had an Adjournment debate on this subject. He referred to the Rochdale report, which recommended, wisely, that, with the unfolding of the new port system for the principal estuarial ports, and the linking of the ports, it would be helpful if Ministers were given the power to amend, by affirmative resolution, in such a manner as to meet the changing wishes of port authorities.

If an hon. Member who has argued for saving a port that he represents and concluded that the exercise was worth it because of the formation of the first estuarial authority in the 1966 Act, then finds that the port authority has invested—I presume wisely—in a number of different economic sectors, why should he support this expensive business of doing something on the pretext that those activities cannot be carried out? If the authority can invest in aviation, signposting and all the rest of it, where else does it want to invest?

Mr. Holt: Like the hon. Member for Middlesbrough (Mr. Bell) in his Adjournment debate, the hon. Member for Hartlepool (Mr. Leadbitter) uses, cleverly, words such as "suggested"—the committee under Rochdale "suggested" changes. There is no evidence of those suggestions being implemented.

Mr. Leadbitter: No, but if Governments have the will, they have all the facilities available to them to do just that. I have spent much of my time in the House of Commons chairing Committees considering statutory instruments. I find orders coming to the House late at night when nearly everyone has gone so that they go through easily. Any Minister or Secretary of State can have his way through a variety of ways and means. I do not argue with that, but I argue that Tees and Hartlepool port authority has introduced an expensive measure to enable it to do something that it is doing already.

Mr. Winney has something interesting to say about the Bill. He says:

"The most ominous part of the proposed Bill being published is in Part III, paragraph 12, which allows the current members of the authority to transfer en bloc to the new Trust (or holding company) being set up to continue the undertaking.

These people will then be able to continue in perpetuity, appointing the chairman of their choice and replacing members who leave the authority with their own nominees. Their power will be absolute.

Under schedule 2, paragraph 9, they will be able to fix their own remuneration".

That is not an inconsiderable advantage. I know of one man who hopes to God that his industry will be privatised next year, because he has found that his fellow chairmen are getting more money as they are free to make up their own pay slip.

Mr. Winney continues:

"Finally, under Part III, section 14 (4) 'The Trust may . . . provide for one or more employees' share schemes to be established in respect of the holding company: and any such scheme may provide for the transfer of the shares without consideration.'

In other words, the reserves will be released not 'for the good of Teesside' but for the good of past, present and future" members of the authority. A corollary of that point is that other people will benefit. As Mr. Winney says, chairmen can be appointed for life. There will be a "You scratch my back and I'll scratch yours" attitude. The old golf club pals will be at it and they will make their own appointments. It is happening now.

Under article 3 of the Tees and Hartlepool Ports Authority Constitution Revision Order 1978 the local authority is able to appoint not fewer than two and not more than three people from a local panel on to the board. However, under article 3(5)(a), the Secretary of State can also appoint people—I fail to recall the exact number—who have knowledge of planning and the environment. Under that provision, people must be appointed who have special local knowledge.

We are talking about a highly successful port authority. With one or two exceptions, the management team is outstanding. It is co-operative. We are faced with a privatisation proposal that would lead to a transfer of all liabilities and assets. There would be a holding company, and the appointments to the board would be bound to be different from those that are currently and statutorily laid down.

Traditionally there has been a close working relationship between local authorities, which have been given powers by the House to represent the broad and general interests of the public, especially in areas where there is access to ports. There has been a link between the people and port authorities, and that has led to a great deal of pride and good will. When we have something good, it does not make sense to say, "We shall let it all go now. We shall cut all the links and ties. We shall no longer have people on the board who have knowledge of planning and the environment."

I am the Chairman of the Committee that is considering the Environmental Protection Bill, and the port authority has a considerable part to play in what is taking place in that Committee. We are trying to find how best to co-operate and work with the port authority and attempting also to inject into the management operations of the authority, within its land boundaries and outside them, environmental standards that will ease the minds of many people in the area.

Mr. Tim Devlin (Stockton, South): The link between Teesside and the structure of the board is important. Under the Bill, the consortium of shareholders that will take over the ownership of the undertaking will be drawn from management, employees of the board, port authority pensioners, pension funds of the port authority, local authorities and port users. Accordingly, the link with the local community will be as strong as ever. Surely the board will reflect the share ownership.

Mr. Leadbitter: Some links are firm and others are tenuous. Some so-called links are formed because it is thought that it is nice to be courteous and to have that sort of relationship. I am saying that the links will be broken.

Mr. Jack Thompson (Wansbeck): I understand the proposition that pension funds, employees and management would be involved, but there is nothing to prevent shares from being sold. In two, three, four or five years' time, the ownership of the port authority could be in the hands of London, Brighton, Swansea, Inverness or even Tokyo. That will not help the port authority.

Mr. Leadbitter: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for that intervention. It demonstrates the seriousness of what we are seeking to do.

If I were to say to the port authority officials, "For God's sake think again", no harm would be done to the growing economy and prosperity that we all want in the north-east. We are talking about something that affects us all in the north-east; it is not merely a Tees and Hartlepool matter. But would any harm be done if we took the route set out in the Bill? Some might say no. They might say, "Let us get on to the adventurous road of challenge and responsibility." That is what Professor Tawney might say. Those people must understand that there is a terrifying risk.

I have seen some greedy people since I became a Member of this place. They make me sick. One example is the Guinness affair. Let us not think that something of that sort could not happen following the privatisation of the port authority. The Lonrho management and the Al Fayed brothers insult each other as though they have no human decency. They do not have the guts to sue for libel. They reflect greed and enormous wealth.

Mr. Ian Bruce (Dorset, South): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Leadbitter: I shall complete this part of my argument and then allow the hon. Gentleman to intervene. I am getting into form and when I do so I stick out my chin. I am prepared to take what then ensues because hon. Members have a right to come back at me.

Those who have studied the City scandals and the way in which takeover rules have been broken will understand what I am saying. In the area which I have represented for over a quarter of a century there has been an outstanding record of good management and growing success.

Mr. Ian Bruce: I listened carefully to the way in which the hon. Gentleman began his remarks. I was pleased when he paid fulsome tribute to the management of the port authority. I am attracted to the debate because I represent a port authority—Weymouth—and I have talked to that authority's management. I am encouraged by what it said and by the profitability of its operation. I should like a private company to be developed in the north-east, for which I have love and affection. I look to the future in the hope that such a company could expand its operations in the same way, perhaps, as Associated British Ports. The management services of a port such as the one that I represent—not investment services—would demonstrate that the north-south divide is not a one-way street of bringing expertise from the north-east to the south. The future should see us developing land bridges and taking advantage of all the opportunities offered by the Bill, which comes before us in advance of the Government's thoughts of putting out all the trust ports——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman is making an intervention, not a speech.

Mr. Bruce: It is an intervention, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Interventions must be brief.

Mr. Bruce: Surely Opposition Members are trying to deny opportunities to an excellent management team.

Mr. Leadbitter: I have always believed—I am not alone in my belief—that confrontation in the economy is unwise. Private enterprise, freedom of movement, laissez-faire and public accountability are all complementary. Many areas of our so-called private sector industry have been delighted over the years by the assistance of large publicly owned utilities. How many of our private enterprise companies have lived off the backs of the steel industry, the coal industry and British Rail? I stand for a balance between private enterprise and public accountability. I do not believe that dogma—on any side—is good for debate in the House.

The Tees and Hartlepool port authority has been successful. It has invested in other companies, and in private companies. It has not done that for fun—it has done so to get a return on its investments. Where something is successful like that, there is no point in saying, "Look, you will get a little bit more, boys, if you privatise yourselves as well."

The House should know that the marina in Hartlepool has been initiated by the Teesside development corporation. I was the first public figure in Hartlepool to suggest a marina. I shall tell the House why it was not started then. So many people crawled along to the public coffers—so-called "high-risk entrepreneurs"—that it never got off the ground. However, a marina has now been started. There is a working relationship between the Teesside development corporation and a company called Lovell. Tees and Hartlepool port authority has shares in the Teesside development corporation. It is like the Father, Son and the Holy Ghost. In my view, that holy trinity is working to some benefit. There is a composite of a trust company, a private company and the Teesside development corporation, all working well together.

Mr. Devlin: I am sorry to trouble the hon. Gentleman again, but I am a little confused. I thought that I heard him say that the THPA has shares in the Teesside development corporation. Surely that is not possible because the Teesside development corporation was set up under legislation as a body corporate by statute. It does not have shares.

Mr. Leadbitter: I do not think that I heard the hon. Gentleman correctly. Perhaps he will say that again.

Mr. Devlin: I may be mistaken about what the hon. Gentleman has said, but I thought that he said that the Tees and Hartlepool port authority had shares in the Teesside development corporation. The TDC is a body created by statute and does not have shares. I am wondering whether I heard the hon. Gentleman correctly.

Mr. Leadbitter: Perhaps I should correct that. In fact, I think that the TDC has shares in the Tees and Hartlepool port authority. I have seen the share list somewhere, but I shall write to the THPA if I have made a mistake.

Mr. Devlin: I am sorry, but I do not think that the hon. Gentleman is correct on that point either. As I understand it, the THPA does not have any shares at the moment.

Mr. Leadbitter: That is a matter for me to clear up, but I have seen the document somewhere.

Mr. Bell: As my hon. Friend says, the question about shareholdings will be rectified or verified later. However, is it not a fact that Tees and Hartlepool port authority is involved in a tripartite development venture, the Hartlepool marina, involving the Teesside development corporation and the Lovell partnership?

Mr. Leadbitter: Yes, that is the position.

The hon. Member for Stockton, South (Mr. Devlin) was right to intervene. If an hon. Member has not got something quite right in the debate, he will seek to put it right in the proper manner later.

Mr. Frank Cook: To ensure that we get a balanced view of the nitpicking that is taking place, will my hon. Friend comment on the fact that one of the major petitioners against the Bill was Teesside development corporation? Therefore, the relationship that we have been trying to put to bed during the past five minutes is not quite as cosy as one might be led to believe by some of our friends on the Government Benches—and I use that expression advisedly.

Mr. Leadbitter: I shall pick up my point about risks. From experience, I believe that it will be a risk to divest the THPA of its assets, which will be transferred. When a holding company is in place and a shareholding applied for, I have no doubt that if the financial interests exist there will be a takeover. If there was a takeover, what would happen to the interests in the north-east which currently benefit from the THPA as constituted at present? It is more likely than not that any large company which takes over the THPA will have its headquarters elsewhere. That will be our first problem.

[Mr. Leadbitter]

Secondly, the shares would reflect a certain amount of public reaction. Some people would have a handsome windfall. We have seen that happen in some of the recent privatisations, of which water is a good example—*[Interruption.]* Conservative Members need not say that that does not happen because the French took over some of our water companies.

Mr. Kevin Barron (Rother Valley): One of the biggest windfalls, and one of the Government's first privatisations in the early 1980s, was from Associated British Ports. Within 24 hours of trading, the price of its shares was phenomenally higher than the price at which the Government sold them. Ever since, the Government have considered ports to be a lucrative area from which they and their friends can make money when they are privatised.

Mr. Leadbitter: Yes, indeed.

Should those things come about, we must consider all the consequences that flow from takeovers, such as the power and greed and all the damage that is done to the areas that the harbours serve—in this case, to the Hartlepool and Tees area.

Let us consider my constituency. Through the actions of Hartlepool district council, we have spent about £2 million on land improvements, repairs, changes to facilities and, in some cases, to operations in the THPA area. That shows the close concern and working relationship exercised by Hartlepool district council, when representing its people. Such a working relationship would not exist in the circumstances that I have described, if the risks of privatisation falter in the end.

What are the benefits of the proposals? There is no doubt that the chief executive's salary will jump up in double quick time, and that will flow right through the organisation. Those concerned will be rubbing their hands with glee and trotting off on holidays abroad. Instead of travelling economy class, they will travel first class.

Mr. Holt: That is cheap stuff.

Mr. Leadbitter: That is what will happen——

Mr. Holt *rose*——

Mr. Leadbitter: I shall give way in a moment.

I hope hon. Members will not take exception to this point. I should like to know the chairman of a former public body that is privatised whose salary did not jump up to three or four times its original level. That is what will happen here. It will be passed by the board and public representatives will not be there. Incidentally, Conservative Members should not assume that public representatives are redundant in privatisations. There is already an 18 per cent.—or thereabouts—capital return on investments. There is already a high turnover, and the organisation is a commercial success. Other disadvantages always follow from such circumstances. The company would not accept the same kind of social, economic and environmental responsibilities as it does now as a trust port. It would be all a question of return for the shareholders; everything else would take second, third, fourth and fifth places.

Mr. Holt: I could not let the hon. Gentleman's rather nasty remarks against the chief executive of the port authority go by without asking him if, before making those attacks, he took the trouble to meet the chief executive and his board to discuss their private Bill and put his objections to them. I might tell him that, at present, they can set their own salaries and decide to travel first class. I think that the hon. Gentleman ought to consider quite carefully the remarks that he has just made against very distinguished business men in the north-east of England.

Mr. Leadbitter: Unfortunately, the hon. Gentleman is mistaken. I have thought out very carefully what I have said. More than that, I have behind me not only sufficient knowledge but the great advantage of a lot of experience. Incidentally, in this House, experience is far more important than intellect, and it is something that the hon. Gentleman is desperately short of.

Mr. Bell: Is my hon. Friend aware that there is at present a salaries committee, as I understand it, that looks at salaries on the Tees and Hartlepool port authority? Did my hon. Friend hear any whisper from the hon. Member for Langbaurgh (Mr. Holt) that there would be a salaries committee once this authority was privatised?

Mr Leadbitter: I think that that has been noted.

I cannot understand why there should be any objection to what is a common cause and something with which nobody disagrees. I put it to the House: does any hon. Member know of any chairman of any public body that has been privatised who has not had his salary increased within months by three and sometimes four times? That is a hard fact of life.

I turn now to another disadvantage. A company called Shell is tripping around the coast of Scotland with little boats—30,000-tonners, 20,000-tonners —tipping off coal in ports where it feels that vigilant, elected Members of Parliament cannot find it out, and there has been a row about it in Scotland. I happen to be a senior member of the Select Committee on Energy and we have been notified of what is happening. Shell is moving that coal at a loss to itself, while the coal mines in Scotland have been brought to the point of litigation because they cannot get contracts from the South of Scotland electricity board.

Does any hon. Member think that, once the importers of coal have got the market, prices will stay low? Of course they will not. The innocents of private enterprise seem to presume that those of us who have different concepts of economic behaviour are completely naive. Once they get hold of the market in Scotland, we shall have Scottish miners out of work, redundant and another charge on the economy. We shall have to ask ourselves who on earth forgot to do the costings of all this. The public have lost and Shell and the people who import the coal have gained.

We heard earlier something about there being no plans in the Tees and Hartlepool port authority for the provision of installations for the importation of coal. That is nonsense, utter rubbish.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): Poppycock, bunkum and balderdash.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. "Poppycock" is an expression that I hope not to have to hear too often in the House. I hope that hon. Members will take the trouble to consult Chambers dictionary to see the definition of "poppycock". Mr. Leadbitter.

Mr. Skinner: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I would remind you that even in your elevated position you have to bear in mind that, when the Prime Minister of the day refers to "poppycock, bunkum and balderdash" when challenged about her tenure of No. 10, we have to accept it in the House. It does not matter to me; I do not believe a word she says.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I cannot sit here arguing with the hon. Gentleman. I have ruled that I hope not to have to hear "poppycock" too often in the House. Mr. Leadbitter.

Mr. Leadbitter: I am very grateful to the shadow Secretary of State for Bolsover; his timing is perfect. However, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of course I accept your ruling. Naturally, we are kith and kin in this business and therefore we have to accept, should accept and want to accept your rulings.

So that is the position in Scotland. To suggest, as the hon. Member for Langbaurgh did, I think, that there are no plans for coal importation installations in the Tees and Hartlepool port authority area is just not true. People in National Power, for instance, would not agree with the hon. Gentleman there. Certainly, I know from a letter that I have seen that even the words "feasibility study" are a bit naughty. Some people who write to Members of Parliament must consider that we are illiterate, or at least gullible. It is an indication of their arrogance when they write letters about feasibility studies.

The fact is that the port authority is contemplating, and, in my view, planning for, that extra trade, which it knows is there and which it will not turn down. The members know that, because it will not have the social and economic responsibilities that I have tried to describe, they will be able to get this done much more quickly if the authority is privatised. At least we shall have a reasonable amount of public representation on the board to hold their hand if we can get the sense of our argument over to them.

In recent years, and more particularly since the miners' strike, people have been sitting at dinner tables in the City and talking in terms of the reduction of the coal input into the power programme. From about 70 million tonnes—that in itself was a drop—we are down to about 60 million tonnes. That means that the Coal Board and the Government, and those others who want to keep nice and pally with them, will seek to pick up this part of the market, and the Tees and Hartlepool port authority is one of two major ports that have been pinpointed. I think that, in the case of Teesside, they are thinking in terms of 5 million tonnes or thereabouts.

Mr. Ronnie Campbell: That 5 million tonnes is the equivalent of at least two collieries in the Durham area.

Mr. Leadbitter: One also has to consider the dramatic number of closures, almost without exception without any time frame, to allow those communities to work out some form of industrial regeneration in the area. Whole communities are beaten up. That is the only way to describe the situation. As a result of political ignorance, whole communities are being beaten up by people who do not care, so long as it is going to be good for them. When the coal industry loses to that extent, the importers and the consumers find that the benefits disappear overnight. As in the case of loss leader sales, once the market has been secured, prices will go up. The competition will have gone from the industry.

We have to be quite frank about what is in the minds of the people who have put this privatisation measure before the House. It is not just a question of extra profits. Any reasonable man would be happy with the success of the Tees and Hartlepool port authority. There are other matters behind the scenes.

Mr. Devlin: There is no evidence whatever to justify the hon. Gentleman's allegations. At present, there is a facility at Teesport that handles 3 million tonnes of coal a year from different countries around the world. This includes British coal, and it is going to British Steel. In addition, 250,000 to 500,000 tonnes go to other users through the port. There has been no plan whatever to expand that facility. The Labour party has no evidence to support its allegations, despite the fact that, in respect of every port-related piece of private legislation, it has produced coal-mining MPs who have made the same claim. The matter is getting completely out of hand.

Mr. Leadbitter: I quote from a press report of 29 March 1988:

"The River Tees will become Britain's coal import centre if a dramatic plan by port chiefs gets off the ground.

British Steel's giant Teesside terminal already handles the world's biggest ships, bringing cheap open cast coal from across the world to feed Redcar's hungry blastfurnace.

But now Tees and Hartlepool Port Authority is looking at building a huge 'common-user' coal terminal."

Mr. Devlin: Which paper?

Mr. Leadbitter: It does not matter which paper. I want to get this on the record. The port authority may rebut it, if it can. *[Laughter.]* There is no point in the hon. Gentleman sniggering and laughing. We are used to a high standard of debate here. Let the hon. Gentleman enjoy the sedentary position and keep his lip buttoned.

Mr. Barron: I want to point out to the hon. Member for Langbaurgh (Mr. Holt) and the hon. Member for Stockton, South (Mr. Devlin) that both the chief executive officer and the commercial director of the authority are on record—in local papers that I assume those hon. Members do not read—as having said that, having received the results of the feasibility study, they are pressing ahead in conjunction with National Power. If I get an opportunity, I shall speak about this matter at a later stage.

Mr. Leadbitter: The newspaper report from which I was quoting continues:

"The THPA has commissioned leading independent shipping and energy consultants Lev Sychrava Associates for a feasibility study into transforming the 300-acre former Shell Teesport refinery site into a coal-importing complex.

Lev Sychrava, director of research and development with Lambert Brothers Shipping before going freelance, says the plan has a lot going for it.

The Tees site would be a good location to develop such a terminal, he said."

People do not commission a feasibility study of that kind without an objective. Indeed, nothing of this nature can be done properly without consultants and advisers. The suggestion that there is no plan in the minds of the board members is—I will not use the word to which you objected, Mr. Deputy Speaker—unreasonable.

I have no doubt that other hon. Members who catch your eye, Sir, including the hon. Member for Stockton,

[Mr. Leadbitter]

South (Mr. Devlin), will make other points. I hope that those who intend to vote tonight for privatisation realise that they will not be able to give a guarantee, either to people in this House or within their own hearts, that in future there will be the same success, the same momentum, as has been experienced under the port authority for the past 25 years.

I had doubts about the Hartlepool port being kept within the estuary authority statutory arrangements, but I see in this Bill no guarantee that the port will be preserved. I have noted with interest, of course, that the port's trading area has diminished over the years. I have noted with pleasure the development of the marina, although that has yet to come to fruition. How can I feel certain, however, that, under privatisation, the Hartlepool port will be allowed to exist?

Under privatisation, I would have no defence. The authority might decide that, for one reason or another, it was not commercial or economic to keep the port open. It might be like British Rail. When British Rail wants to close a line, it gives information about the worst days, just as the meteorological office issues information only about the days when it is pouring. These chaps might have all sorts of peculiar ways of leading us to believe that the port at Hartlepool should close. Even if Tees and Hartlepool port authority wrote to me in big gold letters, "Ted Leadbitter, the port of Hartlepool will remain. Please be satisfied," I would say that those words were not worth anything. Tees and Hartlepool port authority cannot give anyone an undertaking about what a privatised industry will do.

I oppose the Bill, because my constituency interest is pertinent and real. Already, 70 men have been bought off. Some of my dockers were bought off. The authority said that they were getting too much money and it replaced them with people on about £8,000 a year. We know the tricks. So there will be no guarantees from the port authority, no satisfaction for the people whom I represent and plenty of worry for the miners. While there might be flash-in-the-pan prosperity for some of them, in the jungle of private enterprise that will not last. When the call goes out, they will be swallowed up and their jobs will have gone. I wish that they had listened to the common sense that seems always to prevail on this side of the House.

8.59 pm

The Minister for Aviation and Shipping (Mr. Patrick McLoughlin): I think the hon. Member for Hartlepool (Mr. Leadbitter) has finished. It may be for the convenience of the House if at this stage I make a brief statement on the Government's views on the Bill.

As I explained in the Adjournment debate initiated by the hon. Member for Middlesbrough (Mr. Bell) on 1 December, trust ports are slightly odd bodies. They are independent. They are not accountable to anyone. Their powers and sources of finance are limited. But they have to compete with ports run by companies like Associated British Ports and Felixstowe, which have the flexibility and accountability that the trust ports lack. It has long been in the Government's mind that it would be desirable if at least the main commercial trust ports could be converted into companies. Changing the status of a trust port in that way needs primary legislation, but the Government have not been able to find room in their programme for the appropriate legislation. That was why, as has been mentioned already, about a year ago my right hon. Friend the Member for Southend, West (Mr. Channon), when he was Secretary of State for Transport, encouraged trust ports which saw benefits in turning themselves into companies to bring forward their own private Bills.

It is still our intention to bring forward Government legislation on trust ports at the earliest convenient opportunity. But given the pressure on the legislative programme, private legislation is the only way by which these ports can quickly be converted into fully fledged private sector enterprises. However, I stress one point. As my hon. Friend the Member for Langbaurgh (Mr. Holt) explained, the Bill will not alter at all the statutory responsibilities and powers of Tees and Hartlepool port authority under its existing private legislation. That legislation will be carried forward and will apply lock, stock and barrel to the proposed new successor company. That successor company will still be a harbour authority. It will be subject, just as the port authority is today, to those provisions of public legislation which apply to harbour authorities generally. I emphasise that there will be no loss or reduction in existing powers or obligations. That is a very important point, and the House should not be under any misapprehension. The position is exactly the same as when Associated British Ports was privatised.

The Government support the principle underlying the Bill. Tees and Hartlepool port authority has shown welcome initiative. So has Clyde port authority, which has brought a similar Bill before Parliament. But both Bills have raised some difficult issues for the Government, which in the public interest we have had to consider with some care.

A parallel could be drawn between a trust port and the trustee savings banks before they were privatised. It is indeed a close parallel. We share the opinion that trust ports, like trustee savings banks, have no explicit owners. They can therefore be said to be owned by the state, as distinct from the Government. So it is for Parliament to decide, taking into account any views expressed by the Government, not only whether a trust port should be allowed to turn itself into a company but who should get the proceeds from the sale of the shares in that company.

Mr. Ronnie Campbell: Do the Government know how many imports will come into the country over the next three or four years through these ports?

Mr. McLoughlin: I am not sure that that is an appropriate point at this stage of the Bill, but there has been a vast change in how the ports operate. They have taken advantage of freedoms given to them by the House over the years.

Mr. Campbell: The Government support the Bill. They are changing legislation which covers fuel imports, but it is being done by a private Bill. The Government are changing their energy policy completely.

Mr. McLoughlin: I cannot accept that point. If my hon. Friend the Member for Langbaurgh, who speaks on behalf of the promoters——

Mr. Holt: Does my hon. Friend agree——

Mr. Frank Cook: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Do I understand aright? Is a Back-Bencher speaking on behalf of a Minister at the Dispatch Box in answer to an intervention?

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): Order. The Minister has the floor, but he has given way to the hon. Member for Langbaurgh (Mr. Holt).

Mr. Holt: Does my hon. Friend accept that importation is on one side of the coin and exportation on the other? Are we not putting out more cars—built by Nissan—through the Tees than the Opposition ever thought we could?

Mr. McLoughlin: I absolutely agree with my hon. Friend. That is an important part of the development of ports, and one that the Tees and Hartlepool port authority has caught on to, very successfully—as I said in the 1 December Adjournment debate in answer to the hon. Member for Middlesbrough.

There is a further consideration. Many trust ports are different from the TSB in one respect. That applies to, among others, the Tees and Hartlepool port authority. Unlike the TSB, it has received Government support in the form of grants to purchase and improve its assets. Admittedly it is a long time since such grants were paid to the THPA, and the amounts were small; but the grants were paid about 20 years ago towards investment projects in the port, and some of those assets are still in use. There is a general rule that, when assets acquired or improved by a non-Exchequer body with the aid of Government grants are disposed of, an appropriate proportion of the proceeds should go to the Exchequer. The Public Accounts Committee rightly attaches great importance to that.

If the Bill were amended to provide expressly for a share of the proceeds of the sale of the assets to go to the Exchequer, it could cease to be a private Bill. There would then be the problem of accommodating it within the Government's legislative programme, to which I have already referred. The Government are considering the best means of securing an appropriate share for the Exchequer from the proceeds of the sale of the port authority, and of other similar ports. One of a number of options that we are considering is to include a provision in the Finance Bill.

I therefore recommend that the Bill be given a Second Reading. It is a slightly unusual private Bill, to match the slightly unusual nature of the trust ports themselves. A number of questions arise—the hon. Member for Middlesbrough raised some in his Adjournment debate on 1 December—but I suggest that it would be appropriate for the Select Committee to consider them, and to report back to the House. It will have the opportunity to hear evidence from, and to question, the promoters and the petitioners in detail.

For those reasons, I shall be supporting the Bill later tonight.

Mr. Bell: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. When the debate began I put to your predecessor in the Chair a specific point of order of which I had given him notice. That was to the effect that this Bill is not a private Bill, but a public Bill, because it is Government policy and the Government had clearly shown that it was their policy, although they did not have time to include it in their legislative programme. They therefore obliged, or persuaded, Tees and Hartlepool port authority to take a private route. Let me quote a specific *Hansard* response on 12 February 1990 by the Under-Secretary to the hon. Member for Warrington, South (Mr. Butler). The hon. Gentleman asked

"the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the future of the trust ports."

The Under-Secretary replied:

"We believe that there are advantages in the main commercial trust ports being transformed into companies. So far we have not been able to make room ourselves for the legislation needed to bring about such a change. Meanwhile the Clyde and the Tees——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I am not sure what the point of order is for me that the hon. Member is raising. I was expecting to call him, but at this stage I am not sure what the point of order is for the Chair. Perhaps he will explain that to me.

Mr. Bell: I shall do that immediately, Mr. Deputy Speaker, having completed the short quotation, which concludes:

"Meanwhile the Clyde and the Tees and Hartlepool port authorities have promoted their own private measures".—*[Official Report,* 12 February 1990; Vol. 167, *c.106.*]

When I raised this point of order earlier, I was given a response from the Chair, which I fully accept and do not challenge. I was told that the matter had been looked into by the appropriate authorities of the House, which had reached the conclusion that this was an appropriate private Bill.

We have since heard a Minister of the Crown say from the Dispatch Box openly and frankly that this is Government policy, that the Government are looking to privatise some 50 trust ports, that they do not have time to do so in their legislative programme and that they have therefore opted for the private route.

Was the Chair, or were the authorities of the House, aware of that when this was considered to be an appropriate private Bill? The Under-Secretary said that there were financial considerations attached to the Bill. He made a specific reference to grant money that had been given to Tees and Hartlepool port authority about 20 years ago. He said, in addition, that there would be a financial consideration because the Treasury, as a matter of principle, wished to realise not only the grant money but any benefits that had accrued as a result of that grant money. He said that the Public Accounts Committee had made the same statement. So he said clearly that financial provisions, which were not there before, attached to the Bill. He made a clear admission on the Floor of the House that it is Government policy. My question for you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is whether this is a hybrid Bill, and whether the Chair was aware of that Government statement of policy before it gave its earlier ruling.

Mr. Devlin: Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Does it relate to the same point?

Mr. Devlin: Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The point of order that the hon. Member for Middlesbrough (Mr. Bell) just raised fell into two parts. The second part was expressly ruled on by your predecessor in the Chair earlier this evening, having received notice from the hon. Member for Middlesbrough of all the points that he just made. May I ask you, therefore, whether you will respond to only the first part of the point of order—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I shall respond to all points of order. I assure the hon. Member that the Chair is indivisible. This matter was considered extremely carefully. We had notice of it before the debate began.

The hon. Member for Middlesbrough (Mr. Bell) will know the ruling that was given by my predecessor in the Chair—I have it in front of me—and nothing that I have heard from the Dispatch Box in any way alters the ruling that was given at that time. The hon. Member will know well that if he feels that this is not a proper measure to be a private Bill, he can vote against it should there be a Division at the end of the debate.

Mr. Harry Barnes (Derbyshire, North-East): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Was it in order for the sponsor of the Bill, the hon. Member for Langbaurgh (Mr. Holt), to leave the Chamber when my hon. Friend the Member for Middlesbrough (Mr. Bell) was speaking to a point of order about the legitimacy of continuing with the measure on the Floor of the House? In other words, he did not remain in the Chamber to hear the points that my hon. Friend was making and the ruling that was given by the Chair.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I am relieved that the responsibilities of the Chair do not extend to the movement of hon. Members in and out of the Chamber.

9.13 pm

Ms. Joan Ruddock (Lewisham, Deptford): I am speaking for the Opposition, it having been made clear that there is a Government line on the issue. It may be appropriate, therefore, for the Opposition to state their position. While we in no way question the decision given in the ruling by the Chair, the words used by the Minister tonight have obviously thrown doubt into the minds of my hon. Friends about whether this is, in fact, a genuine private Bill.

The hon. Member for Langbaurgh (Mr. Holt) described the trust ports as a peculiarly British institution. I remind the House that the basis of the trust ports is that they either reinvest any surpluses achieved between operating costs and expenditure or they use those surpluses to reduce charges. I should have thought that that was a highly commendable practice and that it would be of regret to most hon. Members that British business over the years has not been keen to reinvest its profits in its own locality. Many of the trust ports have been highly successful in attracting new businesses and bolstering employment in areas hard hit by unemployment. Tees and Hartlepool is no exception to that.

Mr. Frank Cook: On my hon. Friend's point about reducing charges, is she aware that D. B. Winney, who was referred to by my hon. Friend the Member for Hartlepool (Mr. Leadbitter), said in his letter, which was published:

"The reason for the massive level of its reserves is simply that, in its monopoly position as sole authority on the Tees and at Hartlepool, it has been able over 24 years, to levy dues on goods and for conservancy at any price it chose to fix."?

Mr. Winney went on to say that, if there had been competition for customers who had installations on the river at Seal Sands to turn to, it would have been quite a different matter. The easy way for the port to solve its problems of having massive reserves would have been to release its reserves and reduce its charges, thereby giving industry the benefit of lower charges on the Tees.

Ms. Ruddock: I thank my hon. Friend for his excellent contribution. Clearly that is a way forward. Certainly it would be a way to avoid the danger of gold-plated cranes on the docks.

It is not surprising that the trust ports, as authorities with some public accountability and, indeed, responsibility, should have attracted the attention of the Government. As my hon. Friend the Member for Middlesbrough (Mr. Bell) reminded the House, in 1988 trust ports became the subject of a Government consultation on privatisation. The Bill appears to be an attempt to substitute that and to pre-empt possible Government legislation. Although, undoubtedly, we would not be happy to see such Government legislation introduced, at least it would be an honest response to the position, which would give us the opportunity to debate the wider issues of conservancy and safety, which are pertinent to privatisation.

The Bill simply opens the way for loss of local control and local investment, possibly loss of jobs and the potential for asset-stripping. It is significant that the local authorities and unions, such as the Transport and General Workers Union—I declare an interest as a Member sponsored by that union—oppose the Bill, fearing the example of privatisation in other spheres.

The proceeds from privatising the port could be considerable. It is interesting that the Minister has described the degree of Government interest in the matter, through which they hope that moneys might be returned to the Exchequer.

Who will be in control of the port authority after privatisation?

Mr. Holt: The shareholders.

Ms. Ruddock: Indeed, the shareholders. It is obvious that a takeover of the holding company could result in control moving out of the area entirely. The Bill will create a different structure from the present one. At present, the Secretary of State can include in it not less than two and no more than three members from a panel of local authority nominees. I suggest that that gives some local accountability.

In addition, the Secretary of State is required in appointing all members of the authority to have regard to relevant experience in planning and environmental matters affecting the area of the harbour. He must also have regard to the desirability of including members who are familiar with the area served by the authority. All that will be lost.

The authority has shown that it can act commercially, in a commercial environment, under the present arrangements. That has been evidenced by the successful operation of the port and the high level of profitability achieved. I understand that at present the port is largely run by people who live and work in the area, including councillors, and it is therefore operated in the interests of the locality as well as those of the wider economy.

The Bill does nothing to ensure that the importance of the port to the local economy will continue to be sufficiently recognised. It is obvious to us that open public subscription for shares in the holding company may provide windfall benefit to those who have hitherto not been involved with the port and its locality in any way. It is our view that there is not sufficient reason to dissolve the authority and set up the new company proposed in the Bill.

Nothing that has been said to the House suggests that the present powers are too restrictive; indeed, the port's economic success and expansion over the years give the lie to that suggestion. The hon. Member for Langbaurgh boasted that this was the third largest port undertaking in the United Kingdom——

Mr. Holt: So it is.

Ms. Ruddock: I have every reason to believe that that boast is correct, but that gives the lie to the claim that the authority is constrained by its present structure. No matter what constraints the hon. Gentleman may believe exist at the moment, there is no requirement or justification for the fundamental constitutional change that the Bill would effect, which we believe would be to the detriment of the port authority and its dealings with the local community and to the detriment of the local economy.

9.22 pm

Mr. Tim Devlin (Stockton, South): I support the Bill. It is appropriate that we should have another private Bill to promote the navigation of the Tees. The original navigation Act was promoted by the Tees Navigation Company as a private Bill in 1808. That Bill was succeeded by a further private Bill, which set up the Tees Conservancy Commission in 1852. After that came the Bill to which we have already referred, which became the Tees and Hartlepool Port Authority Act 1966. That Act introduced the Hartlepool facilities of the British Transport Docks Board.

This is a Bill initiated by Teesside people for the benefit of Teesside people. It will mean that there will be a major investing authority based in Teesside for the future. At present, the powers of the board are extremely restricted. Under part III of the Tees and Hartlepool Port Authority Act 1966, the authority shall have powers

"to take such steps from time to time as they may consider necessary for the conservancy, maintenance and improvement of the harbour and the facilities afforded therein and in connection therewith, and for the reclamation of land."

Section 12(2) says:

"For those purposes, and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, the Authority may—improve maintain, regulate, manage, mark and light the harbour and, subject to the provisions of this Act, provide port facilities therein, and acquire, carry on and improve any undertaking . . . affording or intended to afford accommodation or facilities for the transport, loading, unloading, receiving, forwarding, or warehousing of goods".

We have been asked who sat down in Queen's square and thought one bright sunny day that it would be a good idea to privatise the port? Surely the point is that the nature of the port has changed a great deal since 1966. That was what the hon. Member for Hartlepool (Mr. Leadbitter) was asked about.

Mr. Frank Cook: Where were you in 1966?

Mr. Devlin: At that stage, I was at school. Being a young hon. Member, I am only 30, and I cannot say that at the age of seven I was paying much attention to the navigation of the Tees.

However, returning to what I wanted to say, which is more important, between 1966 and 1976 there were major land reclamation works. Thousands of acres of land have been brought into use for petrochemical, chemical, steel and port facilities. As a result of that investment, the Tees and Hartlepool port authority is now promoting itself as the European chemical centre on Teesside. There has been no shortage of investment by the port authority.

Mr. Frank Cook: On the one hand the hon. Member says that there are restrictions and that the port cannot do anything, and on the other he says that it is investing in all sorts of things left, right and centre and doing so much. The hon. Member cannot have it both ways. He has to make up his mind: is it restricted or not?

Mr. Devlin: As usual, the hon. Member for Stockton, North (Mr. Cook) has missed the point. The activities and areas in which the port authority can invest are extremely limited. His hon. Friend the Member for Hartlepool, whom I am answering, asked earlier why it was necessary for the powers of the port authority to be changed now. The reason is that, since 1966, the port authority has carried out all its functions to the best of its abilities, yet the authority will be left with a large amount of cash which it cannot invest in any further port facilities on Teesside. The authority has reclaimed thousands of acres of land and it has built petrochemical and steel complexes and wharves, and it has promoted the chemical centre on Teesside, but it is getting to the point where there is little more it can do.

The position has changed recently because of the abolition of the dock labour scheme. The status of the port authority is no longer protected as it was formerly. It is not realistic for Opposition Members to say that, because the Tees and Hartlepool port authority has a monopoly over the navigation of the Tees, it is a monopoly and that it is uncompetitive, as hon. Members have said about fees. The fees charged by the Tees and Hartlepool port authority are extremely competitive. They have to be, because the port has to compete with ports all around the coasts of Britain, many of which have been privatised. It has to compete with a lean, mean and hungry Associated British Ports, and it cannot sit by the River Tees and say that it does not have to pay attention to anyone else.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Devlin: I have given way to the hon. Member for Stockton, North and I do not intend to give way to him again—he can make his own speech—but I shall give way to the other hon. Members in due course.

Where does the Tees and Hartlepool port authority go from here? It is in a competitive world. The only way that it can survive in the long term is by introducing an integrated transport facility which must not be limited to the borders of the River Tees.

In the past 150 years, as hon. Members know, ports have developed and become bigger. The port on the River Tees was originally at the town of Yarm in my constituency. When ships became too big, the port moved to Stockton, which became a great boat building centre. With the introduction of metal shipbuilding and iron ships to the River Tees, the port moved downriver to Middlesbrough.

The Bill marks the point at which the port is now constrained within a narrow area at the mouth of the River Tees and at Hartlepool. It wishes to expand beyond that limit and to expand the facilities and activities on Teesside.

Since we are all reading from press cuttings this evening, I shall quote from the *Evening Gazette* of 9 January 1990.

Mr. Cook: We are all doing some reading tonight.

Mr. Devlin: Yes.

The article says:

"Tees and Hartlepool Port Authority chiefs have their eye on spreading their wings in the 1990s. They see the P & O group as a possible model"

in its bid to become a private company because

"P & O owned Ferrymasters, the cargo shipping firm . . . and transport firms on the continent as well as the UK. We are in the transport game. One of the strengths of the future is having an interest in several links in the transport chain,' said Mr. Britton."

That is why the Bill is so important. There are now cash reserves sitting in the bank belonging to the Tees and Hartlepool port authority amounting to £30 million, and each year those cash reserves are growing. There is extreme competition from private, formerly non-scheme ports. There is also the very important matter of the future of employment on Teesside.

Job opportunities in the port have contracted over a number of years because of the operation of the dock labour scheme. After abolition, the port authority slimmed down its operation in order to match European productivity levels. It is now in a position to expand a whole range of its facilities and activities, but it is unable to do so. Recently, 28 jobs were on offer and 700 people wanted them.

The Tees and Hartlepool port authority is confined by the objectives that are set out in the 1966 Act. My hon. Friend the Member for Langbaurgh said that we live in changing times. There are immense investment opportunities on Teesside as a result of the activities of the Teesside development corporation and the Tyne and Wear development corporation. It is only right that where there is an overlap between the functions of the port and the Teesside development corporation, which has taken over planning powers in respect of some of the land that belonged to the port authority, they should work together. They have worked together, as the hon. Member for Hartlepool said, at Hartlepool marina, at the Teesside offshore base and in Stockton.

The result of that co-operation is that the Tees port authority believes that there is a range of investment opportunities throughout Stockton, Middlesbrough, Hartlepool, Langbaurgh and the north-east in general—even up to Newcastle—in which it would like to invest. However, it is constrained by the objectives in the Act.

The hon. Member for Stockton, North tried to be clever earlier in the debate when he referred to a range of investments which, he said, were outwith the objectives set out in the Act. The port authority is no longer involved in many of the activities that he mentioned.

Mr. Frank Cook: Does the hon. Gentleman deny that it was involved in those activities?

Mr. Devlin: No, I do not. However, those activities were directly related to the port and its activities and fell into category B, which I read out at the beginning of my speech.

At the moment, 37 million tonnes of goods come into and go out of the port every year. It made a profit last year of £9·246 million. That profit is accumulating. There is a fantastic return on capital of 17·6 per cent. What will happen to all that money if the port remains a trust port? It will not be used. It is a wasted opportunity for the people of Teesside to have on their doorsteps a cash-rich authority that is unable to spend money on a variety of projects within its area, although it could and should do so.

Mr. Ronnie Campbell: Does the hon. Gentleman not agree that this private Bill has been introduced so that 5 million tonnes can be brought up the river? It would also mean the closure of Hartlepool coalfield, which would lead to at least 6,000 miners losing their jobs.

Mr. Devlin: I am grateful to the hon. Member for Blyth Valley (Mr. Campbell) for raising the matter of coal. When I challenged the hon. Member for Hartlepool earlier on that matter, he read out a document which he then refused to show me when I came across the Floor to ask him. From which newspaper did it come? When the hon. Gentleman read it out, he said that it was a press release, yet I could see from where I was sitting that it was a press cutting. He did not say from which journal it had been drawn. I took advice on this point this afternoon from the Tees and Hartlepool port authority. I was assured—I have no reason to doubt its word—that it had no plans at present to expand the port in any way.

Mr. Ronnie Campbell: At present.

Mr. Devlin: The hon. Gentleman shouts at me. I shall be perfectly frank. A feasibility study was carried out by PowerGen on Chatham and Teesside. No decision was made as a result of that study. It is only right that such feasibility studies should be undertaken. Opposition Members see the Bill as a vehicle for bringing in more coal on the River Tees. The authority can do that already. Powers already exist for coal to be brought in on the River Tees. As I said earlier, a considerable amount of coal is already imported from Australia, Canada and other countries to British Steel on Teesside and at present 30 million tonnes are coming in. That point has already gone by the by.

No provision in the Bill will bring further coal on to the River Tees. The discussion is pointless, because whether the port is in the private sector or continues as a trust will make no difference to the import of coal. The hon. Member for Hartlepool raised the question of the Shell depot being used. That depot is widely recognised by anyone who knows anything about the Tees port as the daftest place on the entire river to bring in coal.

Mr. Jimmy Hood (Clydesdale): I was looking at "Dod's Parliamentary Companion" and I came across a charming young photograph of the hon. Gentleman. The first thing that hit me was that he has a majority of 774, which explained why he must now be losing some sleep. The hon. Gentleman's biographical details described him as interested in regional development.

I suggest to the hon. Gentleman that nobody believes that the port authority does not want to use the Bill to import massive amounts of coal. It is part and parcel of the Government's policy for the privatisation of the coal industry—that is not a problem now, because they will not win the next election—to be able to import 40 million tonnes, so that they can close down all the peripheral coalfields and privatise the central coal belt. It is all part of that plan.

The hon. Gentleman admits, rightly, that he is young and inexperienced. Opposition Members—who in my case

are a little bit older, although not a lot older—have considerable experience of the deviousness of this Government. We know what they are up to.

Mr. Devlin: That has nothing to do with the Bill. I am so interested in the development of my region that I want it to have a major facility that can move goods in and out of the north of England at a competitive cost, organise transport throughout the European Community and the north of England, and that can create thousands of jobs in doing so.

Opposition Members are ignoring that. They are interested not in new opportunities, but in old opportunities. All we ever hear about from them is the old, traditional industries and the way things were done 100 years ago. The Bill is about the future of our region, the transport infrastructure, jobs and the prosperity of the people of the north-east. I will not sit here and listen to any Scotsman telling me what should or should not be brought in on the River Tees. I shall leave that to people who know what they are talking about and to business men who are ready to make decisions.

Mr. Hood: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Devlin: No, the hon. Gentleman has had his opportunity.

The Bill will enable the port authority to own and invest in property throughout the region but outside the port area. It is in a good position to spot and to exploit the many exciting investment opportunities that exist in the north of England and that is entirely due to the work of the Teesside development corporation and the Tyne and Wear development corporation.

Following the attacks made on the port authority by the hon. Member for Middlesbrough (Mr. Bell), *Port News*, the journal of the Tees and Hartlepool port authority, said:

> "Every opportunity to invest in port facilities in Teesside has been taken up and will continue to be so. But trade goes where the major transport operator goes, not where the port goes, and if THPA wishes to develop, it must develop as a transport operator."

Investment in that new undertaking will be securely in the hands of Teessiders. There is no question that the aspersions cast by the hon. Member for Hartlepool will come to fruition. The shares will be so dispersed among the people and the pension funds of Teesside that it will simply not be possible for a major operator to acquire the lot in one fell swoop. That must be the sort of safeguard which will protect the future of the port and to which the hon. Gentleman referred when he talked about the 1966 Act.

The investment will be securely in the hands of Teessiders. It will be there for the benefit of local people and it will ensure the continued commercial success of Great Britain Ltd. I urge the House to support the Bill.

9.41 pm

Mr. Stuart Bell (Middlesbrough): I am grateful for the opportunity to follow the hon. Member for Stockton, South (Mr. Devlin). I listened with great interest to the incandescent way in which he made his points. Earlier this evening, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we had the remarkable spectacle of the hon. Member for Stockton, North crossing the Floor of the House. I do not think that you were in the Chair at the time.

Mr. Frank Cook: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The hon. Member for Stockton, North did what?

Mr. Bell: I apologise. My gaze was fixed on the hon. Member for Stockton, South.

We had the interesting spectacle of the hon. Member for Stockton, South crossing the Floor of the House. He came and sat on the Opposition Benches. My recollection of constitutional history is that when an hon. Member crosses the Floor of the House he should make a speech so that we can hear why he did so. However, your predecessor in the Chair, Mr. Deputy Speaker, said that we should not use the word "poppycock" too often in the Chamber, so it would not be appropriate to ask the hon. Gentleman to comment on why he crossed the Floor of the House. *[Interruption.]* As my hon. Friend the Member for Mansfield (Mr. Meale) says from a sedentary position, he got lost. He got lost in the debate and in the brief that he was reading.

I am glad to see the hon. Member for Scarborough (Sir M. Shaw) in his place. The hon. Member for Langbaurgh (Mr. Holt) said that we could not get a fish and chip shop in the Tees and Hartlepool development area from which to buy the excellent fish from Whitby. According to the hon. Member for Stockton, South, property development is the major aim of privatisation, so we can look forward to the day when the first property development of the newly constituted body is a fish and chip shop to accommodate the hon. Member for Scarborough. We shall all live in hope.

The hon. Member for Stockton, South made our points for us. He told us how successful the Tees and Hartlepool port authority was. If that is so, why does it have to be privatised? If it is so successful that it has about £30 million in cash in the bank, why must it be privatised? We have not had an answer to that point.

We heard at great length from the hon. Member for Stockton, South about the proposed shareholding of the newly privatised company. It was significant that the hon. Member for Langbaurgh did not mention what the shareholding would be. It was left to the hon. Member for Stockton, South who, with a briefing note, gave us these proposals. The last I heard of this was that the port authority had no idea how it would privatise the company, and to whom the shares would belong. I was told that it had appointed chartered accountants, in the shape of Peat, Marwick, McLintock to advise it. If we understand what the hon. Member for Stockton, South said, it is that the port authority has received advice but not passed it on to the hon. Member for Langbaurgh, because he did not say anything about it.

The hon. Member for Stockton, South made great play of the fact that there is already a terminal for coal on Teesside. He mentioned the 2 millon tonnes coming into British Steel and other users of coal in the area. He did not say something that has been forcefully said from the Opposition Benches: that what is being proposed is a common use terminal, to which coal can be imported on spec and kept in a depot until it is sent anywhere in the country, north or south. As my hon. Friend the Member for Blyth Valley (Mr. Campbell) said, the Durham coal field has at least 12,000 employees, and two pits the size of Horden colliery closed recently. We can get no assurance about whether there will be a common use coal terminal.

The hon. Member for Stockton, South said that my Adjournment debate was an attack on the Tees and

[Mr. Bell]

Hartlepool port authority. The hon. Member for Langbaurgh rightly said that I praised the authority, which put the matter into perspective.

The hon. Member for Langbaurgh said that everyone in the area supported the privatisation of the port authority. I have here a letter from a distinguished solicitor on Teesside who said:

"In my lifetime, this Authority has been regarded as a semi public Authority which although it is autonomous in many respects it was set up for the benefit of the area. Many people must now be concerned that what has been a public body is endeavouring to 'privatise itself'. From the point of view of the people working for the concern it may well be a good thing if it comes off but whether it will be for the public benefit is quite another question."

Mr. Holt: Will the hon. Gentleman say that that solicitor was a Labour county councillor?

Mr. Bell: I can say quite emphatically that the solicitor who wrote this letter, whom I have never met, is neither a politician, nor a member of the county council or of any political party. His name is a matter for him. I am simply responding to the point made by the hon. Member for Langbaurgh. I have the letter here. It is in my file, but I have not asked the solicitor whether I can give his name on the Floor of the House.

Mr. Devlin: I shall be interested to know what authority a solicitor, who wishes to remain unnamed, and who has some thoughts on the matter, can add to the progress of the debate. I can produce letters from barristers, solicitors and business men who think that the privatisation is a jolly good thing. I have not bothered to read them all out because they have no locus in the debate.

Mr. Bell: The locus is that the hon. Member for Langbaurgh said in an intervention that the measure had the support of everyone in Teesside. He may have added the proviso that anyone with any sense would support it. I am refuting that categorically by quoting a letter written by a solicitor. I have not spoken to him about the letter and he has not told me that he wishes to remain unnamed. As a member of the public, he is entitled to express his view through a Member of this place on the Floor of the House.

I shall refer briefly to some of the other comments of the hon. Member for Langbaurgh. He said on two occasions that my right hon. and hon. Friends and I are morons. It is interesting that he used that expression, which I presume is fully parliamentary because nothing was said to suggest that it was otherwise. The hon. Gentleman then said that I cleverly introduced a point in my Adjournment debate. It seems that, on the one hand, one can be a moron and, on the other, clever. The two terms, if I may use a legal expression, are mutually exclusive. It seems that the hon. Gentleman wished to get his own back on me for calling him a "Champagne Charlie" not long ago. I used that description because he had authorised and sponsored a function within the House for Conservative Members to persuade them to support the Bill.

Mr. Holt: The hon. Gentleman said that the soirée was for Conservative Members. He and all his hon. Friends were invited, and none of them had the courtesy to attend.

Mr. Bell: Ideology must be sparse in the Conservative party if Conservative Back-Bench Members have to be invited to drink champagne in the House to encourage them to support an ideological commitment to privatisation. After 10 years in office, it may be that privatisation is no longer the mode with the Tory party. Why did the hon. Gentleman have to bring along champagne to persuade his hon. Friends to support the Bill tonight?

Mr. Leadbitter: Do I understand that the champagne party took place? I received an invitation and I asked how much it would cost. The public relations people in London referred the matter to the THPA but I still did not receive an answer. I was genuinely worried about the Bill coming into the House. I was also worried that free drink and some biscuits and cheese, or whatever, were on offer. Was my hon. Friend told what the cost of the freebie was?

Mr. Bell: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his intervention. The hon. Member for Langbaurgh was right to say that I was invited to the party. As I understand it, my hon. Friend the Member for Stockport, North (Mr. Cook) was not. No Labour Member attended the function. That shows that there is still principle within the Opposition, if there is not among Conservative Members.

Mr. Alan Meale (Mansfield): I am worried because during debates on a previous privatisation of our ports there were suggestions about champagne and smoked salmon being made available so that Conservative Members could nip out of the Chamber to drink and eat at their leisure free of charge. Perhaps you will give some thought to the matter, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with a view to determining whether such practices by those who are engaged in the privatisation of our ports are correct in parliamentary terms.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Let us continue with the debate. That issue has nothing to do with the Chair.

Mr. Bell: I am grateful, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I thought that you were about to answer the intervention of my hon. Friend the Member for Mansfield on my behalf. He has made the valid point that we are concerned about the use of facilities within the House in an effort to influence Members of this place on how they should vote.

As this point has been raised, I shall quote from my statement to the press, which reads:

"Richard Holt is inviting a host of Champagne Charlies in order to gain support for the privatisation of the Tees and Hartlepool Port Authority. It is a common and often condemned Tory practice to wine and dine those they seek to influence when Bills are before Parliament. Labour MPs will boycott the function and hold it up for the ridicule and contempt that it deserves."

That answers the intervention of my hon. Friend the Member for Mansfield. I congratulate the hon. Member for Langbaurgh because when I described him as a "Champagne Charlie", he came back to say that he was an orange juice addict.

Mr. Frank Cook: If it is acceptable for the promoters of the Bill to seek support from the payroll vote by offering champagne suppers in the House with the odd touch of sherbet, perhaps it would be equally fair for Opposition Members to seek to force a vote on each of the Estimates tonight, in which case there will be about seven votes, which will keep Conservative Members here until about midnight.

Mr. Bell: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for raising a point that had not occurred to me until now. The so-called payroll vote may be wheeled in at some time this evening

to assist the hon. Member for Langbaurgh. Without in any way challenging the earlier ruling, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have two points to make about that. First, the hon. Member for Langbaurgh categorically stated that the Minister, the hon. Member for Derbyshire, West (Mr. McLoughlin), cannot take a view on the Bill. Those are the very words that he used. Nevertheless, the Under-Secretary of State then took an extremely clear view, which we can all read in tomorrow's *Hansard*. The view that he has expressed many times is that, in the offing, in some form or another, is the privatisation of nearly 50 ports, ranging from London and Dover to small fishing harbours. Apparently, that is what the Government are considering. Transport Ministers are studying whether legislation is needed to pave the way for trust ports, which handle nearly half the country's seaborne cargo trade and a lot of passenger traffic, to be converted into private companies. Therefore, the Government's position is clear.

I quoted earlier from what the Under-Secretary is reported as saying in *Hansard*. I now refer to a press statement, which reads:

"Last week in a House of Common's debate Shipping Minister Patrick McLoughlin made clear his support for converting trust ports into commercial companies. A spokesman for the Department of Transport confirmed that ministers were 'looking at options', but indicated that it would be a struggle to find the immediate time for the necessary enabling legislation."

We have had several accounts suggesting that this is a Government measure. My hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham, Deptford (Ms. Ruddock) has made it clear that the hon. Member for Langbaurgh was flatly contradicted by the Under-Secretary. It is probably a case of the left hand not knowing what the right hand is doing.

Secondly, the former Secretary of State for Transport was in the House earlier this evening. If we refer back to press comments, we are left in no doubt that it was the former Secretary of State for Transport, the right hon. Member for Southend, West (Mr. Channon), who instigated this Bill. That is made clear from a speech that was reported on 11 March 1988 in a local newspaper, which reads:

"Private eyes focus on us".

The article clearly states:

"Transport Secretary Paul Channon caused some ripples on the Tees when he raised the spectre of privatisation this week. Tees and Hartlepool Port Authority chief executive John Hackney was in London to hear Mr. Channon say that Britain's 74 publicly owned ports are prima facie candidates for going into private hands."

The THPA did not leave the matter there, at simply listening to the right hon. Gentleman's speech. A further press cutting of 5 April 1988 said:

"Tees and Hartlepool Port Authority is seeking clarification on why the Government has asked for its views on ports going private. At present the THPA is an independent body, with board members drawn from local industry, local councils and the TUC."

So we come again to one of the central points of the Bill—whether there is any local accountability. The hon. Member for Langbaurgh said that there was no accountability at all to the local community. Yet we see clearly that Tees and Hartlepool port authority, while an independent body, had board members drawn from local industry, local councils and the TUC. It is therefore clear that this is a Government-inspired, Government-instigated and Government-backed Bill. We shall see as we go on, in Committee and out of Committee, just how much support the Government give to the Bill.

I fully accept the Government's commitment to privatisation. I do not accept that the Executive ought to use the legislature for their own purposes. I made very clear my own view of privatisation as a Government measure in a speech that I made on the Budget in 1988, when I said that from the point of view of the Conservative party

"The concept of privatisation is legitimate. It was an ideological commitment that the Conservative party made at the time of the 1979 general election."—[*Official Report*, 15 March, 1988; Vol. 129, c. 1027.]

Mr. Frank Cook: My hon. Friend introduces a study of the concept of privatisation, but is it not a fact that privatisation as we normally understand it suggests that people pay money in order to acquire property? In this instance it will be quite different. People will be paying money for shares that will be going into a company which will then become their property. So they will be putting money into their own bank. Is not that exactly the same as if I were to sell my hon. Friend my house for £100,000, guaranteeing him that the £100,000 would be in my house when he came to occupy it?

Mr. Bell: My hon. Friend makes a valid point.

My hon. Friend the Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) has said that any fool can sell a company at half price, and we have seen over the years, under the Government's privatisation scheme, a consistent underselling of shares in companies being privatised. Then we have seen those shares move into pension funds and banks, again to the detriment of the community.

The hon. Member for Stockton, South, who is not in the Chamber at the moment, made the point that the shares would stay within the community, but he could not guarantee that. He can no more give us a guarantee than Mr. Tiny Rowland could receive a guarantee from Mr. Fayed. When Mr. Rowland arranged for Mr. Fayed to buy the shares in House of Fraser, he suddenly discovered that Mr. Fayed not only held those shares but had bought others and become the majority shareholder. We can see clearly that, once shares are in the public domain, we do not know and cannot tell where they will end up. One thing that we know, and we have seen it in the sale of public assets over the past few years, is that the City of London ends up with the shares.

Mr. Harry Barnes: Does my hon. Friend feel that many of those shares will be bought in the area, which will be affected by not just this change, but the subsequent change that will lead to the mass importation of coal into the area? So will people in places such as Keir Hardie Terrace, Shotton colliery, which is nearby, or Easington, where my hon. Friend the Member for Hartlepool (Mr. Leadbitter) was born, be the prime candidates, as they get kicked out of their jobs, to pick up those shares so that they have a rake-off from this development? I doubt whether anything such as that will occur.

Mr. Bell: My hon. Friend makes a valid point, which brings me back to the speech by the hon. Member for Langbaurgh, when he made the point about those who lose their jobs. My hon. Friend the Member for Hartlepool (Mr. Leadbitter) pointed out that about 70 jobs in Hartlepool had been lost and that those who had stayed in the industry had had to take pay cuts. The hon. Member for Langbaurgh talked about the twin curses of trust ports and the dock labour scheme. We have seen the nefarious

[Mr. Bell]

effects of the abolition of the dock labour scheme, in the shape of a reduced labour force, both on the Tees and in Hartlepool, and a reduction in salaries. My hon. Friend has a valid point. What will people be able to do? Will they be able to buy shares at half price and, possibly, sell them to the City of London? Will the City then decide the appropriate investment policy for Tees and Hartlepool?

Mr. Jack Thompson: Suppose that local people acquire shares and, after a year or two, sell them to others with a particular industrial interest, such as the importation of coal. In those circumstances, control of the port would ultimately be in the hands of people who had only one thing in mind—the importation of coal. Or it might be radioactive waste or a whole range of other things. That would be a monopoly. It is what happened in the old days. The port that is shared by my constituency and that of my hon. Friend the Member for Blyth Valley (Mr. Campbell) was owned by the coal owners. It was they who determined what should happen. That is exactly what could happen in this situation.

Mr. Bell: My hon. Friend makes a valid point. Some of us remember Mr. Eric Varley, who at one time was Secretary of State for Energy in a Labour Government. Mr. Varley left to become chairman of Coalite. But Coalite was taken over, and Mr. Varley is no longer doing that job. What will happen to the Tees and Hartlepool assets if asset strippers move in? It would not be necessary, in order to secure control, to buy 51 per cent. of the company; a controlling interest could be secured by acquiring something like 29 per cent.

We are talking about the swinging '90s, but what will happen after that—or perhaps even during the '90s—if people, having acquired a controlling interest, decide that there are richer pickings elsewhere in the country or on the continent? They might decide that they would be better off if they had their headquarters in Brussels. Where are the guarantees? Once a company is privatised, once it becomes a company in the public domain, once its shares are being traded in the City of London, no one can tell where the shares will end up. No one can tell who might make share raids. No one can tell what course the company will take. As my hon. Friend the Member for Wansbeck (Mr. Thompson) said, it might even go into a business such as nuclear waste or the importation of coal, and the House could do absolutely nothing to stop it. In the context of this legislation, there is no such thing as a golden share. The Government have no power to prevent any of the things that we know could happen.

I want to come now to some of the more important points that were made by the hon. Member for Stockton, South. I am sorry that he is not in the Chamber at the moment. He said that, in the past, the investments of Tees and Hartlepool were all related to ports or port authority work. He was quite specific. If he thinks again and looks at the facts, he may come to regret that statement. Tees and Hartlepool invested in Tac Display Co. Ltd. On 13 January 1986 a document was prepared for the chairman and members of Tees and Hartlepool port authority, explaining

> "Tac Display Co. Ltd., a privately owned company based on North Shields, whose business is the design and manufacture of shop display units".

The hon. Member for Stockton, South said very clearly that the company invested only in port-related projects. That is not the case.

Mr. Frank Cook: In Cleveland.

Mr. Bell: Yes, in Cleveland, which is our esteemed county.

The business of this company was the design and manufacture of shop display units. It had five divisions. It had a jewellery display manufacturing division. I should like the hon. Member for Stockton, South to tell me what that has to do with a port authority. It had a retail display manufacturing division. The hon. Member for Stockton, South might like to tell us what that has to do with a port authority. It had a shop fitting division. The hon. Member for Stockton, South might like to tell us what that has to do—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Frank Cook: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Some of us have been here since the beginning of the debate. We have been paying great attention and participating in the exchanges. Some hon. Members are doing neither; in fact, they are causing great disturbance to those of us who want to continue our interest in the Bill. I ask you to take them to task.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Perhaps those hon. Members will have regard to what has just been said.

Mr. Bell: I am grateful for your intervention, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and for the intervention of my hon. Friend.

I was analysing an investment of Tees and Hartlepool port authority—Tac Display Co. Ltd. It also had a manufacturing of vacuum forming and joinery division. Again the hon. Member for Stockton, South, who has just returned to the House, might like to tell us what that has to do with a port authority. Earlier the hon. Gentleman made a categorical statement that the investments of Tees and Hartlepool port authority over the past few years were related entirely to port matters. Therefore, he might like to tell me what that division has to do with port investment.

Mr. Harry Barnes: What is happening elsewhere in the House is interesting. The hon. Members for Langbaurgh (Mr. Holt) and for Brigg and Cleethorpes (Mr. Brown) are having a discussion. One is the sponsor of the Bill and the other was the sponsor of the Associated British Ports legislation that allowed millions of tonnes of coal to be brought into the country. This is a similar measure. It is designed to try to kill off the north-east coalfield, just as the other legislation was designed to kill off the Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Yorkshire coalfield.

Mr. Bell: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his intervention. He is right in his reference to a relationship between the Associated British Ports Bill and this Bill. It is a copycat Bill. It would not be before the House if Tees and Hartlepool did not want to follow the route taken by Associated British Ports. The Bill has a similar design and concept. It will affect the mining industry in Durham and in Yorkshire. As I develop my theme, I shall show that there is no way that the hon. Member for Stockton, South can wriggle out of the fact that there is potential for a common use coal terminal on Teesside.

Mr. Devlin: I thought that I answered that when I made my speech. It does not matter whether the port is in the private sector. I take issue with the hon. Gentleman's description of the Bill. It is not a copycat Bill. The legislation sponsored by my hon. Friend the Member for Brigg and Cleethorpes (Mr. Brown) was to extend the port of Immingham——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. It would be unwise for us to have a rerun of the Associated British Ports (No 2) Bill. That has nothing to do with Tees and Hartlepool.

Mr. Bell: I am grateful for your protection, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I should have preferred the hon. Member for Stockton, South, who made a categorical statement about the port authority investing only in port-related matters, to respond to the fact that the authority has invested in TAC Display Co. Ltd., which has five divisions—a jewellery display manufacturing division, a retail display manufacturing division, a shop fitting division, a vacuum forming and joinery division and a design division. I shall give way if he wants to recant what he said earlier, or rephrase it. As he does not want to do so, I shall continue.

Mr. Frank Cook: I am astonished that my hon. Friend the Member for Middlesbrough (Mr. Bell) should be so surprised at the lack of consistency in the statements made by the hon. Member for Stockton, South (Mr. Devlin). After all, he did a 180-degree turn on northern arts between 28 November and 13 March; he got it totally wrong on the poll tax; and the other evening he voted in one Division and then did not bother to vote in the next.

Mr. Bell: It is appropriate for my hon. Friend to refer to the inconsistency of the hon. Member for Stockton, South. I am simply responding to his earlier statement that all the investments of Tees and Hartlepool port authority were port-related. Let me refer again to the investment in TAC Display Co. Ltd. Let me quote from an interesting and revealing document circulated to the chairman and members of the THPA:

"The question must be asked as to why should the Authority invest in a company which has performed so poorly over the last two years? The first point is that there has been a marked turnround over the past few months, output has increased, productivity has improved, and a loss at the end of October of £12 900 has more than been offset by profits in November and December and it is realistically expected that the projected profit will be in the region of £20,000. The company is very highly geared and therefore any equity investment will reduce the high cost of financing which has reduced its ability to grow, and probably the most important feature is that management has now got control over the company and is exercising financial disciplines with the assistance of a regional manager of a major bank."

It was so successful that it lost £150,000. We are hearing so much tonight about the need to pass this privatising measure because the port cannot invest in other companies.

The hon. Member for Langbaurgh phrased his argument very cleverly. At no time did he say that any of the investments made in the 1980s were illegal, or ultra vires the company; at no time did he seek to address the question whether powers already existed for the THPA to do everything that it has done for several years. The Under-Secretary is listening carefully and attentively——

Mr. Harry Barnes: In fact, the Minister is listening to his hon. Friend the Member for Brigg and Cleethorpes (Mr. Brown). There is a three-way connection: the Minister, who represents a constituency in west Derbyshire, with which masses of ports are associated, is tied in with the Bill. We are discussing a Government measure tonight.

Mr. Bell: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his intervention. It has arrested the attention of the Under-Secretary, who is now listening with great attention. His predecessor as shipping Minister, Lord Brabazon of Tara, was fully apprised of the facts about the THPA's investment in TAC Display Co. Ltd.

The Minister's predecessor was written to by the predecessor of the hon. Member for Stockton, South, Mr. Ian Wrigglesworth, who wrote expressing anxiety about the investment. The Minister's answer was significant. He made it clear that investment in a company such as TAC Display Co. Ltd. was entirely a matter for the authority. He said—in a ministerial letter—

"As I understand it, the Authority has the statutory power to make such an investment."

If the statutory power exists for a private authority or the trust port to invest in jewellery, in retail display manufacturing, in shop fittings, in a vacuum forming and joinery division, and in design work, and if the Minister of the Crown says that the investment is in order, why are we here tonight? Why is it necessary for us to go through the process of this debate, to have to listen to the hon. Member for Langbaurgh and the Minister, whose remarks, to his credit, were all about privatisation, a subject to which we had referred earlier?

Mr. Leadbitter: I, too, brought to the attention of the House the list to which my hon. Friend is referring, and I reached the same conclusion as he. It is important for my hon. Friend to impress on the House the fact that that list of activities poses an important question. If the authority can undertake all those activities under present legislation, what does privatisation have to offer? It seems that nothing new could be undertaken, so we are left wondering whether there is a reason for the measure other than privatisation. Perhaps the hon. Member for Langbaurgh (Mr. Holt) has not told us that reason.

Mr. Harry Barnes: A hidden agenda?

Mr. Bell: My hon. Friend says, from a sedentary position, that there might be a hidden agenda. After some months of public debate, we have not been able to get to the real hidden agenda.

I explained that the company lost £150,000. A liquidator was appointed in August 1986, and one is left wondering what happened to that £150,000. Did it represent a dead loss to the Tees and Hartlepool port authority, which provided an independent report to the board of that authority prior to the investment being made, how and why did the investment go wrong and why did the authority get involved in it in the first place?

The hon. Member for Stockton, South said that all the investments of that authority at that time were port-related. There was a company named Mercury Maintenance Ltd., which proved to be another fine investment by the authority. The hon. Member for Langbaurgh was right to say that, in an Adjournment debate, I praised the Tees and Hartlepool port authority, but my praise was for its programme for disabled workers. We are now considering the financial side of the authority, where a different picture emerges.

[Mr. Bell]

Mercury Maintenance Ltd. changed its name to Hercules Security Fabrications Ltd. The authority invested £30 in that company, but a loan of £136,000 was given. The directors in September 1986 were Mr. John Hackney, who is the present chief executive, and Mr. John Tholen, who was the former chief executive. The company was found to be hopelessly insolvent as at November 1987.

The authority invested in another company, in accordance with the powers that it has had since 1966. My hon. Friend the Member for Hartlepool was instrumental in incorporating the Hartlepool port into the Tees and Hartlepool port authority, and credit is due to him for his efforts in that matter many years ago.

There was a £25,000 investment in LPC Elements Ltd. by the Tees and Hartlepool port authority in December 1985. The director remained unchanged, Mr. John Hackney and Mr. John Tholen. According to the company's accounts, it lost £10,534 as at 1988.

We come to Casair Aviation and an investment of £5,000, with £25,000 given by way of mortgage for an aircraft. Again, the directors were as previously. In other words, Tees and Hartlepool port authority board members find themselves on boards of companies in which they have invested. Casair was hopelessly insolvent when it was finally bought out by Northern Aviation Limited, but the accounts were not to hand.

Another company in which Tees and Hartlepool port authority has invested in accordance with its powers under the 1966 Act is called Boldpath. It was given a loan of £510,000. The hon. Member for Stockton, South said that the authority wanted to become a property developer on Teesside or in the north. He said that it could not develop into property because it did not have the powers. But Boldpath is a property company in which the authority invested in September 1986. Against a company with capital of £100, the authority lent £510,000. It is not surprising that, when we ask for statements from the authority about the variety of its investments, we do not find them in the balance sheets or its public accounts and we cannot elicit specific information on each company in any statement.

I am glad to see the hon. Member for Croydon, South (Sir W. Clark) back in his place, no doubt hot from the 1922 Committee Thursday night meeting. Another company in which the authority invested in accordance with its powers was Quality Pipework Services. What does the hon. Member for Stockton, South think that Quality Pipeworks Services has to do with a port authority? The authority invested £40,000 in that company and lent it £80,000. Again, the directors were Mr. John Tholen and Mr. John Hackney, the former and present chief executives. That investment was so good for Tees and Hartlepool that it got its investment back at the price it paid for it.

Why should we stop at one, two, three or four companies? Let us examine the entire record of the authority as it relates to its bid for privatisation. What about Storefreight, a company in which the authority invested £100,000? Again, the directors were Mr. John Hackney and Mr. John Tholen. It was the only investment out of ten which turned out to be profitable.

Mr. Frank Cook: I am so interested in the information that my hon. Friend is imparting to the House that I should like him to clarify whether the investments took place when Mr. Tholen was acting as chief executive or after he departed.

Mr. Bell: All the investments that I have before me were made in 1986. Hercules Security Fabrication was a £30 investment in 1986-87. All the investments were probably made at about the time when Mr. Tholen was chief executive, but Mr. John Hackney, the present chief executive, became a member of the board of all the companies to which I referred.

Storefreight, in which £100,000 was invested, is now a profitable company because it is now 100 per cent. owned by the Tees and Hartlepool port authority. It is the only company to be found in the public accounts. When we ask questions about other investments, we are told to wait until the new accounts are published next month. Perhaps as a result of the intervention tonight on the Floor of the House there will be a modification in the accounts.

I wish to put some questions to the sponsor of the Bill and his ally, the hon. Member for Stockton, South. How can the House allow the privatisation of a company which, when it had the power to do so, invested so badly and unwisely? We do not know how much it has cost the Tees and Hartlepool port authority, but it runs into hundreds of thousands of pounds. We cannot obtain an answer to that question.

Mr. Meale: The information that my hon. Friend imparts to the House is rather alarming. He has read out details of companies involved in marinas, development agencies and fabrication plants. Is he sure that they are the only companies involved? Perhaps we should not proceed any further until we get more details of all the companies in which investments have been made.

Mr. Bell: My hon. Friend anticipates my remarks. I have kept to the very end of my observations on financing another company of which no one has ever heard. I have spoken to three directors of the company who have never heard of it. It is Mountjoy Finance. Perhaps my hon. Friend the Member for Stockton, North, with his great City contacts, has heard of Mountjoy Finance. What are we to make of that company? According to a report submitted to me on 24 January this year, the company was incorporated on 14 February 1986. Its principal activity was the making of long-term loans.

Again, the hon. Member for Stockton, South may be able to tell me whether the making of long-term loans is a port-related activity. The company's assets are fixed at £350,000. Its current assets are set at £50,013. Its current liabilities are £500,000 and its net worth is £13.

Mr. Frank Cook: I am staggered to hear that information, especially bearing in mind my hon. Friend's statement that he has spoken to three nominated directors of the company who did not know that they were directors. Did I hear aright, or have I got my wires crossed?

Mr. Bell: No. I specifically asked three directors of the company, one of whom is no longer a director, whether they had ever heard of Mountjoy Finance, and they all answered that they had not.

Mr. Frank Cook: Can that be legal?

Mr. Bell: It may be prudent for me to ignore my hon. Friend's sedentary intervention.

Let us talk about the net worth of Mountjoy Finance —£13. That is the net worth of a company that can give long-term loans. That £13 represents 13 ordinary shares of £1 each, allotted and fully paid. The company's authorised capital is 100 ordinary shares of £1 each. For the benefit of the House, let me give the names of the shareholders. Northern Investors Company Ltd, Centro house, 3 Cloth market, Newcastle upon Tyne, has three £1 shares. Ferguson Industrial Holdings, Appleby Castle, Cumbria has four ordinary shares. Melville Street Investments (Edinburgh) Ltd., 4 Melville street, Edinburgh, has four ordinary shares. Then, lo and behold, at the bottom comes Tees and Hartlepool port authority, Queen's square, Middlesbrough, which has two £1 shares in the company.

Mr. Frank Cook: Do I understand from that list that the only Cleveland interest in the shares was that of the Tees and Hartlepool port authority?

Mr. Bell: My hon. Friend is right. According to the information on record at Companies house, the Tees and Hartlepool port authority, with its two shares, is the only Cleveland company involved.

I can go further. The investment is not listed in the Tees and Hartlepool port authority's annual report to which I referred earlier, and one of the four directors of the finance house—if I may call it that—is Mr. John Proctor Hackney, of 50 The Holme, Great Broughton, Middlesbrough, who is listed as finance director, but who is now the chief executive of Tees and Hartlepool port authority. Mr. Hackney was appointed a director of the company on 30 May 1989.

Mr. Ronnie Campbell: Does my hon Friend think that the *Daily Mirror* should campaign for a public inquiry into this matter?

Mr. Bell: I will simply say, modestly and prudently, that Mr. Arthur Scargill is a much-maligned man when one studies the details of the Tees and Hartlepool port authority's financial statements.

The financial status report to which I refer—lest there be any doubt about this, I have the official documents with me—prepared on 24 January 1990 stated that the directors have relied upon the exemptions for individual accounts under sections 247 to 249 of the Companies Act 1985. That allows the company to file only a modified balance sheet and a limited number of notes instead of full accounts. The company qualified for this exemption, as it is classed as a small company within the meaning of the Companies Act.

The comments on the financial status report are revealing and show that the company is run at a break-even point, receiving and paying £48,073—worth of interest a year. It is interesting to note that they receive and pay the same amount of interest.

The principal lenders—now we get to the heart of the matter, the reason why the Tees and Hartlepool port authority is investing in a company for £2—are the shareholders. They have extended £350,000 of long-term finance to the company. As the company is in the hands of its shareholders, and only has a small £13 paid-up share capital, this is what the financial status report says:

"we would advise you to seek a parental guarantee if you are considering extending this company a line of credit."

That is with £13 cash in bank on the balance sheet as of 30 September 1987. Here we have it: a £2 investment; a £350,000 loan; one is warned to seek a parental guarantee before extending the company a line of credit; and again £13 in share capital in the bank.

According to the financial statement of 30 September 1988,

"The company's activity is the making of long term loans. The directors consider that the result for the year is satisfactory."

The hon. Member for Langbaurgh looks somewhat disconsolate. He has not listed a single investment by the Tees and Hartlepool port authority during the past— *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Meale: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Many Opposition Members and some Conservative Members—to be fair—have waited patiently here all night listening to the debate. Many more Opposition Members wish to participate in the debate but we cannot hear a word because of the rabble standing over there. Can they be brought to order?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Perhaps those hon. Members who are not listening to the debate will talk quietly.

Mr. Bell: I am grateful to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker——

Mr. Holt *rose in his place and claimed to move*, That the Question be now put.

Question put, That the Question be now put:—

The House proceeded to a Division—

Mr. Harry Barnes *(seated and covered):* On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I shall take the hon. Gentleman's point of order after the Division.

Mr. Barnes: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I have already said that I shall take it after the Division.

The House having divided: Ayes 126, Noes 29.

Division No. 132] **[10.37 pm**

AYES

Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amess, David
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Bellingham, Henry
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Dorrell, Stephen
Emery, Sir Peter
Fallon, Michael
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fookes, Dame Janet
Forman, Nigel
Gale, Roger
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hayes, Jerry

Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Janman, Tim
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knowles, Michael
Lang, Ian
Lawrence, Ivan
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
Mans, Keith
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Monro, Sir Hector
Neale, Gerrard
Neubert, Michael
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Norris, Steve
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Page, Richard
Patnick, Irvine
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Riddick, Graham
Rowe, Andrew
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, Sir William
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thurnham, Peter
Tracey, Richard
Trotter, Neville
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilshire, David
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Tim Devlin and
Mr. William Hague.

NOES

Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Beith, A. J.
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cummings, John
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dixon, Don
Doran, Frank
Fisher, Mark
George, Bruce
Gordon, Mildred
Haynes, Frank
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
Meale, Alan
Nellist, Dave
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Ruddock, Joan
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Steel, Rt Hon Sir David
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Tony Banks and
Mr. Stuart Bell.

Question accordingly agreed to.

10.50 pm

Mr. Harry Barnes: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I have two points of order. One arises from your refusal to allow a point of order during the Division. The point of order that I wanted to raise during the Division was on whether you would think again about accepting the closure motion.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman is proving my point. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman knows that it is not in order to dispute the judgment of the Chair on whether to accept a closure motion. The Chair accepted it, it is then for the House to make a decision. That is what happened and that was in order.

Mr. Barnes *rose*——

Mr. Bell *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I have ruled on the point of order. If hon. Members have a different point of order, I shall take it. We must now proceed to a Division on Second Reading.

Question put accordingly, That the Bill be now read a Second time:—

The House divided: Ayes 111, Noes 26.

Division No. 133] **[10.51 pm**

AYES

Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amess, David
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Bellingham, Henry
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butterfill, John
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Durant, Tony
Emery, Sir Peter
Fallon, Michael
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Gale, Roger
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hayes, Jerry
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Janman, Tim
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knowles, Michael
Lang, Ian
Lawrence, Ivan
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
Mans, Keith
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Neale, Gerrard
Neubert, Michael
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Norris, Steve
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Page, Richard
Patnick, Irvine
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Riddick, Graham
Rowe, Andrew
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thorne, Neil
Tracey, Richard
Trotter, Neville
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilshire, David

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Tim Devlin and
Mr. William Hague.

NOES

Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barron, Kevin
Beith, A. J.
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cummings, John
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dixon, Don
Doran, Frank
Fisher, Mark
Gordon, Mildred
Haynes, Frank
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted

Nellist, Dave
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Ruddock, Joan
Skinner, Dennis
Steel, Rt Hon Sir David
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Alan Meale and
Mr. Harry Barnes.

Question accordingly agreed to.
Bill read a Second time and committed.

Mr. Bell: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I do not want to challenge your ruling in any way, but would it be in order if, through you, I put it on the record, for the information of the Secretary of State for Transport, that I shall be calling for a formal Department of Trade and Industry investigation into the affairs of the Tees and Hartlepool port authority and into the financial shenanigans that I have revealed tonight on the Floor of the House?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: That is not a point of order for the Chair, but the hon. Gentleman has put his point on the record.

Mr. Harry Barnes: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. According to page 366 of "Erskine May", relating to an hon. Member raising a point of order during a Division, only when a question of order arises during a Division may a Member speak seated and covered. That implies that there is a procedure for raising a point of order during a Division and, like many other hon. Members, I have used that procedure in the past.

My point of order is whether I should have been prevented from raising a point of order during the Division. This relates to the point of order that has just been raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Middlesbrough (Mr. Bell). I had been attempting to raise another point of order, which it is now too late to raise, about the nature of the Division that was then taking place, given the statement made by my hon. Friend the Member for Middlesbrough, which I feel should lead to a Department of Trade and Industry inquiry, and affects our procedure in relation to this legislation.

Although I feel aggrieved about it, I accept that that has now passed. My point of order relates to whether, by that precedent, hon. Members will be refused the right to raise points of order during a Division.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: No new precedent has been created. This matter is at the discretion of the Chair. Depending on the circumstances, it is usual for the Chair to take a point of order during a Division if it relates directly to the conduct of the Division, such as whether the Division bells are ringing.

I am sure that, from the point of view of common sense, the whole House will appreciate—the hon. Gentleman himself made this point—that, when a Division is taking place and hon. Members are going through the Division Lobbies, it is exceedingly difficult in practical terms for the Chair or anyone else in the House to hear what is being said by the hon. Member who is raising the point of order.

From the points that the hon. Gentleman raised during the first Division, it is clear that he was not making a point of order relating to the Division. It is sensible and practicable in those circumstances for the Chair to use its discretion in this way—[HON. MEMBERS: "No."]—and to take points of order after the Division when they can be properly heard and properly dealt with——

Mr. Dave Nellist (Coventry, South-East): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is clearly within your recollection—this has happened during the seven years that I have been a Member of the House—that there have been many occasions when the Chair has accepted points of order during a Division——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Nellist: I have not made the point of order yet.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. It is clear that the hon. Gentleman is seeking to question the judgment of the Chair. I am sure that he does not intend to do that. We now come——

Mr. Nellist: On a different point of order——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Nellist *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. We now come——

Mr. Nellist: It is a different point of order——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: If it is a different point of order, I shall hear the hon. Gentleman, but it must be a different point of order.

Mr. Nellist: It is a totally different point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Can you explain to me under which Standing Order the occupant of the Chair can decide whether or not a point of order is valid if the case has not even been made?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I have already dealt with that point of order, and there is nothing that I can add.

Estimates

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *proceeded to put forthwith the Questions which he was directed to put, pursuant to Standing Order No. 53 (Questions on voting of estimates, &c.), and the Order [12 March], as modified by the Order yesterday.*

ESTIMATES, 1989-90 (AIR) VOTE A

Motion made, and Question put.

That during the year ending on 31st March 1990 an additional number not exceeding 3,800 all ranks be maintained for the Royal Air Force Reserve—*[Mr. Fallon.]*

The House divided: Ayes 90, Noes 3.

Division No. 134] **[11.10 pm**

AYES

Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Barron, Kevin
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Boswell, Tim
Bowis, John
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butterfill, John
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Devlin, Tim
Dixon, Don
Durant, Tony
Emery, Sir Peter
Fallon, Michael
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fisher, Mark
Gale, Roger
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Hague, William
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haynes, Frank
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Janman, Tim
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Knapman, Roger
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Lilley, Peter
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
Mans, Keith
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Meale, Alan
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Neubert, Michael
Norris, Steve
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Riddick, Graham
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Steel, Rt Hon Sir David
Stevens, Lewis
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Trotter, Neville
Waller, Gary
Widdecombe, Ann

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. David Lightbown, and
Mr. Irvine Patnick.

NOES

Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
Nellist, Dave

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Dennis Skinner and
Mr. Ronnie Campbell.

Question accordingly agreed to.

ESTIMATES, 1990-91 (NAVY) VOTE A

Motion made, and Question put,

That during the year ending on 31st March 1991 a number not exceeding 66,800 all ranks be maintained for Naval service.—*[Mr. Fallon.]*

The House divided: Ayes 82, Noes 7.

Division No. 135] **[11.21 pm**

AYES

Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Baldry, Tony
Barron, Kevin
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Boswell, Tim
Bowis, John
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Buck, Sir Antony
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butterfill, John
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Devlin, Tim
Dixon, Don
Durant, Tony
Emery, Sir Peter
Fallon, Michael
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fisher, Mark
Gale, Roger
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Hague, William
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Haynes, Frank
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Holt, Richard
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Janman, Tim
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Knapman, Roger
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
Mans, Keith
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Neubert, Michael
Norris, Steve
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Riddick, Graham
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Steel, Rt Hon Sir David
Stevens, Lewis
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Waller, Gary
Widdecombe, Ann

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Nicholas Baker and
Mr. Irvine Patnick.

NOES

Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Cummings, John
Gordon, Mildred
Nellist, Dave
Salmond, Alex
Skinner, Dennis

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Harry Barnes and
Mr. Alan Meale.

Question accordingly agreed to.

ESTIMATES, 1990-91 (ARMY), VOTE A

Resolved,

That during the year ending on 31st March 1991 a number not exceeding 172,550 all ranks be maintained for Army Service, a number not exceeding 4,596 for the Home Service Force, a number not exceeding 109,805 for the Individual Reserves, a number not exceeding 85,364 for the Territorial Army and a number not exceeding 6,800 for the Ulster Defence Regiment.—*[Mr. Fallon.]*

ESTIMATES, 1990-91 (AIR), VOTE A

Resolved,

That during the year ending on 31st March 1991, a number not exceeding 95,240 all ranks be maintained for the Air Force Service, a number not exceeding 16,150 for the Royal Air Force Reserve, and a number not exceeding 2,550 for the Royal Auxiliary Air Force.—*[Mr. Fallon.]*

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 1989-90

Resolved,

That a further supplementary sum, not exceeding £4,951,397,000 be granted to Her Majesty out of the Consolidated Fund to defray charges for Defence and Civil Services which will come in the course of payment during the year ending on 31st March 1990, as set out in House of Commons Papers Nos. 179 and 230.—*[Mr. Fallon.]*

ESTIMATES, EXCESSES, 1988-89

Resolved,

That a sum, not exceeding £10,366,965·82, be granted to Her Majesty out of the Consolidated Fund to make good excesses on certain grants for Defence and Civil Services for the year ended 31st March 1989, as set out in House of Commons Paper No. 177.—*[Mr. Fallon.]*

CONSOLIDATED FUND (No. 2) BILL

Bill ordered to be brought in upon the Resolutions agreed to this day, relating to Supplementary Estimates, 1989-90, Estimates, Excesses, 1988-89 and Estimates 1990-91 (Vote on Account), by the Chairman of Ways and Means, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Norman Lamont, Mr. Peter Lilley and Mr. Richard Ryder.

Mr. Peter Lilley accordingly presented a Bill to apply certain sums out of the Consolidated Fund to the service of the years ending on 31st March 1989, 1990 and 1991: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time tomorrow and to be printed. [Bill 87.]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Ordered,

That, at this day's sitting, the Coal Industry Bill may be proceeded with, though opposed, until any hour.—*[Mr. Nicholas Baker.]*

Coal Industry Bill

Lords amendments considered.

Lords amendment No. 1 agreed to.

Lords amendment: No. 2, after clause 4, insert the following new clause—

"*Opencast coal working: conservation requirements*

. For section 3 of the Opencast Coal Act 1958 (preservation of amenity) there shall be substituted—

Preservation of amenity

3. In formulating any proposals as to the working of coal by opencast operations or the carrying out of operations incidental to such working or the restoration of land affected by such working or by such incidental operations, the British Coal Corporation (in this Act referred to as 'the Corporation') or any person who holds or is applying for a licence under section 36(2) of the Coal Industry Nationalisation Act 1946—

(a) shall have regard to the desirability of preserving natural beauty, of conserving flora, fauna and geological or physiographical features of special interest and of protecting sites, buildings and objects of architectural, historic or archaeological interest; and

(b) shall so far as possible ensure that the proposals include measures to mitigate any adverse effect which the proposed activities may have on the natural beauty of the countryside or on any such flora, fauna, features, sites, buildings or objects."

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment—*[Mr. Baldry.]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): With this it will be convenient to take Lords amendment No. 31, in the title, line 5, at end insert

"and the preservation of amenity in connection with opencast coal working".

11.35 pm

Mr. Kevin Barron (Rother Valley): The amendment has a history. On Report in the House of Commons, my hon. Friend the Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) said:

"If the Government purblindly and stupidly insist on going ahead with a tenfold increase in the maximum size of opencast private workings, there should be parallel strengthening of the planning laws to protect local people." —[*Official Report*, 16 January 1990; Vol. 165, c. 211.]

My hon. Friend was told by the Minister to leave the matter to the planning authorities and that such amendments were superfluous.

It was then argued in the other place—quite well, as I understand it—that, if the Government intended to allow for a massive expansion of opencasting in the private sector, they should ensure that the private sector operates within the same framework as British Coal. Even in the other place the Government argued that environmental failures were the fault of a lack of enforcement of planning conditions. I am pleased to say, however, that when the vote was taken in the other place, the Minister's noble Friends disagreed with him. Tonight the Government have returned to the House with an amendment that they rejected in principle in January.

It is essential that the good practice of the British Coal opencast executive is extended to the private sector. I am well acquainted with examples of the good practice that the executive has adopted for many years in my constituency, where we have what might be regarded as a flagship project—the Rother Valley country park, which provides recreation for many people in the area. Before the site was opencasted, the initial plan for Bedgreave mill, a

[Mr. Kevin Barron]

medieval mill in the middle of the site, was that it should be destroyed, so that the opencasting could be carried on without interference. I am pleased to say that the arguments advanced at the time—long before I became a Member of the House—were won. The mill was kept and they opencasted round it. It now serves as a very good visitors' centre for the country park, and many school-children from my constituency and others use the mill for educational purposes.

Next to country park is an opencast mine on the site of Brookhouse colliery, which closed late in 1985 after the miners' strike. The work taking place there relates directly to the Lords amendment—the one that the Government told us we did not want. A very good ecological experiment has been taking place. Reeds have been moved out of some ponds on that site and placed, at the right time of year, in some neighbouring ponds about half a mile away. That has been done to protect newts' eggs laid on the leaves of those reeds. [HON. MEMBERS: "Really?"] I see that hon. Members are interested in this. The ponds contain crested, smooth and palmate newts. The opencast executive has moved the plants—and the eggs on them —so that those species will survive and can be brought back to the site when it is restored.

Other sites in close proximity are being treated in the same way to save their habitats. At the Tinsley Park site in Sheffield, the executive is moving some acid heathland soil and resettling it about two miles away because it contains the seeds of many varieties of plants that grow in that area and in no other in industrial Sheffield. The soil has been relaid on a nature reserve by the ecology unit of Sheffield city council—a well-known good Socialist council.

Those actions have been taken by British Coal to protect and preserve the environment as best it can. They are the result of years of expertise in such work. However, in the early stages of the Bill, we were confronted with expansion in the private sector, where there is little expertise in looking after the environment and related problems. The rapid expansion of the private sector allowed in the Bill would rely on an expertise that it does not have at present.

We are pleased that the Government decided not to throw out the amendment made in the other place. We recognise that, while opencast coal mining is sometimes necessary, the environment needs to be protected.

I congratulate the Government, because this is one of the few occasions when I have seen them show some common sense, even if it was forced on them in the other place by some of their hon. Friends. We gladly accept and support the amendment.

Mr. Mark Fisher (Stoke-on-Trent, Central): I welcome the Government's acceptance of the Lords amendment, as it sets new standards for the opencast executive's working practices for the natural environment.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Rother Valley (Mr. Barron) has said, British Coal has a good reputation in that respect, but it is useful and important to extend the legislation in this way.

I am anxious to find out from the Minister tonight, when he replies to this short debate, whether the new standards set for this aspect of opencast coal mining—the natural environment—by the Lords amendment and the attitude that it reflects will permeate the Department's thinking about opencast coal mining in general. Will planning applications for new opencast sites be considered in the light of that new attitude?

The Minister will know that British Coal is proposing to develop an opencast site of 350 acres in my constituency. There are 3 million tonnes of coal there and British Coal is proposing to develop 1·25 million tonnes. The site is right in the middle of Stoke-on-Trent, within half a mile of the city centre, surrounded by housing, industry and commerce. I believe that it is a precedent for British Coal to attempt to develop an opencast site in the middle of one of the largest cities in the country, and it is a precedent that is entirely wrong. I gain some hope from the amendment and from what I take to be a new attitude.

Although the site is in the middle of a large city, it is also an important natural habitat—a green site of some 650 acres, surrounded by housing and close to the city centre. It is heathland, with wildlife of various kinds—flora and fauna. People walk and jog on that land and exercise their dogs. It is an important part of their life.

If the thinking behind the Lords amendment begins to permeate the Department's thinking, and that of the Department of the Environment when planning applications are considered, it will be impossible for British Coal successfully to pursue this opencast application in Stoke-on-Trent. All the 250,000 people in Stoke-on-Trent are totally against that opencast site. No hon. Member would like to be faced with a planning application for such a site in the middle of a large urban industrial area. All hon. Members would object to it and would take some encouragement from the Lords amendment, which sets new standards and provides people with some hope.

11.45 pm

I do not know whether the Minister can respond at this stage. Although the Lords amendment helps the case that my constituents will be fighting with regard to the natural environment, the other half of their case against the site in Stoke-on-Trent is that it is in the middle of the city, that it is surrounded by housing and that it would traumatically affect transport on the roads of Stoke-on-Trent. Some Ministers know the city well. I am being reassured that it will not happen, but my constituents will not be satisfied until British Coal reconsiders its plans and develops other sites. I regret, therefore, that the Lords amendment does not go one step further and impose the same high standards as regards the human environment as it imposes for the natural environment. We need that double protection if Stoke-on-Trent is not to be subjected to opencast development.

The city is built on a coal seam. Its economy has been built on coal. We have paid our dues to the country, through the living and working conditions of the people of the city during the past 150 years. The city has gained a great deal from that industry; it has also lost a great deal. During the past 30 years, we have worked extremely hard to re-green our city and to create living conditions that provide hope for the future.

It would be a disastrous step backwards if this opencast site went ahead. I hope that the Lords amendment will give some hope to the people of Stoke-on-Trent that the Department will pay more attention to environmental matters. The Minister has already received many representations from the people of Stoke-on-Trent. I can assure him that he will receive many more unless British Coal withdraws its application. However, for the time

being, I derive some hope from the Lords amendment. I thank the Government and congratulate them on accepting it. It is a good step forward.

Mr. A. J. Beith (Berwick-upon-Tweed): As well as having the largest deep mine in the northern coalfield, my constituency must have about the largest commitment to opencast sites, both large and small, and many more are planned.

I welcome the amendment, not least because it will help to deal better with some of the applications for sites that are far away from the main opencast mining area. I am thinking particularly of the Wandylaw site, north of Alnwick, where an area of open moorland has become an opencast mining site. That was extremely controversial. It has not allayed the fears of those who feel that mining at that site should not have been permitted. There will be applications for sites in other rural parts of the constituency. Those applications should be tested against the amendment, which sets much stricter criteria.

A substantial part of the constituency depends upon opencast coal mining. It provides security of employment. Sites should be opened up on a reasonably planned basis. Many of my constituents have had to contend with the consequences and therefore expect, in compensation, good quality restoration work. We have seen some excellent restoration work carried out by British Coal in my constituency and we hope to see much more. We have also seen an increasing commitment by British Coal to the welfare of the community in the area, and that is most welcome. However, there is no doubt that opencasting operations are a destructive business, and the beauty and attraction that are described in the Lords amendment are disguised from view for quite a long time.

Those who live in the communities in my constituency that are heavily dependent on opencast coal have to be prepared to put up with the disadvantages to find employment. Opencast applications can be very divisive. Some of the applications have divided villages between the areas where people work in opencasting and those where commuters live who see it simply as an intrusion. The areas dependent on opencast coal are often the poorest and most disadvantaged.

I was at a meeting on Monday night in one of the main villages—Widdrington Station—in which many people work in the opencast coal mining industry. That area is one of the most adversely affected by the poll tax in the north of England. As a result of their misfortune in being lumped in with an area that also includes some of the wealthiest outer suburbs of Newcastle, the people find themselves paying a £439 poll tax. A lot of overtime will have to be worked in the opencast industry if there is to be any hope for some of the families to be able to pay an enormously heavy poll tax which has been levied on a community that does not have high wages. The people there will be even more determined to see that there is a future in the opencast industry in the area.

I ask Ministers not only to recognise how important it will be to test new applications against the criteria set out in the Lords amendment, but to see, especially with private contractors, that the obligations implicit in the Lords amendment are carried out. That puts British Coal in a rather odd position. British Coal is involved in the industry as a promoter of opencast coal mining, and I am not sure that the licensing and protective role that goes with that should stay indefinitely with British Coal.

In many ways, I would rather see that handled independently by the Department of Energy, so that moneys held against future restoration work are held by the Department in the interests of the future protection of the environment of the areas concerned. Some of those problems will extend far further than the Lords amendment, which is perhaps the beginning of a more rigorous approach to the granting of opencast planning applications. I hope that that will also involve more rigorous care of the communities that depend on opencast coal mining and require it to be continued so that they can have work, but which have to live with its effects.

Mr. Frank Haynes (Ashfield): I shall be very brief, but I felt it necessary to have a few words about the Lords amendment. I served in Committee, along with Conservative Members. I was terribly disappointed that, despite pressure by the Opposition to stop the extension of opencast mining, we lost. The disappointment, following on from that, was concerned with the question of clearing up the site and putting it back to something like it was before the opencast mining took place. The Opposition especially—because this is where the miners are—know a lot about the mining industry and know of the experiences that people have had with opencast. We know the way in which the land has been left after the operations have finished.

I want to congratulate their Lordships, who have done a first-class job in the amendments. They are a step in the right direction. I also want to congratulate the Government on accepting those sensible amendments on looking after the areas where opencast mining takes place.

I have been married for a long while and I remember the days when I was courting. We used to walk down the beautiful footpaths of Nottinghamshire. Some of them were wedged between the constituencies of Bolsover, Mansfield and Ashfield. They were beautiful walks. I could stand here all night describing those beautiful scenes.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): D. H. Lawrence country.

Mr. Haynes: Yes. It is the most beautiful part of the United Kingdom. There were crowds down lovers lane, and when the lovers went they left the evidence that they had been there behind them. [HON. MEMBERS: "Withdraw."] Some Conservative Members have awful minds.

We may still have to amend the Bill because, with the further expansion of opencast mining and bearing in mind what is happening at present, we live in fear that a lot of cowboys will move in and not do the job properly. I hope that British Coal and the Department of Energy will accept their responsibilities and make sure that, where there is opencast mining, the job is done correctly in the interests of the whole community.

I said that I would be brief and I have been. I simply wanted to put that on the record.

Mr. Skinner: This is an important change, which was debated in Committee and on Report. Many people in Britain, not just in the House, believe that there will be a shift towards looking after the environment, and that is reflected in the amendment. The amendment has come too late for many areas, but if it is implemented properly, it will do a lot of good in areas where so far there has been no opencast mining. If it is carried out to the letter, the

[Mr. Skinner]

flora, fauna and historic buildings will be protected, and that will be to the advantage of many who live in the coalfields, as my hon. Friends the Members for Ashfield (Mr. Haynes) and for Stoke-on-Trent, Central (Mr. Fisher) have said.

I have made it plain in the past that I am not keen on opencast mining. I wish that the amendment had been in operation before Slaley went ahead. That site was almost turned down by the former Secretary of State for the Environment. Then, remarkably, it was agreed by the new Secretary of State, who is supposed to be green and friendly, in his first week in office. That has now gone ahead. Given the different arguments that were put forward at the inquiry, I do not think that the Slaley site would have gone ahead if we had had this amendment.

Another site, adjacent to Slaley, is the Pinnock site. That is a big site, mainly in north-east Derbyshire and partly in Bolsover. If and when an inquiry takes place I want the Minister to look into that development, which has been opposed by the local people and the authorities. I want him to look into it carefully in the light of the amendment. If it is interpreted properly, it could be advantageous to many of our constituents in coalfield areas.

12 midnight

I also want the Minister to bear in mind the fact that there are many historic buildings around the coalfield, as my hon. Friend the Member for Rother Valley (Mr. Barron) said. I hope that there will not be any opencast mining in the areas around Bolsover castle, or Hardwick hall. Both historic buildings are in the middle of the Derbyshire coalfield, most of which is shut, and ready for opencast mining. The application for an opencast mine at Stamfree has been turned down by Bolsover district council. If there is an inquiry about that decision, and that lands on the Secretary of State's desk, I hope that the Minister will make it clear that, under the provisions of this amendment, it will be looked at carefully.

We are now paying more attention to the green belt. Some Tory Members have made an impact on this Secretary of State for the Environment and the previous one. It is becoming a matter of concern to Tory Members of Parliament and large sections of the population. That green belt is in the north of England, and in the coalfield areas, too. Notwithstanding the many applications for opencast mines—there will be many because of the pit closures—I suggest that the Minister makes sure that this amendment is not regarded just as a useful measure from the other place that was passed in the night, but is used properly, and carried out to the letter.

The amendment will mean less opencast coal mining. That will be no bad thing, because it might mean that we shall concentrate on deep mining, where we still have an abundance of coal—the estimate is that we have 200 or 300 years' worth of coal left.

This is an important amendment, so I hope that the Minister will tell us how it will affect historic buildings, flora and the fauna, how it will be carried out and how he will ensure that those who object strenuously to opencast mining will be given a fairer crack of the whip than they have had so far. Too often the local authorities in our areas have opposed such applications, only to find that inspectors, and then Secretaries of State for the Environment, have allowed them to go ahead. I hope that the amendment will have a big impact.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Energy (Mr. Tony Baldry): I am grateful for the thanks of hon. Members to the Government for accepting the amendment. I am also grateful to the Council for the Protection of Rural England, which this week wrote to Ministers to thank them for the Department's helpful response on the environmental issues raised by the Coal Industry Bill. It was delighted that Ministers were able to respond positively to the new clause, and believe that its final version meets many of its original concerns.

As the hon. Members for Stoke-on-Trent, Central (Mr. Fisher), for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Mr. Beith), for Ashfield (Mr. Haynes) and for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) recognised, the Bill is an important signal to opencast operators that they are expected to maintain high environmental standards at all stages of their planning and operations. I have no doubt that those who need to hear will have heard and will take on board the points made by the hon. Member for Bolsover. The hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, Central deserves a full response to the issues that he raised, and I shall be happy to write to him in full with that.

Mr. Barron: With the leave of the House, I should like to thank the Minister for accepting the amendment. Tory Members look rather subdued and tired at this hour, but while we know that there are not 100 of them—as there have not been for the past three Divisions, so they could not close the debate—we are pleased that the Government have accepted the amendment. We hope that the protection of the environment envisaged by the amendment will be carried out on all sites—both British Coal and private sites, the number of which will be increased by the passing of the Bill.

Question put and agreed to.

Lords amendment No. 3 agreed to.

PETITION

Human Embryos

12.5 am

Mr. Ken Hargreaves (Hyndburn): In a week when 10,000 members of the public lobbied Parliament in support of a ban on the use of human embryos as guinea-pigs, I wish to present two petitions which affirm that the human embryo is a real, live human being and urge that it is therefore entitled to the same legal protection that the rest of us enjoy. One petition reads:

To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in Parliament assembled.

The Humble Petition of the officers and supporters attending the 1989 National Conference of the organisation LIFE . . . Showeth that we affirm that the newly-fertilised human embryo is a real, living human being. Therefore, we welcome the statement by the Secretary of State for Social Services on 28 January 1985 that "the Government fully recognises the importance of the ethical and moral questions to be addressed in the debate, including the status of the embryo, and they will guard against undermining the special respect that is owed to the family and children and to the creation of human life."

And therefore we oppose all such practices as are recommended in the Warnock Report, which discriminate against the embryo, or violate his/her human dignity and right to life.

Wherefore your Petitioners pray that the House of Commons, mindful of the Petition for the Protection of The Human Embryo, which was presented to the House of Commons in 1984/85 and bore some two million signatures, will take immediate steps to enact legislation which (a) protects the human embryo from any practices which violate his/her dignity or right to life; (b) forbids any procedure that invoives purchase or sale of human embryos, the discarding of human embryos, their use as sources of transplant tissue or as subjects for research or experiment unless this is done solely for the benefit of the embryo concerned; and (c) forbids all forms of trans-species of fertilisation.

And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

That is signed by Keith Davies of 50 Eastham road, Billesley, Birmingham and 500 members of LIFE throughout the country.

The second petition is couched in similar terms and is signed by Mr. Hugh Morrison of 18 Devonshire drive, Accrington. It is signed also by 36 members of the Evangelical Fellowship, York street, Church and Peel street Baptist church, Accrington.

To lie upon the Table.

Guest Houses (Uniform Business Rate)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Patnick.]*

12.7 am

Mr. Michael Carttiss (Great Yarmouth): Before the House adjourns, I wish to put to my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State some of my concerns about the effects of the uniform business rate on seasonal guest houses and private hotels. Several of my hon. Friends who represent constituencies with seasonal tourist interests have discussed the problems with me, including my hon. Friends the Members for St. Ives (Mr. Harris) and for Waveney (Mr. Porter). The issues go beyond seaside resorts, of course.

I make four suggestions that could be of help to the tourist industry generally and to small guest houses and private hotels that are open for part of the year in particular. I ask my hon. Friend the Minister to take these back to the Department of the Environment for urgent consideration.

My first suggestion deals with raising the rateable value at which a small business may be assessed for the 15 per cent.-plus inflation limitation on the total increase for which the owners will be liable for 1990-91 from £10,000 to £15,000, as is the case for London. That would help small businesses generally.

Secondly, I should like the Minister to consider extending the transitional period from five years to eight years, to reach the new rateable value liability, as I believe that the Local Government Finance Act 1988 empowers the Secretary of State so to do.

Thirdly, I should like the Secretary of State to consider extending the 100-day rule for bed-and-breakfast accommodation, although I shall comment on the adverse effects of that rule, since an extension may help some guest houses, but be to the disadvantage of others.

Fourthly—this is my main point—I should like consideration to be given to permitting guest houses and private hotels in seasonal resorts that are normally closed for the greater part of any year to register, either with their district council or with the district valuer, for the period for which they will be open for business and to have their UBR liability assessed accordingly. If a guest house is open for three months, for example, the UBR liability would be 25 per cent. of the figure that had previously been suggested by the district valuer. If a guest house is open for six months, the UBR liability would be 50 per cent.

Mr. Barry Field (Isle of Wight): I am very much obliged to my hon. Friend for giving way in such a precious and short Adjournment debate. My hon. Friend and I share many interests, one of which is Yarmouth. We both belong to the Yarmouth Association, which covers all the Yarmouths of the world. Does my hon. Friend agree that one difficulty facing the tourist trade is that proprietors have to publish their prices in advance? They have taken bookings and now find that their overheads are overtaking them.

Another difficulty that I am sure that we in the Isle of Wight share with Great Yarmouth is that we are trying to extend the season and its shoulder months, but fixing the relevant period at 100 days fixes the length of the season in the minds of the proprietors and operators. In addition,

[Mr. Barry Field]

the shopkeepers are open for only a short period, and they are wondering why they have to pay the UBR throughout the year, whereas the guest house owners have not.

Mr. Carttiss: My hon. Friend puts exactly the points that I should like the Minister to take into account. I am grateful to him for intervening and for drawing attention to them.

I have had many letters from guest house proprietors, but should like to quote from just one which puts the points effectively. It is from Mrs. Johnson of North Denes road, which is a popular holiday area. She writes:

"it is only right that you should know how the majority of us feel re the new taxes that are about to descend upon us.

No, this is not a moan about the Poll Tax. That is a bug we will all have to bear, even though ours is over £100, more then we were originally told. This is about the Business Tax that is going to put a lot of us out of business over the next couple of years . . . Not only do we have to find the extra money for the Poll Tax but . . . will be expected to find another £750 per year"

for the UBR.

The letter continues:

"On top of this, we have now been told that if we want to have more than one refuse bag a week collected it is going to cost us £4 per week for the privilege! . . .

Because of this situation. . .I have had to limit my work at the guest house to bed and breakfast only and have found a full time job. . . . Please do all you can to get this message over".

The message is that such proprietors will be put out of business if something is not done.

Mr. John Butterfill (Bournemouth, West): Does my hon. Friend accept that many of the problems seem to arise from the level of valuations? I am going to see the Economic Secretary to the Treasury and the chief valuer at the Inland Revenue on this subject, because insufficient account seems to have been taken of the seasonality of the business. Many of the valuations seem to have been based on property values, which have been decapitalised at unrealistic rates.

There is a terrible problem in assessing the proportion of the premises that is occupied by the proprietor. That point does not seem to have been given sufficient weight. About 500 people involved in this business attended a meeting in my constituency, of whom only five had been visited by the valuation officers. A fundamental problem remains to be addressed before we start complaining about anything else.

Mr. Carttiss: I am grateful to my hon. Friend, whose concern I share 100 per cent. I should like to follow his point by giving some examples.

A 28-bedroom private hotel in Kent square, just off the Great Yarmouth sea front, had a rateable value last year of £900; this year its rateable value is £18,000. That gap is, of course, the result of there having been no valuation for 17 years. In Paget road, Great Yarmouth, a small guest house whose rateable value was previously £252 has had an increase to £4,000. A guest house in Prince's road—another area just off the sea front that is popular with visitors—which has 10 bedrooms for letting, has a rateable value of £6,775, while an identical guest house nearby in the same road has a valuation of £4,000. I know that the Minister is not responsible for valuation, but this highlights the tremendous problems of guest house owners.

I do not often agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Aldridge-Brownhills (Mr. Shepherd), but in *The Independent* of 6 March, he was reported as having said:

"The Government just does not seem to know what it is doing or what the impact of the uniform business rate would be."

There is no rhyme or reason in assessing two identical guest houses at totally different valuations. In the case that I have mentioned, the difference is £2,000. As a result, people will have to pay a great deal more.

On the question of the 100-day rule, I have said that the Minister might consider an extension. This, however, is a matter on which there are mixed views. As a consequence of the 100-day rule, many proprietors may find it necessary to opt for restricted opening periods. This is particularly galling at a time when everybody in my borough and, I am sure, in other seaside resorts is making strenuous efforts to extend the holiday season into April, May and October.

Places such as Bournemouth and Blackpool have a good season already, and in Great Yarmouth the season is getting much closer to May to early September. The borough council, through its economic development unit and publicity department, the Great Yarmouth Holiday Association and the publicity association representing so many of the people in the holiday industry, has been doing its best to extend the season, but the 100-day rule could limit that.

Mr. Butterfill: On that point, will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Carttiss: Very briefly.

Mr. Butterfill: The 100-day rule is causing great concern in my constituency. I served on the Standing Committee that dealt with the legislation. At that time, the concession was intended to apply to small cottages that might be let for a few days during the season. We are now in danger of creating a two-tier market—some people having to comply with fire regulations and pay VAT and the business rate, but others moonlighting and not doing any of those things. It seems quite outrageous.

Mr. Carttiss: This is a problem that some of the guest house owners in my constituency have identified. Some people would like to see the 100-day rule extended to 140 days, as in the case of self-catering chalets. If self-catering chalets are in business for only 140 days, they will be exempt from the UBR. Other guest house proprietors point out, just as my hon. Friend has done, that, with private houses opening up for bed and breakfast, without having to comply with the stringent fire and public health regulations that apply to professional hoteliers, there could be unfair competition.

There is a real dilemma as to whether there should be a 100-day rule at all, or whether it should be extended to 140 days. Within the holiday industry overall, there is genuine disagreement about that. It is a matter that needs to be considered. As I have said, I am particularly concerned about the prospect of the holiday season being shortened as a result of the 100-day rule.

We in Great Yarmouth reckon that, on the basis of the lowest estimate, our holiday industry brings £122 million into the area. That is a very significant contribution to the economy of a town that currently has an unemployment level of 8 per cent. That is way above the regional average for East Anglia, which is 3·4 per cent. Last August we had a 5·5 per cent. unemployment rate in the Great Yarmouth

travel-to-work area, which is slightly larger than my constituency. That highlights the importance of the holiday industry having a season which is not truncated by the operation of the rule, if it leads to guest houses and private hotels generally opting for a shorter season to escape the enormous increases to which the UBR could lead.

I want to emphasise the concern expressed by my constituents. Some of my hon. Friends have spoken to me about similar experiences in their constituencies. There should not be any insuperable reason why the rateable value, which is established on the basis of a business being open all year, should not produce a liability which relates to the period of three or four months, or whatever, for which the business is registered to be open. If that were done, it would help to ameliorate the considerable increases that many people in the holiday industry will experience.

I commend these suggestions to the Minister, and I look forward with considerable interest to his response. In my constituency and in other seaside resorts, the future of many people is dependent on the holiday industry. Their ears will be acutely tuned to hear from the Minister a solution to the horrendous problem that they will face from the increased UBR, plus the community charge, plus the charge for refuse collection which my borough council has imposed.

12.21 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. David Heathcoat-Amory): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Great Yarmouth (Mr. Carttiss) on securing the debate and on putting the concerns of his constituents clearly and cogently. I listened with great interest to what he had to say, because we are introducing a number of new rules and regulations, and we recognise that in some cases they have created uncertainty and difficulty. We are always anxious to hear how the system is operating on the ground, particularly in a holiday area such as the area my hon. Friend represents.

Let me deal first with the general points which my hon. Friend raised about the new uniform business rate and the way in which the transitional arrangements will operate. Some rate bills will rise substantially under the new system, but that is largely due not to the uniform business rate but to revaluation. I think all hon. Members concede that we cannot run a system based on rateable values which are 17 years out of date. If we are to have a rate-based system, we must have a revaluation. That by definition means that there will be changes in values and therefore in the rates which are payable. If that was not the case, there would be no point in a revaluation.

Mr. Butterfill: Can my hon. Friend give an assurance that, in future, revaluations will be done on a quinquennial basis and will not be allowed to slip behind again?

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: My hon. Friend makes a good point. I think we did delay it too long. I assure him that we firmly intend to revalue every five years from now on. Indeed, it will require primary legislation not to have a revaluation every five years.

Businesses cannot, of course, be expected to cope with very large rises overnight; that is why we introduced transitional arrangements. Many of the businesses in my hon. Friends' constituencies will have a new rateable value below £10,000, which will qualify them for the more generous phasing limits of 15 per cent. in real terms on increases, and 15·5 per cent. in real terms on reductions. My hon. Friend the Member for Great Yarmouth argued for a higher threshold. We thought long and hard about that and consulted widely on it last year. As a result, we significantly improved the protection available for small businesses.

The arrangements were enacted in the autumn, in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, and further primary legislation would be needed to change them. Apart from that practical constraint, I think that we have already gone a long way to ameliorate the impact of the new system; given the pressing need for a fairer distribution of the rates burden between businesses, I feel that we should not delay unnecessarily by imposing too long a transition period. The proposed threshold of £10,000 outside London already ensures that about 75 per cent. of all business properties will benefit, and I expect that the percentage in my hon. Friend's constituency is roughly the same.

My hon. Friend asked for an assurance that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State would exercise the power available to him to extend the transitional arrangements beyond the initial five-year period. We have powers to extend it, and I appreciate that businesses would be reassured if we gave a commitment now to use them. It is, however, difficult to judge at this stage what kind of transitional scheme—if any—will be needed after the 1995 revaluation, because it is impossible to predict what will happen to rent levels over the next five years.

There is an inverse relationship between rent and rates. Businesses tend to look at their total occupancy costs; if rates rise in real terms—other things being equal—market rents will tend to fall relative to other costs. The next revaluation may throw up different rateable values, and businesses that have not reached their full new rate bills by 1995 may then find that their prospective rate liability is reduced. That is why we think it best to delay a decision on a further transitional period until nearer the time, when the facts become clearer. In other words, we must wait and see.

The transitional arrangements will, I believe, afford the maximum protection for businesses facing large increases, while at the same time being consistent with the need to bring in the new system as soon as possible. Once it is fully in place, businesses will benefit from the assurance—written into statute—that the rate poundage cannot rise each year by more than the rate of inflation, and may rise by less.They have not received that important protection hitherto.

My hon. Friend also mentioned local authority services, drawing attention to the charges made in his constituency for the collection of commercial waste. Refuse collection is currently carried out under the provisions of sections 12 to 14 of the Control of Pollution Act 1974, and the related Collection and Disposal of Waste Regulations 1988, which define and clarify local authorities' responsibilities for the collection and disposal of waste.

One of the key benefits of implementing sections 12 to 14 of the Act is that they provide much clearer definitions of waste, and the basis for a more commercially orientated and accountable collection service. The Act defines commercial waste as, among other things,

[Mr. Heathcoat-Amory]

"waste from premises used wholly or mainly for the purposes of a trade or business".

In our view, waste from properties with mixed business and domestic use falls within that definition. We were asked to make that clear in regulations, and we did so.

We think that, as a general rule, a reasonable charge should be levied on all waste collected from commercial premises, but the Act gives local authorities the power to waive commercial refuse collection charges in appropriate cases. We are aware that it has been the practice of many authorities to recognise that part of the waste from mixed-use properties is domestic by making a reduced charge, or allowing, say, for one bin to be collected every week. So the decision rests with local authorities.

Hon. Members' constituents who have small businesses, mixed hereditaments and mixed properties which are experiencing difficulty should take the matter up in the first instance with their local authorities, but I am aware that councils are taking quite widely varying approaches to the problem, and we are currently analysing responses to our inquiries to see what further direct advice is necessary to those waste collection authorities.

My hon. Friend also expressed the concerns of his constituents who run guest houses and so on, about the payment of business rates and the community charge. He particularly referred to the operation of the so-called 100 day rule.

As for the payment of business rates and community charge, as my hon. Friend will know, the valuation officer will assess only that part of the premises which is used for business purposes. So although a personal community charge will be payable by the owner and anyone who has his or her sole or main residence on the premises, the part of the property used for domestic purposes will not be subject to rates. Also, of course, those who must pay both business rates and the community charge will be eligible for transitional relief, if appropriate, in respect of either or both payments.

Mr. Carttiss: Who is responsible for ensuring that the transitional relief information is available? I understand that the district authority is responsible, but not much information about that is coming out of town halls.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: I am sorry to hear that. The district authorities are in possession of all the necessary information. It is disturbing if it is not getting through to the people who may benefit. It is important that people avail themselves of the relief, particularly transitional relief, that is available. If they contact my hon. Friend, who will pass on the information to me, I will ensure that full and proper information is supplied to the people affected.

My hon. Friend the Member for Bournemouth, West (Mr. Butterfill) referred to certain difficulties, which he identified, about various rateable values being allocated. I need not remind him that rateable values are not, and will not be, based on the capital value of the premises concerned but, rather, reflect market rents. But if startling differences and inconsistencies are showing up in his constituency, he will remind those concerned that there is an appeal mechanism which we hope will deal with the problem.

Mr. Butterfill: My hon. Friend will appreciate that it is rare in any part of the country, and certainly in my constituency, for market rents to be passing in respect of this type of property. Valuation officers are therefore forced to decapitalise capital values, and that is where the problem is arising.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: I appreciate the point that my hon. Friend makes. I am anxious to deal with his question about the so-called 100-day rule, because my hon. Friend the Member for Great Yarmouth fairly pointed out the pros and cons and is aware that too-generous treatment of supposedly casual bed-and-breakfast businesses would represent unfair competition for the hotel trade in general.

We must run a business rating system that tries to sweep in all those who are running commercial businesses from houses and premises. Not to do so would undermine the whole concept of business rating.

We decided to make a concession, if I may call it that, for those who are clearly running a bed-and-breakfast business on a purely incidental or casual basis from their own homes. I assure my hon. Friend that we are well aware of the conflicting views on this issue. We considered the matter carefully before deciding on the 100-day threshold.

I remind my hon. Friend that, when the premises are valued for rateable purposes, the valuation officer will have regard to the annual value of the relevant part. That will inevitably reflect the seasonal nature of any business use. I hope that my hon. Friend will appreciate that the system already works in much the same way as he advocated. Assuming that the season runs for less than 12 months, the rateable value of a guest house will be lower than it would be—all other things being equal—if the season ran all the year round.

We thought long and hard before we decided on the 100-day threshold. It represents a fair balance between the hotel trade and those who run a business in nothing more than a casual or occasional way but nevertheless provide an important service to seaside resorts, which need a higher capacity to cater for tourists and visitors during the height of the business season.

If members of the hotel and catering trade in the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Great Yarmouth are still unhappy about the operation of the rule, I or my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State, the hon. Member for Southampton, Itchen (Mr. Chope), will be only too pleased to meet a delegation and talk the matter through person to person.

That is all that I have time for in this Adjournment debate, but I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Great Yarmouth for raising the issues that are of concern to him. I also thank my other hon. Friends, particularly my hon. Friend the Member for Isle of Wight (Mr. Field), who have spoken. He, too, is vigilant to represent those who provide such an important service to our domestic tourists and holidaymakers.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at twenty-four minutes to One o'clock.

House of Commons

Friday 16 March 1990

The House met at half-past Nine o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PETITIONS

Human Embryos

9.34 am

Mr. Richard Alexander (Newark): I have the honour to present this petition from the parishioners of the Church of the Holy Trinity, Newark. It concerns protection of the human embryo, and has been signed by 225 people. The petition reads:

Wherefore Your Petitioners Pray that the House of Commons will take immediate steps to enact legislation which:

(a) forbids any procedure that involves purchase or sale of human embryos, the discarding or freezing of human embryos, their uses as sources of transplant tissue or as subjects for research or experiment (unless this is done solely for the benefit of the embryo concerned) and *(b)* forbids all forms of trans-species fertilisation.

And Your Petitioners, As in duty bound, will ever pray etc.

I present this petition with my support.

To lie upon the Table.

9.35 am

Mr. Max Madden (Bradford, West): I wish to present a petition signed by Reverend Teodor Poloczek and 400 parishioners of Our Lady of Czestochowa Roman Catholic Church in Bradford, who affirm:

That the newly-fertilised human embryo is a real, living human being: therefore we welcome the statement in the Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Human Fertilisation and Embryology (the Warnock Report) That "the status of the embryo is a matter of fundamental principle which should be enshrined in legislation", and its recommendation that the embryo of the human species should be afforded protection in law. And therefore we oppose all such practices as are recommended in the Report which discriminate against the embryo or violate his/her human dignity and right to life.

Wherefore Your Petitioners Pray that the House of Commons will take immediate steps to enact legislation which *(a)* forbids any procedure that involves purchase or sale of human embryos, the discarding or freezing of human embryos, their use as sources of transplant tissue or as subjects for research or experiment (unless this is done solely for the benefit of the embryo concerned) and *(b)* forbids all forms of trans-species fertilisation.

I beg leave to present the petition.

To lie upon the Table.

9.37 am

Sir David Steel (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale): I wish to present a petition on the same subject, signed by Father John Robinson and 50 constituents in the parish of St. Cuthbert. Some of their anxieties will be met by the Government's Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill, but other observations in the petition will not coincide either with the Government's legislation or with my views. Nevertheless, I recognise the sincerely held views of a minority of my constituents in this matter and am therefore honoured to present the petition on their behalf.

The petition says:

Wherefore Your Petitioners Pray that the House of Commons will take immediate steps to enact legislation which (a) forbids any procedure that involves purchase or sale of human embryos, the discarding or freezing of human embryos, their use as sources of transplant tissue or as subjects for research or experiment (unless this is done solely for the benefit of the embryo concerned); and (b) forbids all forms of transpecies fertilisation.

And Your Petitioners, as in Duty Bound, will ever pray etc.

To lie upon the Table.

Local Government Finance

9.38 am

Mr. Harry Barnes (Derbyshire, North-East): I wish to present a petition on behalf of the residents of Barrow Hill in my constituency, who have been organised by Margaret Tighe of 23 Hill Grove, Barrow Hill, against the poll tax. It says:

To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in Parliament assembled. The Humble Petition of the Residents of Barrow Hill, Stavely, Chesterfield, sheweth that legislation to introduce a poll tax will: Place an unbearable financial burden upon your petitioners; Subsidise wealthy people at the direct expense of others; Create fear and despondency amongst those who cannot pay; Disfranchise many who will be frightened to claim their right to vote; Destroy the democratic freedom of your petitioners to elect local Councillors who can act with a degree of independence from the power of the central state.

Wherefore your petitioners pray that your Honourable House will take measures to repeal the Poll Tax legislation.

And your petitioners as in Duty Bound, will ever pray, etc.

To lie upon the Table.

Family Policy

9.39 am

Mr. Timothy Raison (Aylesbury): I beg to move,

That this House believes that the family is as vital an institution as ever; and calls for the further development of policies designed to support it.

I have been in the House for 20 years, with occasional intervals on the Front Bench, and during that time I have tried to win the ballot for a Private Member's motion. At last, after 20 years, I have succeeded. I hope that the House will feel that the subject I have chosen is an important and worthy one.

I am grateful that my right hon. Friend the Minister of State, Home Office, will be taking part in the debate. The motion that I have chosen covers some half a dozen Government Departments, perhaps more, and I imagine that there was a long queue of Ministers waiting to speak today. I assume that my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Health is anxious to test his larynx after the past few days. I should be surprised if my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Security did not want to want to return to the scene after just a couple of days. I am sure that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer feels that he has got a few moments to spare and would like to attend our debate. I also imagine that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment does not have much else to think about. In spite of that, I am delighted that my right hon. Friend the Minister is present today.

This debate is a serious one, as I believe that its subject will increasingly become a major theme in British politics in years to come. Looking back at the history of the welfare state and social services since the war—as it happens I have just written a book about that—it strikes me that, throughout the early post-war years, the dominant theme was resources and their redistribution. I shall not be so naive as to pretend that the distribution of resources will not continue to play a large part in social policy. However, I am sure that all of us accept that, on top of the traditional issues, there is an ever-increasing pressure to try to get to grips with the problems thrown up by family life, particularly the breakdown of it.

Social policy must concentrate harder and harder on the questions of family life. We all have an uneasy feeling that, because of the things that happen in family life, the incidence of crime, vandalism, hooliganism and even child abuse has increased. Such behaviour causes great anxiety. I do not suppose that this debate will come up with agreed and definitive answers, but at least it will serve a valuable purpose by giving the House the chance to air such important issues.

When we talk about family policy, we risk indulging in easy rhetoric. We all know that, when elections come round, we stand up to say that we are strongly in favour of the family—it sounds the right sort of thing to be. Beyond that, however, Governments, particularly my own, have tried to look hard at specific family issues and to take effective action.

My motion talks about

"the further development of policies designed to support it",

because I believe that we already have such policies. Today we should try to take on board a commitment to a coherent and all-embracing family policy. We should look across the various parts of our system of government to ensure that we pursue objectives that I believe to be extraordinarily important. If we can find such coherent policies that are designed to help parents to bring up their children—in a sense, that is what the debate is all about—we shall have done something useful.

I shall not try to define what I mean by "family". If one looks in the dictionary, one finds the usual variety of definitions, from which one can choose according to one's taste. Essentially I am talking about the family in terms of parents and children, but I do so in the traditional sense, as I believe that the traditional institution of marriage is still the best mechanism for bringing up children. It is right and proper that we should state that belief. We know very well that we live in a world where alternative patterns, if I may use a rather ugly piece of jargon, are becoming prevalent. I do not believe that we should simply sit back and say, "Well, that's happening and there is nothing we can do about it. Let's just get on with it." We need a notion of a model that should underline our approach to this matter.

The breakdown of family life is clearly illustrated by current statistics, and it should cause us great concern. As I attend my surgeries in my constituency, it strikes me that the big change since I became a Member in 1970 has been the shift in the balance of cases with which I deal. When I was first elected, about 70 per cent. of those cases were to do with housing. They were straightforward cases in which people wanted a council house—sometimes it took a bit of time before they got what they wanted.

Today, the proportion of cases to do with some aspect of family breakdown is much larger. Housing problems are a vivid illustration of that, because the mere fact of a family breakdown immediately doubles the need for accommodation. Problems connected with social security reveal the same disturbing tendency of family breakdown.

One or two statistics are necessary to set the scene and they are drawn from the 1990 edition of "Social Trends". In 1987, the United Kingdom, with Denmark, had the highest divorce rate in the European Community. In 1988, there were 166,000 divorces in this country. The figure for births outside marriage has been mounting steadily. In 1961, they accounted for 6 per cent. of births, in 1981 they accounted for 12 per cent. and in 1988 the figure had risen to 25 per cent. So, between 1961 and 1988, the percentage of births outside marriage rose from 6 per cent to 25 per cent.—more than a fourfold increase.

Lone parents are also an important factor about which we must think. The proportion of families with dependent children classified as lone-parent families went up from 8 per cent. in 1971 to 14 per cent. in 1987. Of lone mothers with dependent children, the percentage who were divorced rose from 24 per cent. in 1971 to 44 per cent. in 1987; the percentage who were single rose from 16 per cent. in 1971 to 29 per cent. in 1987; and the percentage separated fell from 29 per cent. to 19 per cent. The percentage of lone parents who were widowed fell from 31 per cent. in 1971 to 8 per cent. in 1987. That shows the strong increase in lone parents who are divorced and single.

One of the most important developments has been the way in which divorce has spread as a social habit throughout the socio-economic scale. There was a time when divorce was a rather upper-class and middle-class habit, particularly an upper-class one. In recent years that trend has reversed and the less well-off, the poorer sections of our community, are now ahead in their divorce rate. It would be wrong to make a value judgment about that, but

one cannot evade the fact that divorce, which can be a hardship to many people, can be a particular hardship to those who are by definition the least able to meet the financial side of it—the poorest.

The statistics reveal a depressing situation, which as politicians, we should think about. I appreciate that there is a great danger of being seen to be moralising, but that is inescapable. We cannot talk about this subject without some notion of morality, but I hope that my remarks do not sound unbearably priggish. I am seriously trying to draw attention to what I see as a grave problem.

When we use statistics, we inevitably generalise. We know perfectly well that, in this issue, generalities conceal an enormous variety of particular circumstances. I do not want to use statistics to make a blanket, unthinking condemnation. One of the particular factors that we must face, however, is that those who are brought out by the statistics, particularly lone parents, lead lives that, overall, are marked by greater proverty and worse housing and that they are likely to face all sorts of difficulties in comparison with others.

A sadly high level of crime emanates from those who have been brought up in broken homes. I visited an institution in Aylesbury, in my constituency, which houses just about the worst offenders among the 17—21 age group. The governor said that about 80 per cent. came from broken homes. Anyone who has visited some of the comparable institutions in the United States will know that their statistics are even more startling.

A briefing paper sent to hon. Members by Relate before this debate says that, by the age of 21, delinquency was twice as high among girls and boys who had experienced their parents' divorce while under the age of five. Relate said:

"Children who experienced their parents' divorce during their school years were more likely to have lower educational attainment."

On 11 March, Professor Anthony Clare wrote in *The Sunday Times*:

"In 1989, Wallerstein and Blakeslee published Second Chance, their account of a 10-year study of 60 families affected by divorce. They found that five years on from divorce, a third of the children were significantly worse off than prior to the divorce. They were clinically depressed, doing poorly at school, and they had deteriorated to the point that disturbances such as sleep problems and poor learning had become chronic. Many still hoped their parents would be reconciled, fantasising that 'if they can get divorced once they can do it again'. They were still angry with their parents for putting their needs before the emotional needs of their children."

I want to be careful how I express myself, but family breakdown is leading to a position which, in many cases, is not helped by a second marriage.

I want to cite a survey in *The Spectator* about the impact of divorce, and which quoted Polly Toynbee's article in *The Observer* on 10 September:

"Divorce is a financial catastrophe for most families. Women and children lose an average of half of their income after divorce. Remarriage is by far the best prospect for women. But failure of second marriages is even greater, with two-thirds ending in divorce.

The blow falls doubly hard on children. A fifth of all children will see their parents divorce before they reach 16. Evidence is now mounting that shows quite how badly they suffer emotionally, educationally and financially. And the effects for most last right on until adult life. This is partly for emotional reasons and partly because they will have a childhood significantly poorer and in worse housing than children of the same class whose parents didn't divorce."

Ms. Toynbee then referred to people's regrets.

Those statistics cover an enormous variety. I do not take the view that, in all circumstances, divorce is wrong. I accept that it is necessary to have it. I do not condemn people. However, that survey illustrates the problem that we must try to unravel. We all know that cause and effect are notoriously difficult to unravel in social science. Just to say that one set of figures matches another set does not prove the former causes the latter. It would be foolish to say that divorce should not be part of the picture; I do not go along with the Roman Catholic view on that. However, we must think hard about how the system operates.

What can we do about the problem if we recognise the facts as I have tried to summarise them? It is a difficult matter. However, it is part of the purpose of the debate to re-establish and reiterate the basic value of marriage in all sorts of ways. We have become accustomed to campaigns on a variety of social issues such as drug-taking and AIDS. I do not know why a campaign for marriage should not be at least as valuable a part of our apparatus as any of the others. Of course, it should not adopt a crude note, but should strike chords to which people respond. It is an essential part of what we must do.

It is right that we build into our tax and benefit systems some incentive to marriage. We already do that to some extent; indeed, the new law on independent taxation for wives allows significant benefits in favour of marriage, as well as for couples with children. I shall later deal with the best way to support children through the tax and benefit systems, but in principle it is right to accept that demonstration of society's point of view. It is important to provide the necessary practical back-up to marriage in such areas as housing, with which I shall deal in a moment. It is no good saying that people should stick together and have a happy marriage if they do not have a home in which to lead their married life. That is a crucial point.

The divorce laws are of great importance and have become a topical issue. My right hon. and noble Friend the Lord Chancellor made a speech a day or two ago that I commend to hon. Members as well worth reading. He is a man of great wisdom and experience. He made his speech to the NSPCC, and it received some press coverage. However, it is a much richer speech than can be shown in a short press report. I do not agree with all that he said, but his speech illustrates our concern.

Scottish legislation currently in the other place includes changes in the Scottish divorce laws. I do not think that many hon. Members have followed progress of that legislation with quite the attention that it merits. It is the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill which, in due course, will arrive in this House. It aims to reduce the period of separation from two years to one where there is consent, and five years to two where there is not. We could argue whether that is the right provision, but it shows that we are waking up to the fact that it is an important matter. The divorce laws should not just be left to the Law Commission and the lawyers, important though they are. It is a matter on which all the public should have their say. We must try to find the right answers.

The English Law Commission is also preparing a report on the divorce laws. In 1988 it produced a preliminary report called "Facing the future", which gave a fairly firm idea of its thinking at the time. It appeared to come down strongly against any notion of fault. In a sense, our current laws do not really incorporate the notion of fault, but in effect the ground of unreasonable behaviour to some

[Mr. Timothy Raison]

extent replaces former fault grounds in the previous law. The Law Commission appeared to be seeking what it described in its report as a morally neutral system. Before we reach any final decision on that, we must think hard about whether it is wise.

Is it right to say that the divorce process, although very properly showing great concern about what happens to the children—it would be ridiculous if it did not give an almost overriding priority to the children—should say that, in all cases, it should be a no-fault divorce? Let us think about the most obvious and simple example—that of the middle-aged man who abandons his wife in favour of a pretty young girl. Of course there are enormous differences between cases, yet underlying that is a moral failure by the man who is prepared to abandon his wife. It would be foolish to legislate such a fact out of existence.

However imprecisely, the marriage and divorce laws should provide some kind of moral sanction and buttress for holding marriages together. If we start from the position from which I started, that marriage is still the best of the institutions, it is right that the law should express its moral commitment in practical ways. When the Government consider the Law Commission report, they should bear that in mind.

My right hon. and learned Friend the Lord Chancellor —I am not sure whether that is how one refers to the Lord Chancellor, but he has all those qualities—talked about this matter in his speech. He spoke in terms somewhat different from those that I have used. Dealing with whether there should be fault, he said:

> "Should bad behaviour by one partner give the other the right to a divorce without regard to the consequences, especially for the children?"

We must think seriously about that.

I would not dismiss what the Lord Chancellor said, but within what he said one can draw a distinction between the first question, whether we take a moral stance and the second question, what we do about the children. As I have said, I am sure that every hon. Member would agree that, after divorce, what happens to the children is of overwhelming importance. There is no dispute about that; but that does not necessarily mean that we should eliminate some of the matters that I have mentioned.

I think that the House will agree with the Lord Chancellor's view that he does not want easier divorce. He and the Law Commission have said that whatever system of divorce we choose must contain real chances to bring about reconciliation, if that is possible. It must be a patient rather than a hasty process, and there must be an enormous focus on what happens to the children. It is foolish to support the slogan of easier divorce.

The qustion of timing is slightly different. I am instinctively against any further shortening of the period in which divorce can take place. It is very short now. The thing that most heartened me about the Lord Chancellor's speech was the firm statement, that the Government are comitted to marriage as the best guarantor of family life.

I accept that my thoughts are not necessarily tidy or entirely coherent. Like many people, I am trying to find the best answer. Rather than offering my own remedies, I am more concerned to do what I can to encourage public debate on a difficult but extremely important matter. We cannot sit back and say that, although there is a great deal of family breakdown, there is no need to do anything about it.

Mr. Julian Brazier (Canterbury): Does my right hon. Friend agree that our divorce laws are such that it is possible for people who should carry most of the blame for the breakdown of a marriage to gain substantial financial reward as a result of the divorce?

Mr. Raison: That is possible, but I hope that my hon. Friend will have a chance to develop his thoughts later in the debate.

Another important topic in the area of how we should support the family is the matter of day care and the question of what support we should give to the working parent. To be realistic, in this context that overwhelmingly means the working mother. The question has become topical as, in the pre-Budget period, there is much discussion about whether there should be tax reliefs to support day care. I do not know whether my right hon. Friend the Chancellor will do anything about that, but no doubt my right hon. Friend the Minister of State, Home Office will tell us what the Chancellor intends to do in the Budget. The issue of tax reliefs has aroused much interest.

The case being made is that there should be fiscal support for people with children who wish to go out to work. As I have said, such people are predominantly women. Naturally, they feel that they must find some form of day care for the children and believe it right and proper for that to be supported. The argument focuses on various aspects. There is the question of whether there should be tax relief on what is seen as a benefit in kind. When a company provides nursery or day care facilities, should they be taxed as a benefit in kind in the same way as a motor car or any other similar benefit? The argument is that such facilities should not be taxed.

There is also the question whether one should be able to claim tax relief if one pays for day or child care through some other mechanism. There is also an argument that the state, or possibly companies, should provide child care vouchers to be spent on different forms of day or child care. Each of those alternatives has strong advocates and I see the cases they put.

There are several different strands to the argument. I suppose that, in a sense, one of the strands is part of the feminist movement, the desire by women to have more ability to go out to work and earn money than they have had historically. We know that there has been a tremendous growth in the employment of women in Britain, and the signs are that it will not diminish. We face the problem of the decline in the 18-year-old age cohort, which in itself will create pressure for more employment, and we know that in other ways the economic need for women to work is likely to be sustained.

What should the Government do about this? Should they accept the argument to apply a bias in the fiscal system in favour of people who want to go out to work, or should they adopt what I see as a more neutral view?

I am against tax relief. It is fundamentally a matter of fairness. The mother who goes out to work is better off than the mother who stays at home to look after her children. It would be wrong to couple that to tax relief while the mother who stays at home has neither income nor tax relief. I do not say that we should bias the system

the other way, but there should be neutrality. We should not tip the balance in favour of those who want to go out to work.

Mrs. Edwina Currie (Derbyshire, South): Like many hon. Members, I hope that I will get an opportunity to expand my argument, but does my right hon. Friend accept that there is no equity at all between the tax on, for example, the workplace nursery for child care and the fact that the parking place at the office and the canteen may be completely free? Training and all sorts of other activities that enable women to go to work may also be completely free, and the tax man is not interested.

Mr. Raison: My hon. Friend makes a perfectly fair point, and I hope that she will take part in the debate. I am talking about the two different ways of trying to bring support to women who are bringing up children.

If we go for tax relief, we will tip the balance strongly one way. There is an altogether better way to approach the matter and the House will not be surprised to know that I intend to refer to it. It is, of course, the child benefit system which offers a much fairer and in many ways more satisfactory answer.

Mr. George Walden (Buckingham): It would be a pity to move on from the point about child care without drawing attention to the growing need for a comprehensive and high-quality nursery school system. That is important from the point of view of the family. My right hon. Friend has spoken from the point of view of the mother, and I understand that, but there is also the child's point of view. From every conceivable aspect, whether it is our economic performance or a child's emotional stability if he is from a broken family, there is an increasing need for a high-quality educative nursery service.

Mr. Raison: My hon. Friend has, with the greatest persuasiveness and eloquence, anticipated what I was about to say. I entirely agree with him, and I shall come back to his point in a moment.

The important point in all the argument which we have to face is that we do not have sufficient knowledge of what is happening in this area or about the impact of the different ways of bringing up children. All of us speak with prejudice and emotion about the best way to bring up a child. Some believe that it is far better for the child to be brought up with his mother at home, whereas others believe that it is better for the mother to be content, to go out to work, to have a reasonable income and a varied life, and to come back home in a better temper than if she had been cooped up with a child all day. All those arguments float around. They may all have some truth in them, but we suffer from the lack of a decent basis of research and knowledge on the subject.

It is not that there is no research, but that it is not of sufficient clarity to give us much help in shaping policies. Those of us with long memories will remember the terrific impact of John Bowlby in the post-war years, with his psychological studies of maternal deprivation. There was a strong feeling that to take a small child from its mother was likely to have long-term damaging consequences.

In more recent years, research has pointed in a different direction. Much of it has been carried out by people who are themselves working mothers and who are anxious to reinforce their own position. This is a subject on which we need to know more; I hope that the resources of the Home Office and of other Government Departments will be provided to try to find out more clearly what goes on in the families we are talking about. I hope that my right hon. Friend the Minister can also say something on that point.

We must deal with the situation as it is. We have to make decisions; we cannot simply say that we shall come back to the subject in five years' time, when all the research studies have been carried out. In practice, it would take 25 years, as the research we need is longitudinal research. We must face the present situation and try to make up our minds what we are going to do.

One point that strikes me is the fact that the movement for child care seems, to a remarkable extent, to be fuelled by the equal opportunities movement rather than by a child-based movement. It is interesting how often organisations that are concerned with equal opportunities, whether European or national, advocate the case for child care most frequently. I do not condemn them for doing so, and they are perfectly entitled to do so, but we must have a clearer idea of what is happening in the lives of our small children and whether what is happening is leading to the kind of social concerns about which we all have opinions.

I want to come to the point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Buckingham (Mr. Walden). Whatever one thinks about the merits or otherwise of day care or child care for small children up to the age of three, we need far more extensive nursery provision than we have at present.

Hon. Members may recall that, a year or so ago, the Select Committee on Education, Science and Arts, of which I was then Chairman, produced a report on education for the under-fives, the essence of which was the need for education for the under-fives, to which my hon. Friend the Member for Buckingham has referred. It did not advocate teaching them sophisticated mathematical techniques or cramming them with things that could be learned more appropriately later, but it advocated quality and the idea that a three-year-old or a four-year-old is capable of an education that is concerned with the growth of his mind as well as with the more obvious areas of well-being.

We have much good nursery education. The most encouraging point of the report was to see how standards had moved on. I was a member in the 1960s—a long time ago—of the Plowden committee, which devoted part of its report to the pre-school years. Whereas the progressive mood then had much to do with liberating the child and was in favour of a rather permissive approach, there is today in good nursery education a far stronger sense of coherence.

Good nursery teachers today have a stronger notion of a discipline in their activities. I mean not that they take out the birch and beat children at the first opportunity, but that they work out what the child should be doing. They have an interesting system, whereby they discuss with the child at the beginning of the day what the child will do in the course of the morning and they come back to it at the end of the day. There is a greater coherence, which is enormously valuable. That is true of the state sector and sometimes of playgroups and similar provision.

Although one sees work that is remarkably good, there is not enough nursery provision. There are still far too few children in some form of nursery provision. It is below the 50 per cent. mark, although it has increased. I was surprised by the extent to which nursery provision has

[Mr. Raison]

increased in the past decade; I had not realised that there had been a steady expansion of pre-school education, but it still has a long way to go.

I was encouraged by the way in which the Government responded to our report; we received a more favourable reception than I had expected. I want to ask my right hon. Friend whether he will say a little about what is happening now. My hon. Friend the Minister of State, Department of Education and Science took over the chairmanship of the committee concerned with the implementation of some of the ideas that were put forward in our report. I hope that my right hon. Friend will tell us what that committee is doing and when we may expect my hon. Friend the Minister of State to report on the quality of nursery education. That would be of interest and value to the House.

There are many social as well as educational reasons why we need to develop pre-school education; my hon. Friend the Member for Buckingham referred to them briefly. I come back again to family breakdown, which is one of the most powerful reasons why a good nursery school can be of enormous advantage to a child from an uncertain and unhappy home.

Isolation is also a problem—the isolation of the tower block or of the rural community. Both are serious problems. Isolation is very much tied up with the fact that there are fewer siblings than there used to be. In days gone by, even in a tower block 10 children might be grouped together, and although conditions might be extremely uncomfortable, there would be a community of children with whom to grow up. The same was true of rural families. The farm might be in a very remote area, but there might be six of seven children in the family playing together, rather than the one or two children in a family that one finds today. Isolation is a problem with which we must deal.

Another important problem is the over-dependence on television in our culture—and much of that television is pretty mediocre, to put it mildly. There is no doubt that it is easy to plonk a child down in front of the television and to leave it there while one does something else. There are good programmes on television and it provides some stimulus, but there is much mediocrity. I have met good nursery teachers who have stressed that one of their tasks is to get children to use their minds rather than to sit in passive reception of what is pouring out through the channels.

We must have a strong commitment to pre-school education, which is a crucial part of family policy. I have mentioned housing briefly. Judging from my own constituency, there seems to be a resurgence of housing need among less well-off young married couples. The Government have been brillantly successful in the way in which they have promoted home ownership, and I have always supported the right to buy, which has been of outstanding value. I wholly accept that the housing association movement has much to offer and I am happy that it should be offering more. I hope that the Government's plans for the private rented sector are successful.

All that is fine, but I still face the fact that young couples come to me on Friday evenings in my constituency and say that they have nowhere to live. They may be living with their parents. They often say that each has had to go back to his or her own family because there is no room for the whole family in their present house.

The Government must accept that council housing, including new building where appropriate, must be part of what is provided to help such people. Circumstances change; today, the problem is more local and regional than national. It was a national problem 25 years ago, but that is not true today. There is quite enough housing in many parts of the country. However, I am very concerned about the position of some of my constituents. I do not know what to say to them. They tell me that they need a house, but I can say no more than that I will take up their case with the local authority and that they will have to wait. We must take action to help those people.

As for financial support for families with children, I have already said that I do not believe that tax relief on child care is the right answer. Therefore, I have to face the question of what I favour. Predictably, what I favour is child benefit. The more one looks at the problems that face us, the more one realises that, as an all-round solution, child benefit stands on its own. It has a string of advantages. I do not intend to make a speech about child benefit—I have done that often enough—but I intend to refer to a few relevant points.

First, child benefit is neutral. It goes to everybody. I am delighted to see that the hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field) has arrived on cue. I hope that he will be able to make a contribution to the debate. Child benefit is neutral as between the working and the non-working mother. In principle, that must be right. Cost is involved in bringing up children, whoever we may be. Therefore I should like it to be supported in that way.

If child benefit is increased sufficiently, it will help the large number of single parents without putting the spotlight on them. It has one great advantage over child tax allowances, which the hon. Member for Birkenhead has shown some signs of supporting for practical rather than ultimate reasons: it gives more help proportionately to the people who most need it.

It is absurd to go on grumbling about child benefit on the grounds that it is indiscriminate if at the same time one supports tax allowances that are, to put it mildly, indiscriminate, except that in many cases they discriminate in favour of the better-off. Child benefit can be much better targeted than tax allowances. However, it has other enormous advantages—not least the sheer simplicity of its administration by comparison with tax allowances, or a combination of tax allowances and means-tested benefits such as family credit and income support.

Then we must ask how much support should be given in the form of child benefit. We cannot say that we believe that child benefit is important if we do not uprate it. At the very least, it has to be uprated, if it is to be a meaningful benefit. However, I am becoming increasingly persuaded that there is a case for doing something far more dramatic.

The Child Poverty Action Group, with others, argues that it would be possible to double child benefit if we scrapped the tax allowance that goes to both married and unmarried couples without children. I am reluctant to take that on, in view of what I said earlier about my support for marriage. I should like a mechanism to be built into the system that supported marriage.

However, looking at the hard realities, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that, rather than giving every married couple support through the tax system, regardless of

whether they have children, it would be better to transfer the £4·5 billion from them to people who are bringing up children. The case is almost indisputable that those who have children, rather than childless married couples should receive the benefit. That could not happen overnight. It would have to be phased in. We have learnt that over-dramatic changes cannot be made to the system.

We must consider all the options and try to find coherent policies that will help to rid us of some of the deepest social anxieties that all hon. Members share.

10.24 am

Sir Norman Fowler (Sutton Coldfield): I congratulate my right hon. Friend the Member for Aylesbury (Mr. Raison) on his speech. The whole House will look forward to the publication of his book. We authors must stick together. However, I am not sure that I shall look forward to it as much as some; I have an awful feeling that my period at the DHSS will be examined.

My right hon. Friend is right in at least two respects and, I believe, in many more. Family policy will become a major political issue in the next few years. All the parties should take account of that fact. It is crucial that within Government and Whitehall there should be a good mechanism by means of which the various strands that make up family policy are brought together. Departments should not work in isolation. I pay tribute to the work of the Minister of State, my right hon. Friend the Member for Oxford, West and Abingdon (Mr. Patten), who is to reply to the debate, for the work that he has already done and that I hope he will continue to do to bring together those strands.

I agree with what my right hon. Friend the Member for Aylesbury said about child benefit. It is entirely legitimate for the Government to make annual decisions about the level of uprating. They have to take into account what can be afforded, other priorities and changes in the tax threshold. It is one thing not to uprate child benefit for one or two years; it is quite another to make that a permanent policy. I should oppose the abolition of child benefit and also the policy of allowing child benefit to wither away.

The reason was set out in the social security review that the Government, with myself as Secretary of State for Social Services, carried out in 1985-86. The diagnosis of need that we made then showed that there had been important changes. Whereas 30 or 40 years ago there was no question about poverty and need among elderly retired people, the relative position of retired people since then has improved, due to improved state pensions, greater access to occupational pensions and, most of all, because people now own their homes. However, the other side of the coin is that, in terms of relative need, more families with children are now in that category. That diagnosis was at the centre of some of our recommendations in the social security review. Therefore, we formulated the family credit policy. The aim was to give help to working families on low incomes. It was intended as a replacement for family income supplement, which had served its purpose but which was being criticised in all parts of the House.

It was never our intention—certainly it was never mine—that family credit should simply take the place of child benefit; it was to replace family income supplement. Child benefit was a basic family benefit for all children, and family credit was in addition to that. The case for a general benefit of that kind is surely indisputable.

According to the first paragraph of the chapter of "Reform of Social Security"—the social security review published in 1985—that deals with children,

> "The principle that we should give financial support to those who bear the extra responsibility of bringing up children is one to which this Government are committed. It acknowledges not only the duty to ensure that children should not face hardship, but also the importance of supporting family life and those who are ensuring our own future by caring for the next generation."

Nearly all countries acknowledge that principle, either through tax concessions or through the payment of benefits—or, indeed, through both. It was Government policy at the time of the review, and it remains Government policy.

I know of few countries, if any, in western Europe—in the western world, indeed—in which the extra expense involved in raising children is not recognised. It would be a serious error to abandon child benefit, which is popular and effective and helps countless families.

The only part of my right hon. Friend's speech with which I disagreed was his suggestion that there was an "either-or situation". We must relate the position of working women to family policy: making equal opportunities compatible with family life is the challenge. In my view, the idea that working women cannot be good mothers is nonsense: it is a ludicrous proposition, and I reject it out of hand. The duty of the House and of Government is to establish how the demands of working mothers can best be met.

This country has a higher proportion of working women than almost any other western European nation, and that proportion will undoubtedly remain high; there is no sign that it will suddenly melt away. My right hon. Friend mentioned demographic pressures. Certainly there is already a dramatic shortage of school leavers, which will continue for the next few years. Employers are trying to attract married women back into the work force, and unless they succeed they will find it difficult to maintain the level of service that they provide. Nursing is an example of that. Even without the demographic problem, however, we should need the major contribution that working women can make. We should do all that we can to encourage them, in the national interest.

Many women choose to work outside the home—all day or for part of the day—for a variety of reasons. They may do it for the extra income, or for the extra interest. Our general policy should be to encourage women to decide what they want for themselves and their families, rather than making decisions for them. Bringing up children is, of course, a valuable full-time job, which I would not dream of denigrating, but we should enable women who want to work to do so.

Fortunately, things are changing. When I first joined the Government in 1979, job sharing was rare in the Civil Service. One Department for which I worked lost a very good woman worker, simply because we had not the flexibility to allow her to make her contribution. In some Departments the position has changed out of all recognition. My right hon. Friend the Minister is nodding: I am sure that the Home Office is an example.

Much of the responsibility rests with employers, who have a good deal to gain. Training and enterprise councils, for example, provide a mechanism for employers to introduce co-operative facilities, rather than single companies doing their own thing. There is also a role for Government, however: to encourage and to enable. That

[Sir Norman Fowler]

that should bring me to the subject of tax, and next week's Budget in particular, was as predictable as the references of my right hon. Friend the Member for Aylesbury to child benefit.

The present tax arrangements discourage employers from providing workplace nurseries. The circumstances are rather nonsensical, as my hon. Friend the Member for Derbyshire, South (Mrs. Currie) pointed out in an earlier intervention. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer should abolish the tax on workplace nurseries. Since April 1985 the employers' subsidy to workplace nurseries has been taxed as a fringe benefit to the employees. It is treated as a perk in the same way as a company car, but it is taxed even more severely. If an employee's earnings exceed £8,500, the employee must pay tax at the marginal rate on the entire benefit. That is curious, as up to April 1984 it was not the policy. For almost 40 years no one paid tax on the benefit of workplace nursery. Three or four years ago the policy was changed as the Government took the view that tax had always been payable, but until then it had not been collected. As my hon. Friend the Member for Derbyshire, South said, it is most extraordinary that a motorist with free parking in central London is not taxed on that undoubted benefit. Dare I say it, everyone in the House of Commons has that free benefit.

Mr. Harry Greenway (Ealing, North): We should stop it.

Sir Norman Fowler: My hon. Friend says that we should stop it, but he might have noticed that the policy changed only last year. It would be rather silly to stop a policy that was put on the statute book only last year. No doubt at that time my hon. Friend was arguing fervently against it. However, that is not the point that I was making.

We are in an anomalous position. There are fairly good reasons why there is no tax on free parking, but it is extraordinary that we have tax-free parking here in the House of Commons, as does everyone who has free parking in central London, yet workplace nurseries are taxed.

We should make it easier for employers to provide child care vouchers that could be used to pay for all forms of care. That would give employers another option, apart from setting up their own nurseries. However, the tax position on vouchers is even worse than on nurseries. Under present rules, employees are liable for tax on such vouchers whether or not they are earning more than £8,500. Obviously, there is a strong case for making such vouchers exempt from tax. Not only would the cost be shared between employers and the Government, but it would provide flexibility and leave the mother to chose whether to use the vouchers to pay for childminding or for a nursery.

To continue with the car parking analogy, instead of providing free car parking, employers could provide car parking vouchers that could be used in National Car Parks elsewhere, but the benefit would remain tax free. In my view, we have got ourselves into a right muddle, and I hope that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer will use the opportunity of his first Budget to put it right.

I am not for a moment claiming that the measures that I propose will solve everything. I agree with everything that my right hon. Friend the Member for Aylesbury said about nursery education. I doubt that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer will be looking at nursery education with the same urgency as he will be considering tax changes. However, if he can make tax changes, he can give a signal and build on the initiative of employment training, for example, where we introduced into the system payments of up to £50 for lone parents. That would emphasise and underline the importance of such measures.

In my view, we should not sloganise. It is foolish and misguided to say that women who work are unable to bring up families. I strongly deprecate such statements. we should recognise that many women will continue to want to work and that many women will want a career as well as a job. That is crucial and I hope that we shall have the opportunity to discuss it in other debates. Frankly, it is very much in the interests of the country that women make that contribution. It goes far beyond demography and equal opportunities; it is in the national interest. We should aim to make it easier for women to raise families and to pursue a career if that is what they want. It presents a profound challenge for the 1990s, and I hope that we shall meet that challenge.

10.45 am

Dr. John Reid (Motherwell, North): The right hon. Member for Aylesbury (Mr. Raison) should be congratulated on giving us the opportunity to discuss a matter of such importance. In some ways it is a pity that the debate has been tucked away on a Friday morning and is rather sparsely attended. Like the right hon. Gentleman and the right hon. Member for Sutton Coldfield (Sir N. Fowler), I believe that the family and children will be of increasing importance over the next few years.

The right hon. Member for Aylesbury will accept that it is a rather vacuous motion—although that word might be too substantial. However, his speech was much more substantive and reflective. His speech had a tendency towards abstract principles, although later he mentioned some of the material conditions under which those principles operate. I should have liked to hear his definition of the family. He referred to the dictionary, but there are many definitions. In my view, we should be considering not only the nuclear family but the single parent family, and the extended family, particularly among ethnic groups. Although the motion refers to the further development of policy, I cannot recall the right hon. Member for Aylesbury mentioning one aspect of existing policy which he viewed with faith and hope.

The right hon. Gentleman criticised a number of aspects of existing policy. That is not surprising as there are two ways of considering policy on the family and children. One can try to design a specific set of policies to attack various problems, or one can bear in mind the family and children whenever one is considering any specific policy, always having at the back of one's mind, whatever the Department or the specific piece of legislation, the effect on the family and on children.

I want to examine the effect on the family and children of a number of Government policies over the past three or four years. I very much welcome the remarks of the right hon. Member for Sutton Coldfield. He must have argued

that line for some years inside the Cabinet, but his view must have been strengthened by his practical experience of the family over the past few months. Given the new interest in the family among Cabinet Ministers, I was looking forward to hearing from the Secretary of State for Wales.

I shall start with the same subject as both previous speakers in the debate—child benefit. I need say little more about the advantages of child benefit, as, surprisingly, it has received almost universal applause today. There are two ways of abandoning child benefit. One is to abandon it in principle, which the Government have refused to do, not least because it is among the most popular benefits. The alternative is through salami tactics, by freezing it over a number of years, to reduce its importance compared with other means-tested benefits.

Last week I asked the Secretary of State for Social Security to give the total estimated saving to the Exchequer as a result of the freezing of child benefit in the financial years 1988-89 and 1989-90. The answer said that in 1988-89 £140 million and in 1989-90 £210 million were saved. The savings to the Department are the other side of the coin in terms of the loss to the family. In two years alone, some £350 million has been taken out of family budgets by the expedient of freezing child benefit. If that continues for three, four or five yars, although child benefit has not been abandoned in principle, the effect will be to abandon it relative to other benefits.

The 2 million children who are in poverty demonstrate the extent of the problem. The right hon. Member for Aylesbury gave statistics on family breakdown and spent some time, perhaps rightly, discussing the morality of relationships. He knows as well as anyone that morality does not occur in a vacuum and that it is not an abstract philosophy. Morality is shaped by one's circumstances and, above all, material circumstances. Over the past 10 or more years, the dearth of decent reasonable housing because of the degeneration in housing stock has been one of the major pressures on the family unit.

In 1979—the year when the Conservative party came into office—Motherwell was building 1,400 new council houses a year, but for the past four years it has not built one. The effect on families—single parent and nuclear—has been disastrous. It has meant that a husband and wife begin their lives together not in a home where they can bring up children but in the front room of a relative's house or perhaps sleeping on a sofa in a back room. There has been a disastrous decline in council housing over the past 10 years that cannot but affect the family and children.

If we add to that the pressure of poverty, the despair of unemployment and the chronic lack of child care facilities, to which reference has been made, we can begin to understand some of the reasons why the numbers that the right hon. Member for Aylesbury mentioned have increased over the past few years. The break-up of marriages, child homelessness and child poverty are not merely a reflection of Government policy, but anyone who approaches this subject without paying attention to material deprivation as a direct result of Government policies cannot reach a satisfactory conclusion. Families cannot be held together by external pressure, by legislation. The cohesion of the family unit—whether nuclear, single parent or extended—is internal cohesion which reacts and responds to external conditions. Poverty, unemployment, lack of housing and so on affect that internal cohesion.

The right hon. Member for Aylesbury referred to a lack of research and statistics. I strongly believe that, if the Government were motivated to solve some of the problems that the right hon. Gentleman outlined, the first basis of policy-making must be information. I am afraid that there is not only no information but a distinct lack of Government will to seek or provide it. The Government do not know how many children are illegally employed. When one asks them for the number, one is referred to statistics from the Low Pay Unit. It conducts surveys whereas the Government find it impossible to do so.

The Government do not know how many missing children there are in Britain. They do not co-ordinate the statistics. They know how many missing dogs there are, because they co-ordinate those statistics, but anyone who asks for the number of missing children is referred to the estimates of voluntary organisations. The same applies to hostel accommodation. A Government who do not have the will to discover basic information can hardly be in a position to develop positive policies.

Given what has happened to the family—I mentioned unemployment, poverty, divorce and higher taxation—what has been the Government's response? I listened with great interest and admiration to the right hon. Members for Aylesbury and for Sutton Coldfield, but all too often when these subjects are raised, the Government say in response, especially in keynote speeches, that it has nothing to do with them, that it is not their fault, that it is all down to others—to the permissive sixties, absentee fathers, the weather, the Book of Revelations, or whatever. Over the past 10 years, the Government have tended to abandon any commitment to a supportive role for families.

We hear about hooligans and vandals, but—I hope that this does not sound like too much of a party point—many of them are the Prime Minister's children, the children of 10 years of deprivation. If children are brought up in an economic jungle one can hardly be surprised if some turn out to behave like animals. I take no great pleasure in saying that.

The Minister of State, Home Office (Mr. John Patten): The hon. Gentleman is trying to be as non-combative as possible, and I shall do the same. Does he realise that in the past 11 years of this Conservative Administration, the juvenile crime rate has fallen substantially? Does he realise that, 10 years ago, 8,500 juveniles were in detention, whereas now there are 4,000? The hon. Gentleman has been analysing matters seriously and philosophically. What does he make of those figures?

Dr. Reid: I make two points. First, there has been a redefinition of the policy on crime. Secondly, the nature of crime has changed. Crimes of violence, hooliganism and vandalism—the very crimes to which I referred—have increased within the general figures that the right hon. Gentleman gave.

I shall not say that the Government have done nothing. They introduced the Children Act 1989, many elements of which are extremely beneficial. I regret the fact that resources have not yet been committed to those provisions, but no doubt the Government will do so in due course. However, in terms of major issues of social provision and

[Dr. Reid]

social support for families, there have been adverse effects. I listened with interest to the right hon. Member for Sutton Coldfield speak of the changes in the benefit system introduced in April last year. They were to the detriment of millions of families in Britain. The right hon. Gentleman said that means-tested benefits were not meant to be a substitution for child benefit—I cannot psychoanalyse him, so I do not know what his motivation was. The introduction of means-tested benefits while freezing universal benefit three years in a row is not designed to make the best use of limited resources. It is designed to ensure that the benefits remain limited. It is based on a fallacy long prevalent in the Reagan Administration—that seems to be the direction to which the Government look in terms of future child policy—that the main cause of poverty among the poor is the assistance given to the poor.

Homelessness undermines the family. Regular official statistics on the number of homeless people are maintained only for those described as homeless under the Housing and Planning Act 1986. Once again, as with missing children and illegally employed children, we do not have the basic statistics to tackle the problem. No one really knows how many people are homeless. It is estimated that roughly twice as many households as are accepted by local authorities apply to be considered as homeless. In 1986 in Great Britain there were 120,000 acceptances, against 244,000 applications. However, official figures give no idea of the degree of hidden homelessness. It is likely that a similar position exists in other areas of the country outside London. Estimates of the number of people sleeping rough are hard to make and the Government have made little attempt to assess them.

We must have all the statistics and figures if we are to have a serious discussion about the nature of the family and the circumstances in which family life might prosper. The total estimated figures for homeless people in London sleeping out in hostels, hotels and so on is estimated to be as high as 75,000.

I make no apology for mentioning one last policy—the poll tax—of which we in Scotland have experience. I shall be brief because it has had sufficient attention in the House recently. It is not just an unjust and iniquitous tax, but a feud-making and family-breaking tax. All experience in Scotland shows that it breaks up families. Let us imagine that there are three unemployed children above the age of 18 who are liable for poll tax in a family, but the head of the household—the parent—is the responsible party. In case after case in Scotland, children have been told by their father or mother, who have been driven to despair because they are liable for the poll tax, "Either pay up or pack up". The tax has driven children out of the family home and broken up family after family.

Mr. Frank Field (Birkenhead): It would be worse for those three children if they were in low-paid employment because, given the tapering system, they will suffer the full effect of the tax. At least those who are unemployed will probably have some partial protection.

Dr. Reid: I accept that, but I do not want to go into the details of the poll tax now. We have had discussions about that. I am merely trying to say that it is no good having a separate abstract debate on the family if we continually pass legislation in a vacuum, not in the context of the effects that it will have on the family.

The same is true of day care provision. If families or children were viewed as valuable in themselves we would expect to see some consistency in the Government's attitude towards day care. Sadly, the Government's attitude has all too often been defined by the market, particularly the labour market. That which 10 years ago was portrayed by many Conservative Members, though not the right hon. Member for Sutton Coldfield, as a ludicrous feminist scheme to allow equal opportunities——

Mr. Frank Field: And by Opposition Members.

Dr. Reid: Yes, and by Opposition Members, as my hon. Friend says. Due to the changes in the labour market and the demographic curve, day care is now regarded as something which should be given due consideration. I welcome the fact that the two Conservative Members who have spoken said that the matter should not be regarded merely as a response to shortages in the labour market. As hon. Members have said, even now the disgraceful practice continues of regarding employers' subsidies to workplace nurseries as a fringe benefit, thus penalising working parents who use the facility. I am glad that the Labour leader has made, and the right hon. Member for Sutton Coldfield this morning made, a commitment to support such a measure to withdraw the penalisation of those parents, particularly women, who use child care facilities of workplace nurseries. I hope that the Chancellor will take the opportunity to rectify that anomaly.

I noted that the right hon. Member for Aylesbury was opposed to that, I think because he preferred child benefit to a system of tax allowances. There is no incompatibility in using a universal benefit and supplementing it with a tax allowance. There is no reason why a range of measurements should not be used to assist the provision of child care facilities for mothers and children. I take the point that it would be unfair if the mother who went to work was given a tax advantage over the mother who preferred to stay at home. But that is not the only comparison; at present, there is gross unfairness as between the mother who chooses to go to work and the father who chooses to go to work, because generations of traditions and burdens prevent the mother from going to work but allow the father to go.

When talking about fairness we should not just compare woman with woman, but compare the opportunity extended to fathers and mothers or women and men. On those grounds of fairness, as well as the policy of supplementing the universal child benefit, we can justify the tax allowance. That is quite apart from the contradictory nature of the existing system mentioned by the right hon. Member for Sutton Coldfield. We can justify that tax allowance in terms of fairness.

The right hon. Member for Aylesbury took some solace from the expansion of pre-school education. The right hon. Member for Sutton Coldfield doubted that the Chancellor would look at the matter urgently. "Urgent" is a bizarre word to use in this case. Almost 50 years ago, in about 1944, we admitted the necessity for the universal provision of comprehensive nursery education. To suggest that it is perhaps worthy of urgent consideration in 1990 is misleading. I criticise not only the present Government,

but previous Labour Governments. Some 50 years after it was admitted as desirable, we are still as far removed from the provision of comprehensive nursery education as ever. That is nothing less than a scandal, particularly in the modern world which relies more on education and socialisation than it did 50 years ago. For their solution, I understand—this is confirmed by the establishment of the family policy unit at No. 10, a major and dynamic member of which is a former adviser to President Reagan—the Government appear to be looking to the United States in terms of the development of family policy, as they did with employment training. They appear to be working gradually towards the free market, trickle-down theory of provision, which was so close to the heart of President Reagan.

I give Conservative Members two warnings. During the administration of President Reagan, poverty among families with children in the United States increased dramatically. At present in the United States one child in five lives in poverty. Among Hispanics that figure is two in five and among blacks the figure is one in two. Any adoption of the United States' approach to such matters would spell disaster for the children of Britain, particularly in the ethnic minorities.

Mr. Raison: Which definition of poverty is the hon. Gentleman using? There is a longstanding problem in this country because the favoured definition of poverty used by some people relates to the level of income support. That is a palpably nonsensical definition because the more generous benefits become, the more people are deemed to be in poverty as a result. What is the American basis of definition?

Dr. Reid: I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for making that point. As he knows, there is a continual dispute about the definition of absolute poverty and relative poverty. Perhaps I should put this matter in an international context. Last year the Urban Institute, a highly respected, Washington-based research institute carried out a survey among eight western industrial nations. The United States came top of the list for both relative and absolute poverty across the scale. I hope that that answers the right hon. Gentleman's point. I am working on instinct, evidence and straws in the wind, but the American approach appears to be seen as the one that should be taken by the British Government. It would be disastrous if they did so.

Although today's motion started out as a vacuous one, like most Friday motions it has stimulated a fairly substantial debate. I hope that the debate will continue and I am sure that it will increase in importance over the next few decades. I hope that some of the ideas expressed today, particularly by former Cabinet Ministers, will gain prevalence in the Cabinet in their absence. I hope that we can look forward to a Budget in which child benefit is restored and adequate financial provision made for families and children in Britain.

11.9 am

Mrs. Edwina Currie (Derbyshire, South): I join hon. Members on both sides of the House in congratulating my right hon. Friend the Member for Aylesbury (Mr. Raison) on introducing this timely debate. I say only that it is a great pity that there are only three members of the Labour party here, and not a single member of any of the minority parties.

Mr. Frank Field: Given that there are twice as many Conservative Members as there are Labour Members, the ratio seems a fair one.

Mrs. Currie: But the hon. Gentleman will, of course, join me in condemning the minority parties.

We have already heard several distinguished speeches today, and I hesitate to take issue with everyone who has spoken so far on child benefit; I hear what they say. Three arguments are usually advanced in favour of child benefit. First, it is said that it helps the poorest families. That is the view taken by the Child Poverty Action Group. As a matter of fact, it does not help the poorest families, because child benefit is set-against income support. If we want to help the poorest families, we should raise the level of income support. I have heard my hon. Friend the Member for Sutton Coldfield (Sir N. Fowler) explain in the past that child benefit does not help the poorest families.

Mr. Raison: The question whether child benefit helps the poorest families is entirely a matter for the Government. The Government could increase child benefit and say that it should all go to the poorest families. It is the Government's decision which prevents that and it is the Government who say that it must be deducted from income support. There is no need to deduct it.

Mrs. Currie: The fact remains that it is income support that determines the living standards of the poorest families in this country, including single-parent families, who get a higher level of child benefit. I would say to the Government that, if they have £5 billion to spend on helping the poorest families, they should not spend it by simply giving the same amount of money—£7 a week—to every child in the country, because that is not the most efficient way of spending the money.

The second argument that is advanced in favour of child benefit is that it gives mothers money in their own right. That is the view of most Conservative women, and it has certainly been adopted in motions passed by the Greater London area Conservative women's committee. That is true, but it is becoming less true as the proportion of mothers who work increases. It is becoming less and less necessary. It is a chunk of money that it is nice to have, but in relation to the average earnings of women—even women manual workers earn well over £150 a week on average—that sum is not as necessary as it used to be.

The third argument is put forward with real force by the Maternity Alliance, to which I am a parliamentary adviser and which I admire very much, in its March to June 1990 newsletter: it is that the fundamental purpose of child benefit is to recognise

"the additional costs faced by families at all income levels with children of all ages."

The House will allow me hesitantly to raise a dissident voice. Why should we recognise, with taxpayers' money, the costs of all children in all families at all income levels? That no longer seems to make sense. It may well have done in days gone by, when we were a less prosperous nation, but I wonder whether it is appropriate now. If we want to help our poorest children, children hurt by abuse and

[Mrs. Currie]

children disadvantaged by divorce, we could easily spend £5 billion a year to achieve that, but there are better ways of doing it.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Aylesbury implied that he would prefer child benefit to be paid in respect of all children to the allowance of tax relief on child care. I would point out to him that child care of any kind costs the working family an awful lot more per week than they get in child benefit, whereas tax relief—even modest tax relief—would cost the Exchequer far less than child benefit does.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Aylesbury raised the important issue of divorce and its effect on the family and society, and, if for no other reason than that, he deserves the congratulations of the House and every family in the country for ensuring that we address ourselves to what is happening. My right hon. Friend said that we had the highest divorce rate in Europe. We have had a sixfold increase in divorce since 1970. That is appalling.

Divorce is always painful and the result of the increase is that divorce now affects an enormous number of children in Britain. Every day 420 children experience their parents' divorce, and one third of those children are under five. One child in eight now lives in a single-parent family, and recent research has estimated that 40 per cent. of the children of divorced parents have lost touch with one of those parents within two years of the decree. That cannot be right for the children, and it cannot be right either for the parent who is left literally holding the baby or for the parent who, having fathered a child or children, never sees them again. To my view it is a national tragedy. It is a miserable, terrible business and it cannot be right to carry on like that.

Divorce is also very expensive to the public purse. Figures published by Relate in a press release in September 1989 showed that that organisation had worked out that divorce is costing this country £3·5 million every day. Relate works it out like this: the cost of income support is £850 million per year; housing benefit costs £220 million per year; the cost of one-parent benefit is £100 million a year; the cost of legal aid is £80 million a year, and if legal aid were better funded it would probably cost more. The total cost to the public purse of broken marriages in this country now stands at £1·25 billion a year.

Yet, speaking on these issues back in September, my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary refused to give the then Marriage Guidance Council, now known as Relate, any extra money. It was asking for £1 million a year. I cannot understand the pattern of public policy that says that it is all right to spend £1·5 billion on the products of divorce and nothing, or relatively little, to take steps to prevent it. That cannot make good sense. The figures do not add up.

Relate tells us that it has calculated that about 25,000 of the couples they counsel every year decide to stay together. The savings from that are around £6 million a year. The Princess of Wales has taken a great interest in Relate. It has to be said that that fact has been a double-edged weapon, although the organisation appreciates her interest enormously. One of the results has been a 20 per cent. increase in referrals and applications. In the absence of adequate public support from the Government and the taxpayer, that, has served only to make the waiting list for Relate appointments even longer. That just does not make sense, and I appeal to my right hon. Friend the Minister of State to take into account these points.

As my right hon. Friend the Member for Aylesbury said, some aspects of divorce law are encouraging the present pattern of divorce. Again, some of what we have been up to cannot be right. My conscience on this is clear. I have once again consulted the Division lists for 13 June 1984, when we debated the Matrimonial and Family Proceedings Bill. When we voted on clause 1, which reduced the time period over which the divorce application can be filed from two years to one, I was one of only 69 hon. Members who voted that the clause should be deleted from the Bill and one of only 51 hon. Members who voted in favour of the proposition that if we had to have a limit of that kind, the period should be two years. That Act was a disaster, and I hope that, in the review that is now taking place, aspects of it can be changed.

That brings me to working mothers. I listened with the greatest delight to my right hon. Friend the Member for Sutton Coldfield and his passionate support of working mothers. It was wonderful. It does working mothers good to hear working fathers stand up and talk like that. It is about time, and it is entirely appropriate and right that my right hon. Friend should have said that. We have two working mothers present and quite a lot of the civil servants ranged behind us in the Box are working mothers. In fact, the majority of women who work in the Palace are working mothers—the majority of the women who serve us our teas, who clean the floors and who work in the Library are working mothers. We tend to forget that when we say that the House of Commons is composed mostly of working men, although most of the Members are working men.

No one should sneer at working mothers. They have the right to use their talents like everyone else. They have an obligation to use them to the benefit of society. I venture to think that a fulfilled woman is a happier woman and that a happier woman is likely to have a happier family. I know that my family would never find it acceptable if I was stuck at home whingeing at them all the time. *[Laughter.]* They are much happier now.

Those of us who are working mothers deeply resent the notion that our children are neglected or become thereby psychologically disturbed, or that we are being selfish. That is a very insulting approach. That does not make working women feel guilty; it makes them feel very angry. Many women who work for their families would make the opposite claim. They work because they want to give their children a better life. They work so that the children can have holidays or travel. They work so their children can have a bedroom of their own in which to do their homework in peace. They work for all sorts of reasons. Many professional women work in order to pay school fees, in the belief that thereby they will give their children a better education. One million women are heads of families, as I believe is the hon. Member for Eccles (Miss Lestor), and therefore many of them will feel that they have no choice about going out to work.

Of course there should be choice. I do not want to pressure women either way. I am content, and I would seek to ensure, that there should be active and effective choice. However, I would say this to some people who would like all of us to be back in the kitchen, barefoot and cooking for them. If the care of the children is so important, it is too important to be left to the women. Children need parents

and they need fathers as well. How nice it would be if the sort of men who make such speeches—and I have heard one or two—would just occasionally stop before they enter the pub on the way home, go home and take the children out for a walk and perhaps even have a conversation with the wife while they are at it.

There are other arguments that could be put on the table for consideration by those who would like us all to stop work. It was all very well in the days when women spent their entire lives having children, being pregnant and looking after the home. That is not true any more. If we are all going to be living to be 50, 60 and 70, the idea that we should spend all our lives being at home is absolute nonsense.

In any case, it is too late. Those arguments are out of date. The majority of women in this country—over 70 per cent.—work. The majority of women with children work, and the majority of women with dependent children work—over 60 per cent. That changeover, the point at which we became the majority, actually happened for the first time about 15 years ago. This is not a recent phenomenon.

That means that the majority of families have resolved many of the issues that trouble us. I suspect that many of them have not quite resolved those issues of how to combine the home, family and the job to the women's satisfaction. All working women would like a bit more help, please. We would particularly like a bit more help from the husbands and fathers who so praise us, but occasionally are not as helpful as they might be—and I exclude my own husband from that, because he is super.

Mrs. Teresa Gorman (Billericay): Does my hon. Friend agree that the business about women going out to work recently is all a bit of a myth? Throughout history, women, in addition to raising the family, have woven the cloth when they lived in little country huts. Throughout the Victorian era, they were largely involved in manufacturing. It is rather a masculine myth that women have always sat at home raising children and have suddenly been drawn into the labour force. It has always been part of a woman's lot to work to help to support the family outside as well as inside the home.

Mrs. Currie: That is absolutely right. My hon. Friend may join me in feeling that, in the end, we know who is being selfish. It is not the woman who is going out to work to try to give her family a higher standard of living: it is the chap who comes home, who thinks that everything is done without his help or intervention, who expects warm slippers, a hot dinner and—dare I say it—a steamy bed afterwards. No doubt there will always be some women around who find their fulfilment in providing all that. Indeed, some of us try to do it with a job as well.

I want now to consider child care and tax. Why should the Government do anything to encourage women to work? There are several responses to that. The first is that there is no reason why not. I would reject the argument about psychological damage, because that is a false argument. The second reason is that keeping house is much easier than it was a couple of generations ago. The real root of women's liberation is the hoover and the automatic washing machine. The third reason is that the women want to work. We believe in choice. This is a free society, and we should not restrict people's choices. The fourth reason is that the demographic time bomb and the reduction in the number of young people leaving school means that we have to encourage them. As a nation, we need women now to go back to work.

It has been estimated that, by 1995, about 80 per cent. of all the new jobs created in this country will have to go to women because there are no new men around to do them. By the year 2000, the problem will become even more acute because that figure rises to 90 per cent.

The problem is child care. There are other issues about the status of women and all the rest, but the thing that stops the vast bulk of mothers in this country going to work is the problem of child care. Gallup Poll did a study for the CBI and the Manpower Services Agency, which was published in November 1989. It asked women what their attitudes were to work, and the results were very interesting.

Among those questioned with child care responsibilities, Gallup Poll found that 28 per cent. of all women with children would be interested in an immediate return to work, provided that satisfactory child care arrangements could be made; 21 per cent. of those with pre-school children and as high as 41 per cent. of single parent families surveyed would be interested in a job immediately if the question of child care could be resolved.

I say this to my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he is listening—and I hope he is: I do not think that the answer is an extension of Government funding for child care. Since the employers benefit, it is they who have to do this in order to maintain the growth in productivity that we need in the 1990s to pay for the extra services that we are all busy demanding. If we are going to do that, employers must get organised on this issue and ensure that they can encourage their women to stay at work for a longer period during the time that they are having children and to return to work much more quickly afterwards.

Workplace nurseries are not my favourite solution, for a number of reasons. I do not think that they are always best for the child. The idea of the commuting child is a bit of a misery. It is not always in the national interest, either, to wish to maintain employment in such numbers in the centre of major cities, and in the south. I would much prefer to see jobs moving away from those centres of population and perhaps then reducing the amount of commuting for everyone.

Workplace nurseries are only a partial solution. What do we do when the child gets to five? A woman has been working happily with the baby in the workplace nursery, the child gets to five years old, and what will the mother do then? They are only a partial solution. They are also the most expensive of the solutions that are suggested.

The real problem so far as the employee is concerned is that the costs of the workplace nursery are so high, the employer's subsidy costs included, that they almost automatically push the employee over the £8,500 limit at which tax comes in on benefits in kind. That is almost invariable.

I would therefore agree with my right hon. Friend the Member for Sutton Coldfield. I think that child care vouchers are a much better idea. They were introduced by the Luncheon Vouchers company in the autumn, and one or two other schemes are in the offing. They are not transferrable for cash, so there is no fraud. Administration is very easy and there is no worry about insurance, premises and all the rest. They are very flexible, so the

[Mrs. Currie]

pattern of child care can be changed during the years and of course the employee can share the expense by topping up. I think that that is right.

I hope that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor is listening to some of this. The problem at the moment is that child care vouchers are taxed even more heavily than workplace nurseries because they do not count as benefits in kind for the £8,500 rule. They are taxed right from the beginning.

There is a major public policy issue. To me, the calculations suggest that there is an awful lot of money to be saved from the public purse. If we take the 41 per cent. of single-parent families who would like to go to work but cannot unless the child care issue is resolved, we are talking about a lot people.

The typical single parent with one child in a typical council flat is receiving £85 a week in public benefits of one kind or another at the moment. If she—or he—goes back to work, even part-time, she starts paying tax and national insurance. If she gets a child care voucher, she may not even be able to claim family credit. The turnaround figure is enormous.

The calculations done for me not long ago by the Library, of which I have sent a copy to my right hon. Friend the Chancellor, suggested that, if we were only to get a quarter of a million of those families back into work, we could save £1·25 billion a year net in benefits. That has to be very much worth doing. It would also be popular, and it would be lovely if the Government would do something that would be popular for a change.

The Gallup Poll that was published in *The Daily Telegraph* a week or so ago did a survey of people's attitudes to tax relief for child care and found that in every age group and in every political party, the majority of the respondents were in favour of tax relief for child care and only 21 per cent.—one respondent in five—said that they were against it. I commend that fact, all by itself, to my right hon. Friend the Minister of State, in the hope that he will bear it in mind.

We hear an awful lot about the downside of the changes that we have been discussing. The high activity level among women, the general lack of child care availability and the high divorce rate, in my judgment, are not coincidences: they are related. The Government stance, for a long time, on the law of marriage did not help. It has been deeply unsettling for a Conservative like myself, until quite recently, to recognise how the tax laws, the divorce laws and many other aspects of the legal code have discriminated against marriage.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Blaby (Mr. Lawson) became one of the good guys in 1988, when he removed the discrimination against married women when it came to sending in their tax returns, and when he removed the discrimination in favour of unmarried people when he took away the dual tax relief for mortgages. My right hon. Friend the Member for Oxford, West (Mr. Patten), who sits on the Front Bench, is about to join the good guys, I am sure, for he has asked for a review of the law on rape in marriage, which discriminates against married women in a wholly unacceptable way. It is not right that a man can be prosecuted and convicted and imprisoned for raping his girl friend, but cannot be prosecuted and convicted for raping his wife in identical circumstances. I hope that that law will be changed.

There is an upside. Most marriages do not end in divorce. Most children are not affected by divorce. In most marriages, it is a promise kept for life. That tells us a lot about what a family really is. It is not just a group of pals or mates who get together on a temporary basis. It is not just an economic union. It is not just a legal set-up, in which spouses and children have certain legal rights. It is not just for show, for a family is very hard work.

The family is a group of people who make promises to each other—explicit promises in the case of wedding vows and implicit promises in the case of children, that we will have our children, and we will love them and care for them, and in the end we hope that our children will love and care for us. I should like to hear a promise from our Government, that they will do everything to encourage the family and to remove, not just ignore, the discouragements, so as to enable the family in Britain to flourish once more.

11.33 am

Mr. Frank Field (Birkenhead): Like other hon. Members, I congratulate the right hon. Member for Aylesbury (Mr. Raison) on initiating the debate and on the much more that he does on behalf of families in the political arena. He is a model to which Back-Bench Members should aspire because it is crucial, while we are in this place, to set out our views, and sometimes judiciously to vote, against our own side to ensure that those views are advanced. I hope that some of those who support the motion will act as courageously in the Lobby when we have a chance to put some of these proposals into practice.

I am sorry that the right hon. Member for Sutton Coldfield (Sir N. Fowler) has had to leave for a moment. Listening to him was like a trip down memory lane. It could have been his speech in the run-up to the 1979 election. Perhaps one of his most important contributions today was to sound the end of an era. Then, as now, much of the rhetoric from the Conservative party was about the need to support families. We have now had 11 years of Conservative Government. I do not want to disturb the non-political atmosphere of the debate, but I may later say one or two things that cast a critical view on their record.

I congratulate the hon. Member for Derbyshire, South (Mrs. Currie) on her contribution. I agreed with several things she said, disagreed with some and shall concentrate on one in particular. She was right to emphasise that the silent revolution of the past 20 years has been the capitalisation of the kitchen. If British industry had capitalised as effectively as homes, perhaps the Government would not be facing the present balance of payments problem. Because of how we measure national income and how we think about increases in living standards, this revolution does not appear in any of the statistics. It has brought about an almost total change in the chances and choices that many people, particularly women, are able to take advantage of or make. Although it may sound grand to talk about the capital programmes the hon. Member was right to talk about hoovers, washing machines and dishwashers because that is what the change has been about. However, I disagree with the hon. Lady's line on child benefit. Interestingly, she approached the

topic in a way that suggested a change of attitude among Tory Members. Six months ago, she would have made a much tougher speech against child benefit. I hope that that is a sign that the Chancellor will fulfil some of the early promise that he showed in his commitment to this benefit.

I take issue with one point that the hon. Lady made about child benefit because it is something that the Labour party must face, too. It is easy to dismiss the case for child benefit on the ground that if one is interested in helping the poor, an increase in child benefit will not result in a net increase of income for people on income support. If we are interested in taking people out of means tests and, at the end of our stewardship in the House in 20 or 30 years' time, seeing something radically different from the ever-increasing numbers of individuals and families caught in means-tested welfare, unpleasant decisions must be taken.

One of those is to decide that, when we increase universal benefits, we may not always increase the rates for means-tested support in the same proportion. For example, if the next Labour Government, as I hope that they will, increase substantially the old-age pension, there is a clear case for not matching that increase in equivalent terms, in income support. If we did, we should do nothing to free older people from means-tested dependence.

Similarly, if child benefit were increased substantially, by taking the equivalent of the married man's tax allowance in the new system of independent taxation and putting that on child benefit, I hope that we would hold to the policy of not making similar increases in income support, so that the two levels moved in line with each other—we increase child benefit, and we increase income support. If we did that, there would be no chance of taking families off means-tested welfare. Any Government who are determined to turn their back on means-tested welfare will go through a period of short-term unpopularity, but we must accept that if we are radically to transform the welfare state.

Like the hon. Lady—although, unlike her, I voted against the Bill introducing divorce reforms in 1984, and not just against one clause—I believe that the House can do some things, but cannot do many others. It is wise, in the measured way that the right hon. Member for Aylesbury spoke, not to pretend that the House has the powers to determine people's lives in the ideal way that we think they should live, and thank goodness for that.

I am also pleased that, so far, we have all resisted the temptation to put our sticky fingers into people's private lives. We can set down the framework within which people can live their lives, but we should do no more.

I agree with the hon. Member for Derbyshire, South that a danger arose when the House voted for a divorce reform proposal that allowed divorces in certain circumstances after a year. In effect we said that one could break a marriage contract in less time than an average hire-purchase agreement or, in other words, that HP agreements are more important than the marriage contract. The hon. Lady, however, did not make the distinction made by the Lord Chancellor this week. He seemed to suggest that we should be less interested in couples without children who want to break the marriage contract than in couples with children. How we go about taking the debate on to that second stage is easier said than done, but it is important to make the distinction.

Obviously it is not our intention to ensure that couples who have no interest in one another and who cannot get on should stay together just because they have children and for our sakes. We must act sensitively, but it is useful to distinguish between couples without children and our greater concern for the survival of marriages that involve children.

The Prime Minister's recent speech at the National Children's Home gave us one sign of hope about maintenance. One might have asked where the Prime Minister has been for the past 11 years, or, to use the coded language of Conservative Members, where the Prime Minister's advisers have been for the past 11 years. During that time those on income support have witnessed the virtual collapse of the principle that fathers should be responsible for their children. That has almost ceased to be a principle guiding the private conduct of people on income support. The figures demonstrate the scale of that collapse in the past 11 years. It is important that the Prime Minister registers that that is an issue, and takes some of the responsibility for it.

Mrs. Gorman: How can the hon. Gentleman possibly blame that problem on the Prime Minister? Does he agree that the extensive nature of the welfare state allows men to walk away from their responsibilities, because they assume that the state—the Government and the taxpayer—will pick up the bill for their responsibilities? Surely we should consider curtailing certain benefits of the welfare state.

Mr. Field: I do not want to disturb the hon. Lady too much, but if she reads the Prime Minister's speech she will note that the right hon. Lady accepts some of the responsibility. If the hon. Lady wants to pursue her line of argument, she should take it up with the Prime Minister.

I am concerned that, so far, the debate has been couched in terms of saving welfare payments. If we are concerned only about offering a new deal to mothers who are drawing income support, in effect, we will ring-fence even more mothers into welfare. Let us suppose that we offer a new deal to mothers who ask the state to take over collecting their maintenance for them so that they do not have the hassle of chasing fathers through the courts. Let us suppose that that deal was offered provided that the mother remained on welfare. If we did that we would create a huge disincentive for mothers to leave welfare and seek work, especially if, at the same time as taking on all the uncertainties of work, they had to resume responsibility for chasing their husbands or partners for maintenance payments.

If the proposal on maintenance collection is to be a success—I hope that it is—we must be generous and make it a universal provision. In other words, all mothers, whether on welfare or not, should be offered a new deal whereby they can make over to the state the role of collecting the payments, which we will ensure that they receive regularly. If we limit the scheme merely to women on welfare we shall build in yet another disincentive to leave welfare; I am glad that the hon. Member for Canterbury (Mr. Brazier) intends to campaign on that issue on the Conservative Benches.

When we consider what has happened to families we must draw a crucial distinction between what we can achieve and the foolishness of some politicians who believe they can put their sticky fingers into people's private lives. One thing that we can influence is the level of financial support to families. That issue will certainly concern the Chancellor in his Budget next week.

[Mr. Field]

It is extraordinary that the hon. Member for Derbyshire, South should say that child benefit should be frowned upon because it is indiscriminate when she, with many of her colleagues, supports indiscriminate tax allowances. The hon. Lady also advocated some indiscriminate support through tax subsidies for the advancement of child care provisions for mothers who wish to go out to work, or who are in work.

Mrs. Currie: I advocated that support for different reasons. The argument that all parents of children should receive child benefit must be challenged. The argument for tax reform on child care is that the nation needs far more women with children at work.

Mr. Field: I accept that, and if those reforms are merely posing a challenge to make us rethink our position, it is a good thing. I hope that the hon. Lady will make a similar challenge on the question of universal support for all home owners through mortgage interest relief. We could go through a great list to encourage such challenges from the Conservative Benches.

Mr. Andrew Rowe (Mid-Kent): I have a great deal of sympathy for the hon. Gentleman's case, but I am worried that £1 billion a year goes to households that earn £20,000 or more. Will he consider the suggestion that people on higher rates of tax should not receive child benefit?

Mr. Field: If the hon. Gentleman proposed abolishing all other tax allowances for that income group, he would, on grounds of consistency, have a powerful case. He knows as well as anyone that child benefit has two roles. It has a welfare role as it is targeted to help the poorest, and it acts as a tax allowance to try to maintain tax equity between those with or without children, irrespective of their income.

That nicely brings me on to the main challenge in the debate—what has happened to family income during the lifetime of the Government. As a result of the Government's policy on child benefit the tax burden has moved from the childless to those with children. That shift has affected families whether they earn £7,000 or £70,000 a year. If we are interested in setting guidelines of public policy to show our preference—it seems clear what the House's preference is on supporting families—we should vote for policies that back up that commitment, otherwise it is an empty one.

The motion calls for

"further development of policies designed to support"

the family. If the House was serious about supporting the family that could be done in four ways. I have already said that it is clear from the speeches of Conservative Members today that the atmosphere in the debate on child benefit is changing for the better. If we are serious about sending out a sign from this House to show that we are interested in supporting families and ensuring that they have adequate money to do the best job for their children, our next generation, the Chancellor must heed that changed atmosphere in time for the Budget next Tuesday.

Secondly, I hope that the Chancellor will examine how the new system of independent taxation will work against some married women who currently benefit from the chance of having their husband's married man's tax allowance transferred to them if they are working. That allowance will not be completely transferable under the new system. One mother in my constituency, who is the main breadwinner in the family, has the total tax allowance transferred to her. But when the new system is introduced the whole family would be better off if they ceased work—unless a similar right to transfer the tax allowance was introduced. That is not unusual in Merseyside because of the wage rates in the area. To lose the equivalent of the married man's tax allowance would mean that that family was actually paying to work, rather than being better off. In his Budget, the Chancellor should ensure that the new system of independent taxation has a transferability of tax allowances equal to the current system.

I am sorry that the right hon. Member for Sutton Coldfield is not in his place to hear my third point. Before the 1979 election he said that if we were serious about supporting families, a future Conservative Government should implement a policy of family impact statements, which would analyse the effects of the legislation on households with children—just as every major measure must have a financial statement on the effect on taxpayers. One problem with the general debate promoted by the right hon. Member for Aylesbury and others, who have been trying to push the issue of family policy for a couple of decades, is that everyone assumes that we have done rather well for families when the evidence shows that we have done rather less well.

One important way constantly to bring us back to the effect of any policy would be to have an impact statement on every major Government measure. The advantage of the Government doing it this time is that it would not cost very much in the initial stages, although the effect of how we spend that money would be costly, whatever the total may be, because we would be more conscious of the needs of families.

The debate on child care appears to be gelling rather well. I agree with the comments of hon. Members on both sides of the House that the least desirable option is workplace nurseries. It is one matter to be employed by a company, but it is another for that employer to decide who will look after the children. That applies also to the House of Commons. What are the alternatives? If we abolish the £8,500 bar as the cut-off point for those who receive fringe benefits, there will be a major mushrooming in the near future that will have a negative effect on the Treasury. We must ask whether we are in the business of further reducing the taxable base. My mind is clear on that—I want to phase out all tax allowances so that there can be a standard rate of tax of 12p to 15p in the pound.

Mrs. Currie: Come over here then.

Mr. Field: There is no sign of the Government embracing that policy.

In addition, there would be higher tax rates above a certain level. People could then choose how to spend their income, rather than the state bullying or bribing them into spending it in certain ways. The hon. Member for Derbyshire, South says that she is in favour of yet another tax privilege being established, so she is being inconsistent to say also that she wants to phase out tax benefits and reduce standard rates of tax. Child care vouchers will achieve more choice than workplace nurseries. However, if we are concerned about the size of the taxable base we must insist that employers pay the cost of those vouchers

from post-tax company income and not offset it against corporation tax. if not, it will be another effect on the tax base and another way to push up standard rates of tax.

My final recommendation is that we follow the policy outlined by the Prime Minister when she was Education Secretary. She said that it was her aim that families with children aged three and four should have the right, if they wished, of an opportunity for their children to attend nursery schools. I should have thought that on this occasion, if not on others, it is a policy that the right hon. Lady——

Miss Joan Lestor (Eccles): It is also Labour party policy.

Mr. Field: It was Labour party policy long before the Prime Minister's conversion in 1972. It is one of the options to consider if we want the best development for our children. I hope, too, that it will be Labour party policy after the next election to be aware, when we implement that pledge, that many mothers work for longer hours than those available at nurseries. It is not only a question of increased provision, but the delivery of that provision to suit the hours of working mothers as well as the people who work in the nurseries.

If we want to increase work choices for women, we should undo the social security changes that now place an almost penal bar in the way of single mothers working while remaining on benefit. The previous system may have been clumsy, but at least they could offset the whole of their child care costs. In the name of simplification, there is now just the payment of a set sum out of which mothers are expected to cover child care costs. Given that the figure is only £15, I cannot think of any mother in Birkenhead who would be better off working than staying at home. It is a thoroughly bad reform and it should be reversed.

I hope that during this debate we have not only set the ground for some agreement—and also important disagreements—between the parties, but that we have paid due attention to the motion on the Order Paper which calls for the development of new policies. My speech has concentrated on the importance of child benefit; the need to have an impact statement for each major Government measure on how it affects families with children; the need to give real choices of child care and not to superimpose our desired policies on families: and the small but important change in policy so that mothers on income support who want to work can offset the total cost of child care before they lose benefit.

11.58 am

Mr. Julian Brazier (Canterbury): Like other hon. Members, I congratulate my right hon. Friend the Member for Aylesbury (Mr. Raison) on this timely debate and also on his excellent speech. The debate has attracted interesting speeches from many hon. Members. I was especially interested in the speech by the hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field). I agreed with about two thirds of what he said, but I suspect that he will disagree with most of what I have to say. I hope that he will forgive me if I do not immediately follow his remarks.

I declare an interest as my wife is expecting twins. I shall have to be careful in expressing my views on child benefit as my wife will read *Hansard*.

I should like to pose a question that has been posed before and is not especially original. However, it is important to address it. Ever since the war we have had steadily rising living standards under every Government —more under this Government than under some previous Governments. We have also had increases in real terms in social security spending under every Government of both political persuasions, yet for a generation many of the indices of human misery and, dare I use an old-fashioned term, human wickedness, have been rising.

Why has the crime rate been rising so rapidly? Violent crime is almost 20 times the level that it was 40 years ago. Why is child abuse rising so fast? I understand that the Children's Society says that nearly 100,000 children left home last year, many of them I am afraid for good reasons. Why is illegitimacy spiralling? We are not talking about the religious views of the natural parents. Some 27 per cent. of children born in this country last year were born to natural parents who were not willing to make the lifelong commitment to marriage. I am afraid that for many people marriage is no longer a lifelong commitment.

The hon. Member for Motherwell, North (Dr. Reid) made an interesting speech, although I disagreed with much of it. I can tell him that between 1960 and 1980, when by his own testimony enormous resources were poured into housing, the divorce rate quadrupled—it went up by 300 per cent. The use of drugs and alcohol continues to rise rapidly as it has for a generation. The indices that we cannot measure, loneliness and despair, go on rising, as people such as my secretary who works with the Samaritans will testify. The suicide rate continues to rise.

Many people with varying political views will say that the solution to the problems is more resources. This year we are putting £50,000 million into the Department of Social Security budget. That is the largest budget in real terms that we have ever seen. We have an army of 200,000 social workers. I am delighted to pay tribute to my excellent social service workers in Canterbury, with whom I have a good working relationship. They are funded from a different budget, which is over and above the funding of the DSS.

What is the explanation for the extraordinary paradox of ever rising living standards and ever increasing Government resources, and the rapid worsening under all Governments of most of the indices that I have mentioned? I make no bones of the fact that I am a Roman Catholic and believe that the heart of the problem is that Britain has ceased to be a Christian country. It is absurd to try to blame either the Government or individual Church leaders, who are convenient targets—such as bishops whose names I shall not mention—for this change. What we as legislators can achieve is modest but nevertheless important.

I should like to suggest five areas in which we can contribute to tackling the problems; to a greater or lesser extent they are all controversial. I shall touch briefly on abortion because we shall shortly be dealing with it at greater length. I recently looked at a scan of the twins whom my wife and I are expecting. I saw two 8 in long babies who at 19 weeks were swimming about, able to feel pain and to listen to music. It is incredible to think that under our laws, as a matter almost of convenience, because we are very close to the point of abortion on demand for babies of less than 28 weeks' gestation, such babies can be killed. It cannot be an accident that the statistics for violence against children both at home and in care have not declined as we were promised in 1967, but increased

[Mr. Julian Brazier]

sharply from that time. In Scotland 30 years earlier in 1936, a loophole in Scottish law enabled abortion to begin there, and Scotland has the same pattern.

The second area with which I shall deal is divorce. We have heard such good speeches on the matter that I shall be brief. I echo the comments of my hon. Friend the Member for Derbyshire, South (Mrs. Currie) about Relate. How can it be right to spend 20 times as much on legal aid to assist divorce as we spend to fund Relate? I have just been to see my branch of Relate in Canterbury. I am told that one person in three who has been divorced regrets it afterwards. That is a rather sad statistic. In some cases both parties regret it afterwards. We should look again at that statistic.

I tread again on dangerous ground in speaking about two matters. I strongly support the Prime Minister's initiative to make not only divorced fathers but the fathers of single-parent families pay. I endorse the comments of the hon. Member for Birkenhead about that. This must apply across the social spectrum and not just in cases where the mother is on income support. We should go further. I strongly endorse the view that we must return to the concept of a guilty party in certain divorces. It is wholly wrong that we have virtually eliminated from the divorce laws the concept of guilt. I shall give one example.

The wife of a policeman in my constituency, a decent man with a thoroughly honourable record in the force, decided almost at the drop of a hat to live with a lover. For a year she abandoned her husband and children and for six months of that year she did not attempt to visit her children at all. She suddenly decided that she missed her children and would like to have them back. Her husband had some resources and she had none, although she was living with a man who had a substantial income. She went through the divorce proceedings and was able to extract a substantial sum from her husband. Much more important, she got custody of the children even though she had previously abandoned them. I am offended not by the details of the case but by the fact that I was assured afterwards that her guilt in the divorce, the fact that she had been a persistent adulteress and had chosen to live with her lover, was not even a material factor when considering the allocation of assets or the custody of the children.

The third area is housing. Good intentions in housing have led to an enormous amount of damage to the social fabric of our country. I introduced a ten-minute Bill last year. I am delighted to say that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment has agreed to come back to me as soon as research on the matter in the Bill has been completed. Believe it or not, if a man commits such severe violence against his wife and family that the council has to rehouse them, there is no provision in law by which the council can recover the council house, even if the man is sent to prison because of the violence. We as taxpayers have to pay for housing benefit to ensure that such a man keeps up his rent payments, so that he can occupy the house when he completes his prison sentence.

People have duties as well as rights. It is the duty of a man who is given a council house to look after the family for which he was given the house, but he also has a wider duty to the community. Given the comfort in which most of us live, we considerably underestimate that duty.

The saddest delegation that I have ever received at my surgery was from a group of people from a council estate that has been ruined by two groups. One was a single woman who was running a prostitution service. Her girls would sit out in all stages of disarray on warm evenings attracting their customers with children playing around. Worse still, four doors along was a problem family with children who had three dogs bottled up in their house. The dogs filled the garden with the most unspeakable excrement, the smell of which was unbelievable in summer. The dogs howled at all hours of the day and night. Their owners had parties frequently going on until 3 am or 4 am. It is all very well for us to be relaxed, to minimise the problems and to say that we must be careful that any sanctions that we take against families with children do not knock on to the children. But how can parents living on that estate possibly give a decent upbringing to their children while such problems are allowed to continue?

I do not support what councils are forced to do in desperation, because it is their only option in law, which is to put such families on to sink estates. Those estates then become breeding grounds of problems for the next generation of children. We should carry out the experiments that have been tried out in Holland. If a family have so failed in their duty to their neighbours that they are willing to destroy their environment, it should be possible under civil law to have them removed and put for a period into special remedial accommodation, which would be supervised and have adequate, but robust furnishings. Their previous house could then be given to families who could well do with it. At the end of the period in remedial accommodation, the family should again take their place on the housing list.

Tax benefits are also relevant to the debate. We have heard a mixture of different views so far. I shall declare straight away that I am on the side of the one-income family. It is important to make a distinction, which has not been made adequately so far, between mothers with pre-school-age children and those with school-age children. I want to focus on the former. It seems grossly unfair that a family who have small children and a mother who has taken the decision that until her children are of school-age she wants to stay at home should be expected, although they have only one income, to subsidise through the tax system child care facilities for the family with two incomes. I am very much opposed to tax relief on child care facilities.

I should like to see us go down the road of the most imaginative Treasury White Paper that came out in 1986 and, sadly, seems to have been shelved. I think that the hon. Member for Birkenhead may have endorsed its ideas, although I did not quite understand his comments on it. My right hon. Friend the Member for Aylesbury certainly endorsed the idea of allowing the tax allowances of mothers whose husbands are working, but who do not themselves work, to be transferred to the husband. That is a most imaginative route and would do far more for families with pre-school-age children than cuts in the basic rate of income tax.

Law and order is another aspect of the debate. I have tried to stress that we must get back to traditional values. We cannot legislate to make people Christian and it would be wholly wrong for us to try to do so. I am the first to accept that in the middle ages, my own Church was guilty of excesses—perhaps to understate it mildly—in trying to do so.

Mr. Frank Field: That is the most modest statement so far.

Mr. Brazier: I shall not enter too far into the religious divide by saying that there were fewer executions on our side than on the other side in this country and abroad.

Mr. John Patten: Do statistics prove it?

Mr. Brazier: My right hon. Friend calls for the statistics. The figure on our side was 100 before the reformation and 300 under Queen Mary. There were 18,000 deaths during the reformation, but I do not want to get involved in that as it is an irrelevant figure.

It is terribly important to realise the extent to which, in our laws in a range of areas, we have undervalued the extent to which people have obligations as well as rights. I pay tribute to my right hon. Friend the Minister here. Through his White Paper, he is considering the extent to which we must start to make parents more involved with their children and to have more obligations towards them if they become young offenders. It is incredible that no previous Government have made it a legal requirement for parents to attend court when their children are being charged with offences. One would like to think that parents would want to do so. It is a sad reflection that many of them do not. That is only a modest beginning.

We must be willing not only to consider making parents liable for the fines that their children incur, but to consider, when juvenile offenders are given non-custodial remedial treatment, making the parents also attend some of that treatment. In that way, we can bring home to parents the fact that they have a duty towards their children. In my constituency two months ago, two 12-year-old children beat up an 85-year-old woman at a bus stop and robbed her of £7. The parents of those children have failed as parents. It should be made clear to them through the law that they have done so.

I want to leave the House with these thoughts. We cannot legislate to make people Christians or to make them better, but it is terribly important that when we consider resourcing and the law, we do not simply say, "How can we throw more money at the effects of the problem?" Instead, we should ask how we can reinforce the family and how we can reinstil a sense of duty and obligation into people.

12.17 pm

Miss Joan Lestor (Eccles): This has been a wide-ranging debate. All who have spoken have contributed something to a discussion that we must have about family policy and where we go from here. I want to congratulate the right hon. Member for Aylesbury (Mr. Raison) on at last coming up in the ballot. I had the same experience. It took me 17 years, so I should tell other hon. Members who have not been here so long that it is worth waiting for. I did not find what he said at all priggish, although he said that he was afraid that he might sound that way. It is important that we consider the policies of all Governments, although we are concentrating today on this Government, because they have been in office a long time. We must consider how their policies relate to children and to what is taking place within our families.

When we enact certain housing policies, for example, we must consider what effect they will have later. Many speakers have said that we must consider the effect on family life and on the availability of housing.

I want to speak first, as I may not have time to go into this later, on child care, workplace nurseries and related matters. The Minister and I argued for many years about provision for the under-fives. We have both always supported the provision of nursery education. The one issue between us is that, when he says that there is more nursery provision than there was, he does not say that much of it is part-time provision, which does not meet the need we have been discussing today.

I have a rather different view from that stressed today on workplace nurseries and child care generally. I support the removal of tax on workplace nurseries for one reason only—that it is unfair, as the hon. Member for Derbyshire, South (Mrs. Currie) said. When I park my car here, or at Euston, or at the airport, I do not have to pay tax. If we had a workplace nursery here and I parked my children in it, I should have to pay tax. That is remarkably unfair. That is why I favour abolition of tax on the workplace nursery.

The right hon. Member for Aylesbury referred to Dr. Bowlby and to the fact that, in the 1960s, we were told that there should be a one-to-one continuous relationship with a child so that it would develop into a stable person. That fitted in nicely with conditions after the war, when we were told that women were not needed in the work force and that if they did not stay at home to look after their children, the children would behave appallingly when they grew up. However, it became attractive once again for women to return to work, so there was talk about various forms of child care provision.

If workplace nurseries are provided but a recession follows and women are no longer needed, they will be the first to go, because provision for working mothers will be abolished. That is why I have always been in favour of co-ordinating child care provision. It should include education for them; educational opportunities should be provided very early in their lives. It should also encapsulate child care and an extended day, after 4 o'clock, for men and women at work whose children need to be looked after. If we do not follow that course, there will be another argument in a few years' time about women staying at home, or they will be forced to do so because there will be no child care facilities for their children.

I was appointed as the spokesperson for children because it was recognised that it is important to consider the needs of the child as well as freeing women to go to work. The two go together. Workplace nurseries have a role to play, but it would be undesirable if children had to travel a long way to reach workplace nurseries. I have visited a good workplace nursery in Leicester; parents have to travel only a short distance there with their children. Such provision must be community-based and centered on the child. Child care provision must not be related to economic conditions or to changes in society.

Several hon. Members have referred to the so-called breakdown of the family and to many of the difficulties and problems that that causes. There is some truth in that. I do not deny that the high divorce rate leads to many children being brought up by one parent with great difficulty. It would be a great help if we could be given statistics concerning children who have been brought up in what appeared to be a normal family but who then became anti-social or delinquent.

We are never given those statistics; we hear only about the children of one-parent or divorced families. Most of them do not go wrong. I adopted two children as a single

[Miss Joan Lestor]

parent. I feel deeply for those of my colleagues who are also single parents and who brought up their children without their becoming anti-social or delinquent. People say of the one-parent family, "What can you expect? It is a one-parent family." That is unfair.

Mr. Rowe: The previous Secretary of State for Education and Science put in hand a series of deprivation studies. Is it not remarkable that it was found that a large proportion of the children who came from deprived families caused no trouble to the state?

Miss Lestor: Yes, that is true. I am glad to have the hon. Gentleman's support, as that is the point that I am trying to make. We do not look at the other side of the coin. Against enormous odds, many single parents are bringing up their children very well indeed. They will make a good contribution to society.

Money is the biggest problem for single parents. All their difficulties arise from lack of resources. The right hon. Member for Aylesbury referred to the number of childen who are born out of marriage. I believe that he said that 25 per cent. or 27 per cent. of children are born out of wedlock. However, many are born to people who have a stable relationship. The attitude towards marriage has changed. It is difficult to analyse the statistics, but I accept that, because more children are born out of wedlock and that because working mothers are in difficulty through lack of resources, there are bound to be problems.

Mr. Raison: I accept that many children are brought up admirably by single parents. However, statistical evidence is beginning to emerge that those relationships are not so stable as married relationships and that we delude ourselves if we believe otherwise.

Miss Lestor: I do not deny that; the statistics speak for themselves. Relationships are changing. More marriages are ending in divorce. We have no figures relating to the breakdown of relationships, but when there is such a breakdown it is a tragedy, especially for the children.

I am appalled that the Government have made no money available to Relate and to other organisations that are trying to assist people through the trauma of divorce and to give them counsel regarding their children. It is appalling that, in divorce cases, even after all the changes in the law, there is still a tendency for there to be a guilty and an innocent party and for one partner to rubbish the other. Children are torn between the two parties. When the parents remarry and there are new families, the children of the first union often feel that they do not belong to anyone. It may take us a long time to change that; we may never change it. However, children should not be used as pawns so that parents can score points off each other by means of their children.

Much more work needs to be done, and the Government should give a lead by providing more money for interested organisations to help parents and children through the trauma. There is nothing worse for a child than the feeling that it does not belong anywhere, and must constantly share with its rivals. I was pleased to learn that branches of the National Children's Home in my area, the north-west, provide such a service, as I am sure that they do in other parts of the country. We need more of that.

In her speech to the National Children's Home, the Prime Minister seemed to be talking about a family that no longer existed. Conventional families still exist, of course, but there are many other kinds of family group nowadays. Some hon. Members have mentioned the Prime Minister's point about the need for fathers to take financial responsibility for their children, and I have no objection to that idea—if, that is, the fathers can be found and can afford to pay, and if the money goes to the children and not straight to the Exchequer.

I have received many letters from fathers who say, "I maintain my children, but I do not see them because the relationship has broken down," or, "I cannot put them through the trauma." When couples divorce or simply break up, it is the children who suffer.

Much has been said about the need to deal with such problems as poverty, and I am all in favour of fulfilling our pledge to retain and upgrade child benefit. I am sorry that the Government have frozen it for the third successive year. In my constituency, the extraction of £400,000 by the Exchequer has squeezed the purchasing power of women in particular, thus inflicting further damage on the economy of an area that is already in a bad way. I know that many Conservative Members agree that the universal concept of child benefit should be retained, and I hope that the Government will think again while there is still time for the Budget to be "rewritten".

Not so long ago, the right hon. Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit) told my present constituents to get on their bikes, come south and look for jobs. At that time I was the Member for Slough, where there were jobs but no houses. Men who look for jobs in different parts of the country often cannot find anywhere for their families to live, and those who take up such opportunities may see their families as seldom as once a month because of the expense involved. Moving to where the jobs are takes its toll of family life.

One reason why I wanted my present job was the fact that governmental responsibility for children is spread among a number of Departments. Whichever party is in power, Governments must consider the effect of their policies on family life. When the policy of enforced council house sales was introduced, no corresponding right to build accompanied it. That has caused havoc in some areas.

The right hon. Member for Aylesbury and others have said that their constituents often complain to them about housing problems. The better council houses have been sold; mortgage repayments are a growing burden; those who seek work elsewhere find that there is nowhere for them and their families to live. The number of children who are now brought up in bed-and-breakfast accommodation should prompt grave concern. That is no way for children to grow up—living in one room, often with poor sanitation and in conditions that breach fire regulations. Many children in such accommodation have no play space and, for a variety of reasons, are unable to attend school regularly.

The hon. Member for Canterbury (Mr. Brazier) mentioned desertion. Sadly, it is usually the men who desert the family, and the women who, as a result, become impoverished. If we try to catch men who are not paying maintenance, I hope that the money will go straight to their families and not to the Exchequer, with the family remaining on a low income, because that would not benefit the family or the children.

We also need to consider truancy and the added problem of children who are engaged in drug abuse at an early age and the children who go missing. According to the Children's Society, at any one time 98,000 children do not sleep at home for a night or longer. Many of them turn up, but some do not, and the resulting problems are enormous. Some of them sleep out. One or two programmes have shown, and those of us who have talked to agencies know, that some of them are extremely young. The prospects for those children are appalling as they alre. dy feel rejected by society. We all know that one cannot simply pick them up and send them home, however young they are. Often what they are running away from is worse than sleeping in the street or in some sleazy hole. We have to examine why that is happening.

I am also concerned that recently the Government have not taken seriously enough the addiction of young children to fruit machines and the growing habit of truancy from school to participate in that form of gambling. The parents of young gamblers are extremely worried about what is happening to their children.

Mr. Frank Field: I totally agree with my hon. Friend. Does she agree that the gambling casinos are often centres for drugs and prostitution?

Miss Lestor: My hon. Friend is perfectly right. Of course undesirable people hang around those centres and children are extremely vulnerable. There is no doubt that there has been an increase in prostitution among young men and women. That is because it is a sure source of income when they are homeless and we cannot deny that it is happening in our society.

Child abuse has been mentioned. I do not think that any of us really knows whether child abuse is increasing or whether more cases are being reported. The publicity has been such that many victims have been encouraged to come forward, and we are all pleased about that. I have no idea whether the problem has become worse, but there is more of it than many of us realise. It is one reason why children run away from home, but it is not the only reason.

We have not matched the needs of our social workers and local authorities in tackling the physical and sexual abuse of children. Hundreds of children in London who are on the at risk register are not allocated a social worker. Now that we know what is happening, it is not good enough for us not to spend the money and invest in dealing with some of those problems.

The Children Act 1989 is a great improvement on much of what has gone before. Sadly, we have not matched it with more resources. I hope that, when the Chancellor of the Exchequer reads the report of this debate, he will realise that it is not much good passing legislation that is much more child-centred than before without recognising the demands and needs of local authorities in dealing with the problems. They need more resources and help.

Everyone who has spoken today has expressed concern about what is happening to children in our society. It involves a minority of children, of course, but it appears to be a growing minority. I believe that something can be done if only the Government will take steps and recognise that those children whose family lives have broken down, who are deprived and who do not have access to many things that others have will grow into adults and those adults will have enormous chips on their shoulders. They will have undergone all sorts of unpleasant experiences and it will be difficult for us to deal with them.

One of the contradictions in our society applies to child abuse and many other problems. We are all full of sympathy for the little boy who has been sexually abused and we call the person who has done it all the names under the sun. We are all very understanding. But when that victim becomes the assailant, our attitudes change. Unless we grasp that aspect of child deprivation and say that we will deal with it now, the cycle will continue. Not all abused children become abusers, but unfortunately there is a pattern.

This has been a useful and wide-ranging debate. We have talked about child poverty, the alleged breakdown in family life, divorce, working mothers and the need to ensure that women have a right to go to work, rather than have that matter raised only when Governments feel the necessity for it. I congratulate the right hon. Member for Aylesbury on choosing this subject. I hope that we shall return to it. Unless we do so, and have policies to meet some of our needs, the anxieties that have been expressed will continue to be justified.

12.40 pm

The Minister of State, Home Office (Mr. John Patten): The deep interest in children's welfare of the hon. Member for Eccles (Miss Lestor) is clear to the House. We all pay tribute to her for her longstanding interest in this matter. Nothing shows that interest more clearly than the fact that the hon. Lady wanted to speak from the Opposition Front Bench on children's issues rather than on issues that might have been seen to be a bit more glamorous by her colleagues who did not do as well as she did in the shadow Cabinet elections. If I had a vote in those elections, I would vote for her—and, for the sake of completeness, for the hon. Members for Jarrow (Mr. Dixon), for Motherwell, North (Dr. Reid) and for Birkenhead (Mr. Field). This is an equal opportunities day, and I do not want to offend any of the hon. Lady's colleagues.

When I was the parliamentary private secretary to my right hon. Friend the Member for Aylesbury (Mr. Raison), he was a tough taskmaster. I do not remember ever carrying into a debate on his behalf—for he did not choose to carry his own folders; I always carried them for him—as much briefing as I have carried into this debate. That information has come from eight Departments around Whitehall. Not just ripples but a tidal wave of briefing has flowed towards the Home Office. I have 445 pages of briefing on which to base my speech, which I hope to complete by 2.30 pm, if not before.

I thought that I had been uniquely let down by the Civil Service during the rather interesting and entertaining debate that broke out between that notable Roman Catholic, my hon. Friend the Member for Canterbury (Mr. Brazier), and that notable Anglican, the hon. Member for Birkenhead, about the numbers that each religion had executed during the religious troubles in the 16th and 17th centuries. I looked through all my folders and could not find those statistics anywhere. Happily, seeing my concern at not being able to answer the question, the Box has provided me with the answer that Home Office statistics on executions began in 1749 and that Queen Mary was at it rather earlier—clearly, there was an Anglican hand in that note.

[Mr. John Patten]

When my right hon. Friend the Member for Aylesbury speaks on issues involving the family, the House listens. When the founder editor of the *New Society*, which alas is no longer an independent and freestanding journal, speaks on these issues, the House listens. He is characteristically modest and did not reveal that he was about to write a book. He did not reveal its title, price or publisher. There are two prospective authors in the Chamber—my right hon. Friends the Members for Aylesbury and for Sutton Coldfield (Sir N. Fowler)——

Mrs. Currie: And me.

Mr. Patten: Some people never stop scribbling. I have read the book written by my hon. Friend the Member for Derbyshire, South (Mrs. Currie).

I was delighted to see my right hon. Friend the Member for Sutton Coldfield in the Chamber. I would not attempt to add to the analysis of the problem given by my right hon. Friends. Between them, they have analysed it better than anyone could.

I should like to hazard a purely personal view about the family. It is central to our national life. It is the basic building block of our community. It is the place where education begins, where our habits and lifestyles are formed and where our characters are moulded. I strongly believe that the family should be more than simply a group of people with keys to the same house or flat.

This leads me to the Government's response. My right hon. Friend the Member for Aylesbury called for a campaign for the family and marriage. That is an interesting idea, which I shall certainly contemplate and discuss with my right hon. Friend on another occasion. I recognise, as we all should, that Governments cannot make people love one another or stay together. I am prepared to shoulder the blame for all sorts of things in the House, but I am not prepared to shoulder the blame for failing to prevent people from parting. My right hon. Friend is right to say that we must shoulder the responsibility to do all that we can to support people trying not to part. That is critical. The hon. Member for Birkenhead was right to say that when hon. Members legislate or debate issues, they can deal only with the framework of people's behaviour, and cannot interfere with how they choose to behave.

The Government recognise the central part that the family plays in our national life. We want to do all that we can to promote the interests of the family. We must help marriages, which may be made in Heaven, but on which the maintenance work must be done by men and women. It is incumbent on us to try to do the maintenance work better than we have done in the past.

The Government and I believe that families should be given as much help, choice and independence as possible. That lies at the heart of our thinking on a wide range of issues on family policy, extending far wider than the possible reform of taxation and social security systems. We hope to introduce policies extending even further the choice and responsibility in education and housing. The policies that we have introduced in the past have done much towards the desired effect of strengthening and upholding the family unit.

In 1988 someone said:

"The family is the building block of society. It is a nursery, a school, a leisure place, a place of refuge and a place of rest; it encompasses the whole of society; it fashions beliefs; it is the preparation for the rest of our lives."

No one in the Chamber would dissent from what my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister said in 1988. That is an acute analysis of the family. The analysis is founded on an issue which runs through the Conservative party as far back as the time of Burke.

It was Edmund Burke who most clearly laid down the dominance of the family unit as one of the most critical factors in the nation's political cohesion. It is crucial in forging a commonly accepted morality among people. As a political party, we have never deviated from that over the centuries, which has made us the oldest political party not only in the western world but in the entire world. That is an astounding record of political consistency.

With regard to present arrangements, rather than the philisophical grounding of past arrangements, I shall consider what we have done in the 1980s and hope to do in the 1990s to meet some of the challenges contained in the views of my right hon. Friend the Members for Aylesbury and for Sutton Coldfield and my hon. Friend the Member for Derbyshire, South and others who have spoken.

Before doing so I shall consider four things that might have occurred in the 1980s had history taken a different turn. It is important to try to do that. First, if there had been a different political scene in the 1980s it is arguable —I am not saying that it is right or wrong—that there would not have been such a rapid and dramatic shift away from the traditional style of manufacturing industry, with its full-time unionised labour force. If the changes that occurred in the 1980s had not taken place, we would have seen more of that traditional style and less of the move towards service industries, with far more non-unionised and female labour. A Government who, rightly or wrongly, propped up traditional manufacturing industry and had close links with traditionally male-dominated trades and professions might have presided—perhaps paradoxically—over a much smaller increase in female participation in the work force than we have experienced, as my hon. Friend the Member for Derbyshire, South pointed out.

Secondly, had we had a different Government and had not my right hon. Friend the Member for Sutton Coldfield conducted his review, which is likely to form the foundation for much of social security policy well beyond the year 2000, we might have experienced a much more dramatic expansion of publicly funded and publicly run services for families, such as child care and nursery education. We might have moved a good deal closer to the Scandinavian model and some people, myself included, would have seen that trend as one that displaced the family, which would not have been a good idea.

Thirdly, the pattern of benefits might have been rather different. Benefits might have been less well targeted, in which respect I again refer to the work done by my right hon. Friend the Member for Sutton Coldfield when he was Secretary of State for Health and Social Services. Superficially, at least, it may seem odd, and a parodox, that a Conservative Government who wish to target help on the poor should disagree with a left-of-centre party which has a policy of spreading benefits universally, however affluent their recipients may be. We have present a Left-wing thinker who knows very much more about

these issues than me, and I beg the hon. Member for Motherwell, North not to torpedo me below the waterline, as he certainly could on these issues. He would argue that services or benefits exclusively for the poor become poor services and benefits. That has been incorrectly argued for many years.

While a great expansion of social security benefits—spread more widely and at ever higher levels—might have produced a larger constituency of social security recipients, that might not have helped the family in the end. We might have found the legitimacy of the system that had been introduced being threatened by higher tax rates necessary to pay for it and by the "Why work?" syndrome, which was highlighted clearly in the example given by the hon. Member for Birkenhead to show the effect of the taxation system on his constituents.

The final difference is probably the most significant of all, and none of us has managed adequately to pin it down this morning. Two institutions above all help individuals and children. The first is the family and the second is the state. No advanced society will ever rely solely on one of those institutions. It would be bizarre for us to argue, "This matter will be dealt with purely by the family and this will be dealt with purely by the state." That would clearly be wrong. The two institutions are not necessarily always in conflict; why should they be? Each is there to help the other. The more that the state does to help on a rainy day, the less we need to do for ourselves, through a reliance on the extended family or on personal savings.

The pattern of cause and effect is complicated. An increased role for the welfare state reduces the need to rely on the resources of the family. Perhaps—I say "perhaps"—the role of the family in providing its own welfare services has been allowed to slip away a bit too much in post-war England without our thinking deeply enough about it, and the state has necessarily come in to fill the vacuum. Perhaps the state's increased role is simply another example of the specialisation of labour in this country. After all, we do not all bake our own bread and not as many of us care directly for our elderly parents. The elderly are very often looked after by outside providers. Those are key political and philosophical questions which nobody will ever be able to answer. If we had had a different Government with a different philosophy in the 1980s we should undoubtedly have given a much more ambitious role to the state in family matters—in the provision of finance and services. However, that would have placed much less stress on the family's responsibility for providing, or at least choosing, services.

Those four differences, which are hypothetical because we know what happened in the 1980s—they might have occurred had there been a different political creed—would eventually have undermined the family even more than the family has undermined itself because of the changes of the past decade. We must resist some of those trends in the 1990s.

I have a number of points that I wish to lay before the House. The Government believe that families should be given as much independence as possible in all areas of the community, thus strengthening the family unit. I shall relate a few examples of how I believe that we have succeeded. A family with two children and one earner on average earnings has seen its real take-home pay rise by about one third in the past 10 years. That is a substantial increase. I fought my first general election campaign in 1979. If one of my minders had told me to get on to the platform and promise that people on average earnings would be one third better off in 10 years' time, I would not have dared. But that has happened, and it must have benefited a good number of families, even though not every family has shared in that extraordinary increase in affluence.

Mr. Frank Field: Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Patten: I will give way provided that the hon. Gentleman's question is not too difficult.

Mr. Field: I have a dummy question for the Minister. Will he give us the equivalent figures for single people on that level of income? What has been their real increase in comparison with people with children?

Mr. Patten: I will write to the hon. Gentleman.

Nearly 80 per cent. of families have children and nearly 80 per cent. of families with children pay tax and therefore benefit from tax cuts. That has been apparent from the 1980s. I am advised that two-earner couples with children—I must rely on advice from others—have on average gained about £8·50 per week from tax cuts and benefit changes over the past 10 years. However, I shall deal with the point made by the hon. Member for Birkenhead by writing to the hon. Gentleman and I will place a copy of the letter in the Library.

Dr. Reid: My question will be much easier, because I am not an expert. As the Minister is talking about tax, but confined himself exclusively to direct tax, can he confirm that, in direct and indirect tax, the average family is now paying over £27 per week more than in 1979?

Mr. Patten: No. I dispute those figures. Again, I will have to write to the hon. Gentleman and send him the relevant tables and place those in the Library, too.

Let us consider the money spent on a whole range of benefits for the family. The figure is nearly £10 billion, which is a substantial increase of about one quarter in real terms since 1979. There has been a redefinition of poverty during the 1980s and we must strive to do more in the 1990s to help families. Strong points were made by my right hon. Friends the Members for Aylesbury and for Sutton Coldfield and by my hon. Friend the Member for Derbyshire, South about the need to make changes in the tax and benefit system as it affects children and child care. I will draw the attention of my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer to those points before Tuesday.

There has been a debate about nursery schools and nursery school provision. About 25 per cent. more under-fives now attend nursery schools than in 1980 although, as the hon. Member for Eccles said, some do so part-time. However, they may not be worse off for attending part-time. Some three and four-year-olds find nursery education rather tiring and need to go home in the afternoon. We must make flexible provision in nurseries. Overall, 70 per cent. of four-year-olds receive nursery education or help from pre-school playgroups and other organisations.

Had Lady Plowden been taking part in the debate, she might have teased my right hon. Friend on his suggestion that the only way to help three and four-year-olds was through nursery provision. She and others feel that while

[Mr. Patten]

nursery provision is valuable, various other provisions, such as pre-school playgroups, can, in their way, do just as well for some children, as my daughter's experience shows.

Mr. Raison: For the record, I should say that I support playgroups as well as nursery schools and I did not wish to give any other impression.

Mr. Patten: I thought that Lady Plowden's name would bring my right hon. Friend to heel. She terrifies me and I am sure that she terrified him in his day.

My right hon. Friend asked about the work being done in the Department of Education and Science by my hon. Friend the Minister of State with responsibility for schools. She chairs a committee of inquiry, which will report in the summer, looking at the issues that concern my right hon. Friend. The group will not only deal with nursery school education, but will look at the educational value of all child care facilities available to three and four-year-olds. The group will look at nursery schools, pre-school playgroups and a range of other child care facilities. That is in tune both with the spirit of the age and what is happening out there.

My hon. Friend the Member for Derbyshire, South described the growth in women's employment and in child care provision. Substantial changes have been made without any Government direction or interference, local or national. It has been interesting to see the massive boom in women's employment, full-time and part-time, and to speculate where and how child care has been provided. It has been provided in different ways in different parts of the country.

I welcome what the hon. Member for Eccles said about the Children Act 1989. We may differ about resources, but we agree that the Act demonstrates the Government's clear commitment to caring and providing for children.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Aylesbury, the hon. Members for Motherwell, North and for Birkenhead, my hon. Friend the Member for Canterbury and others spoke about housing. As the House is aware, in recent months my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment has been looking closely at the problems of homelessness and of those who are finding difficulty getting secure and safe housing. Further announcements are expected. I shall make sure that my right hon. Friend receives a copy of the *Official Report* of today's debate, so that he is aware of the strong concern that has been expressed.

The Government have introduced, and are introducing, other measures, such as setting up a Broadcasting Standards Council and ending the exemption of broadcasters from the provisions of the Obscene Publications Acts. These will help family life by curbing excessive sex and violence on television, and are measures that I regard as very important.

This has been a wide-ranging debate. We have been told about the needs in education. The National Curriculum Council is doing much valuable work to ensure that more social and personal education is built into the national curriculum. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister recently made an announcement about getting maintenance from fathers who absent themselves, which has been widely welcomed this morning by my hon. Friend the Member for Canterbury and others.

My right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary has put forward proposals to ensure that parents are a bit more responsible for preventing their children from offending. That idea would have been thought outrageous 10 years ago, but it is coming into its own time. There has been little dispute from outside bodies about the need to move in this direction.

Here, in a non-combative way, I pick up the point of the hon. Member for Motherwell, North, who gave the impression that, during the 1980s, juvenile crime increased. I demurely demurred with his suggestion, whereupon he was egged on by the hon. Member for Birkenhead, who said that the figures had been redefined. The figures have not been redefined. The way that we have collected statistics about offending, including those on young offenders, has not changed during the 1980s, apart from a couple of changes made in 1980 or 1981 which inflated the amount of crime reported.

It was interesting to see the veil suddenly slip from the normally demure political features of the hon. Member for Birkenhead. We know that he is a saintly figure who floats at some height above the debate, looking down at we lesser mortals who cannot quite reach the golden mean between both sides. He reminds me of the tortured saints who one sees in the frescos of the great Romanesque churches in Ravenna, looking down in slight horror at what they see below them. For a moment we saw the politician, tooth and claw, and we were jolly pleased to see it, when the hon. Member for Birkenhead beguiled and entrapped the hon. Member for Motherwell, North into saying that there had been a redefinition of the figures.

Mr. Frank Field: I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for his description of me—although he may think it damaging here, it will no doubt boost the vote in Birkenhead.

The point that my hon. Friend and I were seeking to make was not that the Government had been caught with their fingers in the till and had literally fiddled the figures, but that the problem is so serious that, increasingly, our constituents do not report to the police cases that they would have reported five or 10 years ago. That is why it was right to say that it is difficult to read trends into the figures because we do not know whether there has been a change in reporting crimes or a real change of substance.

Mr. Patten: I must dispute that. We have two sources of information—the annual criminal statistics, the calculation of which has not changed in the past 11 years except in two minor and inflating ways that made the crime figures worse than they were in the early 1980s, and the British crime survey. That survey is taken every four or five years and it has shown that the reporting of crime went up substantially during the 1980s. Although I am the first to admit that there may be regional differences and that the incidence of crime may be greater in one town than in another, we are much closer to the real figures on domestic violence or violence against children than we were in 1980. I accept that there is still a lot of hidden crime, but the figures are better owing to people's increased willingness to come forward to report crime.

More needs to be done in the 1990s to help the family, and this morning hon. Members suggested many changes to the tax regime. The Conservative Family Campaign and

the National Family Trust are debating how such changes can be made. Others believe that much more can be done through social security to help the family.

Above all else we need to take a long, hard look at divorce, which has been spoken about at some length this morning. I do not intend to repeat the argument brilliantly led by my noble and learned Friend the Lord Chancellor in another place, to which my right hon. Friend the Member for Aylesbury drew attention. I concur with the ideas advanced by my noble and learned Friend.

We shall need to keep the conciliation services under review. My hon. Friend the Member for Derbyshire, South referred to the good work done by Relate. A number of other bodies help with marriage guidance, including the Catholic marriage body and its Jewish equivalent. We try to support all those organisations. Last year, at the request of Relate, we made available to it an extra £600,000 which it welcomed publicly and privately.

Throughout my speech I have stressed the importance of working with the natural pattern and grain of our community—that point was made plain by my right hon. Friend the Member for Aylesbury. We must let individuals take responsibility for their acts and recognise the importance of local communities that stand in a free society between the individual and the state. No set of policies can do more to satisfy those requirements than measures designed to confirm the role of the family as the building block upon which our community is founded. That is why the House should be extremely grateful to my right hon. Friend the Member for Aylesbury for his notable contribution in getting that debate going this morning.

1.14 pm

Mr. Andrew Rowe (Mid-Kent): I have already told my right hon. Friend the Member for Aylesbury (Mr. Raison) that an engagement in my constituency means that, alas, I cannot stay to the end of the debate. I thank him for initiating such a valuable debate.

There is more to a family than what the Scots call "Ma, Pa and the weans". It is a multi-generational family. Indeed, that has been brought home to me today because my family is wrestling with the sad and uncomfortable problem of helping my mother to adjust to being in a residential home. In addition, my daughter telephoned in a rage this morning because we will not be there when she gets home this evening. The fact that that unfortunate latch-key child is eighteen and a half is a sign that parenting continues for a great deal longer than many of us expected when we set out on that road.

There are a number of important elements in the crisis that has already been discribed by hon. Members. One of the advantages of being called late in the debate is that I do not have to use many of the statistics that I had originally chosen to illustrate my points. One reason that families are under pressure is the very much greater mobility that now prevails. People change their homes every five to seven years and firms expect families to uproot and move to other parts of the country.

Another reason is that to an increasing extent, the older generation are withdrawing from the nuclear family—not through any malice aforethought, but, as Titmuss pointed out at the beginning of the century, the gap then between the last child leaving home and the mother dying was 10 years. The gap today may be 45 years. Of course, the healthy, fit and, in many cases, relatively affluent older generation move house and pursue their own avocations. They are glad to see their grandchildren when opportunity permits, but they are often many miles away. That is a further pressure on the family.

Another pressure is that of the two wage packets. I could not endorse more fimly the view expressed across the Chamber—which I know my right hon. Friend the Minister practises—that there must be a change in the masculine role in the family. It is absurd to imagine that we can simply load on to women—whether or not they are willing to accept the load—the additional role of a major wage earner in the family, on top of all their other roles.

The belief of some hon. Members that families are best served by mothers staying at home pays far too little attention to the technological revolution. Most women can complete their domestic maintenance chores in an extraordinary short percentage of the week. The result is that wives, who are often in smaller and smaller accommodation, are frequently surrounded by neighbours with whom they find it difficult to form a relationship, for all sorts of reasons.

Large numbers of people now think of their front doors as a barrier to the hostile outside world, rather than as an entry into congenial society. Women want to get out and meet people. They want to be in more congenial circumstances. They become claustrophobic at home. This is an area in which the Government can use their hortatory role to assist. There must be more flexible working hours for both women and men. There is absolutely no reason why men should not enjoy the benefits of job sharing in exactly the same way as women. I want to see job sharing extended much more rapidly. The difficulties that my wife encountered in achieving a job share were an object lesson in the rigidity of attitudes among many employers.

It would be valuable to look again at the shape of the school day. There is nothing sacrosanct about the hours that schools operate. They are set just by tradition, and almost every country in western Europe has a different idea about the times at which schools should be open. I would not wish to see here what I understand to be the position in Switzerland where, consciously or unconsciously, there are extreme variations in school hours between different areas and, indeed, between one school and another. That has had the effect of imprisoning women in their own homes because they have a child at one school and another child somewhere else and are incapable of doing anything but treat the home as a base.

A consequence of the changing emphasis between men and women means that the courts will have to look much more carefully at the assumption that the mother should always have custody of the children. That is being looked at, but we need to do a great deal more.

As a result of pressures on the family and the break-up of many families, there has grown up a tendency to rely upon professionals to provide the support which, in an ideal world, would come from the family or the local community. As professionals always do, they extend the frontiers of their responsibility until they can no longer police it. Police forces and social services departments are at last admitting that the problems of discipline among the young are beyond them. We shall have to find alternative resources and I shall return to that matter.

It would be appropriate, for the sake of the children, for divorce not to be an option until the parents, except in exceptional circumstances, can show that they have taken

[Mr. Andrew Rowe]

measures to receive assistance about reconciliation. It would be perfectly reasonable for divorce courts to ask whether the parents have taken any steps to bring about a reconciliation. It is entirely reasonable that there should be a cooling-off period.

It might make sense to have some kind of addendum to a marriage contract that makes arrangements about what should be done with the children in the event of a breakdown. That could be done before the children are even conceived and may well be sensible, rather like making a will. There is no doubt that a will diminishes family rows over where property should go, and some statement about what should happen to the children in the event of a family breakdown might be of assistance.

The debate has overlooked the fact that having a child is probably the most frightening single event that can happen to a family. It is exciting and often a pleasure, but it is frequently—usually—a very frightening experience. Legions of young women who have children are given a rudimentary education about how to feed and clean the child, and that is about it. They go home from hospital, often alone but frequently with an equally frightened husband, to try to set out on making a home for the child. They assume only too easily that they are doing it worse than anyone else. When a child cries through the night, they think that it must be their fault. It is common for such a couple or individual not to seek help because they think that, if they do, they will be blamed for the failure.

We must look carefully at the support services available to young parents. Fears are diminished ludicrously easily when drop-in centres are set up where there are a number of young mothers. The support the women gain from one another, and from older women and men coming in and telling them that they are not the worst parents in the world, is extraordinary. They point out that they have all had the same experience. That is important and the Government could do much to encourage such centres, especially with the use of volunteers, many of whom would be happy to assist in that way.

One of the most horrifying features of many of the terrible stories about child abuse is that, in a curious way, the children are seen not only as instrumental in family quarrels, but as adjuncts. They are not seen as a value in themselves. It is vital to encourage people to see that children are of value in themselves. The debate about tax allowances confirmed the view that people think that their car is of more value than their child. Parking spaces are more important than spaces in day care centres. People do not kick or scratch their cars, but they are willing to do all sorts of unpleasant things to their children. That is sad, but common.

I want to illustrate the importance of support for young people from a study, which is now old, in which I took part when I was a lecturer at Edinburgh university. It was the first study of which we knew that looked at young couples who had come to the Scottish Marriage Guidance Council. We studied 300 such couples, one of whom had to have been under 21 on marriage and both of whom had to be under 30.

The one overriding finding from the study was that it was not promiscuity or permissivenes that had led to the marriages running into trouble, but the fact that these young people had frequently gone steady from an absurdly early age. They might have been going steady since the age of 11 because they wanted someone to go to the pictures with them. They then found no way of breaking off what was increasingly becoming an unsatisfactory relationship. They frequently had a child to try to paper over the cracks, but as they grew up, they were separating.

Those young people did not know about human relationships and had never tried a human relationship with anyone else. That was one of the fundamental reasons for the break-up. Why do people go for such relationships? The reason is that they are alone, frightened and unsure of themselves. Their parents or their broken homes have failed to give them a sense of self-value. It has made it extremely difficult for them to face the difficulties of saying no, of having a row or of risking having a disagreement with someone else.

I speak from personal experience. I am the child of a divorced couple and, sadly, I myself have been divorced. One of the last results of that is that it takes a long time for one to risk upsetting the apple cart by asserting oneself. The idea of causing someone to be angry is horrifying when one has had to endure the business of being dependent on the good will of people who are not one's own parents, and it necessarily creates real problems.

We must take seriously the need to use whatever means we have—I fear that the education system may be one—to enable young people to learn a great deal more about marriage and human relationship. If that sounds like a wishy-washy response, I do not think that it is. A recent study has shown that very young children are interested in the question. It showed that they are far more interested in human relationships than their parents or their teachers thought they would be.

I endorse the remarks about the importance of conciliation services being properly funded and supported. Active citizenship is one means by which to support people with children. If there are no grandparents, they could be given advice on how to raise their children. Many older people would value the opportunity to support a family. We must also encourage people who are living on their own in a house with more accommodation than they need to provide a home for a mother and her child. That would be to their mutual benefit. The older person might come to rely heavily on the energy and companionship of those young people.

It might be worth exploring a different set of divorce laws for couples without children. I should like couples with children to be compelled to say that they have at least sought a reconciliation. Divorce should not be allowed until after the arrangements for the children have been sorted out. When no children are involved, the position is different.

As for older members of families, technological advances in the medical profession have led to many people living far longer than they wish to live. They are becoming a great burden on their families. It places immense pressure upon them and leads to great financial burdens.

It often leads to families being unable to build up financial resources for their own old age.

I wonder whether it might be possible to introduce a system of mortgage in reverse, under which it would be possible for someone who has been moved into a home for the elderly and whose house is no longer needed by the family to dispose of it. The purchaser of the house would pay for it month by month. That money would pay for the

care of the elderly person. When the elderly person died, the house would be owned in proportion to the contributions that had been paid by the purchaser. Such a system might ease the difficulties that many young people face when trying to buy a house.

If we want fathers to be responsible for their children, could not the national insurance number be modified to show that they are parents? Everyone has a national insurance number. If a stroke were added to show that that person had children, it would be much harder for many fathers, who seem to disappear off the face of the earth, to pretend that they do not have a family. That might be a practical way of dealing with the problem.

The cost of our present policy paralysis runs into billions: the National Health Service, the schools, the prisons and many other institutions are victims of our failure to devise and execute an effective way of supporting the family. We cannot afford to ignore the problems any longer.

1.30 pm

Mr. David Amess (Basildon): I congratulate my right hon. Friend the Member for Aylesbury (Mr. Raison) on securing today's debate. Having read the *Hansard* report of last November's debate on the subject in the other place, I feel that ours has been equally interesting. My right hon. Friend's speech showed great wisdom; I disagreed only with his remarks about the Catholic view of divorce. I am glad that, at long last, someone has had the guts to persuade the House to discuss this matter seriously: we have heard some splendid speeches.

If I made the remarks that I had intended to make about women going out to work, and if my hon. Friends the Members for Derbyshire, South (Mrs. Currie) and for Billericay (Mrs. Gorman) happened to charge back into the Chamber, they would probably handbag me. As two or three more hon. Members wish to speak, however, and as my hon. Friends, having seen my name on the monitor, may indeed charge back in, I shall not say what I was going to.

Although I cannot compete with my hon. Friend the Member for Canterbury (Mr. Brazier), I have three small children and my wife is expecting our fourth in two weeks' time. At the moment the poor woman looks rather like a barrage balloon. When Members of Parliament debate family life they lay themselves open to criticism: our lifestyles are not conducive to a normal family existence. Every hon. Member, whether married or single, must know the stresses and strains that the job involves. Husbands and wives have a pretty rotten deal. Unfortunately, Members of Parliament are regarded as the lowest of the low nowadays, but the majority are conscientious and hardworking, and their families too make many sacrifices.

I was born in the east end of London, with a very happy family background. We were very poor—if my wife were here she would probably get out the violin at this point —and lived in a small terraced house with no bathroom, an outside toilet and a tin bath hanging on the wall. There was nothing special about that; it was very common at the time. Nevertheless, as I said, we were very happy. I am a great supporter of the Conservative Family Campaign: in my view, the family is the cornerstone of society.

There seems to be a division of view between the parties on individual responsibility and the role of the state. Grandparents were fundamental to east end family culture, and the people living in our road had various responsibilities. One person was responsible for delivering the babies, another for counselling those in marital difficulties and a third for laying out the body in the sad event of a death. There was a wonderful community spirit. We did not have to lock our doors; people helped each other, and society was generally very well ordered. Sadly, however, the planners came along, the high-rise blocks were built and the happy family life of the east end was spoilt.

I am saddened by the lack of parental responsibility in certain quarters. My right hon. Friend the Minister of State has already drawn our attention to the fact that the peak age for offenders is 15. That in itself is a dreadful thing for us to contemplate. We must ensure that there is more parental responsibility.

My hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe) said that having children is an enormous responsibility. We do not have any help with our children, and until we had small children we never realised quite what a responsibility it is. It is an enormous strain being woken up at 4 o'clock in the morning by one's son jumping into bed wanting to talk about dinosaurs. Then the youngest baby jumps in, and then, after having three or four children in the bed, one has to spend the next day washing up, hoovering and tidying. Having said that, we must have more parental responsibility now. It is not good enough for youngsters to play late at night, causing great disturbance in the neighbourhood and then, when the parents are tackled, saying that they simply do not want to know. We must address the fact that many parents do not even go to court with their children.

I commend to the House the excellent book that my right hon. Friend's Department was involved in producing, "Practical ways to crack crime". It is an excellent publication that contains many ideas that I hope the Home Office will develop in the next year. Although it will not be easy, I hope that legislation will be introduced in the next Session to deal with parental responsibility.

My hon. Friend the Member for Canterbury spoke about abortion. I shall not bore the House by developing my views on that subject. I note that the right hon. member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale, (Sir D. Steel) presented a petition to the House this morning on the subject of embryo research and abortion. Although I accept that no woman undertakes an abortion lightly, I regret the fact that 2 million babies have been aborted since the right hon. Gentleman's Act was put on the statute book. It is crazy that we have special baby care units trying to save the lives of babies born after 22 or 23 weeks' gestation, yet abortion is available up to 28 weeks. That does no good for the stability of family life in Britain.

I am appalled at the concept of the abortion drug RU486 being allowed into chemists in Britain, as it will help to destroy family life. I was disappointed and angry at the debate on the subject in the other place. The idea that we shall be able to police laboratories so that research on embryos stops at 14 days is absolute nonsense. I wonder where such research will continue.

A few weeks ago I introduced a ten-minute Bill about adoption. Anyone who has looked at magazines with advertisements showing little boys and girls who desperately need to be adopted cannot fail to be moved by the trauma involved in adoption. For example, one boy had been moved 36 times within just 13 months. Obviously

[Mr. David Amess]

that will have an effect on him in later life. I hope that the Government will take on board the suggestions in my ten-minute Bill so that we co-ordinate adoption rather better.

My hon. Friend the Member for Derbyshire, South mentioned divorce. She did not mention that as a newly elected Member of Parliament I tried to amend that Bill. Of course, as we know, the House is more or less dominated by lawyers.

Mr. John Patten: Not any more.

Mr. Amess: Perhaps these days the House is not dominated by lawyers, but it certainly was in the past. I was tied up in knots on that occasion and was told that we had to do something to reduce the period after which a divorce could be obtained.

The legislation has had a traumatic effect in Basildon, but I pay tribute to Relate. Many people have said, "We did not realise that a divorce could be obtained so quickly". As my right hon. Friend the Member for Aylesbury said, the divorce figures are staggering. We should be ashamed that we are not doing more to counsel people to stick together. It is not easy to be married. One has to work at these things. I admire the many Basildon women, and some men, who valiantly battle on as single parents. They have not deserted their children but accept their responsibility. It is a difficult task and as a local Member I would wish to do all that I can to support them.

Housing has been mentioned. All of us meet young couples at our constituency surgeries who say that they need a house. I have referred to the east end spirit. In the past, when there was also a great housing need, why did we not have the serious problem that we now face with family break-ups? In the past, often mum and dad would give a room to a young couple until they could move on. I am not entirely convinced that the argument is as simple as some have made it.

I am appalled at what is happening in Basildon. The word is going round that if one has a baby, one gets accommodation from the council or the Commission for the New Towns. Any officer or individual who peddles that myth should be ashamed of himself. It is disgraceful to bring a child into the world because one believes that one can thereby get accommodation. I do not believe that any responsible person would say that, but large numbers of people say that that is what happens in Basildon. If so, it is wrong and I hope that the local authorities and the CNT will address that matter.

Three weeks ago, there was a terrible tragedy in Basildon involving a Hong Kong couple. The gentleman came home from work and found that his four childen had been suffocated. That incident has had a traumatic effect on the community in Basildon. The media immediately wanted the inside story on what went on between the two people. Everyone tries to apportion blame, but I am not having any of that. We must deal with the facts. This terrible tragedy has happened, four tiny lives have been lost and somehow the working relationship that should have existed between the family structure and the state was not effective. I hope that in due course we shall act on the report of the inquiry.

Family life is fundamental to everything that we hold dear. I look to the Church to be much more outspoken about family life. I look forward to the Government's excellent policies continuing to underpin family life.

1.44 pm

Mr. Harry Greenway (Ealing, North): It is a great honour to follow my hon. Friend the Member for Basildon (Mr. Amess). Like him, I congratulate my right hon. Friend the Member for Aylesbury (Mr. Raison) on his excellent motion and the good debate that it has produced on the centrally important matter of the family.

I am sorry that my hon. Friend the Member for Derbyshire, South (Mrs. Currie) is not here. When she spoke of working mothers she was clearly referring to women who leave home to do a job. It is absurd to pretend that they are the only mothers who work; mothers at home seem to work equally hard. That should not be forgotten and mothers should not be disparaged for staying at home.

When my hon. Friend the Member for Basildon spoke of his personal contact with the east end of London, I thought of when I lived there for quite a long period and how much I grew to love it. He was absolutely right that when the miles and miles of terraces of small houses were replaced by tower blocks the neighbourhood changed completely, the spirit of one person being the next door neighbour's keeper went, and the sense of family in the east end community was dissipated. That spirit is still there to some extent, but is nothing like it was, which is a great tragedy.

Like my hon. Friend, I am a supporter of the Conservative Family Campaign and I commend a good deal of the work that it does. I shall amplify what he said about Churches. They have a particular responsibility which the Church of England sometimes—not always—fails to discharge. Any Church should see itself as the family of the people of God and encourage individual families to feel that they are a reflection of that one family. —Too often, Churches and Church leaders simply engage in political diatribes which are useless and unhelpful for families, who want leadership, saying, "Let us have an end to easy divorce and let us put children first in marriage and in every way." That is what Jesus taught. He was not concerned with the illegal immigrant who broke the law 15 times and was expected to be deported from a church in Manchester back to Sri Lanka. That was not the business of the bishop of Manchester, who should be teaching his flock the word of God, the gospel and how that relates to family life, and the relationship of the broad family of God with the nuclear and wider family.

Delinquency by the age of 21 is twice as high among young men and women whose parents divorced while the children were under five. Eighteen-year-old men from divorced families are much more likely to be unemployed. If couples consider splitting up for fairly facile reasons, as sometimes happens when they are not striving to stay together for the sake of their children, those statistics should give them cause for thought.

Of all those who go into prison, or other custodial institutions, between the ages of 15 and 22, no less than 80 per cent. return. Giving young people the stability to enable them to keep out of prison, particularly up to the age of 22, is of great importance to the individual and to society. We should never forget that requirement because it is of such central importance.

During my long years as a teacher I saw children of every kind of background and I saw the difficulties of those who came from single-parent households or divorced backgrounds where their parents were constantly fighting, sometimes physically. I know the difficulties and strains that such circumstances placed on children. The House should remember that and find ways of preventing such occurrences, although that is not easy.

When we look beyond those difficulties to parents who are trying hard, and succeeding, in their marriages and bringing up their children—sometimes fairly strictly—we should not discourage them from being firm and strict. Too often, schools are in conflict with firm parents and sometimes society at large is in conflict with them. That is wrong. Recently, we had a court case because a parent had smacked a child three times with a wooden spoon even though there was nothing to see. A national campaign has been launched to dissuade parents, and if possible to prevent them by law, chastising their children. That is monstrous and will lead to serious social problems just as the abolition of moderately and reasonably applied corporal punishment in schools has led to difficulties. In some schools, no alternative method has been put in place, and that is why the children are seriously out of hand. Take away the occasional physical sanction that can be imposed on a child by his parent and one creates more difficulties in the home than one solves. I am not saying that children should be beaten up, and I shall come to the question of child abuse in a moment, but the occasional tap or smack does no child any harm.

Child abuse is an immensely serious problem in Britain. Not long ago, I had the sad experience of meeting a young lady who had a son, now aged 12, by her father. She was obviously in the most anguished state. Her father was about to go to court and the complete hatred with which she spoke of him was most upsetting. We need to talk more specifically than we do about child abuse and to give the nation examples of what happens to the child who has been abused and deal with his relationship with his parents. Then perhaps society would feel more strongly and take a more determined attitude to the question. One sometimes has to hold up a mirror to society to show people the results of their actions because only then will they change.

A number of hon. Members have referred to housing. It was a great wrong that until last year only one marriage partner could claim tax relief on the couple's mortgage, whereas those who were living together—sometimes wilfully and in sin—could both claim mortgage interest relief. It is greatly to the Government's credit that they ended that.

It will help family life that we now have separate taxation for married men and women. I should like to pick up a point made about community charge which, in my opinion, has not been sufficiently amplified. I shall refer to one particular injustice, whereas the Opposition criticise the whole charge and never say what they would do. I have worked out that the roof tax and local income tax that they propose, when applied to a house worth £80,000 in my constituency—many houses are worth a great deal more—would cost £1,500 a year, compared with a community charge of £435, which is already much too high. Labour's proposals do not bear thinking about; they are awful.

If it is right to tax couples separately, however, it cannot be right to lump pensioner couples' savings together for community charge purposes. The community charge must be amended and if that can be achieved through regulation, all well and good. Each elderly person, whether or not he or she is married, should be entitled to have savings at the permitted maximum level which at the moment is £8,000. If the combined savings of a married couple mean that they must both pay the full community charge, that is wrong. It is unjust and illogical when those people may be taxed separately as married people.

The care of the elderly is too often neglected and has hardly been referred to today. We have talked a great deal about children, and that is right because they must come first. However, we are all aware of instances in which old people, who have done a wonderful job bringing up children, sometimes single-handed and sometimes in happy marriages, have been forced into nursing homes or old people's homes in old age while their children live just down the road, but never visit them.

I emphasise that family relationships are lifelong. My grandmother lived to be 99 years and 50 weeks of age. One of my greatest pleasures was being with her regularly until the day she died. I would not have had it any other way.

Mr. John Patten: She taught my hon. Friend how to behave.

Mr. Greenway: She certainly did, and that might mean that I will live to be 99. No doubt my right hon. Friend the Minister will be about the same age if I live that long, and good luck to him.

I hope not to be a burden on the state. I will do my best to be useful to my descendants and have a good relationship with them. Even if I do not, I hope that they will love me enough to keep in touch even in old age and not live down the road but fail to visit me.

We must accept that families are the most cohesive unit in society. If people are not part of a happy family, that is their great misfortune. As I am a member of a happy family, I sympathise with those people and I would do anything I could to help them.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That this House believes that the family is as vital an institution as ever; and calls for the further development of policies designed to support it.

Agriculture

1.57 pm

Mr. William Hague (Richmond, Yorks): I beg to move,

That this House congratulates the British farming community on its achievement of producing two thirds of the country's total food requirements compared to less than half thirty years ago and on becoming a major export industry; recognizes the vital contribution made by agriculture to maintaining the countryside as an attractive environment, particularly in upland areas where there are few alternatives to livestock farming on marginal land; welcomes the determination of Her Majesty's Government to secure fair competition in agricultural products in the European Community; and calls upon the Government to secure a major devaluation of the Green Pound as a prelude to the total abandonment of green currencies by 1992 at the latest, and to continue to seek ways of encouraging good practice in both conservation and business management by the farming community without imposing additional burdens upon it.

The purpose of the motion, which I have great pleasure in moving, and of the debate, which I have great pleasure in initiating, is, as the Order Paper states,

"To call attention to the role of agriculture in sustaining the economic and social health of the nation".

It is worth doing that because for many people agriculture and agricultural policy is a very murky and mysterious matter. However, agriculture is of unique importance in this country as it covers more than 80 per cent. of the land area and produces one of our basic requirements—food.

It is worth reviewing the success of agriculture and its problems although they have often been referred to in the House. It is worth hon. Members showing that they appreciate the need to assist actively the work of people in the farming community and that we understand the close connection between agriculture and the health of the rural economy and our natural environment.

At the time of the second world war, the health of agriculture was dramatically different from today. At that time people had to endure great sacrifices to import more than half the food needs of this country. Our farmers could produce less than half our total food requirements. There is now a different attitude among subsequent generations. We have been able to take food production for granted. At that time, people appreciated much more where food came from and how it arrived on their table.

I am pleased to say that today, our agriculture produces about two thirds of all our food and about 80 per cent. of all the food that could be produced in our climate. That change has come about despite a fall in the work force of two thirds and a fall in the area under cultivation. It is the result of milk yields increasing twice over and wheat yields increasing by two and a half times, and of productivity improvements that would be the envy of many other industries. Even in comparison with the late 1970s, the average employee in agriculture produces 70 per cent. more now than he did then.

Agriculture has been a tremendous business success, which adds thousands of millions of pounds each year to our balance of payments. It also helps many other sectors of the economy. People actively employed in agriculture spend £5,000 million a year on other services, capital equipment and other inputs. It is a tremendously important industry not only for those who work directly in it but for those who supply it and for those who use its products, for example, in the food processing industry.

We should appreciate that success, but we should also appreciate that the importance of agriculture goes beyond economics. It involves such a large proportion of the land area that the countryside of Britain is a byproduct of agriculture. Some people have the notion that agriculture is the enemy of the countryside, that visitors to the country must have rights to walk where they wish and to do whatever they wish and that the farmer is an unnecessary intrusion. We need to dispel that image and we must blow the trumpet of the farmer, showing him as the friend of conservation and the countryside, because that is the true image. Some 2,000 new farm ponds are created every year and 650 farmers are engaged in the farm woodlands scheme. Many farmers are involved in planting trees and taking conservation measures of their own accord. The environmentally sensitive areas have been a huge success, respected by visitors, farmers and local residents alike. There are other management agreements and sites of special scientific interest.

Some policies have not been wholly successful. For example, set-aside has not been a public relations success for the Government, the farming community or anyone else. Local residents in any area near to agricultural production complain about what has happened when fields have been turned over to set-aside. That does us no good and that policy must be rethought.

If agriculture has been so successful, why has it so many problems? Many people leave the land and the incomes of some hill farmers whom I have visited in my constituency in Swaledale are some of the lowest for 27 years. Investment in agriculture and agricultural equipment has fallen dramatically—by about 28 per cent. in the past five years. It is now at its lowest level in real terms since the war.

There are two reasons for the problems facing agriculture. First, it is a victim of its own success, and that of agriculture in other countries, in producing so much food. Secondly, European Community agricultural policy is, more often than not, weighted against the British farmer. Politicans cannot put right the first problem—farmers have been able to increase food production faster than population growth. There is the added complication that huge areas of the United States are not cultivated but could be. There is tremendous agricultural potential in the east as the economies of eastern Europe become revitalised. It is a sobering thought that the odds are that there will be more than a plentiful supply of foodstuffs for a long time to come.

We can help to ensure, however, that our agriculture industry has a fair chance to compete in the European Community. The farming community has the misfortune of being more dependent upon political decisions than any other industry in private ownership.

Agricultural policy is a mystery to many because there are so many subsidies, premiums, artificial exchange rates, grants, compensatory allowances, and payments for doing specific things as well as payments for not doing specific things, all of which are apparently designed to give special protection to the farmer. From that has come the idea that farmers are feather-bedded. The grants and the rest were introduced not to give special favours to farmers, but because, in many countries, agriculture is the most heavily protected industry. Japan surpasses itself in agricultural protection, even judged by its own protectionist standards. Every year the United States spends billions of dollars on agricultural subsidies and protection. Ferocious battles take place in the EC between countries seeking protection for their agriculture industry.

The British farmer would like nothing more than a free market in which he could take his risk like any other business man. He does not want to be shielded from the market sometimes, then thrust into it. He does not want that market to operate in a distorted manner, nor does he always want to be involved in bueaucracy and the form-filling that goes with the subsidies, premiums, grants and so on. Many farmers have turned into office workers, which is not what they wanted. Political decisions hold great sway over agriculture and we must recognise that. I know that the Minister appreciates that.

Agriculture in Europe is fundamentally different from farming in this country—many European farms are smaller and more people are involved. Any misfortune that befalls agriculture in such countries has, arguably, an even greater economic and political impact than here. It is not surprising that such countries seek to defend their agricultural interests at every opportunity. It is not surprising that the United Kingdom had to take the lead in the reform of the common agricultural policy, which threatened to establish surpluses that would have done no good to the farmer, the consumer, or the taxpayer in any country in the long run.

In the time that I have been in the House I have been delighted at Ministers taking the lead or successfully negotiating on many agricultural matters. They have successfully negotiated improvements in the headage limits of beef premiums, from 75 to 90 animals and the headage limits of ewe premiums. Last year Ministers successfully negotiated a price settlement, until currency movements spoilt it. They have successfully delayed changes to the funding of hill livestock compensatory allowances and they have made important departures from it for the future.

Ministers have also successfully negotiated on milk quotas, which will be welcomed by the farming community. Other welcome decisions not necessarily related to the European Community have also been reached. They include the retention of the Potato Marketing Board, the permitted continued sale of green top milk, the increase in the suckler cow premium, the full compensation given because of bovine spongiform encephalopathy, as well as the increases in HLCAs. Ministers must be congratulated on their efforts in the past year to help the farming community through such difficult times.

Sometimes problems arise as a result of delays in the payment of some of the allowances and compensations. Sometimes the good will and good results produced by increasing the amounts to be paid out are sacrificed when that money does not get to the farmer in time. Last year in my constitutency there were serious delays in the Northallerton office of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when it was processing the payment of HLCAs. This year I have been told of continuing delays. I am sure that the staff of that office are doing their best, but that office and other MAFF offices throughout the country must be properly staffed if they are to carry out Government and EC policy and make payments on time.

The Government should blow their own trumpet about some of the things that they have done, as they have been extremely tough in many European negotiations. My hon. Friend the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food will know that, now, the principal grievance of the farming community is the green currencies and the unfair competition that the British farmer faces because of the current valuation of the green pound.

Because of shortage of time, I shall not detail the tremendous discrepancies between the amount of money received by British farmers and that received by farmers on the continent across a whole range of agricultural products. Obviously, if the British farmer receives £20 less per tonne of wheat than the German farmer, it creates a serious problem that needs to be rectified. It is equivalent to a loss of income of £800 million a year from the British agriculture industry.

I hope that my right hon. and hon. Friends will do their best to put the case for the British farming community in all forthcoming negotiations. The eventual answer is British entry to the exchange rate mechanism of the European monetary system and the abolition of green currency rates. Let us hope that both will happen by the end of 1992, if not before. In the meantime, Ministers must make great efforts—and if they do, they will deserve the gratitude and support of the farming community.

The motion calls on the Government

"to continue to seek ways of encouraging good practice in both conservation and business management."

The new system of conservation grants is most welcome and any scope to extend the environmentally sensitive areas would also be welcome. Perhaps the Ministry and the Department of the Environment should further consider how to ensure that national parks and the farming community work successfully together. Nowhere is it more important to keep people on the land than in the national parks. Both my hon. Friend the Minister and I represent the Yorkshire dales. They would look very different without the fields grazed and the walls kept in good repair. That is why the HLCA payments are important. It is also why improved payments for some conservation projects in particular areas would give good value for money. It requires sensitive planning policies. It is not easy for the next generation of the farming community to find anywhere to live. They are an important part of the rural housing problem that I have previously brought to the attention of the House. They are the heart of the rural economy and the rural environment. Some of the national parks are, sometimes, rather heavy-handed in dealing with planning applications by farmers that would allow their businesses to continue for future generations. I hope that that will be kept under careful review.

If there is time, I hope that my hon. Friend will comment on nitrate-sensitive areas and on what has happened to the European Commission proposals on nitrates. When we debated them in the House, they appeared to be rather ill-informed and even alarming in what they would mean to agriculture in Britain if they were ever implemented.

The motion calls for good business management, which on the individual farm, is a matter for the farmer. It also means good management of the marketing and distribution of agricultural products. There have been some ill-informed attempts recently to call for the abolition of marketing boards. I hope that we reject those calls. There has also been discussion about the future of the Milk Marketing Board. I hope that it is secure as it is doing a great deal to adopt more market mechanisms in its operation. I hope that my right hon. and hon. Friends will resist, wherever possible, placing more bureaucratic or

[Mr. William Hague]

unnecessary financial burdens on the industry. Forthcoming regulations from the Department of the Environment on silage, slurry and fuel oil storage are causing concern. Not much time has been given for thorough consultation, let alone for assessing the full financial consequences of the proposal. A great deal of digging up and reconstruction of farmyards could result, so I hope that the regulations will be more fully examined before they become law.

I hope that Ministers will continue to emphasise how much we believe in agriculture. My right hon. Friend the Minister's speech to the annual general meeting of the National Farmers Union was most welcome. Agriculture does not always get a great deal of support from other public spokesmen and in the hysteria about bovine spongiform encephalopathy that we have seen in the past few months Ministers should be congratulated on having kept calm. I cannot congratulate the BBC because whenever possible it has insisted on showing library footage of a cow against other footage of Northallerton market in my constituency. That footage of a beast with BSE has appeared hundreds of times and given the impression that BSE is to be found passing through Northallerton market. There is no evidence that such an animal has been through that market, but that footage has now appeared on the BBC more often than Terry Wogan and it is time to stop showing it. I hope that the BBC will take note of that.

I hope that there will be time for the Minister and other hon. Members to respond. I have tried to demonstrate the importance of agriculture to our national and our rural economies. I have also shown the success that it has enjoyed and the problems that it now experiences. I have pleasure in presenting the motion to the House.

2.15 pm

Mr. Elliot Morely (Glanford and Scunthorpe): I congratulate the hon. Member for Richmond, Yorks (Mr. Hague) on bringing such an important issue before the House. I am sorry that because of the way things have worked out, the debate has been squeezed to the back end of today's business. Agriculture is worthy of a detailed debate on it role and its relationship to society and our countryside communities.

The Agriculture Act 1947, which was passed by a Labour Government, forms the basis for agricultural support. It is a tribute to Tom Williams and the Labour Government of that time that the Act has been maintained almost unchanged as a means of giving support within a framework that ensures efficient food production and prevents a return to the events of the 1930s when many people were driven from the land.

There is no doubt that our farmers are suffering heavily as a result of the green pound. I add my voice to those who have urged on the Government in their negotiations on the matter in the EEC. They should try to abolish the system now or make it much fairer to our farmers before it is eventually abolished in 1991.

Another issue that worries farmers is high interest rates. The Goverment have only partial powers in terms of the green pound because they must deal with the matter in EEC negotiations. However, interest rates are certainly wholly within the powers of the Government and they could take far more successful steps to deal with them. High right are crippling farmers and many other business people, quite apart from people who have mortgages or high-interest loans.

Mr. Edward Leigh (Gainsborough and Horncastle): I am sure that the hon. Gentleman would want farmers to be confident about the future. Will he comment on the Labour party policy review which states that Labour would

"negotiate with our . . . partners a price support system, based on lower guaranteed prices for limited levels of production".

That two-price system was condemned when it was produced by the leader of the SDP in the last Parliament as a disaster for British agriculture. I am sorry that not a single member of the SLD has bothered to turn up today. Will the hon. Gentleman give the commitment that if a Labour Government are elected they will not introduce a two-tier price structure? Would Labour tax or nationalise agricultural land? If the hon. Gentleman can reply to those questions I am sure that that would considerably help the debate.

Mr. Morley: Those points are worthy of serious debate, but I very much regret that in the time remaining, during which the Minister has to reply to the debate, I shall not have time to deal with all of them. However, I shall touch briefly on our alternatives.

Some farmers have been responsible for the problems that have worried rural communities. Pollution, silage run-off, pesticides and the use of aerial sprays, especially in lowland areas, have caused problems. As trustees of the countryside, farmers have a responsibility to ensure that our landscape and habitats are protected. They should also ensure that there is reasonable access to rights of way and that public rights of way are maintained and not blocked. A minority of farmers have not given their full attention to those factors, and it is because of the actions of a minority that the ban on straw burning has been introduced. I must stress that the minority of farmers behave like that.

I recently had the privilege of addressing the annual dinner of the Winterton Agricultural Society, which is very much influenced by local farmers and landowners. For over 120 years, it has put on an annual agricultural show and played its full role within the community. It has fostered a community spirit, and played an active role in ensuring the stability and well-being of rural communities. That must not be underestimated.

There is great concern in the farming community about the change in the role of the Agricultural Development Advisory Service and the fact that it is becoming more a financial, money-making concern than a support system for the farming community. I contrast that with the role of the Department of Trade and Industry, which offers small businesses all kinds of financial help and inducements. Farmers are small business people and they deserve the same kind of backing for their businesses. ADAS, in the way that it is changing, is not fulfilling that need.

I am also concerned about the cuts in research and development in this country, while our European rivals are extending their research and development ready for 1992 and the open market. It is vital that our farmers are not put at a disadvantage compared with their European rivals in the open market. We must maintain our level of research and development to give our farmers the backing and

technical support that they need. All too often the definition of near-market research means that the research is ended and no one else steps in to pick it up.

When we are in Government, we shall introduce various changes—and we shall see a Labour Government in the not-too-distant future. We shall impose green premiums to give support for farmers for the points that the hon. Member for Richmond mentioned, such as encouraging environmentally friendly farming. Environmentally friendly farming will mean a reduction in output, and we should recognise that in terms of support. We also want an extension of the environmentally sensitive areas, which we supported and which we believe are very successful.

The approach to farming must be planned and strategic, taking into account the needs of the people who work in farming, including farm workers, the local community, the role of farmers and their effect on the environment, and the importance of maintaining food quality standards. We should set up an independent body to ensure that food quality standards are maintained. We should recognise that in the rural community, there are related problems with public transport and housing. We should tackle that in integrated and supportive ways. From my experience, I see that there has been a shift in the farming community and rural communities. They recognise that the Labour party has increasingly relevant policies to their needs, and we are increasingly attracting more active support to our cause and our campaigns.

2.22 pm

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Mr. David Curry): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Richmond, Yorks. (Mr. Hague) on choosing this subject and on the particular eloquence of his advocacy. I should expect nothing less of my hon. Friend who represents such a beautiful part of north Yorkshire. His constituency is, if I may say so, surpassed in beauty only by the neighbouring constituency somewhat to its west which is, of course, the one that I represent.

My hon. Friend was perfectly right to say that agriculture is now part of an international industry and that our decision-making at national Government or local level must be put in the context of the European Community which sets the overall framework for our policies. More than 90 per cent. of the expenditure for my Ministry is determined by European regulations, so the margin for purely autonomous decision-making at home is small. Our policy is also determined increasingly within international negotiations in the context of the general agreement on tariffs and trade. The great event which is upon us and which should be settled by the end of the year is the next round of the GATT negotiations.

All the developed countries with agriculture industries are concerned about the economic cost of agriculture to the rest of the economy. Only by means of a kind of international disarmament will the cost of agriculture be sustainable. We must ensure that competition takes place on a reasonably fair battleground.

The Government do their utmost within that context to help agriculture. We recognise that agriculture cannot be divorced from general economic circumstances. No farmer whom I have ever met has asked for special status for agriculture so as to insulate him from the economic forces that affect many other members of the community. We can provide assistance. My hon. Friend the Member for Richmond referred to the suckler cow premium, which was increased just under a year ago. We have announced an increase in the compensatory allowances for the uplands which, in both my hon. Friend's constituency and mine, cover large areas; 50 per cent. of the community live in less-favoured areas. Those allowances are important to farmers who will never be large, rich, agricultural barons. However, they have an enormously important conservation role to fulfil.

We were able to secure improvements in compensation for bovine spongiform encephalopathy. I support what my hon. Friend said about the poor cow that is continually used on television to illustrate BSE. As he said, the same cow appears repeatedly, slipping on the same patch of ground and giving the impression that BSE is a doleful matter. It is not cruel, inasmuch as the animals are then dealt with. That film gives the wrong impression. I hope that it will be changed. We have also increased the compensation for salmonella cases.

There are areas where, in the interests of public safety and in the interests of the farmers themselves, tough action must be taken. That will be difficult for farmers. However, when we can take action to mitigate the effects, we do so.

My hon. Friend referred to the farm and conservation grants. They have been given a greener aspect over the past few years, and we shall continue to move in that direction. We are encouraging the preservation of stone walls, and similar measures. The grants that have been made available for diversification have also been taken up and have led to success, but no one should exaggerate their importance. I have noticed, nevertheless, that the number of fishponds has increased. A farmer who lives not far from me has introduced some fishponds on his land. He is doing so well out of what he charges for fishing in his ponds that next year, I am told, he plans to put fish in them.

A number of schemes are to be introduced soon. A pilot extensification scheme will be introduced shortly. That will be a green scheme, as well as a scheme to aid agriculture. The proposals to encourage organic agriculture will be announced soon. The environmentally sensitive area schemes will be reviewed next year. We shall have to consider whether to extend them and whether we are getting the best value for money out of them. The obligations are relatively light. In some cases there is a good reason for that. In my constituency, right at the top of the Pennines, increased access could have a deleterious effect on peat moor landscapes where paths can create problems.

The nitrate pilot scheme will shortly be unveiled. Negotiations are taking place in Brussels, because we still have reservations about it. My right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food was in Paris recently seeking French support in respect of the Community demand that there should be exclusive reliance on agriculture to deal with the nitrate problem. That is the dirigiste approach. We hope to modify those proposals, although the Department of the Environment takes the lead in those negotiations.

We realise that the question of the green pound is important. I ask the agricultural community not to make it into too much of a totem. If the green pound were to be devalued by 5 per cent. between now and tomorrow, would the farmer be materially affected? Conversely, if the

[Mr. David Curry]

green pound were to be revalued over 24 hours, would the farmer be all that much better off? We must keep it in perspective. However, we recognise that the price differential penalises the British farmer.

We intend to press for a significant devaluation. We have devoted a great deal of time to discussing with our colleagues how important it is that the green pound should be devalued. We have explained the handicaps. We have pointed out that devaluation would not give British agriculture an advantage but that it would help it partly to recover from the disadvantage from which it suffers at the moment. That is the cardinal element in the farm price negotiations which will begin in earnest in about 10 days' time at what will probably turn out to be a marathon session in Luxembourg.

I strongly subscribe to my hon. Friend's views on planning and the national parks. We share the Yorkshire dales national park, and I have great respect for the work being done there. Nevertheless, people want to live in the area, and we want an active and vigorous local community with opportunities for tradesmen and small businesses. We want a diversified economy. The landscape, after all, will be protected if normal economic life proceeds in harmony with nature; we do not want to turn the place into a museum piece. That is why we give the uplands the grants without which they would not survive. We are supporting local communities, and I believe that our policies are right and should be pursued.

It being half-past Two o'clock, the debate stood adjourned.

Private Members' Bills

ENTITLEMENT TO EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING BILL

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on Second Reading [9 March].

Mr. Harry Barnes (Derbyshire, North-East): On behalf of the Member in charge of the Bill——

Hon. Members: Object.

Debate further adjourned till Friday 23 March.

MARRIAGE (REGISTRATION OF BUILDINGS) BILL

Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. Edward Leigh (Gainsborough): With the authority of the Member in charge of the Bill, now, Sir.

Hon. Members: Object.

Second Reading deferred till Friday 23 March.

NORTHERN IRELAND ACT 1974 (AMENDMENT) BILL

Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Not moved.

RADIATION EXPOSED CROWN EMPLOYEES (BENEFITS) BILL

Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. Harry Barnes: On behalf of the Member in charge of the Bill, I beg to move.

Hon. Members: Object.

Second Reading deferred till Friday 23 March.

SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE

Ordered,

That—

(1) this House do meet on Thursday 5th April at half-past Nine o'clock;

(2) notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph (2) of Standing Order No. 17 (Questions to Members), no Questions shall be taken, provided that at eleven o'clock Mr. Speaker may interrupt the proceedings in order to permit questions to be asked which are in his opinion of an urgent character and relate either to matters of public importance or to the arrangement of business, statements to be made by Ministers, or personal explanations to be made by Members; and

(3) at half-past Three o'clock Mr. Speaker do adourn the House without putting any Question, provided that this House shall not adjourn until Mr. Speaker shall have reported the Royal Assent to any Acts agreed upon by both Houses.—*[Mr. Greg Knight.]*

Disabled People (Clothing)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Greg Knight.]*

2.31 pm

Mr. Alan Meale (Mansfield): Although I have drawn the short straw in the debating stakes, I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to speak about a matter that I regard as serious indictment of the House: our collective failure as parliamentarians to introduce comprehensive legislation to ensure that the day-to-day needs of disabled people—especially the severely disabled—are taken fully into account in our legislation.

Sadly, the everyday clothing needs of disabled people—particularly, as I have said, the more severely disabled—have not been recognised, either by our draftsmen or by those who have taken it on themselves to interpret regulations rigidly, in a way that lacks sympathy and understanding.

There is no doubt that specially designed clothing can dramatically increase the independence of disabled people and their general ability to participate in life. Social independence opens up a whole new world for those unlucky enough to have physical handicaps. The Government readily appreciate the need to provide for the disabled in some respects, such as housing and building design, employment, transport and mobility—although they have not always acted fully on that recognition. Why, then, do they not accept that many disabled people need special help to acquire what the able-bodied majority regard as normal everyday dress?

The second report by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys revealed that more than 2 million disabled people in the United Kingdom estimated that they spent at least £5·20 a week for purposes connected with their disability. More than 1 million spent more than £10 per week, and 500,000 more than £15. A major factor was undoubtedly the cost of special clothing.

Worse still, having been confronted with the normal expectations of society, disabled people face the tremendous difficulties involved in purchase, alteration and repair costs. To ignore the dilemmas to which those problems lead, and to withhold support, is to accept the principle that disability equals disadvantage: such is the poverty of choice that we provide.

I shall give the Minister a few examples that illustrate the difficulties that disabled people have to face when they need new clothing. A woman aged 45 with otherwise normal statistics has a personal height of only 3 ft. She needs dresses, coats and underwear and cannot find a retail outlet to help her without huge additional costs, delays and limitations in design. Another woman with severe disabilities needs trousers, slippers and skirts to allow her to go out. She has 40 in calf measurements, which preclude her from normal retail buying. Worse still, the tailoring of such items causes lengthy delays and difficulties over fitting and design costs.

A gentleman with limited use of his hands needs tailoring to provide adapted fly fastenings to his trousers to enable him to toilet himself. That is a limited alteration, but when adapted to every pair of trousers that he owns, it constitutes an enormous difficulty. A gentleman with cerebral palsy needs a pull cord affixed to a knee-length dressing gown for use when he crawls around his home. That is not a pleasant thought for hon. Members, but it is a reality of independent limited movement to the person concerned. A severely mentally and physically handicapped woman in a children's home in Nottinghamshire requires a satin dress for her 18th birthday, an item that is impossible to fit off the peg, particularly with the difficulties that such a purchase would cause the person fitting the garment.

Those people and thousands of others regularly face major problems with their clothing needs and requirements, a factor recognised by the Griffiths report on community care, produced by Sir Roy Griffiths for the Secretary of State for Social Services in 1988, which dealt at some length with the problems of dressing some handicapped people. The problems are recognised by every organisation involved in helping disabled people. That is not difficult. Because of the nature of disability, added wear and tear to certain types of clothing is sometimes caused by something as simple as constant washing.

However, the response of the then Minister for Health in a letter to the hon. Member for Newark (Mr. Alexander) in 1989 contradicted that. She wrote:

"for the majority of disabled people, their needs for clothing and their need to exercise personal choice of style can be met by certain types of clothing produced for the general market or by adaptations to standard garments."

In many cases that is not a true reflection of fact. None of the cases that I mentioned fits that category, nor do many others.

For example, two of my constituents in Mansfield face similar problems. Mr. and Mrs. Henshaw have a daughter now aged two, who through difficulties at birth, had to have both her legs amputated. Her parents are extremely conscientious, yet low-paid because of their profession. They have to go to Nottingham for regular limb fittings and extra help from the NHS. However, Charlotte needs special help because she is a growing child, and because she has artificial limbs her clothing has to be adapted for her disability. It is sad that she gets no help. Because she is only two, Charlotte gets no mobility allowance as it is not paid to people who have children under five years of age. That is a disgrace. My constituency is 15 miles from Nottingham and Charlotte's low-paid, conscientious and hard-working parents have to travel a considerable distance. They receive no support whatever. The Minister and his colleagues in the Department of Social Security should find time to redress that disgraceful anomaly affecting young children who need the specialist support that our laws offer disabled people. Our laws need to be adjusted to help those people.

The Minister is aware that there are about 20 clothing workshops for the disabled in the United Kingdom. They are specialists, yet they receive little or no help from national Government. In the response that I mentioned earlier, the Minister for Health dismissed the need for central Government funding and said:

"it is open to local authority special services departments to help fund organisations".

That was a truly inappropriate response, especially as there are about 150,000 disabled people in Britain who need specialist clothing provision, which can be produced only by organisations such as the workshops that I mentioned. I particularly praise one of them, Bassetlaw Fashion Services for the Disabled, and its director, Mrs. Ann Waddingham. That small, charitable workshop covers north Nottinghamshire and other parts of the east midlands. It not only manufactures garments but alters others to individual needs, makes regular home visits to

[Mr. Alan Meale]

measure and fit clothing before production and carries out limited training for the parents, relatives and partners of disabled people.

The Minister is aware also that a number of hon. Members are concerned about the matter and the funding of those workshops. The hon. Members for Shipley (Sir M. Fox), for Londonderry, East (Mr. Ross), for Belfast, South (Rev. Martin Smyth) and for Newark, and my right hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe (Mr. Morris) have all strongly said in their own way that something needs to be done to alleviate the situation. I submit that a short-term solution to the problem resides with the Minister, through his Department deciding to fund, on a limited basis, all those workshops, perhaps on a three-year research project. He undoubtedly has the ability to do that under grants that he has made available. Departmental guidance notes, to which the then Minister for Health referred in her letter, state that aid can be given "to support innovatory projects of potential national significance or to develop a particular pattern of service."

The Minister knows the figures. With a growing number of younger, severely handicapped people surviving longer, the problems for them can only get worse. In the long term, the Government should accurately define the funding needs of all such workshops and specifically designate specialist clothing for the disabled within the terms of existing legislation for the disabled. I argue that a short review period can only help such a process. It is useless in present circumstances to rely on local authorities—whether Labour, Tory or whatever—to fund such projects, especially since the poll tax.

I strongly urge the Government to help those workshops to develop their pattern of service, which can only help disabled people to live as normal a life as possible. The needs of disabled people demand that the Government respond positively to the difficulties that disabled people face in their lives. Because of the clothing needs of permanently and severely disabled people in that important training period of their lives—when under five—I again ask the Minister to meet his colleagues in the DSS, to carry out a review and to provide the extra help that they need in clothing provision, training and mobility assistance. I beg him seriously to consider the project that I have put forward.

2.43 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Mr. Roger Freeman): I congratulate the hon. Member for Mansfield (Mr. Meale) on raising this subject, which he did eloquently and clearly. I shall ensure that my colleagues in the Department of Social Security are aware of his points about mobility allowance, which is a matter for them, not me.

All hon. Members will understand the complexities of life for people with disabilities. They already have problems with movement and have the additional problem of clothing themselves at what must be a greater cost than that normally faced by you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the hon. Member for Mansfield or me in buying clothes from a shop. Bespoke clothing, which is what we are talking about, is much more expensive than the clothing available to the ordinary citizen. I understand these problems.

As we emphasised in the White Paper "Caring for People" it is vital that all disabled people should be able to lead lives that are as full and independent as possible. That applies as much to their clothing needs as to other aspects of daily living. I refer not only to people in wheelchairs, but to those suffering for arthritis who will have as much difficulty dressing themselves as people who are premanently in wheelchairs. Some will need special clothing that is tailored to their individual disability, and production costs are inevitably higher because of the unique nature of the production of such clothes.

The hon. Gentleman said that other hon. Members have raised the subject before. The Adjournment debate of 21 October 1987 initiated by my hon. Friend the Member for Shipley (Sir M. Fox) referred to the subject. The hon. Member for Mansfield paid tribute to my hon. Friend the Member for Newark (Mr. Alexander), who has raised the subject many times. Bassetlaw Fashion Services for disabled people at Retford is located in his constituency. The hon. Member for Mansfield rightly paid tribute to other hon. Members for raising the subject.

We recognise that clothes are an integral part of the wearer's personality and individuality and his or her acceptance socially. Good, fashionable clothes increase the wearer's self-esteem and the regard in which he or she is held by others. Disabled people rightly demand a choice of clothing which, while functional, does not obviously proclaim itself as being different from the sort of clothing that they might have been able to buy in a high street shop. I acknowledge my Department's responsibility to encourage good practice.

We have provided a substantial grant, as the hon. Gentleman may know, of £340,000 per annum in real terms to the Disabled Living Foundation in London, the clothing advisory service of which is the main source of information on the subject—collecting, storing and disseminating information on all aspects of clothing for disabled people. We also support the Disabled Living Centre's council.

My Department also funds the publication of a series of books called "Equipment for Disabled People". They provide details and comments on the evaluation of a wide range of equipment and self-help devices intended to assist disabled people. One book, entitled "Clothing and Dressing", provides information on a number of factors which need to be taken into account in selecting clothing, and which help the individual to choose suitable styles.

Through its disability equipment assessment programme, the Department sponsored Southampton general hospital's assessment of the use of lower limb dressing aids, which help people to put on shoes, socks and stockings. Those are mundane problems for the hon. Gentleman and me, but of vital importance to disabled people. The programme assesses disability equipment while it is in use by disabled people under clinical supervision, and records the equipment's advantages and disadvantages. It offers guidelines on the most important aspects to be considered when such equipment is prescribed.

The programme is aimed primarily at helping disabled people, their carers, and the professionals working with them, to choose the most suitable equipment to meet their needs. It is also of value to manufacturers and suppliers. The feedback that they obtain helps them to see whether their products need to be modified to improve performance or convenience. A number of reports have been published, including that from Southampton, and they are available from the Department on request.

I look forward to attending the launch on 22 March of the clothing initiative for people living in National Health Service hospitals. I hope that the hon. Gentleman, given his interest, will be interested in coming. I will ensure that an invitation is sent to him. I know that his remarks were specifically directed to those living in the community, but his concerns could, and should, extend to people in hospital. The findings of the working party formed by the Disabled Living Foundation, the Royal College of Nursing and the King's Fund highlight the Department's concerns in this area.

The provisions for laundering, storage and purchase of patients' personal clothing for people in long-stay hospitals—especially mental illness and mental handicap ones—are often unsatisfactory. Sometimes laundry services are not available, which means that carers have to take home soiled washing. Sometimes clothing may be ruined because inappropriate laundering facilities are used, or lost when it is sent away to commercial or off-site facilities. Patients frequently have to wear stock clothes, which may be ill-fitting or of poor quality. The common usage of clothing is not a practice that maintains a sense of dignity and well-being in a patient.

The right to their own clothing is of great importance to patients living in National Health Service institutions. All health authorities should explore every avenue possible to implement or upgrade systems to enable people to wear their own clothes. A conference to be held on the day following the launch—23 March—will help Health Service personnel to improve their systems.

I now come back to the providers of clothing for disabled people and I shall seek to answer the hon. Gentleman's two questions. I acknowledge the services offered by workshops such as Bassetlaw Fashion Services to disabled people who have special requirements. But I must emphasise that, for the majority of disabled people, the need to exercise a personal style can be met by adaptations of the standard garments produced for the general market. That is not always the case——

Mr. Meale: The Minister referred to the Disabled Living Foundation. That body estimates that disabled people have to spend nine times more week by week than the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys suggested. I seem to recall that the figure was almost £50. The Minister mentioned the availability of goods. Earlier I talked about Charlotte Henshaw. When her parents buy her clothes on the open market, they have to buy clothes two sizes larger than she would need if she were not disabled as, clearly, she needs longer skirts to cover her artificial limbs. Instead of costing £13—the nominal average cost—the garment may work out at £18. In addition, there are dressmaking costs of £5 to £7 for the alterations that need to be made. That adds up to a 90 per cent. increase in the cost of that garment. We are talking about people on low wages, who spend all their money helping their disabled child. It is ridiculous for us to force conscientious parents to go to such lengths. They should be able to go to a workshop and look at fashions which can be made up from scratch from basic patterns and adapted to suit their child's need.

Mr. Freeman: Of course, the hon. Gentleman is right that it costs very much more to purchase clothing for disabled people than clothing for people who are not disabled. One can approach the problem of the high relative cost in two ways—first, by helping the purchaser and, secondly, by seeking to assist the supplier. Let me deal with the purchaser—the patient—first.

The hon. Gentleman will know that income support now provides extra help for disabled people in the form of premiums. The disability provision—from April 1990 worth £15·40 a week for a single person and £22·10 a week for couples—goes to disabled people under 60 years of age and £15·40 a week extra also goes to families for each disabled child. This additional benefit is now paid, automatically, as soon as the disabled person or child satisfies the criteria. There is no intensive questioning on the individual's personal affairs. Disabled people over the age of 60 years who qualify for it get the higher pensioner premium. From April this will provide an extra £17·05 a week for single people and £24·25 for couples.

The hon. Gentleman also referred to the cost of production. Perhaps in the time that remains, I can deal with the question of supply. The hon. Gentleman knows that my Department has no statutory power to assist, through section 64 grants, the workshops to which he referred. Section 64 of the Health Services and Public Health Act 1968 enables funds to be provided mainly to assist with the central administrative costs of national voluntary organisations in health and personal social services, and even if we wished to do so, my colleagues and I could not assist the workshops under the law as it stands. Nevertheless, as the hon. Gentleman is aware, it is open to local authority social services departments to help those organisations and they can do that under the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970. Local authority associations can make representations to the Department of the Environment in terms of the setting of revenue support grant levels to take into account the need, as they see if, for financial assistance or grants for workshops.

On a slightly more constructive note, I can state that under the National Health Service we provide free footwear. While that was not specifically covered by the hon. Gentleman, we provide footwear for disabled people, where that has been prescribed by doctors or physiotherapists, at a cost of £20 million a year to the taxpayer. I know that many of those items cannot be described as high fashion.

However, in widening the debate about clothing, we will be considering our arrangements for the supply of footwear under the NHS to see whether we can help patients a little more, particularly with regard to their fashion desires, and perhaps acquire less standard items of production. We must consider those matters to see whether we are getting value for money and whether we are satisfying patients' demands. I cannot give the hon. Gentleman a timetable for such a study, but we will be launching one.

Mr. Meale: All disabled people are grateful for the excellent service that is provided for them. However, footwear provision is slightly different from clothing. There are many ranges in every size of shoe and those are easily manufactured and supplied. On the other hand, clothing must be specially designed, particularly for severely disabled people to meet their living requirements. A man suffering from cerebral palsy who drags himself round on the floor in his home needs specially adapted clothing to help him. Shoes and clothes are entirely

[Mr. Meale]

different, although I welcome the Department's concept of at long last trying to develop a fashion approach to the needs of disabled people.

Mr. Freeman: The hon. Gentleman anticipated my final remarks. I agree with him. I clearly said that shoes are not clothing, but it is a step—to use a perhaps inappropriate expression—in the right direction. The hon. Gentleman made a well-argued case and stressed the need for the Department to research the activities of the 22 workshops around the country.

The Department's research management division can mount studies to examine the features of those workshops which appear to contribute to their success. For example, they can study the good relationship between workshops and local authority social services departments. The research management division can do that with a view to establishing guidelines for further support and ways in which financing might be augmented.

Given the hon. Gentleman's arguments, I will undertake to see how the Department could assist in research. That is a sensible and modest first step to help people whom, I agree with the hon. Gentleman, need our consideration, sympathy and support.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at two minutes to Three o'clock.

House of Commons

Monday 19 March 1990

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Oral Answers to Questions

WALES

Welsh Language Teaching

1. **Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how much money has been allocated by his Department to assist with developing the teaching of Welsh to adults in 1988-89 and 1989-90; and how many full-time tutors of Welsh to adults are currently working in Wales.

The Minister of State, Welsh Office (Mr. Wyn Roberts): In 1988-89 Government grants worth some £265,000 were made available to support Welsh for adults classes, and £356,000 has been available in 1989-90. Information on the total number of tutors for adults is not held centrally.

Dr. Thomas: I am grateful to the Minister of State for his reply. He will be aware that that sum falls substantially short of the £800,000 requested by the Welsh Joint Education Committee for the first year, rising to £1·5 million in the second year. He will also know of the recent survey commissioned by S4C which showed that 11 per cent. of adults questioned would like to attend Welsh language classes. Is not that the positive way to respond to the population changes taking place in Wales?

Mr. Roberts: The hon. Gentleman will have noticed that the allocation for 1989-90 was 34 per cent. greater than the allocation for the previous year, and I am happy to be able to tell him that the allocation for 1990-91 is £420,000—an increase of 18 per cent. on last year's figure. The figures that I have given do not include money channelled through local authorities or through revenue support grant, or the money spent by S4C and the Acen initiative, nor does it include the money being spent by the Training Agency, so a great deal is happening.

Mr. Gwilym Jones: Clearly the Welsh language has no better supporter in the House than my hon. Friend, who has fought long, well and hard for it. I welcome the additional spending that he has announced, but can he say where it will be spent?

Mr. Roberts: We shall be announcing the detailed allocation later this week, but the House will be interested to know that the main beneficiaries in the past have been the six local education authorities the four university colleges and the polytechnic, the Nant Gwrtheyrn language centre, the Workers Education Association, Cyngor y Dysgwyr—the Learners Council—and the Welsh Joint Education Committee. We have also spent money on education research in this area. In the coming year I hope to extend this support to the local authority higher education colleges.

Mr. Roy Hughes: Will the Minister consider the special position of Gwent, where there are so few Welsh speakers, and consider providing additional financial assistance for that county?

Mr. Roberts: The hon. Gentleman and the House will know that our top priority is the implementation of the Welsh language provisions of the national curriculum, in which we have paid special attention to the needs of Gwent.

Health Education

2. **Mr. Rathbone:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what plans he has to review health education in schools; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: Under the national curriculum, health education will be taught in all schools, as a cross-curricular theme and through specific core and foundation subjects, as appropriate. It is for individual schools to determine the organisation and teaching of health education in the light of national curriculum requirements. The strategy of the Health Promotion Authority for Wales includes new initiatives directed at young people.

Mr. Rathbone: I thank my hon. Friend for his answer, which shows his concern about health education in schools, but will he reassure the House that the importance of health education in the battle against drug misuse—a battle which must be won if we are to prevent our young people from being lured into drug misuse and dependency and into the violent crime that can so often ensue—is brought home to health education teachers and to those in local schools who are teaching the national curriculum?

Mr. Roberts: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. I am fully aware of his special interest in the subject as chairman of the parliamentary committee on drug misuse. A great deal is happening in Wales in this respect. There are drug education co-ordinators in each local education authority area and in 1989-90 their remit was extended to health education, with emphasis on drugs, alcohol and AIDS. Grant for expenditure of almost £700,000 has been provided so far and the programme is due to run for a further three years. There is support for the in-service training of teachers and youth workers in drugs education under the local education authority training grants scheme, which has been expanded in line with the education support grant to training and preventive health education.

Mr. Michael: Will the Minister acknowledge the enthusiasm of Labour Members for health education in schools? Does he agree that health education for children and adults can be effective only in the context of adequate comprehensive health care and a healthy environment? Does he also acknowledge, however, the desperate search for cuts in every health authority in Wales, the proposal to withdraw school nurses in South Glamorgan because Ministers are not providing enough money, and the damage to children's health due to the homelessness caused by the Government? Will he further acknowledge

that serious underfunding of schools in Wales is a threat to health education and that his interest in the topic therefore appears somewhat unconvincing?

Mr. Roberts: I totally disagree with most of the hon. Gentleman's comments. The question is about health education in schools. I have given assurances and examples of how we are promoting health education in schools. I might add that the Health Promotion Authority is establishing life education classes with the support of some £94,000 from the Welsh Office, and a start will be made on units for that purpose in the next financial year.

Interest Rates

3. **Mr. Martyn Jones:** To asks the Secretary of State for Wales what representations he has had from business organisations in Wales about the level of interest rates.

The Secretary of State for Wales (Mr. Peter Walker): None directly, but reference to the level of interest rates has been made by a few organisations in discussions with the Department.

Mr. Jones: I thank the Secretary of State for that reply. I am rather surprised that he has not received more representations from businesses. As chambers of commerce and trade were consulted about the poll tax, which really has no direct bearing on them, will they and the Confederation of British Industry also be consulted about interest rates in Wales?

Mr. Walker: We consult the Confederation of British Industry and the chambers of trade and commerce on all issues and I am glad to say that all the recent surveys of the Confederation of British Industry and the chambers of commerce and trade show them to be most optimistic about the future of the Welsh economy.

Mr. Ian Bruce: Does my hon. Friend agree that business profitability is now so good under the Conservative Government that businesses are still able to increase their investments despite high interest rates? Although we shall be looking for interest rates to come down as quickly as possible, it is clear that the return to investors and to pensioners who have invested their savings will be extremely good.

Mr. Walker: Yes. Welsh industrialists look back upon the period which started in October 1976 when interest rates were 15 per cent., inflation and taxation were massively higher than they are today, and Welsh Development Agency programmes were not on par with what they are today.

Mr. Barry Jones: Is the right hon. Gentleman concerned at the impact of high interest rates on domestic budgets and the numerous small businesses that he has so patiently encouraged? May I remind him that the Policy Studies Institute estimates that 120,000 Welsh households are in serious debt, that perhaps 750,000 have some debt and that indebtedness is growing rapidly throughout Wales? Is not Wales paying a heavy price for the Prime Minister's and the Cabinet's mistakes? I notice that the right hon. Gentleman has distanced himself from the Government's policies.

Mr. Walker: I only wish that the hon. Gentleman had distanced himself from his Government's policies when he was Under-Secretary of State. During his few years with the Welsh Office, unemployment went up, during mine it has gone down by 68,000; in his period of office there was a very small flow of inward investment, whereas in mine it has been massive; under the hon. Gentleman, inflation rates rose to enormous proportions, there were high interest rates and high taxation. His record for the Welsh economy was dismal and bad.

Cancer Services

4. **Mr. Raffan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he expects to make an announcement following the consultation process on the review of the provision of cancer treatment services to the people of north Wales; and if he will make a statement.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Wales (Mr. Ian Grist): My right hon. Friend will make an announcement when he has thoroughly considered all the representations submitted in response to the extensive consultation undertaken by the Welsh Office.

Mr. Raffan: As my hon. Friend and his officials are on record as saying that they are minded to support the recommendation that radiotherapy facilities be developed in north Wales at Glan Clwyd hospital, will he undertake to announce a decision soon after the consultation period ends on 31 March?

Mr. Grist: My hon. Friend will not be surprised if I say that we are minded to do so, which is all I can say until we have considered what the consultation brings forward. We shall not delay our announcement once we have made up our minds.

Floods (North Wales)

5. **Sir Anthony Meyer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what estimate he has been able to make of the cost of the damage resulting from the recent floods in the Towyn area of north Wales.

Mr. Peter Walker: It is too early to make an accurate estimate of the expenditure involved, but it will be high. I have made it clear that Government assistance through the Bellwin scheme is available to help local authorities in dealing with this emergency.

Sir Anthony Meyer: Is my right hon. Friend aware that the scale of this disaster, which has entirely vanished from the headlines, is far greater than anyone had realised? The money that has been provided, though welcome, is inadequate to meet the needs. People have not merely lost their possessions but have seen the value of their houses fall by many thousands of pounds. Social services are under appalling strain and a pall of gloom hangs over the area. Will my right hon. Friend consider appointing a task force to assess needs and assemble resources and thus restore some morale to the unhappy people of that area?

Mr. Walker: While I welcome my hon. Friend's suggestion, the best co-ordinating instrument is the Welsh Office, which is working closely with local authorities. As my hon. Friend knows, we have taken several decisions which in some senses are unique. For example, the usual Bellwin provisions provide for 75 per cent., but we have decided to raise that to 85 per cent. We have people co-ordinating aspects connected with engineering and with

social security. I am glad to say that the appeal has gone rather well, and the appeal that I made a few weeks ago to the furniture and carpet industries is producing important results. I assure my hon. Friend that matters are being co-ordinated and that the Welsh Office and I are in close contact with what is happening.

Mr. Barry Jones: In support of the hon. Member for Clwyd, North-West (Sir A. Meyer), does the right hon. Gentleman agree that only by visiting the area can one fully comprehend the scale, magnitude and impact of the disaster? The hon. Member for Clwyd, North-West did not exaggerate. I have visited the area, and the memory will stay with me of the council housing estate inundated with 5 ft of sea water and the school that was inundated but miraculously evacuated. With the best will in the world and without entering into a political fight, the sum that the Government have earmarked for compensation is insufficient. Further to the plea of the hon. Member for Clwyd, North-West, I ask the right hon. Gentleman to return to his Department and to Cabinet because the chief executive of Colwyn borough council says that up to £3 million will be needed. From what I have seen, that must be right.

Mr. Walker: My hon. Friend the Minister of State and I have visited the area and have seen what happened. The first provision is to meet emergency requirements. Lifting the limit to 85 per cent. is more than any previous Government have done in similar disasters, and it is the first time that a Government have contributed to an appeal when there has been no loss of human life. I have met all the local authorities concerned and when they have assessed the costs we shall consult fully with them. Everything suggested by the hon. Gentleman has already been done or is in the process of being done.

Homelessness

8. **Mr. Livsey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is the latest figure for homelessness in Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: From October to December 1989, local authorities accepted 1,618 households as homeless.

Mr. Livsey: Does the Minister accept that homelessness in Wales is becoming far worse not only in urban areas but in rural areas? Does he agree that that is due to a lack of affordable housing in the rented sector in particular? During the 1970s, 8,000 council houses per year were built in Wales. Last year only 750 were built. Does he accept that Tai Cymru's target of 3,000 houses in the coming year is utterly inadequate to meet the needs of the 70,000 people on the housing list in Wales? What does the Welsh Office intend to do about this human tragedy to put it right? Will it enact a crash house building programme because that is what is required?

Mr. Grist: Of course this is a serious matter. That is why we have increased the money available to Tai Cymru by 40 per cent., increased the expenditure available to local authorities for building by 15 per cent. and announced measures for homelessness back in December. It is also why Tai Cymru gives such precedence to low-cost housing and other forms of entry into housing. We also expect more money to enter the housing system through shared arrangements between housing associations and other funding agencies, including councils.

Sir Anthony Meyer: Does my hon. Friend appreciate how unwise it would be to build houses, whether starter homes or other types, in areas where the drainage is manifestly incapable of dealing with the resulting problems, as in Towyn?

Mr. Grist: I should have thought that any builder who sought to build and to cover his building by a 10-year building guarantee in such circumstances would be most unwise. In any event, planning permission would probably not be given.

Dr. Kim Howells: Is the Minister aware that there are housing estates under construction now where builders sell the property on the basis that around the site there is a flood control zone? In other words, the dykes are part of the housing construction programme. Many people, including those in Tai Cymru, are extremely worried about that.

Mr. Grist: In those circumstances I, too, would be worried if I were a purchaser and I would seek to look into the circumstances in which my house was built. I imagine that the search would give some protection. If the hon. Gentleman would like to give me details, I will look into them.

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: Does the Minister accept that the amount of money allocated to Tai Cymru in respect of low-cost housing this year is completely inadequate to meet the needs of the homeless in Wales? The hon. Member for Brecon and Radnor (Mr. Livsey) said that in his constituency he would need 1,000 homes to be built to meet the problems. I am sure that all hon. Members agree with those sentiments. Will the Minister examine schemes in England where building societies find ways to assist? For example, the Woolwich building society has set up an offshoot called Woolwich Homes. Will the Minister consider ways in which building societies in Wales could also assist in such projects?

Mr. Grist: Most certainly. I was pleased to open a housing development of sheltered houses and flats for students in my constituency at the weekend. For the first time ever, it involved one of the building societies—I cannot remember which—as well as the university and other sources of funding. I agree with the hon. Gentleman, but neither he nor anyone else should run away with the idea that there is a quick and easy answer to what is a social problem of serious dimensions.

Medical Treatment (North Wales)

9. **Mr. Jack:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what financial contribution of capital and revenue his Department makes to meet the expenses of those living in north Wales who receive medical treatment in facilities operated by the North West regional health authority.

Mr. Grist: The authority's allocations from the Department of Health include provision for the costs of treating patients from outside the region, including north Wales. However, in cases where contracts for specific service developments for north Wales patients have been agreed, the costs have been met by Welsh health

authorities from funds provided by the Welsh Office. In 1988-89, the cost of treatment provided to Welsh patients in the north-west region under such arrangements amounted to some £26,300.

Mr. Jack: I am grateful for the detail of my hon. Friend's answer. Can he confirm that under the new arrangements in the Bill now proceeding through Parliament, cross-boundary flows will attach themselves to Welsh patients seeking treatment in Merseyside and the north-west? Will he confirm that that money will represent extra money for the north Wales health services, that those treatments will be properly funded and that there will be no resistance to such treatment because people will know that under the new arrangements they will be paid for?

Mr. Grist: My hon. Friend is absolutely right about the purpose of the Bill now going through the other place. I remind him that I said that the north-west region and other English regions are funded for the Welsh patients that they take and we would therefore expect some of that money to come back to Wales so that if Welsh patients choose in future to go to England they would have the money to take back with them because the funding for such treatment would be on their heads rather than funded directly by the Department of Health.

Housing

10. **Mr. Coleman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he intends making extra money available to local authorities in Wales to build houses for rent in the public sector.

Mr. Grist: My right hon. Friend has already announced a 15 per cent. increase in level of resources available for local authorities to spend on housing next year. It is for the authorities to determine how best to use these resources, taking account of local need and seeking to achieve value for money.

Mr. Coleman: Neither the Secretary of State nor his successor has any experience of conducting constituency surgeries in Wales, but that is not true of the Under-Secretary of State. From his own experience, he must surely be aware of the dreadful situation faced by many of our people in Wales. Is he also aware that high interest rates and the virtual cessation of council house building in the lifetime of this Government have been the means of ensuring that many people who come to our surgeries requiring houses do not get that chance? Will he let the experience that he has gained from his surgeries guide him in making more money available than the measly amount that he has just announced?

Mr. Grist: The hon. Gentleman must have missed the point that I made a moment ago when I said that at the weekend I had the great pleasure of attending and opening a major development in my constituency. Such developments will occur again and again in the future. The hon. Member may like to reflect that in the final two years of the Labour Government his local authority had 93 council house starts and 280 private starts. In the past two years, however, some 111 council houses and 403 private houses have been started in Neath.

Waste Tips (Mid-Glamorgan)

11. **Dr. Kim Howells:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he has met with officers of Mid Glamorgan county council and the Welsh Development Agency to discuss the waste tip removal programme in that county.

Mr. Grist: No, Sir. I am satisfied that there is close liaison between the statutory authorities to determine the most appropriate programme for the reclamation of waste tips in the county.

Dr. Howells: Is the Minister aware that a great many people in Mid Glamorgan are concerned and frightened about the existence of colliery tips and the threat that they pose to their homes? Is he also aware that those people know that Mid Glamorgan county council is not a rich council and is frequently strapped for cash when it comes to major projects such as the removal of tips? When can we expect a public statement about the plans and funding for the removal of the Cilfynydd tip?

Mr. Grist: The hon. Gentleman will know that it is a matter not of removal but of reclamation. The Welsh Development Agency will fund up to 100 per cent. of the cost of reclaiming tips. The hon. Gentleman may like to reassure his constituents that Cilfynydd tip is tested every day—further tests were conducted at the weekend—and his constituents should rest assured that, for the time being, and unless told otherwise, they should be safe.

Electoral Boundaries

12. **Mr. Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether he has any plans for proposing new parliamentary or local government boundaries in Wales.

Mr. Grist: Parliamentary and local government electoral boundaries are matters for my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department. My right hon. and learned Friend has no plans to change local government administrative boundaries in Wales other than minor adjustments which might be recommended from time to time by the Local Government Boundary Commission for Wales.

Mr. Hughes: I expected that answer. In the light of the recent announcement by the Secretary of State for Wales, perhaps the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State would consider making representations to the Welsh Office. I say that as an expatriate Welshman. Given that the Welsh Office regularly has so much difficulty finding a Secretary of State within the boundaries of Wales, would not it be a good idea to continue the procedure adopted about 20 years ago when Gwent was formally added to Wales? Could not the boundaries be extended a little further, as that is the only way to ensure the probability, or even the possibility, of any future Tory Minister at the Welsh Office coming from a Welsh constituency?

Mr. Grist: The hon. Gentleman is tempting us to spread Welsh Tory wings all the way into central London which was last attempted, with some success, towards the end of the 15th century.

Local Government Finance

13. **Mr. Gwilym Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what action he intends to take against excessive community charges being imposed by Welsh local councils.

Mr. Peter Walker: I am considering what, if any, action to take in the light of the information that I have received on the expenditure plans of Welsh local authorities for 1990-91.

Mr. Jones: My right hon. Friend will be remembered for many splendid achievements dring his time at the Welsh Office. I invite him to be remembered for one more thing—capping Cardiff and South Glamorgan councils. In that way he will be remembered by my constituents as the Secretary of State who stepped in and defended the people of Cardiff against the vicious tax being levied by Cardiff and South Glamorgan councils.

Mr. Walker: Decisions on the future will have to wait until all the final information is received. We do not yet have it all, although we asked for it by this date. I understand my hon. Friend's concern, when expenditure in Cardiff is up 35 per cent. on 1989-90 and 60 per cent. on 1988-89.

Mr. Ron Davies: Does the Secretary of State recall that in July 1988 he made an attack on my constituency Labour party for daring to suggest that the Government's then estimates of the likely poll tax were less than accurate? Now that we have had the figures and those prophesies have come true, my constituents face poll tax bills 30 per cent. higher than the Government's estimates. Before the Secretary of State finally retires from his job will he offer two apologies: first, to the constituency Labour party in Caerphilly for having maligned it and, secondly, to the people of Wales for not having the courage to stand up in Cabinet and oppose a tax which few people supported at the time and nobody supports now?

Mr. Walker: Every time the hon. Gentleman speaks, whether in the Welsh Grand Committee or here, it must give great confidence to the present Labour Chief Whip that he will retain his position. I should be happy to release to the press today the scandalous leaflet issued by the hon. Gentleman and his party, which gave the impression that there would be no rebates, and that the poor, elderly and those on low incomes would be badly hit. In fact, in contrast to that pamphlet, 300,000 people in Wales, many of them in the hon. Gentleman's constituency, who were receiving 100 per cent. rate rebates, will be better off financially under the new system.

Mr. Raffan: Does my right hon. Friend agree that if Clwyd county council had not irresponsibly increased its spending by nearly £15 million and broken its pledge to cut senior and middle management by 10 per cent., the county community charge in Clwyd could have been at least £40 less than the £223 at which it was set?

Mr. Walker: It is important that when examining their community charge, people should compare the current year's expenditure with that of the previous year to see by how much local authorities increased spending over the rate of inflation. That would be an interesting study. Plenty of local authorities are good examples, and others are bad examples. I hope that the electors will examine the expenditure carefully.

Mr. Murphy: Will the Secretary of State give us a straight answer about the poll tax-capping of Welsh local authorities which he threatened a few months ago in the Chamber? Does he intend to poll tax-cap any Welsh council? Does he realise that that is a hollow gesture and that if the local authorities involved are poll tax-capped they will be thrown into administrative and financial chaos?

Mr. Walker: Before increasing its expenditure by 35 per cent., every local authority should consider the implications. It is for the electors to consider the position. The reality is that there are big variations between Labour and Conservative authorities, and between the actions of various Welsh local authorities. I shall examine what must be done when all the final figures have been obtained.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: Will my right hon. Friend commiserate with the electors of South Pembrokeshire? They have the lowest community charge in Wales, set by their own district council, but Dyfed county council, on which Labour is the largest party, twice increased its community charge after the chairman of the finance committee decided that enough was enough? Does the Secretary of State think that it is time the Labour authorities got their act together and put their own house in order?

Mr. Walker: There is a remarkable comparison between Cardiff city council, at £78, and South Pembrokeshire, at £7. It is important that all who pay the community charge carefully examine where the increased expenditure has been made.

Welsh District Councils

14. **Mr. Murphy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he last met Welsh district councils; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. Peter Walker: I met representatives of the Welsh Counties Committee and the Council of Welsh Districts on 30 January to discuss local authority budgets for 1990-91. I also met the Gwent district councils association on 13 March 1990, when we discussed a variety of issues.

Mr. Murphy: When the Secretary of State met the Welsh district councils, I am sure that they discussed the problems of roads in Wales, 90 per cent. of which are controlled by local authorities. Does he accept that many of them are in a deplorable condition as a direct result of underfunding by the Government over the past 10 years? Does he accept that his figures show that those roads need £96 million spent on them to bring them up to scratch?

Mr. Walker: We have a very good record; we have spent more than £400 million, and we shall continue that good record.

Mr. Flynn: When the Secretary of State met Gwent district councils, did he discuss the poll conducted by the *South Wales Argus* which, having presented the Secretary of State's case on the poll tax in Newport, and the case of the local authority, invited its readers to vote on whom they believed—the Secretary of State or the leader of

Newport borough council? The result of the poll was three to one in favour of the local council. Will the Secretary of State, as a "here today, where tomorrow" politician, withdraw the threat to a fine local authority which enjoys increasing support, year by year, from the people of Newport?

Mr. Walker: I am pleased to say that I had good talks with the Gwent district councils association, which considered them constructive and helpful—unlike most of the hon. Gentleman's comments.

When the final figures are in and they can analyse how much expenditure has been increased, I should be delighted for the electors of Newport to decide whether they like paying the proposed extra amount. They should also reflect that as a result of the negotiations conducted for Wales the community charge in Scotland will be 32 per cent. higher, and in England 57 per cent. higher, than in Wales.

Local Government Finance

15. **Mr. Alex Carlile:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on the levels of community charge declared by local authorities in Wales.

Mr. Peter Walker: It is a matter of concern that some local authorities have chosen to set budgets and hence community charges well above the levels implied by the generous settlement for 1990-91 which I announced to the House in December 1989. Their electorates will judge whether their explanations for any increases which are higher than necessary are acceptable.

Mr. Carlile: Will the right hon. Gentleman join me in congratulating the politically independent Montgomeryshire district council on setting a very low community charge? But what is his comment on the fact that even in Montgomeryshire most people appear to be worse off than they were under the rates, particularly pensioners who will suffer financially and who are confused by the bureaucracy introduced by the charge?

Mr. Walker: Although there may be some initial difficulties, pensioners in receipt only of their pensions and income supplements will, without exception, be better off than they were under the rating system. There are 300,000 such people in Wales, and they will benefit because the total amount of rebate and allowances will be more than the total poll charge.

Secondly, looking at the overall figures in Wales we should recognise that if these increases in expenditure had taken place under the old rating system, domestic rates would be rising by 30 per cent. this year.

Mr. Morgan: As this may be the right hon. Gentleman's last appearance at the Dispatch Box as Secretary of State for Wales, and as he has walked out on Slater Walker and is now walking out on Thatcher Walker—I do not know what he has against the roofing trade—can he say whether the last thing that he will do as Secretary of State will be to rate-cap authorities such as Cardiff or South Glamorgan which, after all, have set a poll tax exactly in line with what the city treasurer of Cardiff city council predicted last year? He is not a political official but a neutral financial official who made his calculations as soon as he was told what the Government grant would be.

Mr. Walker: It is interesting that a Labour county council and district council made a prediction before they knew any of the figures, including the grants to be provided by Government. They came up with a figure and stuck to it, and I think that there is a great deal of party politics involved.

Labour Statistics

16. **Mr. Roy Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what are the latest unadjusted figures for unemployment in *(a)* Newport, *(b)* Gwent and *(c)* Wales; and if he will give the equivalent figures for 1979 on the next nearly comparable basis.

Mr. Peter Walker: On 8 February 1990 the number of unemployment claimants in Newport district, Gwent and Wales were 4,673, 13,928 and 88,851 respectively. Unadjusted figures for 1979 are not available on a basis that enables a valid comparison to be made. I know that the hon. Gentleman will rejoice that there are now more people at work in Wales than ever before.

Mr. Hughes: Will the Secretary of State meet the miners' representatives when they visit the House this afternoon? Will he remember that there is not a single pit left in Gwent and only a handful left in Wales? Where are the new jobs to come from, bearing in mind the dramatic drop in manufacturing output and the fact that Germany and Japan are concentrating on investment in eastern Europe?

Mr. Walker: As the hon. Gentleman knows, I have pleaded with him throughout my time as Secretary of State never to withdraw this question from the Order Paper. I hope that he will continue to table it. Perhaps he will reflect on the fact that following a decade in which 55,000 jobs were lost in coal and steel, we now have more people in work in Wales than at any time. Perhaps he will also reflect on the fact that in the last two years for which figures are available the number of self-employed people in Britain went up by 8·5 per cent. In Scotland it went up by 9·8 per cent. and in Wales by 28·6 per cent.

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

Shop Properties (Barnet)

24. **Mr. John Marshall:** To ask the right hon. Member for Selby, representing the Church Commissioners, what is the income of the Church Commissioners arising from rents on shop properties in the London borough of Barnet.

Mr. Michael Alison (Second Church Estates Commissioner, Representing the Church Commissioners): The answer is £830,000 per annum.

Mr. Marshall: How much of that is accounted for by rents on shops in Golders Green road? Will my right hon. Friend assure me that in future rent reviews the Church Commissioners will take account of the fact that some shops have already had to close because of the level of rents in that street?

Mr. Alison: I cannot without notice give a precise breakdown, in relation to Golders Green road, of the global figure. However, I can tell my hon. Friend that whenever the 47 or so shops which the Church

Commissioners own in Golders Green road have a change in their rental liability due to the falling in of the lease, or because the lease provides for a break clause, in each case there will be an opportunity for arbitration, either through the High Court or through an independent arbitration service, to secure a fair rent when the rents are renewed.

Mr. Pike: Do not the rents in Barnet demonstrate the problems that the Church would have if it had to depend on its present membership? Does not that highlight the dangers that would arise if there was a move towards the disestablishment of the Church of England?

Mr. Alison: As the hon. Gentleman suggests, disestablishment would not be advantageous to the Church of England. One reason would be the vesting in the Church Commissioners of very large historical assets which have descended, as it were, into the lap of the Church Commissioners. The question of how those assets would be redistributed and subsequently managed in the event of disestablishment is perplexing and difficult.

Agricultural Land

25. **Mr. Teddy Taylor:** To ask the right hon. Member for Selby, representing the Church Commissioners, what is the total of agricultural land owned by the Church Commissioners.

Mr. Alison: The answer is 157,000 acres.

Mr. Taylor: Has my right hon. Friend noticed the extraordinary realisation last year of several million pounds worth of agricultural land? This is a continual trend, with the Church of England having reduced the proportion of its assets held in agricultural land from 22 per cent. to 11 per cent. in the short period of five years. There has been a transfer of that cash to commercial premises because the trustees consider that there will be a much better prospect of getting more income therefrom. Do the Church Commissioners, who perhaps are more optimistic than some of our citizens, know something that we do not?

Mr. Alison: Our policy has been based on experience rather than on prophetic insight. The primary duty of the Commissioners is to assist with the stipends, housing, and pensions of serving and retired clergy. Until the early 1980s, farm rents had been improving steadily and were one of the few sources of investment income that kept pace with inflation. The problems of overproduction in the European Community, of which my hon. Friend is only too well aware, have reduced farm profit margins and adversely affected rents and capital values. Therefore, for the sake of serving clergy, their families and their housing needs, there has been a tendency to move out of farms into commercial property. But we remain the second largest landowner in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Frank Field: What was the economic sense of embarking on a policy of selling land once the market price began to collapse?

Mr. Alison: The Church Commissioners have to try to strike a balance between their forecast of what will happen and market movements in any given circumstances. I am afraid that often we follow the market and sell in a descending market, but that is because we cannot lay claim to exceptional prophetic insight into what will happen.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

Members (Support Staff)

28. **Mr. Allen:** To ask the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed, representing the House of Commons Commission, if he will bring forward proposals to develop the numbers employed by the Commission to improve staff support to individual hon. Members.

Mr. A. J. Beith (On behalf of the House of Commons Commission): The Commission's responsibility is to ensure that there are adequate numbers of staff of the right experience, qualification and expertise to provide support for the House as a whole. The Commission's success in carrying out this responsibility is evident from the high quality of service provided to Members.

Mr. Allen: Would not hon. Members be assisted to become full-time Members if those who wished it could employ more staff, rather than being limited to the numbers that they can employ on the current office allowance? What is the hon. Gentleman's opinion on that? Can he suggest a way forward so that hon. Members who wish to do a full-time professional job can be enabled to do so?

Mr. Beith: The arrangements for hon. Members to employ staff working individually for them are made under the office costs allowance, which is decided on a resolution of the House. The Commission's staff serve the House as a whole and it would require a decision of the House and some debate in the Chamber before that practice was changed.

Staff (Wages and Conditions)

29. **Mr. Skinner:** To ask the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed, representing the House of Commons Commission, if he has any proposals to seek to improve the wages and conditions of staff employed at the House of Commons; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Beith: The House of Commons Commission has a statutory duty to ensure that the pay and other conditions of service of the staff of the House Departments are kept broadly in line with those in the Civil Service. Within this constraint, the Commission seeks to exercise its responsibilities towards staff according to the best public service practices. Pay is reviewed at the same time as, and in line with, that in the Civil Service, the grading of staff is periodically reviewed with the advice of the staff inspector, and other conditions of service are reviewed as necessary in consultation with the relevant trade unions. The Commission has no responsibility for staff employed by Government agencies or Departments, or by Members themselves.

Mr. Skinner: Is the hon. Gentleman aware that, if the young people employed in the canteens and the Tea Room do not clock on, are 15 minutes late, or do not clock off, they are liable to have, and have had, £6 stopped from their pay? That is the equivalent of two hours' pay. Is not it ironic that whereas people who are running their legs off to look after Members of Parliament and provide them with their cafeteria services are having their money stopped because they do not clock on or off promptly—they do not get any more money if they come in early—

Members of Parliament have a pairing, flexitime system which means that only 50 or 60 of them need turn up for work and their money is in the tin? If pairing is all right for Members of Parliament, why is it not all right for the staff?

Mr. Beith: An excellent service, through to the late hours of the night, is provided by the staff in the Tea Room and other Refreshment Department outlets. I shall look into the specific issue that the hon. Gentleman raised.

Sir Alan Glyn: Will the hon. Gentleman reflect on facilities for the staff, some of whom work here for long periods but who have nowhere to lie down and rest in between those periods?

Mr. Beith: The Commission and the House authorities are aware of that point and have sought to make progress on it. Many constraints are imposed by this building, some of which we hope will be relieved by the opening of the new parliamentary building across the street.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Why is it that the Refreshment Department has a balance of nearly £2 million yet staff in the dining rooms throughout the House complain that they are underpaid, despite the assurances given by the hon. Gentleman? Is not it now necessary for a review of all salary and wage levels in the Department and for some action to be taken? It is improper for Members of Parliament, in effect, to feed on the back of cheap labour in the House.

Mr. Beith: I do not think that it can be contended that the House employs cheap labour by the standards of the catering industry in general. The arrangements to keep House staff pay in line with Civil Service pay would, if broken, give rise to considerable argument, not least from the trade unions. The Commission keeps these matters under constant and careful review.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Westminster Hall

30. **Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Lord President of the Council if he will ask the Lord Chamberlain to join him in a feasibility study of possible extended use of Westminster Hall.

The Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons (Sir Geoffrey Howe): Although I am not necessarily opposed to such a study, it would be inappropriate for it to be commissioned in the manner suggested.

As I advised the hon. Member on 5 February, if he has a specific proposal he should in the first instance raise it with the Accommodation and Administration Sub-Committee.

Mr. Banks: I have many proposals, and so has every other Member of this place. The right hon. and learned Gentleman knows that in earlier centuries Westminster Hall was always humming with life. It was one of the great public centres of London. It is a criminal waste of space to have the Hall so empty. Why cannot the right hon. and learned Gentleman produce some ideas? We could use the place for shops, restaurants or exhibitions. It could be used for many different things. Why does not the right hon. and learned Gentleman use his imagination? If he let it run riot for a few seconds, he would come up with many exciting ideas for the use of Westminster Hall.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for allowing his imagination to run riot. He knows that times have changed since the law courts moved from Westminster Hall to the Strand and since the other functions that used to take place in the Hall ceased. It is now used for a limited number of ceremonial occasions. At least one of my predecessors—my right hon. Friend the Member for Shropshire, North (Mr. Biffen)—said that part of the attraction of Westminster Hall lies in the fact that it is little used and little congested, which makes some impression on visitors who first arrive here.

Mr. Conway: Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that coach parties, especially those travelling a long distance from Shrewsbury, for example, have to start early in the morning and, when they arrive at the House, must queue at the House of Lords entrance, often in poor weather? Is it a demoralising start to a visit to the Palace of Westminster. I hope that my right hon. and learned Friend will take heed of calls from hon. Members on both sides of the House to find a better way to enable constituents especially to enter the Palace than through the Norman Porch entrance.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I am aware of the difficulty to which my hon. Friend draws attention. As I have told the House several times, arrangements have been agreed to improve the facilities at the Norman Porch entrance and to accelerate access to the line of route for visitors. There is a limit to the amount of additional space that can be made available at this end of the Palace.

Dr. Cunningham: There is no better example of the problem than today, when there is a long queue of people standing in heavy rain waiting to gain access to the House. Those people could easily be accommodated, at least temporarily, in Westminster Hall. It is medieval to expect people coming from Scotland, Wales or the north of England to stand in the rain to gain access to the mother of Parliaments. The mother of Parliament's skirts are showing a little and she needs sprucing up.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The House has sympathy with the hon. Gentleman's point. One reason why specific arrangements have been proposed for access through the Sovereign's entrance, which will be implemented within a reasonably short time, is that they will make a significant improvement to the facilities, especially for people who have to wait in bad weather.

Members' Changing Room

31. **Mr. Butler:** To ask the Lord President of the Council if he has any plans to improve facilities in the Members' changing room.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I understand that certain improvements will be made as a consequence of a request made by my hon. Friend.

Mr. Butler: Does my right hon. and learned Friend accept that the area is especially seedy? There is even a machine that looks as though it had come out of Frankenstein's laboratory.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I came to a not dissimilar conclusion when I visited that part of the premises the other day. I told my hon. Friend that it struck me as not so much seedy as quaint. It looked like part of a set left over from the Ealing Studios. It was surprising to learn that the area had been refurbished and redecorated—although before my time—as recently as 1986. However, I will arrange for the matter to be looked at again.

Mr. Morgan: Will the Lord President examine the possibility of making better use of the main central area of the changing room, which is not used for changing or anything else, but is simply occupied by a large round table of no value at all? Could that be replaced by a ping-pong table, which would at least enable people to have some activity to keep themselves mentally and physically alert during late-night sittings?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I hope that the hon. Gentleman does not need entertainment of that type to keep him alert during late-night sittings. I am not convinced that the space is large enough for a ping-pong table. However, I agree that the use of corners of accommodation in this intensely crowded building could be re-examined during the space audit now taking place.

Visitors

32. **Mr. Skinner:** To ask the Lord President of the Council what improvements he intends to make for visitors to the House; and if he will make a statement.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: In respect of the line of route, there is little that I can add to my reply to the hon. Gentleman on 11 December last and to other replies and statements I have made since. The Catering Sub-Committee has, however, recently put forward proposals for providing refreshments on a limited scale to visitors to Parliament. They will have to be studied in terms of their feasibility.

Mr. Skinner: Is the Leader of the House aware that every weekday more than 2,000 visitors come to the House to visit the line of route? Many must wait outside in the pouring rain. Usually several hundred people come to the Lobbies after Parliament has started at 2.30 pm. Several hundred miners are there today. Often pensioners must stand outside. Surely it is time that Westminster Hall, or some other facility, was used to provide shelter from the rain. If the Leader of the House is not happy with Westminster Hall being used for that purpose, I will give him another idea—abolish the House of Lords and use that.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: That may be one of the very things that visitors to the Palace come to see. Aside from the improvements in prospect for the Sovereign's entrance, we have accelerated the arrangements for admission by duplicating the screening equipment through the use of hand-held screening devices. Clearly, we will examine whether we can do any more.

Mr. William Powell: Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that one of the minor facilities appreciated by visitors are the plaques embedded in the floor of Westminster Hall, which celebrate important parts of our national history? Will he take this opportunity to ensure that a plaque is set into the floor to commemorate the great Anglican divine, Dr. Sacheverell, whose sermon "A church in danger" led to a sensational trial in the reign of Queen Anne? Would not it be appropriate for that to be done now, as the Church of England is in as much danger now as it was then?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I fancy that if such long and sophisticated analyses of history were each to be commemorated by plaques of that type, there would be very little room left on the floor.

Oral Questions

33. **Mr. Allen:** To ask the Lord President of the Council if he will bring forward proposals to reduce the maximum period of notice given to Ministers for oral questions from 14 days to two days.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I have at present no plans to do so, and I would not consider such a proposal without first having had the views of the Procedure Committee, of which the hon. Gentleman is a distinguished member.

Mr. Allen: Did that reply take the right hon. and learned Gentleman 14 days to think up? Do similar replies take his ministerial colleagues 14 days to think up? Is not it time that we reduced the number of days' notice that Ministers have on questions to something a little more reasonable, such as two or three days?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The reason for questions is normally the elicitation of information from Ministers, so it makes sense that there should be a reasonable time for the preparation of answers. Aside from that, the hon. Gentleman, as a member of the Procedure Committee, knows perfectly well that I could not bring forward a change in this respect without such change having been considered by that Committee. I advise the hon. Gentleman strongly to ensure that his bright ideas are processed by the Committee. I do not think that he advances them by raising them again and again on the Floor of the House.

Local Government Finance

35. **Mr. Jack:** To ask the Lord President of the Council how many debates there have been since 1 January on local government finance.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: There was a debate in January, and there have been two Adjournment debates on specific aspects of local government finance.

Mr. Jack: Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that more debates on local government finance would have provided us with an opportunity to tell the people of Lancashire that their community charge could have been £60 lower had the Conservative group's views been put forward? We could have rebutted the allegation that the Government have not given extra money to Lancashire, and we could have told people about the excellent rebate and transitional protection facilities.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I agree with my hon. Friend, and I congratulate him on the way in which he has been able to get his point across, notwithstanding the absence of debates. Scarcely a day passes—certainly not a day on which I am answering questions—without his making the point very forcefully. I underline the point.

BILL PRESENTED

RADIOACTIVE MATERIAL (ROAD TRANSPORT)

Mr. Neville Trotter, supported by Mr. Chris Butler, Mr. Sydney Bidwell and Mr. Ted Garrett, presented a Bill to make new provision with respect to the transport of radioactive material by road; to repeal section 5(2) of the Radioactive Substances Act 1948; and for connected purposes: And the same was read the first time; and ordered to be read a Second time tomorrow and to be printed. [Bill 103.]

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS, &c.

Mr. Speaker: With the leave of the House, I shall put together the two motions relating to statutory instruments.

Ordered,

That the draft Gas and Electricity Industries (Rateable Values) (Amendment) Order 1990 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.

That the draft Coal Industry (Borrowing Powers) Order 1990 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.—*[Mr. John M. Taylor.]*

ROYAL ASSENT

Mr. Speaker: I have to notify the House, in accordance with the Royal Assent Act 1967, that the Queen has signified Her Royal Assent to the following Acts:

Capital Allowances Act 1990

Civil Aviation Authority (Borrowing Powers) Act 1990

Coal Industry Act 1990

British Railways Order Confirmation Act 1990

Orders of the Day

War Crimes Bill

Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. Speaker: I have to announce to the House that I have not selected the reasoned amendment on the Order Paper.

3.32 pm

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. David Waddington): In view of the debate on 12 December last year, I am sure the House would not wish me to go through the sequence of events which has led to the introduction of this Bill. But let me just remind the House of the central finding of the war crimes inquiry. This was that, on the basis of the inquiries it had undertaken, there was reason to suspect that, among the vast majority of worthy and entirely blameless individuals from eastern Europe who settled in this country at the end of the second world war, there were some who had committed the most dreadful of crimes but who, on the basis of the law as it stands today, cannot be called to account for their actions.

The inquiry therefore recommended that the law be changed to enable the courts in this country to try offences of murder and manslaughter committed as war crimes in Germany or German-occupied territory during the period of the second world war.

Dr. Alan Glyn (Windsor and Maidenhead): The Home Secretary has used the words "Germany or German-occupied territory". Does he agree that there is room here for some anxiety? He will remember that, during the war, occupying powers changed. For instance, at a particular time, certain territory was occupied by the Soviets. It may have been German territory, but, as it was occupied by the Soviets, technically it is completely outside the jurisdiction of this Bill.

Mr. Waddington: My hon. Friend and all other hon. Members will have an opportunity to debate that matter at length. The point is that we are implementing the recommendations of the Hetherington-Chalmers report. I do not think that many hon. Members would wish us to take any more jurisdiction than is necessary to meet the mischief that is identified in the report. That is the short answer to my hon. Friend's point.

The inquiry made a number of related evidential and procedural recommendations concerning the holding of trials. During the debate that took place here on 12 December, a wide range of views were expressed by right hon. and hon. Members, who recognised well that the decisions we are being asked to take not only touch on the liberty and rights of people who fled to Britain to escape tyranny and enjoy liberty, but raise important wider issues. Some asked whether it was really desirable for us now to try to examine events which took place so long ago. Others stressed the impossibility of our ever forgetting the horrors of the war, and therefore of our being able to re-bury the evidence of atrocities which we are told has now come to light. But at the end of the day the House—after, I know much conscience searching—gave a decisive vote in favour of legislation.

Since then, the Government have been considering carefully what form such legislation might take. In particular, we have looked closely at the evidential and procedural recommendations made by the inquiry, to decide to what extent they should be implemented.

We recognised that among those—both in this House and in another place—who disagreed with the inquiry's conclusions, there were many who did so out of the conviction that implementing those conclusions would involve establishing a special procedural or evidential regime for war crimes trials alone, and felt that it would be wrong to do so. Indeed, among those who spoke in favour of the principle of extending the jurisdiction of the courts, there were some who at the same time expressed strong doubts about the case for implementing the inquiry's other recommendations. The right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) was among their number.

In those circumstances, I am glad to tell the House that, as I see it, only one of the inquiry's ancillary recommendations would, if accepted, break new ground —that is, the suggestion that documentary evidence from foreign archives should be admissible in evidence if the source of the evidence was authenticated by the archivist.

To implement that recommendation would certainly involve new legislation, and I do not think it would be right, for war crimes cases alone, to take that step—and we do not propose to do so. All the other proposals of the inquiry either require no change to our existing law or are consistent with steps that Parliament has already approved in other contexts. It may be helpful if I describe them in turn.

First, the inquiry recommended that witnesses in war crimes trials—who may be elderly people living abroad, possibly in indifferent health—should be able to give evidence through a live television link. Parliament has already accepted that principle. Legislative provision for live television evidence already exists for trials for other offences in England and Wales under the terms of section 32 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988. That provision was included in the 1988 Act principally for use in serious and complex fraud trials, but it would not be sensible to limit its application to that area alone and to exclude its application in the most serious of all types of case—those involving the taking of human life. We therefore intend to bring section 32 into effect in respect of murder, manslaughter, and serious and complex fraud. But section 32 does not apply to Scotland, and to extend the power to Scotland an amendment has been tabled in another place to the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill.

Secondly, the inquiry recommended that it should be made possible for evidence to be used in war crimes trials to be taken on commission in the country where witnesses are living, and that video recordings of evidence taken in that way, or in response to a letter of request issued by a court in this country to an overseas authority, should be admissible. There is, however, no need to legislate to achieve that effect. As the House will be aware, section 29 of the Criminal Justice Act 1998 provides for the issue of letters of request direct to an authority exercising jurisdiction outside the United Kingdom.

Mr. Patrick Cormack (Staffordshire, South): Is my right hon. and learned Friend saying that aged people in countries far removed from the United Kingdom can be

[Mr. Patrick Cormack]

interviewed on video, and that those videos can be brought back to this country; that such witnesses need not go anywhere near the court of law that is to deliberate on the matter; and that such evidence will be entirely admissible?

Mr. Waddington: It is certainly the case that we took powers in the 1988 Act for the issue of letters of request, and there is no doubt that under our existing law it is possible, as a result of the issue of such letters of request, for evidence to be taken abroad, subject to numerous safeguards for the accused, such as the ability to cross-examine the witness. That is the present law and we are breaking no new ground by taking the view that it should be extended to war crimes trials.

Mr. Roy Hattersley (Birmingham, Sparkbrook): Can the right hon. and learned Gentleman confirm—as it is in his departmental handout—that he is hoping to break new ground for Scotland? All that he has just said applies to England and Wales, and as I understand it, the law is being amended for this specific purpose to cover Scotland.

Mr. Waddington: I started off by dealing with section 32 of the 1988 Act. Undoubtedly it is the case that, as far as live television is concerned, section 32 does not apply to Scotland. We have already tabled an amendment in another place to the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill to bring Scottish law in line with our own.

I was careful in the use of my words earlier on. I did not suggest that some legislative changes were not to be made. I made it plain that in no way are we breaking with precedent or breaking new ground. All the powers certainly already exist in one of the jurisdictions.

Mr. Peter Archer (Warley, West): Can the right hon. and learned Gentleman say whether the proposed amendments to the law for Scotland will be confined only to war crimes?

Mr. Waddington: No, I do not think that for one moment. The amendment to the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill will apply to serious and complex fraud trials. We are concerned to bring the law in Scotland in line with the law which already exists in England.

At that stage, I was dealing with the question of live television evidence by video link. I then went on to deal with the separate situation in which evidence can be taken abroad, as a result of letters of request, and that evidence can be admissible in a court of law in this country. That power already exists under section 29 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988.

The statutory provision is now being broadened in one small respect—the context of general mutual assistance between jurisdictions, in clause 3 of the Criminal Justice (International Co-operation) Bill, which is now before Parliament. My understanding is that the broadening there merely amounts to the possibility of letters of request being issued before proceedings are commenced, at the investigatory stage, rather than after an arrest has been made.

Mr. Ivor Stanbrook (Orpington): Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that the procedures that he has mentioned, which already apply to some extent in this country, will not provide an opportunity for the defendant to cross-examine any witnesses in Russia, because the defendant will not be allowed to go there?

Mr. Waddington: If one considers the safeguards in the 1988 Act—in sections 23 to 28—one sees that there is not the slightest doubt that the evidence would not be admitted if there was no opportunity for the representatives of the accused person to cross-examine the witness in question.

No further action is needed on video recordings as far as England and Wales are concerned, because part II of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 provides for the admissibility of documentary evidence, which for that purpose can include video recorded evidence subject to specific safeguards. That power arises because of paragraph 5 of the second schedule to the 1988 Act, coupled with section 10 of the Civil Evidence Act 1968. In this area, too, there is therefore no question of inviting Parliament to sanction a new departure, purely with war crimes trials in mind.

As to Scotland, it is unclear whether documentary evidence of this kind can be admitted in Scottish law. There are two views on it. It is obviously right that this lack of clarity should be removed. That will again be achieved by amendments to the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill.

Third, the inquiry noted that section 23 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 already provides that a statement made by a person in a document shall be admissible as evidence of any fact of which direct oral evidence would be admissible if the person were dead. However, the Act goes on to say that such a statement is not to be admitted in evidence if the court is of the opinion that in the interests of justice it ought not to be.

The court is required in reaching a conclusion to have regard, inter alia, to any risk, having regard in particular to whether it is likely to be possible to controvert the statement that its admission or exclusion will result in unfairness to the accused. The inquiry concluded that, in view of those strict criteria, it was very questionable whether a court would rule the statement of a dead witness of sufficient substance to be admissible. However, in spite of that, it did not make any recommendation for amending legislation; nor do we propose any such legislation to the House.

Sir John Stokes (Halesowen and Stourbridge): I am not a lawyer, so if I am mistaken I am sure that my right hon. and learned Friend will tell me, but he seems to imply that this special Bill means that there will be no change whatsoever in English law and in existing procedures. If so, why is he going forward with the Bill?

Mr. Waddington: My hon. Friend will recognise that the key proposal in the Bill is that jurisdiction should be conferred on the British courts to try here people who are alleged to have committed war crimes during the 1939-45 war who would not otherwise be triable because they were not British citizens at the time that the alleged offences were committed. I am dealing with consequential proposals made by the Hetherington-Chalmers committee, which a number of my hon. Friends and Opposition Members were worried about when the matter last came before the House. I am merely, I hope, assuaging the fears of some right hon. and hon. Members by pointing out how minimal need be the consequential changes.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett (Pembroke): Does my right hon. and learned Friend not recognise that many Conservative Members are concerned that the law is being changed in order to bring to trial a small number of people and that juries are bound to infer that, if the law of the land is being changed by Parliament, these men must be guilty?

Mr. Waddington: I have far more respect for the good sense of British jurors than that.

Mr. Ian Bruce (Dorset, South): I am grateful to my right hon. and learned Friend for the clear way in which he is setting out the consequential matters that would arise within the law if we were to bring a certain group of people within the jurisdiction of the British courts. Why did the Government decide not to include all war crimes, including those that took place within Japanese territory? If we are considering crimes that were committed in previous wars, why do we not take powers so that we shall be able to take action against war criminals in any future wars who come to this country to settle?

Mr. Waddington: On my hon. Friend's last point, we do not have to take powers. We have those powers as a result of an Act that was passed by the House in 1957. The answer to my hon. Friend's first point is that I know of no allegation that there is anybody resident in this country who during the 1939-45 war was guilty of a war crime in the war against Japan.

Today we are discussing whether we should implement proposals made by the Hetherington-Chalmers inquiry as a result of evidence which they discovered and what was put before them which tends to show that there are now people in Britain who were not blameless during the 1939-45 war, who were guilty of the most terrible war crimes and who were not British citizens at the time those crimes were committed and therefore cannot be tried here under our present law.

We do not propose that any changes should be made in our law as to the possible admission of a statement by a person who has since died. We are content that it should be left to the trial judge to decide whether the statutory criteria are met, whether the evidence should be admitted. If such evidence were admitted in a war crimes trial, the weight attached to it would still be a matter for the jury.

The inquiry did not say that there was some doubt whether, in Scotland, the recorded statement of a person now dead, made before any proceedings had been commenced, would be admissible, and suggested legislation to clarify the matter. My understanding, however, is that such a statement would be admissible, and the Government do not intend to carry out the inquiry's suggestion.

That leaves but one recommendation made by the inquiry—other, of course, than the basic recommendation to confer jurisdiction on our courts—to be dealt with; the House will see that the schedule provides for the use in war crimes trials of the procedure for transfer to the Crown court without committal proceedings, which is already available in serious fraud cases.

Mr. John Gorst (Hendon North): Before my right hon. Friend leaves the previous section, can he say, on a practical rather than a legal point, whether there has been any change in the situation since Hetherington made his inquiries before producing his report? At that time, events in the Baltic states had not developed in the way that they have now, and the Soviet Union was clearly ready to facilitate evidence and witnesses being brought forward from that part of the world. Events have now changed; have they changed sufficiently for there to be any doubt as to whether witnesses and evidence might now be available?

Mr. Waddington: That is an extremely valid point, but when one looks at the Hetherington-Chalmers report, one has it forced upon one that the people who are suspected of those crimes do not all come from the Baltic states. A large number of them are said to have come from Byelorussia or from the Ukraine, so even if there were speedy progress towards democracy in the Baltic states and the setting up of a system of justice in which we could have complete confidence, it would not meet the case, because we would still be faced with the terrible problem of whether we could extradite, or deport to Russia proper, people suspected of those crimes.

The procedure for bypassing committal proceedings was introduced for serious fraud cases because of the complexity of such cases, and the House will appreciate that it will be available only for war crime trials which are of similar complexity, because my right hon. Friend the Attorney-General has to be satisfied that there is complexity before the procedure can be invoked.

If right hon. and hon. Members analyse the contents of that very involved schedule, they will see that paragraph 1(1)(b) makes it quite plain that the procedure of bypassing could not be invoked unless my right hon. and learned Friend was of the opinion that he was dealing with a case of complexity. The wording of the schedule follows that in sections 4 to 6 of the Criminal Justice Act 1987 and makes it possible for a defendant to apply to the Crown court to have the case against him dismissed before it comes to trial on the basis that there is insufficient evidence on which to base a conviction.

In the debate on 12 December, the House was clearly and strongly supportive of the view that we should take action. Since then, we have attempted to devise a package of measures to ensure that any trials that may take place here will be fair to the defendant and that the procedures followed are fully in keeping with the traditions of British justice. I hope that the House will agree that we have succeeded in those aims.

Mr. Ian Gow (Eastbourne): My right hon. and learned Friend gave a ringing justification for what he sees as the new legal process described in the Bill. Why did he not discuss that with the then Attorney-General, my noble and learned Friend Lord Shawcross—the chief prosecuting officer at the time and one of the most eminent lawyers of the day—who would have been able to offer my right hon. and learned Friend advice diametrically opposed to the advice that he has just given the House?

Mr. Waddington: I have the greatest respect for the noble Lord, but the Government must make these difficult decisions. They cannot shovel responsibility on to anyone else or say, "We are not brave enough to make the decision; we shall make it only if we are backed up by a noble Lord in the other place." We must take decisions, and I think that we have taken the correct one.

Mr. Archer: Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman believe that the proposed procedure is much fairer to the defence than the existing alternative procedure of a voluntary Bill?

Mr. Waddington: I agree entirely with the right hon. and learned Gentleman.

Some have urged us to make no procedural changes, but this is an important point—I am sure that, when the House voted in favour in December, it was not just making a fine gesture with no substance. It was not willing the ends while at the same time making it clear that it had no intention of willing the means. It would be pretty contemptible if we were to grant jurisdiction to the courts but at the same time refuse to take any steps that would make the bringing of prosecutions against individuals, in respect of whom there is evidence, a realistic possibility.

Some opponents of the Bill say that, after so long a gap in time, when memories must have faded, it is impossible to guarantee a fair trial. I cannot agree. What could be more proper than that we should leave these matters to the independent prosecuting authorities to decide whether to bring charges, and to the good sense of British judges and juries to determine whether it would be safe to convict on the evidence presented in any individual case?

I believe that the House would expect me to add a few words about how we envisage that the process of investigation and prosecution will be pursued, if the Bill is passed. In Scotland, the initial work of investigation and the responsibility for any subsequent prosecutions will be the responsibility of the Crown Office. In England and Wales, the general responsibility for investigation of crime lies with the police, while the conduct of prosecutions is for the Crown prosecution service.

With that in mind, we plan to establish a central policing unit to pick up and to continue the investigatory work begun by the inquiry. It will be operationally responsible to the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis, and in the first instance it will consist of nine police officers and their supporting staff. Obviously, as its work develops, it may be necessary at a later stage to review its size.

The task of investigating alleged war crimes is without precedent in the work of the police, and the Government accept that the performance of this task should be funded entirely by central Government. I must make it quite clear, however, that that does not mean that the work of the unit will in any way be subject to central Government direction. It will be subject only to the operational control of the Commissioner, and it will carry out its investigations in the same way as investigations are carried out by the police into any other criminal activities.

The work of the police investigation unit will need to be conducted in close liaison with the Crown prosecution service, which will in due course take over responsibility if the stage is reached at which prosecutions are brought. There will also be a need for those conducting both investigations and prosecutions to be able to call on the expert assistance of historians and linguists.

Sir Anthony Buck (Colchester, North): Could my right hon. and learned Friend give us a little more information about who will head up the unit, what his background will be, what rank the unit will have——

Mr. Gow: And on costing.

Sir Anthony Buck: —and, as my hon. Friend says, on the costing and funding of the unit.

Mr. Waddington: I have made the position on funding clear. We accept that it must be the responsibility of Government. My hon. and learned Friend will see that there is a clause in the Bill which deals with that matter. There will be a money resolution consequential upon it. I cannot say more than that the team will be responsible to the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis.

Mr. Merlyn Rees (Morley and Leeds, South): The Home Secretary mentioned clause 2, which refers to the amount of money to be provided. My point is probably a matter for the Committee, but the Home Secretary said the Government intended to set up a unit which will be operationally under the control of the Commissioner. Could we, perhaps not today but certainly by the Committee stage, have more information about the unit, which after all will be decided by the Commissioner, not by us? Will it have contact with a similar unit in Australia? The unit will be different. It is not enough to leave it to the police, even though it is their job. We should know more about it. Could we have more information in Committee?

Mr. Waddington: The right hon. Gentleman has a good point. I shall give him all the information that I can, but I should make one point absolutely plain. We have concluded that it would not be right to proceed with these matters unless and until the Bill receives Royal Assent. We do not believe that it would be proper in the particular circumstances of this case to take the view after Second Reading that we can go ahead with setting up the unit. My hon. and learned Friend the Member for Colchester, North (Sir A. Buck) and other right hon. and hon. Members will have ample time to advise us on what sort of unit it should be, how it should operate and how it might liaise with other units overseas.

In the debate on 12 December, I offered my personal view on these matters. I said then, and I say again, that nobody would have chosen to address these issues so long after the event. It is so long since the war, and the instinctive wish of most of us is to get on with our lives in peace and not to rake over the past, let alone the pasts of men who have lived peacefully in this country since before many hon. Members were even born; but sometimes one is brought face to face with facts that cannot be buried, with deeds so terrible that they cannot be forgotten, and as long as one of those responsible survives, the world will cry out for justice.

In nothing that I have said have I shown any lack of respect for those who do not believe we should legislate —quite the contrary. But the vote in December showed clearly that the House wanted the Government to legislate. That is why we have acted and why the Bill is before the House today. I cannot say whether the outcome of the Bill's passage will be prosecutions, trials and convictions. Such matters will be the responsibility of the police, the prosecuting authorities, and, ultimately, the courts. I just feel that we must do our duty to the memory of those who suffered and that this is just one way in which we can carry out that duty.

4.3 pm

Mr. Roy Hattersley (Birmingham, Sparkbrook): Tonight my right hon. and hon. Friends will vote according to their conscience, for each of us is required to make judgments about the merits of the Bill, which, in my view, raises fundamental moral principles. Because of that, it would be impertinent of me even to offer advice about how votes are cast tonight. I understand that the

Government have a duty to do exactly that, but only the Government are placed in the position of believing it necessary to make a recommendation. I do no more than to describe the conclusion to which I have come and the way in which I have reached it.

My difficulty in coming to a firm conclusion is my second reason for not presuming to give advice—even now my doubts remain. When we debated the principle of war crime prosecutions in December I marvelled, and I marvel still, at the certainty with which hon. Ladies and hon. Gentlemen on both sides of the argument held the position that they then took up. For me, it remains a matter of doubt and it is a subject about which I come to a conclusion on balance, even then with great reluctance.

My fundamental view on this subject was best expressed by Sir Winston Churchill, speaking in the House on 28 October 1948, when he proposed

"to draw the sponge across the crimes and horrors of the past —hard as that may be—and look, for the sake of all our salvation, towards the future."—[*Official Report*, 28 October 1948; Vol. 457, c. 256.]

Today, the horrors and crimes of the past have been put back on the parliamentary agenda by the Hetherington-Chalmers report, the debate in the House in December and the Bill before us. Whether that was wise or desirable is now of academic interest. We must decide the issue before us—to prosecute or not to prosecute—and we must decide it against the background of an assumption that war criminals took refuge in this country. That assumption was clear from the Home Secretary's speech, but without it, we would not be debating or contemplating such a Bill. In my view it is a highly dangerous assumption, but it is the assumption—or should I say conclusion?—of the Hetherington-Chalmers report.

The report, which paved the way for the Bill, refers to 10 named alleged war criminals whose names were supplied to it by the Wiesenthal centre. Scottish Television screened a programme that named names, and the final paragraph of the Hetherington-Chalmers report referred to the age of known suspects. There is no doubt that we are considering this Bill against the background of the assumption that the people are here and that some people believe that they know who they are.

The legislation is undoubtedly aimed at known suspects. I should have much preferred the Government to introduce more general legislation, ideally in the terms of the 1949 Geneva convention, which would have made it clear that any war criminals from any war, in any sector, in any continent, at any time, who might come to Great Britain and hide here would be covered by the full powers of that Bill. The Government have rejected that option, and we are left with what amounts to the Hetherington-Chalmers principle, if not all the Hetherington-Chalmers methods of pursuing the prosecutions that their report proposed.

Against that background I thought it right to ask myself two questions. First, is it right, in any circumstance, to proceed with prosecutions for offences committed almost 50 years ago? Secondly, if the notion of prosecution is acceptable, is the method by which the prosecutions are to proceed consistent with the rules of law and the principles of our judicial systems? I say "systems" because of the likelihood of prosecutions in England and Scotland. That is a special problem to which I shall return in a moment and one to which the Home Secretary did less than justice.

The crimes to which the Bill relates are described by the Hetherington-Chalmers report as

"so monstrous that they cannot be condoned".

I do not believe that there is a single hon. Member who would argue with that definition. As the debate continues, some will say that equally monstrous crimes have been committed more recently in south-east Asia and elsewhere. I have no system of values that enables me to say whether the crimes that we are discussing worse than those. They are all so monstrous as to be almost beyond our comprehension. It is important not to be too specific about them until there are prosecutions and convictions, if that happens. We have to hypothesise about their nature and how they might apply to individuals who come before the British courts. They seem to be so monstrous that however we envisage and hypothesise them they could not be subject to any statute of limitations.

It would be absurd for us to say that, as people have escaped punishment for half a century for crimes of such enormity, time itself absolves them from any judicial action now and in future. Therefore, the simple passage of time is not an argument for voting against the Bill and certainly does not dissuade me from supporting it. I understand the point about looking at evidence after such a period, and shall return to that. If it is possible to proceed, and the principle is accepted despite the passage of time, it is necessary to consider why we might wish to proceed with prosecution, possible conviction and eventual punishment.

Such an action has five main purposes: the deterrence of other potential criminals, the reformation of those guilty of crime, the protection of society against the repetition of the offences, retribution and a demonstration of the revulsion that society feels towards the crime and those who committed it. Only one of the five purposes can be fulfilled by the Bill.

If we had meant to deter all war crimes, the Government would have chosen, and the House supported, a general rather than a specific Bill. I suspect that the mentality of those who behaved as it is alleged some men now taking refuge in Britain behaved would not be susceptible to the pressures that come from rational considerations such as deterrence.

Mr. Gorst: Could it not be argued that, if we deny criminals a haven in any part of the world, that will be a deterrent?

Mr. Hattersley: Exactly; that is why I would have preferred the Government to introduce a Bill that would deny haven in this part of the world to any war criminals.

Mr. Waddington: I hope that the right hon. Gentleman will not lose sight of the Geneva Conventions Act 1957. The account given by the right hon. Gentleman was not particularly good, because from 1957 all war crimes were triable in this country, whatever the nationality of those concerned.

Mr. Hattersley: I said in the debate on 12 December that the Geneva decision of 1957 legitimised the basic proposal that the Government put before us. I held that view then, and still do now.

I do not believe that deterrence is the justification for the Bill. Were that the case, we would want a Bill that applied automatically and, by its declaratory effects, deterred any war criminal who might think, rightly or

[Mr. Hattersley]

wrongly, that he or she could take refuge here. The Bill has to meet special circumstances and, by definition, cannnot be seen as a deterrent.

It canot be argued that conviction and imprisonment are likely to rehabilitate the offenders, prepare them to live useful lives and send them back improved into the community. Clearly, we are not locking them away to ensure that they do not repeat their offences. Those three justifications do not bear a moment's examination. Retribution is far too near vengeance to be a good reason for introducing the Bill.

Therefore, we are left with one possible justification: the demonstration of our abiding revulsion at the conscious and premeditated slaughter of the people whom it is suspected were slaughtered and its relationship to a policy of calculated genocide against the whole Jewish race. After some doubt and difficulty I came to the conclusion that this single justification—the demonstration of revulsion—was enough to warrant support for the principle of prosecution.

Mr. Stanley Orme (Salford, East): My right hon. Friend will be aware that there are groups of people in this country and elsewhere who deny that the holocaust took place. They are trying to repeat history now. If there are people who have committed or been convicted of such crimes, it is incumbent upon us to ensure that this and future generations be made aware of the monstrosity of their crimes.

Mr. Hattersley: I agree and disagree with my right hon. Friend simultaneously. I doubt whether we should want to legislate if it were done simply to make a point to the strange groups of reprehensible and, I suspect, psychotically disturbed people to whom my right hon. Friend refers. However, there is a wider problem that requires us to demonstrate our revulsion at the acts that undoubtedly took place. Jews all over the world are again expressing genuine fears about renewed outbreaks of anti-semitism in some places in Europe—indeed, in the very places in which it is alleged that some of these crimes took place. It would be disastrous if today we gave the slightest impression that we have forgotten what happened 50 years ago. So I come to the firm conclusion that, on the principle, we should proceed.

For me, at least, supporting the principle of prosecution was the easiest part of today's decision. My difficulty concerned how the prosecutions are to be carried out. I ruled out almost without question the choice of deporting suspects to the Soviet Union, for, despite the near-miraculous progress that has been made towards democracy in that country and in the Baltic republics, and the improvements in civil liberties, it seems to me that the words of the Hetherington-Chalmers report are still true: the system of justice there is not comparable with that in this country and we should not be guilty of deporting British citizens—citizens by nationality and registration, but nevertheless citizens—to such a system. In any event I could not support the deportation of those accused of murder to a state that still retains capital punishment. I therefore concluded that, if the men are to be tried, they must be tried here, convenient an option though it would be simply to ship them somewhere else and allow the process to go on, for better or for worse, in a different judicial system.

I know that to prosecute requires retrospective change, not in the law—I would not support that, and nor would the House—but in the jurisdiction of the courts. That, too, I am prepared to support. As I understand the Hetherington-Chalmers report, had the individuals who may have committed these crimes been British citizens when the alleged offences were committed, they would have been triable in British courts irrespective of where the offences had been committed. Had they remained in their country of birth, I have no doubt that they would have been tried very soon after the war concluded.

There may be some forms of prosecution from which a change of nationality provides exemption, but I cannot believe that the crimes with which this Bill deals are such that they could be reasonably put in that category. I am not suggesting for a moment that the change in jurisdiction is merely a technicality. I am suggesting and admitting that it is a big step, but it is a change which, in these circumstances, is wholly justified.

I turn, almost finally, to the rules of evidence that will apply to trials under the Bill. The proposal of transfer to Crown courts without committal proceedings in schedule 1(1) seems sensible and right. I have no reservation about that, but four other changes proposed in the Hetherington-Chalmers report need closer examination. The first was the inadmissibility of evidence from people who are now dead. The Government rule that any changes in that area are unnecessary, so that is no cause for complaint. The second was the authentication of archives without oral testimony, and the Government rule changes in that area undesirable.

Since those two proposals have been dropped as unnecessary or undesirable, we can conveniently forget about them. As the Home Secretary was kind enough to recall and remind the House, it was on this point that I had my greatest difficulty three months ago. I still retain the gravest reservations about the two innovations to Scottish law which by definition are being proposed. I also retain the gravest reservations about the way in which they are to be introduced. I shall deal with them briefly but individually.

Live television evidence from abroad is to be made admissible in Scottish courts. Scottish lawyers in the House will say whether Scottish law reformers have been clamouring for that change for the past five years. I understand that Scottish courts and those in England believe that the extension of television evidence in trials involving children is necessary and desirable. However, the Home Secretary is being disingenuous if he suggests that this change in Scottish law is for any reason other than to facilitate prosecutions under the Bill.

Mr. Greville Janner (Leicester, West): It is not.

Mr. Hattersley: Someone says, "Why not?" I would be wrong to be deterred by a comment which I did not fully hear and do not fully understand. Let me make it clear, if that thought is in anybody's mind, that I am concerned about changes in law designed to help specific convictions because, however trivial or marginal they are, they set a highly undesirable precedent.

The Hetherington-Chalmers report proposed that evidence taken on commission abroad and video recordings made abroad, unless on letters of request,

should become admissible as evidence in Scotland. In its handout the Home Office says that these changes are to be made to clarify Scottish law. Scottish lawyers in the House will correct me if I am wrong, but I searched in vain for any demand for that clarification until the Hetherington-Chalmers report was produced. There is no doubt that the proposals were introduced to meet the needs of the Bill and to faciliate prosecutions under the Bill.

Those changes will be made, but not in the Bill. That seems a rather devious way to proceed, although not in the sense of being disguised from anybody; the Home Secretary could not have been more frank about the matter. We all know that one problem that the Government will find with the Bill in the House of Lords will be the changes in the rules of evidence. This manages to introduce the principle while letting the rules of evidence tag on Christmas-tree fashion, as American legislators would say, to a quite different Bill. They are to be attached to a Bill now going through the House of Lords. That Bill is notable for proposing changes in the licensing laws and the laws on divorce and the rights of Scottish solicitors to have audience in minor courts. To introduce these as well is a wholly undesirable step. I wish that the Home Secretary had not taken that step and I wish that he would drop these proposals.

Mr. Archer *rose*——

Mr. Robert Maclennan (Caithness and Sutherland): I fully agree with what the right hon. Gentleman says about Scotland. His view about the Government's attitude is considerably fortified by the total absence not only of a Scottish Minister or a Scottish Law Officer, but of any Scottish Conservative Member.

Mr. Hattersley: I give way to my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Warley, West (Mr. Archer).

Mr. Archer: I understood the Home Secretary to say that the proposed amendments were not confined to war crimes. Whatever the Government's motives—obviously I am not privy to them—the time to debate them is when the relevant Bill comes before the House. I am wholly in favour of introducing them across the board whatever the motives. We can debate them when the time comes.

Mr. Hattersley: My right hon. and learned Friend is right that the time to debate these measures is when the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill comes before the House, but I should be remiss in my duty if I did not remind him and the House that these proposals were originally an inherent part of the Bill. They have been removed from it, and the Home Secretary was kind an generous enough to say that this was because of reservations about the changes. They have now been tagged on to a different Bill.

The existence of these proposals, connected with a different Bill, do not justify our voting against this Bill today, but I would be wrong not to say that the Government were mistaken to remove them from this Bill and try to bring them in—if I dare describe the other place in this way—through the back door, in a different measure. As I am sure my right hon. and learned Friend would wish, we shall oppose those changes when they come before us.

The Home Secretary said that these changes will apply to a category of offences, but the important point is that the changes would not have been brought in at all had it not been for this Bill. I become worried when changes, no matter how wide in their application, are brought in with a narrow purpose in mind. That is how the Government are proceeding. It would have been far better had these changes been dropped altogether. When they are proposed, we shall resist them. I believe that the other place will fight strongly against the changes when it discovers that they are related to this Bill. I have no doubt that the Bill is inherently better without these measures. In terms of the speech that I made on 12 December, the Bill is redeemed without them.

As there are no changes in law other than the one point on the committal procedures, and as I believe in principle that it is right to proceed, I shall vote in favour of the Bill as a demonstration of our abiding revulsion at the crimes to which it relates. I shall vote in favour, worried about the way that the prurient part of our press will treat the trials that may follow and conscious that pre-trial publicity, the age of the potential defendants and the antiquity of the evidence may make prosecution impossible. Above all, I shall vote in favour in the hope that, this final step having been taken, we can put the horrors to which the Bill relates behind us once and for all.

Mr. Patrick Cormack (Staffordshire, South): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Have you had any intimation that the Government wish the Committee stage of the Bill to be taken on the Floor of the House? If not, would you be prepared to take a manuscript amendment to that effect at 10 o'clock?

Mr. Speaker: That may be moved at the conclusion of the debate if the hon. Gentleman so wishes.

4.27 pm

Mr. Julian Amery (Brighton, Pavilion): I was never called to the Bar. Although I had some dinners and paid my subscription to the Inner Temple, Hitler interfered with the process. So I must leave it to hon. and learned Members on both sides of the House to deal with the complicated question whether fair trials would be possible, and with all the complicated rules of evidence.

I was deeply moved by the remarkable letter that Lord Shawcross wrote to *The Times* last Saturday. He explained, as one of the great protagonists of war crime trials, how, by 1948, the House was sickened by the continuing process and, with the agreement of both parties, came to the conclusion that a sponge must be drawn across the list and that we should no longer be responsible for instigating war crime trials in Germany, which at that time we still governed.

Because the allied powers were governing Germany, the war crime tribunals took place. Normally, it would have been left to the defeated country to try its own people, but, together with the Americans, the Russians and the French, we were governing Germany, so we had no choice except to find our own method to deal with those who had committed appalling outrages.

Mr. Rees: On 12 December, the Home Secretary gave a different version of the events to which the right hon. Gentleman has referred. He said:

"the decision was made not to proceed with war crimes trials in the British-occupied zone. We are not talking about that. No decision was ever made by a British Government that there should be an end to all war crimes trials, least of all that

[Mr. Rees]

there should be an exemption from prosecution for all time for people resident in this country."—[*Official Report*, 12 December 1989: Vol. 163 c. 889.]

The right hon. and learned Gentleman told us that the decision was taken in the British zone and not here. The matter should be clarified, because it is extremely important in terms of the way in which hon. Members vote this evening.

Mr. Amery: The right hon. Gentleman makes a good point. Lord Shawcross was the Attorney-General at the time and the question of prosecution rested with him as much as, if not more than, with the Home Secretary. It is true that, in deciding not to prosecute any further in the British zone, and therefore, presumably, Britain itself, we left it open to other countries—France, Israel and others—to pursue their own prosecutions in defence of their citizens who had suffered. That was legitimate, and that pursuit of prosecutions continues.

When it was alleged that President Waldheim might have taken part in the shooting of British prisoners, we instituted an inquiry immediately. The result was negative. That seemed to be perfectly all right.

Mr. Robert Boscawen (Somerset and Frome): Will my right hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Amery: We must have regard to the background. Nothing can excuse the outrages committed by the individuals to whom the Hetherington report points. We do not know who they were, but we must remember what happened in the Ukraine and the Baltic states, and in the past few months those events have become much clearer. Young people in the Baltic states were brought up to believe that Communism was the anti-Christ. In the Ukraine there were fierce fights at the time of the Bolshevik revolution and thereafter. Appalling atrocities were committed by those who served the Nazis and by those who served the Soviet Union.

My right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary has referred to the 1957 legislation, but I am not sure what its validity is. It seems that it was designed to catch crimes committed after the relevant clause was introduced. Appalling things were done by the Soviet forces in the Baltic states when they took them over from Hitler and then when they recovered them. These matters must be in our minds, and we are much aware of them because of recent events.

I join the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) in being concerned about the selectivity of the Bill. It appears to apply only to crimes committed in German-occupied territory or in Germany. There were, however, many appalling atrocities committed during or before German occupation, and later, in other parts of the world, before 1957.

Mr. Archer: I do not dissent from the right hon. Gentleman's proposition that appalling crimes were committed in Russian-occupied territory, but is there any reason to think that any of the perpetrators are living in this country?

Mr. Amery: I suspect that my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary, or his predecessor, were quite ignorant four or five years ago whether anyone was living in Britain who could be indicted. There may be someone in that position, and I would not be surprised if there is more than one. I do not know whether the 1957 legislation would necessarily catch them. Crimes of the greatest enormity have been committed in eastern Europe, the Soviet Union and China. That can be said also of Uganda and of Argentina, where the dirty war was fought. Who can say that no one responsible for such crimes has arrived in this country, become a resident here and acquired British nationality after five years?

I do not know where this process will stop. What we are debating is what might be called unfinished business at the war crimes trials, which we decided in this place to stop in 1948. Do we want to inherit endless vendettas over what has happened in other countries?

Mr. Waddington: I am sorry to interrupt my right hon. Friend, but he is repeating the error that he committed a short time ago. There was no decision by the House to stop war crimes trials. All that was decided was that there should be no more war crimes trials in the British zone in occupied Germany.

Mr. Amery: The fact that we decided not to pursue those crimes in occupied Germany makes it seem pretty peculiar that we should try to restart 45 years later the unfinished business of that period. Where would all that stop? Are we to import into Britain arguments about crimes that may or may not have been committed in other countries? It is not clear whether the 1957 decisions would cover all them. There may be people from Cambodia, or even China, who would qualify as British citizens—*[Interruption.]* They might become British citizens; why not?

I belong to the diminishing band of hon. Members who fought in the last war, and I think that most of us tend to be more tolerant than others about the things that were done in that war. I was associated—although I hope in no sense guilty—with resistance movements that perpetrated many appalling actions; the massacre of the Chetniks by Tito's forces is only one case in point. Are we going to revive all that? That happened while the war was virtually still in progres.

There is the question of how far obeying orders is a defence. The other day, a distinguished former hon. Member, Mr. Nigel Nicholson, told of the horrors that he experienced when he was under orders to push people back—Chetniks and Russians—to certain death.

Mr. Alex Carlile (Montgomery): I find it difficult to understand how the right hon. Gentleman can refer to the wholesale slaughter of people who were playing no part in the war as actions committed as part of that war. Is he really saying that Auschwitz was part of the last war? Was it not, rather, the action of a misguided, criminal and demented political regime?

Mr. Amery: I made two points. I talked about the people who were sent back to certain death from Carinthia, including women and children, and were killed on the spot to avoid any evidence. No one could say that they were active participants. I also referred to obeying orders as a defence. It is a questionable area.

I spent much of the war connected with eastern Europe, where atrocities were committed by both sides—by the Ustashi, by Tito's people, and, I dare say, by the Chetniks. I had great fears recently: I never dreamed that I would see

the liberation of eastern Europe, but it has happened, so far without the return to the retribution and violence that I had feared and almost expected.

The other day I was in Romania and was received by President Iliescu who, surprisingly, began our conversation by apologising for the fact that Ceausescu and his wife had been executed without a proper trial. It is almost miraculous that the communist system is being dismantled without lynching or murder. At this juncture, when Baltic states and the Ukraine are in our minds and front-page news, I ask myself whether we would be wise to reopen old wounds and to proceed with this legislation. I think not.

I am no lawyer, but I want to end by quoting these words of Lord Shawcross:

"In my own opinion, as a once mere practising lawyer, the prosecutions which are contemplated by the Bill now before Parliament would violate the basic principles of British justice and law."

4.39 pm

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): I have always been a strong advocate of bringing Nazi war criminals to justice, no matter how many years after the atrocities were carried out. I was delighted when, a few years ago, Barbie was put on a plane to France. Having tabled questions about him, I was glad that he was about to be tried. It was not argued that, because of his advanced age, or because of the number of years since the atrocities had been committed in wartime occupied France, he should not be tried. He was tried, convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment.

I am one of those who actively campaigned in this House for Rauff, one of the most notorious SS killers, then living in Chile, to be deported to West Germany. Before the gas ovens were brought into use, Rauff was responsible for the system of mass killing whereby men, women and children were put into vans that were then filled with exhaust fumes. As was made clear in a report in *The Daily Telegraph*, Rauff was living in Chile under his own name, which was even apparently listed in the telephone directory. I took the view with others that this notorious killer should certainly be brought to justice, and I am glad that there was a campaign to that end.

During the last year of Rauff's life in Chile, the spotlight was turned on him. A British television crew went out to make a film for "World in Action". A number of campaigners against Nazi atrocities demonstrated outside his house. Should the view have been taken that, because he was a very elderly man in ill health, soon to die, he should be left in peace for the last months of his life? My view, of course, was that he should never have been allowed to live in freedom and that he should have been brought to justice after the war.

One of my criticisms of the position adopted after the war is that the pledge given by the British Government and other allied Governments that all those held responsible for Nazi crimes against humanity would be brought to justice was never really implemented after the first year or so. I am old enough to remember reports of the Nuremberg proceedings. I do not know whether the right hon. Member for Brighton, Pavilion (Mr Amery) agrees that it was absolutely right that all the Nazi leaders who survived should be brought to justice. Indeed, I considered some of the Nuremberg sentences to have been too lenient. That, of course, is a personal view—I may be wrong. Perhaps it was better that death sentences should not have been passed in a number of cases.

What I find very disturbing—and what was disturbing at the time—is that, once the Nuremberg trials were over and a few more proceedings had taken place, the cold war started, and by 1949-50 there was no longer enthusiasm for such trials, as I am sure the right hon. Gentleman is aware. Many of the people who had carried out monstrous crimes and atrocities during the Nazi era were allowed to go scot free. Only as a result of public opinion since the 1960s has the Federal Republic of Germany initiated proceedings against people alleged to be Nazi war criminals. We all know that such proceedings have always been highly unpopular in West Germany.

I am certainly critical of many aspects of Israeli Government policy, but I believe that the Israeli kidnapping of Eichmann was perfectly justified. If the alternative had been that Eichmann might, like Rauff, go free for the rest of his life, the Israeli action was correct. I also happen to believe—although I may be in a minority here—that the Israeli decision that Eichmann, having been found guilty of some of the worst crimes ever committed, should be sentenced to death, even though Israel does not otherwise have the death penalty, was right. I am pleased that he was hanged—and I say so as someone who has constantly argued against the death penalty and who, rather than change his mind, would be prepared to lose his seat in this House. This shows that, in respect of such cases, one cannot be totally consistent. There are exceptions, and I believe that the Eichmaan case was such an exception.

I accept, however, that in the case of the alleged war criminals with whom this Bill is intended to deal, matters are not so clear-cut. There is the question whether it is appropriate that legislation should be introduced at all. A number of right hon. and hon. Members take the perfectly legitimate view—I may not agree with it, but it is perfectly legitimate—that no action should be taken. I do not for one moment accept that those who argue against this Bill are in the same category as the person who, in a letter in *The Daily Telegraph* today, argues that such Nazi atrocities never took place. I accept that right hon. and hon. Members who oppose the Bill do not in any way doubt that such atrocities did occur and that those who argue otherwise are acting as apologists for the Nazi regime.

Mr. Cormack: Does the hon. Gentleman agree that many of us who have grave reservations about the Bill oppose it for a variety of reasons? One of the reasons is our fear that it will fan the flames of anti-semitism.

Mr. Winnick: My hon. and learned Friend the Member for Leicester, West (Mr. Janner) dealt with that matter the last time this subject was debated. The hon. Member for Staffordshire, South (Mr. Cormack) is consistent in his opposition to all forms of racism, including anti-semitism. I disagree with my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Leicester, West on a number of issues, but I think that he was absolutely right that those who want to be anti-semitic do not need any encouragement.

Mr. James Molyneaux (Lagan Valley): It is very important that we try to educate people not to look at this as a racist issue. From my own experience, I concede that the Jewish people suffered far more severely than did those

[Mr. James Molyneaux]

of any other race, but I have an abiding memory. As a serving Royal Air Force man, I was sent to escort an RAF medical team to Belsen 24 hours after it had been liberated. I am still haunted by the sight of a Roman Catholic priest attempting to celebrate communion mass at a makeshift altar. I was struck by his peculiar behaviour. With one hand he was holding the elements, and with the other he was clinging to the altar—he dared not let go. On closer examination, I saw two of his fellow clergymen lying dead at his feet. They had died the previous day. I think that the matter should be put into context.

Mr. Winnick: The right hon. Gentleman's intervention is very useful and positive. It is perfectly true that, while the Jews were the main victims of the Nazis, there were many other victims who were far from being Jewish. Indeed, Nazi victims were of many nationalities. We are dealing with the question of Nazi war criminals, but anyone who has read about Nazi Germany knows that many politicians—communists, socialists, others on the left, and some conservatives—who certainly were not Jewish were put to death in the concentration camps and other places which were in existence almost from the very moment that Hitler took power in 1933.

I accept that, in all the cicumstances, it probably would not be right to invoke deportation, but, in so far as vetting procedures took place, some of the people whose presence is the reason for the introduction of this Bill clearly lied to get into the United Kingdom. Nevertheless, for all the reasons that were put forward by the Home Secretary, I do not accept that it would be appropriate to invoke deportation procedures. Most, if not all, of the people concerned had lived here for many years before any allegations of atrocities against them arose. Perhaps that is an argument, for what it is worth, for no action being taken.

Hon. Members have asked about the suspects' age and possible ill health, and whether any prosecutions would be brought. Australia has passed similar legislation, but from my reading of the report, I understand that no war crimes charges have yet been brought in that country.

Mr. Archer: Yes, they have.

Mr. Winnick: My right hon. and learned Friend says that charges have been brought in Australia; that must have been done since the publication of the report.

If, because of a defendant's ill health, lawyers believe that he should not be brought to court, the judge could make a decision accordingly. In my view, it would be perfectly right for him to do so.

Mr. Gorst: Does the hon. Gentleman agree that we now have information that was not available during the 40 years since the crimes were committed, and that had such evidence been available before, it would have been incumbent upon us to do something? It is only in recent months that sufficient evidence has become available.

Mr. Winnick: I agree entirely with the hon. Gentleman, and I shall deal with his point when I conclude.

I accept that, if judicial proceedings are brought against people who are very elderly or in ill health, there could be, if not anti-semitism—I dealt with that earlier—a certain amount of misplaced sympathy which would be counterproductive. We shall have to take that possibility on board when deciding how to vote tonight.

I accept that there are arguments for not proceeding with the Bill. I hope that I have made clear that the matter is not as clear-cut as the arguments concerning Nuremberg, Eichmann or Rauff. However, there are also strong arguments for carrying the Bill into law.

In weighing up the pros and cons of the Bill, we should not overlook the allegations of deliberate and systematic mass murder of civilians. It is not good enough for the right hon. Member for Brighton, Pavilion to argue that crimes were committed on both sides. There was a difference between the two sides, and no one knows that better than the right hon. Gentleman, who has a very distinguished war record and who is well aware of some of the activities that were undertaken.

In that respect, the right hon. Gentleman is like the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath), a former leader of the Conservative party, who I understand will be speaking and voting against the Bill, and whose own war record is beyond question. Those two right hon. Gentlemen know better than almost anyone else the difference between the two sides—between the side that was responsible for the aggression in the first place and for committing the most terrible atrocities, and the side that took up arms against fascism and the rest.

At the same time, no one would argue that the resistance in occupied Europe has a spotless record. Under the circumstances, it is unlikely to do so. However, it was Nazi policy almost since the beginning of the war—[HON. MEMBERS: "Before the war."]—and even before the war, to exterminate Jews and others. That was certainly Nazi policy following the conference early in January 1942, when it was decided not simply to punish Jews and others—not that they deserved any punishment, of course—but physically to liquidate them from the face of the earth.

The policy of the Nazis was of systematic and deliberate mass murder. They showed no mercy to men, women or children. Atrocities occurred on an almost daily basis in parts of the Soviet Union that were occupied by the Nazis. I do not want to invoke unnecessary emotion, but mothers with their babies in their arms pleaded with SS killers at least to spare their babies. They were shown no such mercy. Those are the sort of crimes with which the Bill seeks to deal, and we cannot get away from them. We cannot say simply, "It was unfortunate, but war is war, and sometimes crimes were comitted." The crimes committed by the Nazis were of a completely different character, and that was recognised at Nuremberg.

After the most exhaustive inquiries, the report on which the Bill is based reached a conclusion, on the evidence available, in respect of three people who came to the United Kingdom after the second world war and took out British citizenship. It states in paragraph 9.10 that the evidence available shows that

"there would be a realistic prospect of conviction for murder."

How can we say now that we have no interest in bringing those three prosecutions? If the evidence had not come to light, if there had not been public pressure, and if the report had not been produced, we might be able to say that many years have elapsed, many changes have occurred in Europe, and it is too late to start dealing with those responsible for war crimes who now live in the United Kingdom.

However, the matter is before us, and we must make a decision one way or the other. In view of the evidence, we have no alternative but to pass the Bill into legislation. If that is done, as always it will be up to the judicial authorities—fortunately, not this House—to decide whether charges should be brought against the individuals concerned.

In enacting such legislation, we would be following in the footsteps of other democracies, such as Canada, Australia and the United States. I always thought that America had a pretty sorry record in respect of war criminals, showing little interest once Nuremburg was over. Far too many people were allowed to enter the United States who clearly were involved in mass murder and other crimes. However, in the past five years or so —rather late in the day, but better late than never—the United States has begun to act properly and has invoked the kind of deportation procedures which, as I have already explained, I would not like to be introduced in this country. Nevertheless, America has taken action. We should act, too, but in a different way—like Canada and Australia.

This is a very sorry business. It is not the kind of issue that many right hon. and hon. Members like to be brought before the House, but every one of us must make a decision, on a free vote. For all the reasons that I have given, I believe that it is right and proper to carry the Second Reading, to examine the matter in detail in Committee and to allow the legislation to pass accordingly.

4.56 pm

Mr. Ivor Stanbrook (Orpington): Over the past three years, since the Simon Wiesenthal Centre first interested itself in the possibility of pursuing alleged war criminals in Britain, I have done my best to oppose the very idea and, in this House and elsewhere, to make the case against the purpose of the Bill.

I have done so not because I have any connection with any particular factor in the controversy. I myself served in the Royal Air Force during the war, and I am not unaware of the scale of the atrocities that were committed. I accept that fearful atrocities were committed by all sides. What the Jews called the holocaust certainly occurred, and it affected millions of people—but millions of others were also affected. The criminals were not restricted to the so-called Nazis but existed on all sides, including the allied side.

One can accept all that and still say that the purpose of the Bill is wrong, for two reasons. In principle, we ought not to delve back into history, to revive the grim, terrible, cruel stories of the last war, in which many, many people suffered.

Mr. Anthony Beaumont-Dark (Birmingham, Selly Oak): I was too young to fight in the war, but I am not too young to realise that the crimes in question were unique in their enormity. They were not committed in the heat of battle. No one denies that things happen on the battlefield which honourable people would, in the coolness of afterthought, regret. We are talking of something that started in the late 1930s—a holocaust. I urge all right hon. and hon. Members to read Martin Gilbert's book on the holocaust.

It is not a matter of saying, "We all did naughty things." I urge my hon. Friend the Member for Orpington (Mr. Stanbrook) not to belittle the carnage of the holocaust by saying that we all did things that we regret. It is not a matter of regret but of record that a great evil took place for which no one responsible should ever be forgiven—however old, however ancient, or however decrepit they may be.

Mr. Stanbrook: My hon. Friend's age and experience do not encompass all the terrible things that have happened in the past 50 years. As my right hon. Friend the Member for Brighton, Pavilion (Mr. Amery) said, it is not for us to distinguish between the scale of the terror inflicted in any sector of the war or in any region. Of course, the justification given is that the crimes that we are discussing were particularly horrible, but we are not merely dealing with a particular set of atrocities. We should be considering, as the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) attempted to say, all the frightfulness against mankind and all crimes against humanity.

Therefore, if we are to deal with the principle properly, there should be jurisdiction in this country to try all such crimes wherever and whenever they were committed, by anyone who comes within the jurisdiction of——

Mr. Toby Jessel (Twickenham): Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Stanbrook: No.

There should be such jurisdiction for courts in this country.

Sir Bernard Braine (Castle Point): Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Stanbrook: I give way to the Father of the House.

Sir Bernard Braine: In his earlier remarks, my hon. Friend referred to crimes being committed by both sides, and he blurred the distinction between those and the crimes which are the subject of the Hetherington-Chalmers report, with which the Bill is concerned, which were crimes of great enormity. Unlike my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Mr. Beaumont-Dark), I am old enough to know what went on, and to remember that members of the armed forces were horrified at the intelligence that was reaching us about the appalling crimes which were being committed, not merely in the concentration camps or during the holocaust, but against men, women and children—unarmed, defenceless civilians —all over German-occupied Europe. Before he goes any further, will he make a clear distinction between what happens in the heat of battle and the calculated, diabolical cruelty which characterised the enemy against whom we were fighting?

Mr. Stanbrook: Calculated and diabolical cruelty has been inflicted on other people. I am not here to distinguish any particular period of time or part of the world—[HON. MEMBERS: "Why not?"] Will hon. Gentlemen allow me to make my speech?

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Stanbrook: I do not propose to give way.

We are talking about that principle, so the question is whether we would achieve any good by reviving jurisdiction in British courts after nearly 50 years to try alleged war criminals.

[Mr. Stanbrook]

I suggest that, in view of the present state of world affairs, when peace and co-operation are watchwords, we should not be reviving thoughts of hatred, cruelty and revenge. That is what we shall be doing by instituting crimes under the Bill.

I do not believe that we advance the cause of humanity one iota by passing a Bill of this kind. I know that many hon. Members do not agree with me, that they are satisfied that the principle justifies the attempt but the practice—the second side of the equation—is more impelling to me than the principle behind the argument. The first of the acts which constituted war crimes covered by the Bill occurred in 1941, which means that, next year, 50 years will have passed since it was committed.

Mr. John Gorst (Hendon, North): Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Stanbrook: No, I am sorry.

It is that interval of 50 years and its implications which must not be disregarded when we discuss whether we should institute war crimes trials twice. The 50-year interval affects the whole concept, especially the detailed preparation and prosecution of the crimes. We have been told that all that is necessary is to extend the jurisdiction of British courts. That means that this is retrospective criminal legislation, and it is selective criminal legislation. It bears all the hallmarks of what British lawyers would normally regard with contempt. We are changing the law to enable prosecutions to take place.

I acknowledge what my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary said about the slight adjustments that the Government propose compared with the Hetherington inquiry report, which may enable some people to accept that a fair trial could be provided. However, with my small legal experience—I have defended and prosecuted murderers and I have appeared in many extradition cases for both requested and requesting countries—I believe that there is no possibility of the individuals affected by the Bill being given a fair trial or having the slightest opportunity of one. *[Interruption.]* When one considers that the whole apparatus of British law is being adjusted to enable the prosecution of three elderly men who are resident in this country, one of whom is sick and is unlikely to stand trial, then we must admit that we are predetermining the verdict.

Consider the changes to be made to the Criminal Justice Act 1988, which was passed when the powers-that-be were considering the possibility of instituting war crimes trials under legislation which would shortly be brought before the House. Those changes will target the luckless individuals who will be brought to court under the legislation. Taking evidence on commission in Europe ignores the fact that in practise the defendant will not be able to cross-examine witnesses; the witness will not be seen and will not give oral testimony before a jury in London, but that evidence will be relied upon.

I listened to what my right hon. and learned Friend said about receiving evidence from persons who are now abroad. I am glad that this will not be the subject of new legislation. He says that it will rest upon the existing rules, under which the evidence of a person who has died may not be received unless the judge is satisfied that there is no danger of an injustice being committed. It is not for us to leave that to the judges. After 50 years, we ought to be taking that decision. Are we legislating for justice or are we legislating for a possibility of injustice? I do not have to make a case for anything but the possibility of injustice because everyone knows that there is a great possibility of injustice as a result of the admission of that kind of evidence.

Mr. Cormack: Does my hon. Friend accept, as I do, that if these people are guilty of such terrible crimes, there is an ultimate justice from which they cannot escape?

Mr. Stanbrook: Yes. When this matter was previously considered, I ventured to make that point.

The accused persons—they are not guilty persons, as many people say; they are, under our law, innocent persons—will be threatened with a charge under the Bill when it becomes an Act. They are elderly people who will eventually have to face their maker. God reserves His judgment for those who have committed crimes during their lifetime, whatever we in this place or whatever the British courts may wish to do to them.

The practical difficulty that will arise out of trials instituted under the Bill, if it becomes an Act, is that these offences were committed 1,000 or 2,000 miles away in wartime conditions, by and among the people whose language and customs were quite different from our own. It would be very difficult to translate all that in such a way as to enable a British jury to decide dispassionately the question of guilt or innocence. The defendants will not have the opportunity to travel to Russia to gather evidence on their behalf.

Mr. Alex Carlile: Why not?

Mr. Stanbrook: They will not be allowed to travel freely in Russia. Anyone who imagines that they would be allowed to do so——

Mr. Carlile: Will the hon. Gentleman give way on that point?

Mr. Stanbrook: No, I do not intend to give way.

Mr. Carlile: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Is it proper for an hon. Member to misrepresent the contents of a Bill that is before the House which makes it absolutely clear that legal aid will be available to all defendants?

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): The hon. and learned Gentleman will be seeking later to catch my eye. I am sure that he can make that point during his speech, if he is successful.

Mr. Stanbrook: I am sorry that a member of the legal profession should use such a bogus point of order to interrupt another hon. Member. We all know that in practice, it would not be possible either for the defendants' concerned or for anyone representing them to travel freely in Russia to do the sort of things that the Hetherington inquiry did, at great expense. It had teams of investigators and the KGB to assist it.

Anyone who is considering applying the normal principles of British law to a crime applies them to contemporary events. The chances of obtaining evidence —of witnesses being summoned, of their speaking English —are slim, and all the rules of law and procedure that

apply to comparatively recent events will not apply to any of these cases. They will be dealing with offences that were committed nearly 50 years ago.

The language—it may be Russian, or other languages—will have to be translated. Interpreters will be needed. All the other apparatus of the law that would normally be applied without complaint from anyone to the conduct of trials in this country will not be applied equally and justly in cases of this kind.

The 50-year gap is decisive. Witnesses will be elderly. Generally speaking, the memories of witnesses fade quickly. I have often heard people say, "Ah yes, I remember him," but in practice it does not work out that way. In practice, the passage of nearly 50 years will make it almost impossible to identify a defendant—or a witness, even.

That is part of the difficulty that the Government and any intended prosecution will have to face. The Government are starting a process that will bring with it nothing but misery and humiliation and that will be distorted by the popular press. We shall all be heartily sick of the matter, even before any trial takes place. In the meantime, decisions connected with the case may be taken that will result in it not being brought to court in any event. The millions of pounds that will have been spent on the investigation, that ought much more profitably and properly to be spent on other heads of expenditure, will be wasted. I reiterate that I believe that the Bill legislates for injustice. We ought to reject it.

5.15 pm

Mr. Alex Carlile (Montgomery): I thank the Home Secretary for the great thought that he and his predecessor have given to the issue. I am sure that the whole House wishes to join me in those thanks, in particular for the careful consultations that have taken place with all those who are concerned with these matters.

I did not seek the opportunity to speak in the December debate on the principles of the Hetherington-Chalmers report, but since then I have detected a weakening in the resolve of certain right hon. and hon. Members, who may feel that the "fine gesture" that the House made in December, as it was described earlier by the Home Secretary, was enough to make the House's view clear. I believe that it was not enough and that we should vote for the Bill tonight and make it part of our law.

May I at this stage do something, Mr. Deputy Speaker, which I believe to be proper, having regard to my position in the debate, and that is to declare what I am sure is an unregisterable interest in the matter? Two of my grandparents, two of my uncles, an aunt and many cousins—some of them extremely close to me in blood—were murdered in Poland during the last war. They were murdered as a result of precisely the war crimes that we have in mind. Just so that hon. Members understand that I am not talking about the ordinary incidents of war on one side or the other, may I say a few words about what those people were?

They were all innocent. One uncle—my mother's brother—was a young doctor who was seized because he was out in the street at night taking messages. An aunt was a teacher of history in a secondary school in a rural area, in a town of about the same significance as Llanfair Caereinion in my Montgomery constituency. My grandfather was the postmaster in a small Polish town. His principal interests in life included such aggressive pursuits as classical Greek and the Latin historians. He was a studious, amiable and harmless man of learning, who never committed an aggressive act in his life. He had political views and opinions, but on the whole he was careful to keep them to himself.

Those three people were among those who died, completely innocently, for going about their ordinary business. I have in my possession, in my mother's home, correspondence from some of them. In some cases, it simple peters out. In one case that I have not mentioned, the correspondence consists of an alleged death certificate from Auschwitz which the family knows to be inconsistent with the evidence of when she died. They could not even tell the truth about how and when she died.

We are talking in this debate about criminal cruelty on a scale which, at the time, was so unimaginable that it is my belief that, even now, there are people in this country, perhaps even including hon. Members, who cannot comprehend the scale of what occurred.

One word which we have not yet heard in the debate, that we usually hear in other debates on criminal justice policy, is the word "victim". I should like to say something on behalf of the victims of those crimes, not on behalf of those who died, but on behalf of those who are still living. My own mother, who lives in this country, in very good health, I am pleased to say, looks back on those events with objective eye, but with a recollection that would surprise the hon. Member for Orpington (Mr. Stanbrook) and others.

This year, my mother will go to Poland for the first time in 45 years. She will bring herself to go to Poland following my father's death—he was never willing for her to go there—with me and with my sister who was born in Poland. She wishes to revisit some of the places which she knew as a child; but she will go with a heavy heart. She wishes to see those places again in her lifetime, but she will go against strains of memory as clear as crystal, and that will make it a difficult experience for her.

She and others can give evidence that would shame in quality some of the evidence given, say, last week in courts of law throughout Britain. She has described to me how, when she was fighting in the Warsaw uprising, on a Warsaw street she was stopped by two soldiers and she heard them discussing, in German, which she understood, but which they did not know she understood, whether she should be killed because she had an attractive leather bag. The Ukranian soldier wished to murder her, but the German soldier thought that it would be wrong to murder her, so she was spared by the German soldier, who told her never to walk alone in a street in that city again.

She remembers that event as though it happened yesterday. She remembers what was in the bag, she remembers a description of the people who spoke to her, and the words that were used, even though they were spoken in a language that was not her own. My mother escaped from a ghetto in Lwow, now in the Uklraine. She escaped hidden in a haycart. She remembers the details, and has described them to me, of how she came to escape, who helped her, the circumstances in which they helped her, the details and even the weather on the day she escaped.

I cannot begin to understand how the hon. Member for Orpington can allege that people's memories of such events can be compared with the menory of some minor traffic accident.

Mr. Stanbrook: I did not so allege.

Mr. Carlile: Well, that was the effect of the hon. Gentleman's allegation.

There are people, some of whom I know, who suffered far worse privations than my mother ever suffered and whose recollections of what happened to them is as clear as it could be. They can give evidence of what happened. Some of them can give that evidence in English, some in other languages, but I do not understand what difference language makes in the modern world with the availability of simultaneous translation systems, which almost all Members of Parliament will have experienced at international conferences. Some of us have experienced such translation systems in central and eastern Europe, and know that they work very well.

Those people are not afraid to be cross-examined. They wish to have their recollection put to the test, and nothing proposed by the Home Secretary seeks to deprive anyone of the right to put their recollection to the test. The right hon. and learned Gentleman has spoken of provisions which would ensure that a fair test of those memories is carried out.

Although it may be difficult for some hon. Members to understand, those people do not have revenge in their hearts. They are not looking for retribution, because revenge and retribution cannot be delivered for crimes, such as those. They are seeking that there should be a small measure of justice for them as the victims. They are not interested in the sentence that will be passed. Contrary to some of the lurid publicity there has been, they do not want to create a new species of geriatric madhouse for those who committed those terrible crimes. The sentence does not matter to them, but, as victims of horrendous crimes, they have the same justifiable interest in seeing justice being done as the victims of any other crime, whether it was committed today, 10 years ago, 20 years ago or 50 years ago.

I can do no better than remind the House of the words of Primo Levi, the great historian of what occurred. He wrote:

"You who live secure
In your warm houses,
Who return at evening to find
Hot food and friendly faces:
Consider whether this is a man,
Who labours in the mud
Who knows no peace
Who fights for a crust of bread
Who dies at a yes or a no.
Consider whether this is a woman,
Without hair or name
With no more strength to remember
Eyes empty and womb cold
As a frog in winter.
Consider that this has been:
I commend these words to you.
Engrave them on your hearts
When you are in your house, when you walk on your way,
When you go to bed, when you rise.
Repeat them to your children."

If we in the House and in this country are to look the world in the face and to say to our own children, "This must never happen again," surely we must be prepared to do justice to the victims.

5.28 pm

Sir Bernard Braine (Castle Point): There can be few who have not been moved by the quiet eloquence of the hon. and learned Member for Montgomery (Mr. Carlile) speaking straight from the heart with the added anguish of family loss. He has gone right to the heart of what the Bill is about. Until he spoke, I began to wonder whether those who had contributed to the debate so far really knew what the Bill was about. It was necessary for the hon. and learned Gentleman to speak as he did, not merely for himself and for the victims, but for the House.

It is quite true that very few people in Britain, particularly younger people, have any idea whatever of what happened. They may have seen pictures, may have heard stories, may have seen war films, but those of us who went through the war and had contact with the countries in which those atrocities took place can never forget the wickedness of what happened.

I went to war in 1939—this was true of most of my generation—believing that we were embarking on a crusade against evil forces, but had not the faintest idea just how evil they were until the revelations after the war. What happened still beggars description. I remember heading a parliamentary delegation to Poland. One of the dignitaries whom I sought to meet was Bishop Dombrowski, the Catholic Church's link with the communist Government. We had a frank talk and I recall him telling me that the casualties Poland had suffered fighting two cruel enemies were greater in proportion to population than those of any other belligerent. One third of the Polish clergy were murdered—not in concentration camps, but just murdered, by the Nazis or the Russians. Roughly one third of Poland's professional classes disappeared as a result of what happened. Warsaw was burned down twice in the war. Even now, the sufferings of the people are not fully understood in this country or elsewhere in Europe.

I congratulate my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State on the speed with which he has produced the Bill and on the clarity with which he explained its provisions. He correctly reflected the overwhelming vote that the House registered on 12 December.

I readily acknowledge, particularly following the speech made by the hon. and learned Member for Montgomery, that each hon. Member must take a personal stand on this matter. I shall not legislate for others but shall speak for myself. That said, there is no doubt in my mind that it is right to proceed with the Bill. Let us start with its authors—two highly experienced prosecutors whose careers had been geared to examining the worth of evidence.

They did not lightly apply their minds to the task. They were accustomed to applying a strict test of evidence before recommending it for prosecution—that there would be a greater than 50 per cent. chance of conviction. On that basis alone, they found sufficient evidence of murder and manslaughter, not against a vast army but certainly against a number of persons.

They reported that the detailed investigations disclosed "horrific instances of mass murder"—

not the occasional killing as result of a bit of looting, but mass murder. Some hon. Members will know precisely what that means. They concluded:

"The crimes are so monstrous that they cannot be condoned; their prosecution could act as a deterrent in future wars. To take no action would taint the United Kingdom with the slur of being a haven for war criminals."

Some hon. Members who have spoken seem to have forgotten that we are considering not the generality of war

criminals who have survived since the war but those who, by one means or another, have been accorded the privilege of British citizenship. I find it unacceptable that persons who committed such crimes should have obtained British citizenship without searching inquiry and should have found a safe haven in this country. British citizenship is a high privilege. It should never have been granted to criminals, and it would not have been had we discovered it at the time.

Other democratic countries where Nazi murderers have found a hiding place—the United States, Canada and Australia—have already acted. We are not pioneers in this, because we are following the examples set by other democratic countries that have just as high a regard for fairness and justice as we have. Indeed, their legal systems stem from ours. It is high time, then, that we followed their example.

I have thought long and hard on this issue, and two considerations have weighed on me. First, it was argued in the previous debate and again today that old people forget. I have memories of the war, particularly of one atrocity. I have a vivid memory of every person concerned. When something shocking takes place, one does not forget. I shall give the House an illustration. Kitty Hart, a survivor of Auschwitz, told an international conference on war crimes held in London last October—the right hon. Member for Morley and Leeds, South (Mr. Rees) the former Home Secretary, and some other hon. Members heard her—

"If a person has absolute power of life and death over you—even for an instant—that face will be etched on your mind for ever. You cannot possibly forget it, even if you try."

She gave her evidence last year in the High Court of Wuppertal, West Germany, at the trial of Gottfried Weise.

Weise was an SS officer at Auschwitz. His nickname was William Tell, because he used to shoot tin cans off the heads of prisoners. He was blind in one eye and his actions usually led to the death of his victim, often a child. At the end of the trial, the judge was impressed by the accuracy of the evidence given. In winding up, he remarked that those who had spoken were calm and without emotion and Weise was convicted on their evidence. I place little credence, therefore, in the argument about memories fading when they involve crimes of this enormity.

My second consideration is that we are not dealing with killing in the heat of battle. War veterans—there are still a few of us in the House—know that the battlefield brings out the worst and the best in men—appalling savagery and sublime heroism. This Bill, on the other hand, deals with those who committed the cold-blooded, premeditated and carefully planned murder of unarmed men, women and children.

In a previous debate, I described how, in 1942, the senior echelons of the Nazi leadership held a secret, high-level conference at Wannsee. The purpose of their meeting was to improve their methods of getting rid of unwanted people. The use of carbon monoxide gas was not fast enough; it was too costly and laborious. I gave an account of how it was decided to replace such a method by constructing gas chambers in which vast numbers of men, women and children could be done to death in a few minutes. Once the door was shut and the Zyklon B released, they all died within three or four minutes. One of the witnesses at the Auschwitz trial said:

"We knew when they were dead because the screaming stopped."

As my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Mr. Beaumont-Dark) said earlier, such methods had nothing to do with the heat of battle. Whole village communities from one end of Europe to the other were rounded up at places such as Oradour in France and Lidice in Czechoslovakia and forced into a church or a large building. The hon. Member for Birmingham, Perry Barr (Mr. Rooker) will remember what happened to British soldiers at La Paradis in France. They were doused with petrol and burned to death or simply machine-gunned. It happened all over Europe. The victims had nothing to do with waging war. That was the treatment meted out by the strong and cruel on the defenceless and weak. Those are the sort of crimes that we are dealing with and which the Hetherington and Chalmers team investigated.

May I quote one particular case? It is that of Bogdan Kosiy, who was tried in the United States in September 1981. That was quite a long time after the war, as the House will agree. Kosiy was tried for his participation in the murder of unarmed civilians in the Ukraine and of children in particular. Allan Ryan junior, a former director of the Department of Justice office of special investigation created to investigate and prosecute Nazi war criminals in the United States, tells us in his book "Quiet Neighbours":

"Our case was strong . . . but it was particularly poignant because several of the witnesses clearly recalled that Kosiy had made Jewish children his special victims. Maria Ilikovska, a 68 year old Ukrainian housewife, saw Kosiy kill a twelve year old boy who had been hiding in the town after the rest of the Jews had been deported. 'I watched the scene, how Kosiy took out his gun and shot the boy in the back of his neck,' she testified. Pressed on her identification, she grew indignant. 'I am absolutely certain,' she said. 'I am an old woman and I am telling the truth.'

Four witnesses told of watching in fear as Kosiy snatched three year old Monica Singer, daughter of the Jewish towm doctor, from her home and dragged her to the Police station. The child understood too early, what was to happen. She cried out to her mother, who had followed, pleading for her release. 'Mother, he is going to shoot me . . . I want to live.' Kosiy took out his pistol and her mother turned away, unable to watch. Anton Vatseb, his eyes fixed in horror on the unfolding scene, told what happened next. Kosiy stood the child against the wall. 'Then he stepped back around ten steps and then he shot.' Vatseb paused, 'As far as I remember, he shot twice.'"

That was just one incident brought before a court in a civilised country. It is but one incident out of tens of thousands reported since the end of the second world war.

Does anyone in his right senses believe that, if such criminals by some trick of circumstance came here after the war, were admitted to this country and obtained British citizenship, we should now say, even if there is incontrovertible evidence, "Oh no, leave him alone. It all happened a long time ago. Let us forgive and forget."

I do not make a plea for revenge: I agree with what the hon. and learned Member for Montgomery said a few moments ago. I am thinking of future generations, of our honour and of what should be done in circumstances where such a preson has obtained British citizenship. I am thinking of too many people still living who will never forget. I suggest that we have a duty to generations yet unborn to make it plain that such crimes can never really be forgiven. Certainly, they can never be forgotten, and those who committed them should never have acquired British citizenship or be allowed again to breathe British air.

5.43 pm

Mr. Jeff Rooker (Birmingham, Perry Barr): I am grateful to have the opportunity to follow the Father of the House. When we consider the history of the second world war or, indeed, any period in which carnage took place, it should be easy for civilised people to stand back in judgment and say that some things are right and some things are wrong. The Bill is right because of what was wrong during the second world war. I am extremely grateful to the Home Secretary for the way in which he has acted on the matter and brought the Bill to the House at an early stage. In the normal course of events, it would have taken a great deal longer to do so. The Hetherington-Chalmers inquiry recommended that, if legislation were to be enacted, it should be done quickly, for obvious reasons.

The Bill is not on a Jewish issue, and it is wholly wrong for people to put it across that way. We have heard speeches and, indeed, clear evidence that that is not the case. I may have gone a little too far, but nevertheless I stand by it, when I described the Bill as it was published —which is not the way in which I expected it would be published—to one of my constituents as a technical adjustment of nationality law. The kernel of the Bill is to put people who are resident in this country and have rights of abode here—some British citizens and some not—on the same footing as everyone born here. To that extent, it is a technical adjustment of nationality law.

I shall not go into the matters raised by my right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) but other legislation does not deal exclusively with war crimes. In my view it would have been wrong to put other matters in this Bill. The Bill would have had to be drafted differently and its long title and scope would have had to be different. The matter is being dealt with in the right way.

The House must place firmly and clearly on the record, today of all days, that the Bill is not anti-German by any stretch of the imagination. One reads things in print, but one must be careful not to give credence to the shorthand used in headlines by the popular press. That would be wholly wrong.

I met people when I hitch-hiked round Germany and more recently in the autumn when I met people here on the Terrace, who were amazed that Britain had never enacted any war crimes legislation. It occurred to me as the Father of the House was speaking that we are not pioneers but laggards in such legislation. When one sees the roll call in chapter 7 of the Hetherington report of other democratic countries that have enacted legislation, such as the two Germanies, Poland, Holland, France, Belgium, Israel, the United States, Canada and Australia, one realises that we are laggards in coming to the matter now.

I can speak only from second-hand experience about people's memories—for obvious reasons, given my age. In the past four or five years, I have heard three or four people, all elderly men, describe to me what happened to them on 28 May 1940. The events were as clear to them when they spoke to me as they were on the day on which they occurred. They happened at the village of Wormhoudt near Dunkirk. The men told me exactly what I heard Kitty Hart say at the conference chaired by my right hon. Friend the Member for Morley and Leeds, South (Mr. Rees) in autumn last year. They said that, if someone virtually orders one to be put to death, one hears and sees the actions. One tends to remember. Their stories are the same and they can tell us who was in what field, in what barn and at what hour on the afternoon of 28 May 1940.

I accept without equivocation that the people who might be called as witnesses will have clear memories and, from my experience of talking to survivors, they are more than willing to tell their side of the story to officialdom to get justice for the people who did not come back or for those who were injured. There is no fear among those people about telling their side of the story and being subjected to cross-examination.

From our debate in December it was clear that, after the war, public opinion was moulded to look to the future rather than to the past. It was fairly easy to do that in one respect, because no one envisaged that we would allow alleged war criminals to come to the United Kingdom. That notion never crossed my mind, and I am sure it never crossed anyone else's. The moulding of public opinion was also made easier because of the restrictive secrecy legislation that we operate. Many of the files that relate to the second world war are closed for 75 years, and the normal 30-year rule does not apply. It will be 2021 before most of those files are accessible to historians. I do not understand the reason for that. I am told that it is to save embarrassment, but I do not understand to whom embarrassment would be caused.

The Hetherington-Chalmers report is an astonishingly concise survey of an important part of our history. Members of my generation who were born in 1941, or just after, just missed national service. When we were at school, history was more about ancient Rome and ancient Greece than our civil war or events that had just taken place. The war was not treated as history, nor as a current affairs subject. Our education in the 1950s and the early 1960s was bound to be different from the education received by those who fought in the war or the civilians who were hurt by its atrocities.

Unless specific events had occurred to make people stand back and think about them, it would never have crossed anyone's mind that for 50 years Britain may have become, unwittingly, a safe haven for alleged war criminals. I am grateful that the dust cover on that part of our history has been removed. It is clear that alleged war criminals gained entry into our country and, given that they were freely admitted, it is clear that they must have told lies about their background.

Anyone who reads the Hetherington-Chalmers report will be struck that our procedures did not work in the aftermath of war and bureaucratic nightmare that existed in Britain in the late 1940s. That chaos was mirrored across Europe, East and West. In the late 1940s, millions of people moved round Europe and new identities were assumed. How could we be absolutely certain that everyone to whom we gave haven was bona fide and not caught up the criminality of war, as described in the Hetherington-Chalmers report?

In the December debate the former Prime Minister, the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath), for whom I have great respect, thought that the House had been forced into action because of pressures from California. That remark saddened me because, frankly, it does not matter from where that pressure came. If the list of names and allegations had been available in the 1950s, 1960s or the 1970s they should have been acted upon. If someone had held up a list of alleged war

criminals to whom we had given safe haven and demanded action, I am convinced that any Home Secretary and any House of Commons would have addressed the matter.

Those allegations were never made specific until the mid-1980s. We do not need to apologise for our action. I do not believe that this Bill is retrospective in any way. No one charged as a result of the Bill, which changes the law on nationality, will be charged for any offence that was not a crime on the day it was committed.

The Hetherington-Chalmers report also mentions trials conducted in other countries where the defence advanced was that the person had been acting on a superior's orders. Superior orders are not a defence and can never be held as such.

Chapter 7 of the Hetherington-Chalmers report lists what other countries have done in relation to this matter. East Germany and West Germany are, of course, dealt with separately and paragraph 7.18 makes it clear that there are a good many documents held in East Germany to which access has never been available. It is clear, however, as the new country emerges that those documents will be available. The new German nation will be different from the German nation that we have known since the second world war.

The Bill's principal purpose is important, but it is also important that the House should send a signal round the world—not just to those who may have thought that they had a safe haven here. If we enact this legislation it will send a signal to the new German Government, its new authorities and the new bureaucratic system that is bound to emerge from the welding of those two countries. The signal will be clear—we are not prepared to go easy on alleged war criminals once allegations have been made and a prima facie case has been assembled.

If we make it clear that we are not prepared to go easy, I cannot see how the new German Government can continue to follow the example of the West German Government who, appeared to go easy in the case of Wilhelm Mohnke. He is probably the most senior alleged war criminal whose whereabouts are known today. Others may yet be discovered, but he is still in the telephone directory.

Mr. Winnick: I agree with what my hon. Friend said about those Germans whom my hon. Friend had met who did not understand why prosecutions were not undertaken against alleged Nazi war criminals. It is also important to appreciate that the first victims of the Nazis were Germans —we should never forget that. Does my hon. Friend agree that it would be useful if the German Government showed good will by taking action? Much evidence has been produced about that German general to prove undoubtedly—my hon. Friend knows far better than anyone else in the House—that he was responsible for the massacre o British soldiers.

Mr. Rooker: I agree with my hon. Friend, but the case against that general is not just a matter for the United Kingdom.

If we are not prepared to bring to justice those who live in the United Kingdom, with the protection of British citizenship, and against whom a prima facie case exists, how can we expect the German authorities to do likewise? Mohnke was clearly responsible for the order that no prisoners be taken at Wormhoudt in 1940. There are eye-witness accounts that he was responsible for the orders that led to the killing—the murder—of unarmed Canadian and American prisoners of war in 1944 and 1945.

The United Kingdom Government have already made their files on Mohnke accessible to the German authorities. It is about time that the Canadian and United States Governments did the same. We are talking about an ex-general, who was Hitler's last personal general, and whose last task for Hitler was to be in charge of the bunker in the final days. We are not talking about a low-level Nazi soldier, but a full-blooded diehard and committed Nazi SS general who was with Hitler from the early 1930s. Everywhere he went, the death of unarmed people followed, not in the heat of battle but outside it. It is amazing that the United Kingdom, United States and Canadian Governments have not taken up the matter collectively with the German authorities. The United Kingdom is the last of the allied powers to take action to prevent the United Kingdom from being a shelter for war criminals.

If the new Germany country does not want to be accused of being the only place in which a diehard ex-Nazi can live in peace, it will have to take action. I hope that the Bill will send the people of that country a signal, as it will to those in the rest of the world. The Bill is indeed a signal.

I conclude by wishing the staff and officers of the investigating authorities well. They are not being set an easy task, and it will be expensive, but one cannot argue about pounds, shillings and pence in relation to such an issue. In the normal change of public expenditure, we are talking about the fifth decimal point that would be lost when the final column was added up. We are talking about justice.

I reiterate the final sentence in the book on the Mohnke issue, "Hitler's Last General". It quotes the words of Simon Weisenthal:

> "When history looks back, I want people to know that Nazis were not able to kill 11 million people and get away with it."

6.2 pm

Mr. Edward Heath (Old Bexley and Sidcup): When we first debated this matter I voted against the proposal that there should be legislation. I have listened carefully to this debate and have heard nothing to make me change my mind. Therefore, I shall vote against the Bill tonight. Almost everything I have heard has reinforced my convictions. One factor to do so is the passion and emotion with which some right hon. and hon Members have spoken. That will be characteristic of the process in this country if the Bill becomes law.

Why were those statements made in 1948 to which my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary referred? Lord Shawcross set out the minutes of the Labour Government. Whether the House decided or not, the Labour Government decided that no more trials would take place.

Mr. Janner: That is wrong.

Mr. Heath: I prefer to accept Lord Shawcross's decision and quotations from papers rather than the hon. and learned Gentleman. Mr. Churchill made the statement from the Opposition Benches. We have been going through the process of war crimes trials, the publicity

[Mr. Heath]

involved and the effect on the country. I went to the Nuremberg war crimes trials and listened to those conducting them. That is firmly in my mind.

The hon. Member for Birmingham, Perry Barr (Mr. Rooker) made an interesting remark when he said that we were, at that time, looking to the future, and so we were. That was why the Labour Government, Mr. Churchill and the Opposition agreed to call a stop to it. They were looking to the future. We should look to the future. While listening to hon. Members on both sides of the House, I have been impressed by how many of them, speaking with passion, say, "Of course, we have no experience of the war or the events leading up to it. We were not even born at the end of the war." I know from many people who have written to me since the last debate that there is undoubtedly a difference between those who went through those experiences and those to whom it is something quite new.

During the 1930s, Jewish refugees came to a camp close to my home. We knew all about that. The personal experience of the hon. and learned Member for Montgomery (Mr. Carlile) was moving, as was the passionate speech of my right hon. Friend the Member for Castle Point (Sir B. Braine). We have known about and experienced many of these things.

The sister regiment in my brigade was told to take over a concentration camp. We heard about the experience from them. My regiment's recce party was the first into Antwerp and we went to a concentration camp on the way to Antwerp. Those things can never, and will never, be forgotten. The Jewish experiences will never be forgotten; they are part of history. There may be one or two maniacs who say that they never occurred, but who takes any notice of them? No one does so for a moment.

My right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary wisely said that we were confronted with a choice. We could say that the past was the past. He took the advice, prematurely, of the hon. Member for Perry Barr that we should look to the future. My right hon. and learned Friend said that the other choice was to put the Bill on the statute book as a sign that we shall not condone such things. In that, I believe that the Government have come to entirely the wrong conclusion. Nobody will believe that Britain will condone such things. Defeat in the war showed that we would not condone them and the Nuremberg war trials, in all their fulness, after the war and for the first time in history, showed that we would never condone them.

Mr. Gorst: Is it not correct that youthful people caught up in terrifying events are quick to look to the future? In the past few days I have talked to a Romanian who was purportedly in front of a firing squad during the troubles in eastern Europe. He wants to look to the future. Do we not have a responsibility as we get older to think also of the lessons which must be learned from the experiences of our youthful years?

Mr. Heath: If I interpret him aright, I think that my hon. Friend is endeavouring to be complimentary. I agree that when one is young one looks to the future, but with age and experience one can learn from the past in looking to the future. I agree that we should do that.

It is said that we must teach people not to carry out war crimes. At Nuremberg, we carried that through and defeated the people in war who had carried out the war crimes. That has not stopped the orgy of war crimes that has occurred since. It has not stopped them in south-east Asia or anywhere else. When people are in such positions of power and are determined to extend their power, they descend to committing war crimes and do not look to history. We have been unable to influence that or to do anything about it afterwards.

I shall consider the major point of the proposals of my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary: this is retroactive legislation. If it were not, it would not be required. I am not happy about all the other points that he made. He has disowned two of the proposals put forward in the Hetherington report. Let us remember that the report did not take account of the wider issues of which the House should take account, but dealt specifically with legal points, and understandably so. Many of the points about which we have learned today have related to legal matters.

I am not happy about evidence being given on videos or television in a foreign language with the defendant being unable to be on the spot, with his counsel examining him and defending him. Perhaps we have to accept that as part of our normal legal process, but it does not appeal to me as a means of ensuring justice.

The basic point is that this is retroactive legislation, and this situation does not justify it. I am astonished that some of my right hon. and hon. Friends support the idea so readily. I remember a Labour Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1950-51 trying to backdate a measure by a fortnight. There were riots among my party; Members said that such an act was intolerable. Now we are trying to backdate legislation by 50 years, and I cannot believe for a moment that that is justified. We will not be tarnished by the allegation that we have done nothing about war crimes; we shall be tarnished by the idea that we can change our legislation 50 years later, so that anyone who comes to this country and enjoys its privileges will be liable to be affected by retroactive legislation going back 50 years. That is the crucial point——

Mr. Rupert Allason (Torbay): Does my right hon. Friend appreciate that a loophole in the law discriminates against people who were born in this country? If they were born in this country and were British passport holders when they committed a crime overseas, they could be prosecuted at any time; retroactive legislation is not needed for them. All this proposal intends to do is to put foreigners who came to this country after they committed their crimes on the same footing as British subjects who were born here.

Mr. Heath: I realise that, but this retroactive legislation is in no way justified by the reason that my hon. Friend gives. It is proposed, for instance, that large numbers of people should come here from Hong Kong. Many have come from Uganda and from other countries. All of them could be affected by retroactive legislation passed in this Parliament, in a way of which they were unaware when they came here. They can be made liable to prosecution by any future Parliament or Government——

Mr. Rooker: The right hon. Gentleman mentioned Uganda. Ugandan citizens who came to this country in recent years and who are alleged to have been responsible

for committing war crimes are already covered by the 1957 legislation. There is no question of bringing in new legislation to cover them.

Mr. Heath: The point that I am trying to make is that, once we legislate retroactively in one sphere, there is no guarantee that a future Government, backed by a large majority, will not do so in another. That is the crucial point which it is so difficult to bring home to the House. We have never tolerated retroactive legislation in any sphere; we have always fought it. If we give way in this sphere which arouses so much passion and emotion, everyone will realise that the British Parliament is prepared to pass retrospective legislation in others.

That is the main reason why I am still strongly opposed to the Bill, but I want to touch on its consequences. Four people were specified in the report and it is now said that one of them is dead. What chance of a fair trial have the other three, given that the committee has already said that there is a good chance of convicting them? Is this how we want our judicial system to be handled?

We have heard today about the special body that is to be set up to investigate the other cases. That cannot be kept quiet. As soon as investigations start, the press will know about them and the gutter press will run the story on the front pages—and everywhere else. In the past 10 years, the police have developed one of the best public relations systems in the country. No incident at 4 or 5 o'clock in the morning, or on the tube going home, is not immediately reported on television and radio and in the press. That is what will happen to these people.

We have heard today also about some people's remarkable memories. Some people do indeed have them, but those of us who deal with other memories know how fallible they are, particularly those of people who write memoirs. I cannot accept the idealistic tone of some of the comments that we have heard about the perfect retention that some people may have in these trials—some may, but most do not.

These will be show trials. Many people will rejoice about that. The hon. and learned Member for Montgomery spoke most movingly about his friends not wanting heavy punishment or retribution, let alone revenge. They may not want that, but the people who will follow these trials in the gutter press will want it, and that will be immensely damaging to this country. Demands for revenge appeal to the lowest instincts in people——

Mr. Waddington: I wonder whether my right hon. Friend realises that the retrospective legislation to which he takes such exception seems to be expressly allowed for in article 7 of the European convention on human rights, to which we acceded in 1950. The convention specifically states:

"No one should be held guilty of any criminal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a criminal offence under national or international law at the time when it was committed."

But article 7.2 goes on to say explicitly:

"This Article shall not prejudice the trial and punishment of any person for any act or omission which at the time when it was committed, was criminal according to the general principles of law recognised by civilised nations."

The whole argument advanced by Hetherington is that it is incontrovertible that, if these people committed the crimes alleged against them, they must have known that what they doing was criminal and must certainly have known that what they were doing was criminal according to the general principles of law recognised by civilised nations. Was the European convention right or wrong to allow for the very retrospective legislation to which my right hon. Friend objects so strongly?

Mr. Heath: I am objecting to the fact that it is not part of our judicial process or system, and the Home Secretary cannot deny that. If it were part of it, we should not be here debating the Bill. The Home Secretary is trying to introduce the idea to our judicial and legislative systems. Whether these people must have known is a side issue of no consequence. Many of them were brought here by British authorities and could not have known our system of law, let alone foreseen the 1957 Act——

Mr. Waddington: I know that my right hon. Friend is not trying to mislead the House, but he misunderstands what I am saying. I am not arguing that those people knew when they came here that they might be subject to British jurisdiction. I am saying that they knew perfectly well that they were commiting crimes under the laws of every civilised nation.

Mr. Heath: Even that is debatable—[HON. MEMBERS: "Come on."] I am sorry, but we come here to the perennial argument about people who receive orders, a position in which I found myself during the war, as did many of my colleagues and friends. When they believed that they were given orders which they subsequently carried out, they could say that they were not aware that they were breaking the laws of any civilised legal system.

If the Government press on with this Bill, they will be gravely mistaken. I do not envy the position of the Attorney-General when he comes to deal with individual cases under the Bill. Once the process starts, the public will quickly revert to the position of 1948. When the people concerned become known and inquiries are made, the Attorney-General will be pressed by people asking him why he has not brought any action. He will have to say that he does not believe that action is justifiable—if that is his view—in a given case. Then we shall hear exactly the same passionate remarks about what happened leading up to and during the second world war. I do not envy him his position for one moment.

The right action for us to take would have been to adhere to the 1948 decisions. We should have said that we had taken our action, it was known worldwide and it was effective. The Jewish people will never allow what happened to be forgotten for a moment, so that is not a concern of the House either. Our concern is how the people of this country will be affected once this process starts. It will be infinitely damaging, and at a time when eastern Europe and the rest of Europe are looking to the future, we shall find ourselves going back into the past.

6.21 pm

Mr. Peter Archer (Warley, West): The right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) is, of course, always listened to in the House with great respect, but I was a little puzzled when he said that he was troubled by the passion of some of the contributions made to the debate. I would be more troubled if we could discuss these events and remain totally clinical and unmoved.

The case for the Bill is simple and can be stated totally without passion. Certain people, most of whom are United Kingdom citizens and all of whom have been residing among us for a long time, are alleged to have committed

[Mr. Peter Archer]

terrible crimes. The Bill makes provision for the evidence against them to be properly investigated by a court of law, as would be the case if you, Mr. Speaker, or I were subject to the same allegations. That is the case for the Bill.

There is no need to discuss the various justifications for the criminal law. I am reluctant to embark on a discussion about the reason why the criminal law should be enforced in this case. Of course it should be enforced, and it is for those who oppose the Bill to establish why that should not be done. The debate centres on their objections.

As I understand them, they have four objections. First, it is said that the Bill is selective, that it does not deal with all the enormities that human beings have committed and does not include the enormities committed outside German-occupied territories before 1957. I have some sympathy with that objection, which at least troubled my right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley).

I have been arguing for many years for an international criminal law which is enforced in international courts. That is not my invention. It was being discussed in the United Nations in 1947, and at that time people thought that it was about to come into existence. But I pay tribute to the Home Secretary for the speed with which he responded to a widespread and deeply felt call for action, and I can understand why he did not embark on so wide a principle. He is seeking to deal not with a potential problem but with one that is with us here and now. If he had sought to legislate more widely, he might have been criticised. It is a harsh fate for him to be criticised because he is less ambitious in the Bill, although I would have welcomed wider legislation.

The second objection advanced is that all this happened a long time ago and that events so long ago are better forgotten. That was one of the objections of the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup.

Mr. Heath: Not for a moment would I say that they should be forgotten. I said that they will never be forgotten. I said that we should not now embark on this path of legislation and everything that flows from it.

Mr. Archer: I am sorry if I misrepresented the right hon. Gentleman. He seems to be saying that they should not be forgotten but that, having remembered them, we should not act in accordance with them. I accept the distinction, but I am not persuaded by it.

It would be a strange doctrine to say that someone who committed a crime and who remained undetected for a long time should not only enjoy the freedom and prosperity to which he had not been entitled during that time, but should have the whole slate wiped clean. It would be like saying that if, after some years, the people who perpetrated the outrage at the Royal Marines base in Deal were discovered, we should declare, "It is all a long time ago; let us forget about it." Those who are closest to the events would certainly find some difficulty in understanding that doctrine.

The third objection, as I understand it, is that the law is being changed retrospectively. That was the burden of the argument advanced by the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup. It has been suggested that a lawyer is better qualified to pronounce upon these matters than someone who has not had a legal training. I do not agree with that at all, and to that extent I go along with the right hon. Gentleman. The objection to retrospection is that it can be unfair. If it is not unfair, there is no objection to it, and lawyers have no monopoly in deciding what is and what is not unfair. Of course it would be unfair of us to allow someone to do something that appeared to be acceptable and innocuous at the time and then afterwards to say, "We have changed our minds. What he has done will now be made punishable."

That would be unfair, but who will argue that the actions which we are discussing appeared at the time to be acceptable and innocuous? It is not even true to say that the people we are discussing thought that they were acting on orders. They entered enthusiastically on a course of action which they were in a position to implement. They were wicked to a spine-chilling degree and must have known that their crimes were wicked. They were unlawful under the legal system of every civilised country, including the countries where they took place. They were unlawful under international law and contrary to the military manuals in use by the German army at the time. No one is inventing a new crime, the punishment for which would be retrospective.

Of course, without this legislation, the courts of England and Scotland would not have jurisdiction to try these people, even though they are United Kingdom citizens and have been residing among us for a long time. The alternative to the legislation would be to extradite them to the countries where these events took place. But I have not heard them or any objector to the Bill arguing for that solution. It is being said, not that it is unfair for them to be tried in the United Kingdom rather than somewhere else, but that we should wash our hands of the whole matter. That is not an objection based on retrospection; it is an invitation to walk away from the whole thing.

The Attorney-General (Sir Patrick Mayhew): Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman agree that the key to the retrospection issue is to be found in the long title to the Bill, which says that the Bill's purpose is to confer jurisdiction on United Kindom courts in respect of certain crimes? It does not seek to impose criminal penalties for certain conduct which has not hitherto attracted them. Moreover, it would confer jurisdiction not immediately or retrospectively but in the future, at such time as the Bill takes effect. In other words, it gives substantial notice.

Mr. Archer: I am grateful to the right hon. and learned Gentleman for his intervention, and I wholly agree with him. The burden of my submission is that no one in his right mind would suggest that this was unfair, and unfairness is the basis of any objection to retrospection.

The fourth objection is based on the alleged reasons why the accused people cannot be given a fair trial. The right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup suggests that, because the Hetherington-Chalmers report mentioned three specific people and said that there was reason, as its authors understood it, for implementing prosecutions in those cases, those people could not be given a fair trial. In every criminal case the prosecuting authorities say that, in their view, there is good reason to implement a prosecution. The right hon. Gentleman's argument proves too much because it entails that we should abolish the whole of our criminal law system. If I thought that the

people about whom we are talking could not be given a fair trial, I would be among those opposing the Bill, and I hope that no hon. Member would doubt that.

Mr. Gorst: Is it not the case that, if anyone living in this country has a guilty conscience about what he has done, there is nothing to prevent him, between now and the Bill being passed, from extraditing himself to wherever he might be better off?

Mr. Archer: I could not have put it better; I agree with the hon. Gentleman. I am a little troubled that some of them may extradite themselves but not necessarily to countries where there is jurisdiction to try them. That would have been a sensible way to deal with it in the absence of the Bill. They should be sent back to where they can be tried.

Mr. Allason: Is it not pretty unlikely that people will extradite themselves, as the only other country left in the civilised world where these individuals can go to obtain safe haven is Syria?

Mr. Archer: I could not improve on the hon. Gentleman's intervention. I fear that that is true.

I have had a little experience in our criminal courts, both as a recorder and as a magistrate. I do not think so ill of our criminal courts and our jurors as to believe that there cannot be, or will not be, a fair trial in such cases. No system can guarantee that there will never be a miscarriage of justice—there have been some in recent times—but that was where the court was deliberately misled by someone falsifying the evidence. There is no reason to think that that will happen in this case. The conclusion of that argument is that, as no legal system can guarantee that it is proof against any deception, no one should be tried for anything.

Only two specific reasons are suggested as to why the fairness of these trials should be in question. The first is that the potential defendants are old. That will be a consideration for the prosecuting authorities to take into account. If someone is too ill or too old to understand the nature of the offences charged against him and to give proper instructions for his defence, then the trial will not, and should not, proceed. The prosecuting authorities are there specifically to direct their minds to just such questions, and the purpose of the Bill is to empower them to consider such questions. In the absence of the Bill, no one will have power to consider them.

This point is equally true of witnesses. If it transpires that no witness is capable of giving evidence, so no evidence is available, then, unhappy though it may be, the accused person will go free because the prosecution will not be capable of being proceeded with. But we should not be too patronising about this. I know many people in their early or mid-70s who would be outraged if one suggested that, because of their age, they were incapable of understanding what is alleged against them or of explaining what they have to say about it. These matters must be considered in each and every case.

The second reason for anxiety about a fair trial in these cases is that Sir Thomas Hetherington and Mr. Chalmers made suggestions to facilitate the taking of evidence abroad. In the last debate on this subject, my right hon. Friend the Member for Sparkbrook expressed disquiet about changing the law of evidence for one category of case. That principle does not shock me. It has been done for a number of categories of case—for example, for fraud cases. The two proposals in the Hetherington-Chalmers report seem eminently sensible for all criminal proceedings —not to facilitate a prosecution, but to get at the facts, and that may operate in favour of the defence.

But that is now academic. Those two proposals are not in the Bill. Whether they should be introduced in respect of all criminal proceedings or of criminal proceedings in Scotland is something that we may debate at some other time. The only proposal in the Bill is a procedural proposal to avoid the necessity of elderly people making two long journeys instead of one and giving evidence twice instead of once. That could have been achieved by making use of the existing procedure of a voluntary bill.

I am glad that the Home Secretary has provided a procedure that will be much fairer to the defence than a voluntary bill. If that change were introduced right across the board, we would not have to complain so frequently about voluntary bills. This principle enables the judge to decide whether there is sufficient evidence to place the accused on trial. It is for the judge to consider whether the interests of justice require that a particular witness should give evidence orally, and should he decide that, then so be it. It is difficult to understand how that system can be thought to operate unfairly.

We need to take the greatest care to ensure that no injustice is done. We need to do that in very criminal trial, and as these are allegations of such vile and wicked crimes, it is particularly important that there should be a fair trial. But seeing that justice is done includes ensuring that the truth emerges, and that is not achieved by walking away from the problem. Sir Thomas Hetherington and Mr. Chalmers were not indifferent to the need for a fair trial. Some time ago, I was speaking to someone from another country—a distinguished lawyer—who said how fortunate we are to have two such individuals who could produce such a report and produce it so quickly.

The reputation of this country for justice will not be enhanced by shrugging our shoulders, or by displaying an absence of passion. If the Bill does not proceed, we shall be alone, as the hon. Member for Torbay (Mr. Allason) said, among countries where the problem has arisen, certainly outside south America and the middle east, in saying that we would be content to be a safe house for war criminals. We would be administering a deep hurt to those who, like the hon. and learned Member for Montgomery (Mr. Carlile), are either themselves among the victims or closely related to victims. And we would be false to justice itself.

6.36 pm

Sir John Wheeler (Westminster, North): It is a great pleasure to follow the right hon. and learned Member for Warley, West (Mr. Archer), and I agree with all that he said. I found the speech of my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary most persuasive and compelling, in his outline of what the issue is about. Her Majesty's Government had no alternative but to introduce the Bill in the light of what happened in December when, by 348 votes against 123, the House voted in favour of the principle of legislation.

The Bill sets out precisely and concisely what we intend to achieve. It says:

> "The purpose of the Bill is to confer upon United Kingdom courts jurisdiction over offences of homicide committed as war crimes in Germany or German-occupied territory during the period of the Second World War."

[Sir John Wheeler]

The effect of the Bill, should the House agree to it, is that the criminal law would apply to those persons now resident in the United Kingdom who were not British citizens at the time of the alleged offences.

Clause 1 is the substance of the issue. I do not intend to repeat many of the arguments, some of which are emotional and some of which are legal in their basis, in favour of the Bill. Those of us who have been here throughout the debate have heard them all. The Bill effects no great change in the criminal law of the United Kingdom. It effects merely one change—the change that permits a case to be brought before the criminal courts of England and Wales and of Scotland against individuals who were not citizens of the United Kingdom at the material time of the commission of the crime alleged against them.

To do nothing is not an option for the House. Three years ago, information came to our notice—it was not previously available in the public domain—which alleged that the most monstrous crimes had been committed. To say now that they took place 50 years ago and that they do not really matter is not an acceptable option for us.

I seek to answer those who have properly referred to the decision of 1948 not to continue with war crimes trials. We should hark back to the political climate of that time. We and our allies had serious doubt whether peace would continue to be maintained in Europe. It was in the interests of all to conclude the trials for political reasons—and not only for the reasons that Lord Shawcross has advanced to the press in recent times, valid though they were, no doubt, at the time.

The evidence that we have before us as a result of the publication of the Hetherington-Chalmers report is such that we now believe that we harbour in our country those against whom grave and serious allegations have been made. It behoves us to ensure that the criminal jurisdiction, through its normal process and procedures, should have the opportunity to consider the allegations, if that is the right course of action proposed by the Law Officers in their independence. It is for those reasons that I shall vote in favour of the Bill this evening.

6.41 pm

Mr. Merlyn Rees: I do not wish to misrepresent the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath), but I think that he said that many of those who are emotional about the matters raised by the Bill were not involved in the war. He said something like that, and told us that he had received letters about the issues which we are now debating. He talked also about those who acted under orders.

I do not wish to overlard the point, but my father died in the first world war. No one in my family ever gloried in war. I was brought up in that tradition. I suggest that it is only a few who glory in war. It is with that background that I have always taken my children, when we have been on the continent, to see the Commonwealth war graves. I have told them that Germans and others who were our enemies lie in the same cemeteries.

For myself—I was in the middle east and Italy, not in France—I have had a look at north-east France. I was touched to see Chancellor Kohl and President Mitterrand holding hands on the battlefield. The French and the Germans killed more of each other over a period of years than most of the rest of us. I have visited the cemetaries at Caen. I stood with the right hon. Member for Lagan Valley (Mr. Molyneaux) at the anniversary of D-day at the beach where he went ashore in June 1944.

A man came to see me last week who was not in very good shape. He had been on the Lancastria when 2,000 died at St. Nazaire, or in that area, when it was escaping from Dunkirk and taking the long route home. I have visited practically every Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemetery in Italy, where I happened to be.

I have asked myself—I was not there—about the 120,000 who died in Dresden. A war crime? There are those who say that it was not a war crime because it was done under orders. I have read the questioning that took place—I had ministerial responsibility for the Royal Air Force after the war—about whether the bombing of Germany did what it was intended to do.

The right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup will know that the argument was advanced in defence circles in the 1960s that things would have been better if we had had a larger army. It was asserted that we would not have been so weak in Europe when the land battle was fought. I do not wish to be involved in that argument. The fact is that 55,000 of our young men—they were of my age group—lie dead in Europe. I think of them now, when all the talk is about Berlin. They were in groups of eight, and all that is left of them is the bit around their necks. They were set aflame above Berlin. The part that we played in the battle of Berlin is sometimes fogotten.

When a discussion takes place about war crimes, all old soldiers, airmen and sailors say almost instinctively to one another, if not overtly "We were all involved in that, and it was all a war crime." All war is a crime. The next war, which happily seems to be further away from us now, might be fought with nuclear weapons. When I had ministerial responsibility for the Air Force, it was much in my mind that we had aircraft equipped to deliver nuclear weapons that were targeted on Warsaw and Budapest, for example, just as their weapons were targeted on us.

We are not talking about war crimes in the sense in which the term is understood by many old soldiers, airmen and sailors. Everyone who has been involved in modern war knows in his heart of hearts that millions of people lie in north-east France and that the Russians lost 30 million dead in two world wars. We are not talking about that. Paragraph 1.12 of the Hetherington-Chalmers report says that we should consider the terms "war crime" and "war criminal". It states:

> "Most of what are termed "war crimes" in the Second World War were committed far from the front line and have little to do with the actual waging of war."

We are not talking about normal methods of war under orders.

Mr. Amery: The right hon. Gentleman is right to say that there is a difference between what happens in the heat of battle and events at other times at other places. Some of us are anxious about the Bill's selectivity. Horrible things were done well behind the lines by the KGB, or whatever it was called in those days. The Bill deliberately does not cover those acts. Is it appropriate to be selective in the sense of having unfinished business with the anti-Nazi war crimes trials? Should we have a broader Bill, or no Bill at all?

Mr. Rees: The report provides figures for the atrocities carried out by the Soviet forces in 1940-41 in the very area of eastern Europe that we have been talking about in terms of the Nazi war crimes. I see no difference between the actions of the Nazis and those of the Soviet forces. As I understand it, if anyone who participated in the Soviet war crimes is living in Britain, he will be subject to this proposed legislation.

Mr. Amery: I think not.

Mr. Rees: If such a person has come here, settled here and become a British citizen, he will be covered by the Bill. There is a technical consideration. The Bill refers to German-occupied territory. If there is a time factor, that should be put right in the Bill. If it was not German territory at the time——

Mr. Archer: Or German-occupied territory.

Mr. Rees: —we should consider the matter. As far as I am concerned, there is no difference between German territory and German-occupied territory.

The genocide that the Bill is designed to deal with is different from the war crimes against humanity in which so many of us have been involved over the years. That is the context in which the Bill has been drawn. It is not drawn in the context—one that many of us would consider to be nonsense—of the sort of war that we have managed to become involved in over the years in Europe, in which millions have been killed.

I am grateful to the Government for drawing up the legislation, and for listening during the debate—and in many cases after it—to our views on what should be in it. As I have gone round the country talking about this matter, I have repeatedly emphasised that, if I had committed such a crime, I could be brought before the courts, but if my next-door neighbour had come here and stayed, even if he had not become a British citizen, he would be exempt from being brought before the courts.

There is a responsibility in becoming a citizen. It has been said that people may want to leave the country; although that point does not meet the major issue of the commission of crimes, it illustrates the observation made by my right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Perry Barr (Mr. Rooker)—that the Bill is nationality or citizenship legislation, rather than war crimes legislation. The Bill does not create a new crime, but says that people who were not here at the time, but have come here to live, are subject to the law in the same way that the rest of us are.

I am glad that the Government have dealt only with committal proceedings in the second part of the Bill. If I had been Home Secretary, I would have thought carefully about the long title of the Bill, about making it a grandiose Bill and about widening it. If there is a case for the Scots to argue in their Committee about what they want to do with certain aspects of their law, it should be considered in the breadth of Scottish law and not in the narrowness of the Bill. I congratulate the Government on deciding to act in this way.

We decided to support the legislation in a take-note debate in December, and it is the legislation that we must consider. The House has decided on principle, and it has the chance to decide on principle again. However, the detail of the Bill is important: the various clauses, the police unit that will investigate the Bill and the way in which the courts will work. I do not want people to be found guilty, or indeed not guilty, if the procedures of the court do not stand up to British justice.

I have spoken to a number of lawyers in recent weeks, and I listened to the debate in another place, which tended to be legal in tone. The lawyers have told me that they do not wish to prostitute the British courts. Along with others, I have been involved with the case of the Guildford Four; I wish that there had been the same concern about that case as is being projected on to these future cases. I do not like it.

I still involve myself in Irish affairs, and concerns are expressed to me about the courts. If those in another place consider the procedures of the courts, I hope that they do not consider them only in that context of the Bill; there is a wider concern. It has been suggested to me that the handling of the case of the Guildford Four was not the fault of the courts but that of the police and the evidence that was presented. That is not the way that I have thought about the British courts, or the reasons why I ended detention in Northern Ireland and said that people had to go through the courts.

A court is not just a place that sits to listen: it has to make value judgments about the nature of the evidence. I hope that that will be done in the few cases that will come forward under the Bill. I trust the courts, and I believe that the Government's amendments will make the handling of court cases that much better. I support the Bill in principle, as I did before. I think that the Government have set about dealing with war crimes, as defined in the legislation, in the right way.

6.55 pm

Mr. Nicholas Bennett (Pembroke): It is with some trepidation that I follow the right hon. Member for Morley and Leeds, South (Mr. Rees), as I was born four years to the day after the surrender of the Germans in 1945, and have no memories of the last war.

There are two reasons why I wish to take part in the debate. First, for many years I taught that period of history to children in our schools, and also as a lecturer at a further education college. Secondly, I am concerned about what the Bill will do to the British legal system.

Last year, I visited Dachau concentration camp in southern Germany to see for myself the remains of that ghastly place. One can still see the watchtowers, the barbed wire and the killing camp in its entirety. I also visited Belsen, which was razed to the ground after the war. Belsen creates a far greater fear than Dachau, where some of the buildings are still standing. One enters Belsen and sees the mounds in the mist and among the trees. Standing in that killing field, one realises that it is the final resting place of hundreds of thousands of innocent people.

I went on to Nuremberg, where I visited the court and the court room where Goering and the other Nazi leaders were tried in 1946. I saw the place where justice was finally brought to the people who had meted out so much crime and inhumanity to their fellow man. Having said that, I nevertheless have grave concerns about the Bill.

We are proposing to take before the British courts two or three aged men to be tried for crimes that took place 45 to 50 years ago. We are singling out specific individuals. The right hon. Member for Morely and Leeds, South asked whether the Bill applied only to the Germans, and

[Mr. Nicholas Bennett]

to German-occupied territories. It does: if he reads the terms of reference of the Hetherington-Chalmers report, he will see that page 3 paragraph 1.12 says:

"Our terms of reference require us to consider 'murder, manslaughter and genocide committed in Germany or in territories occupied by German forces'."

That has been reproduced on the front of the Bill.

My first objection is that we know that similar crimes took place in Russian-occupied Poland, Latvia and Lithuania. We know that the same atrocities took place before the Germans came, while they were there and after they had left. Surely it is wrong for us to single out one period of time, under one occupation, for special mention in the Bill, when there must be people alive who have committed the same atrocities under another regime whose members will not be prosecuted.

Mr. Rees: I take the hon. Gentleman's point, but all the allegations relate to German-occupied territory. If, before the Committee stage, anyone can show that people living in Britain committed such crimes in the Soviet-occupied areas, after the Soviet-Nazi pact, I am sure that arrangements could be made to amend the legislation.

Mr. Bennett: I wish that that were true.

I take the points made by my right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) in this debate and that of 12 December: the research has not taken place. The manhunt has been selective, and has dealt only with certain crimes in certain places.

My second objection is this. We cannot base our law on one inquiry on one set of incidents. If we are to bring forward a Bill to prosecute war criminals, it must be on the generality of war criminals and not on specific cases of specific individuals. I share the attitude of my right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup: we cannot allow the House to go down the road of retroactive legislation. That would be a dangerous precedent, which the House has always set itself against.

As a young Conservative just beginning my political career in 1964, I experienced the row about the Burmah Oil case. It was suggested that there should have been retrospective legislation. However grave the accusations may be, we cannot now bring in a law to deal with people who were not British citizens for actions that were not under British jurisdiction in a foreign country some 50 years ago, and make that the excuse for retrospective legislation.

I want to deal next with the question whether these people would get a fair trial. I intervened in the speech of my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department—unfortunately, he was diverted by a second intervention—to ask what jury would be able to give a fair trial to an individual brought before it as a result of specific legislation. If Parliament has spent between £7 million and £9 million, and if 35 police officers have been specially employed, there must be something of an onus on the jury to find the defendant guilty. The whole weight of the British parliamentary system will have been brought down on him before trial. In these circumstances, it is not right to say that he will get the fair trial to which every defendant is entitled.

There is also very grave doubt about the question of evidence—in particular, the documents that will be produced. We all know that, over the last 40 or 50 years, the Russians have forged documents for their own purposes in propaganda warfare. It may be that the Russian Government have now changed their tune, but the fact that so many documents have been produced will make it very difficult to determine which are genuine and which are forgeries.

Mr. Rooker: Like one or two other hon. Members, I listened to the chief investigators of the Canadian, Australian and American Governments at the conference in London at the end of last year. Those people, who have been at the receiving end of evidence supplied by the Soviet authorities, had never—not once—in the course of their inquiries come across a forged or faked document. All the documents having been tested rigorously in every possible way, there was not a single example of the Russian authorities' having put forged documents up for consideration.

Mr. Bennett: That is, so far as they could tell. We know that there are Russian forgeries.

Mr. Cormack: Does one not have just a few questions to ask when one considers the attitude that, until very recently, the Russians adopted to the Katyn massacre?

Mr. Bennett: My hon. Friend makes a very valid point. There have been many years of misrepresentation about that massacre. Only recently have we been getting the truth about what happened in that Polish wood in 1940.

I want to turn now to the question of identification. I pray in aid the very good debate in another place on 4 December. In that debate, virtually the whole of judicial opinion and the balance of argument was opposed to the introduction of legislation. In column 627 of the *Official Report*, Lord Walston is reported as having said:

"However, against that, there are other arguments. Surely it is"——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): Order. It is not in order for a Member to quote the *Official Report* of anyone but a Minister in another place. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will be able to paraphrase the noble Lord's remarks.

Mr. Bennett: I apologise, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As a fairly new Member, I was unaware of that rule. I shall summarise the noble Lord's remarks. He said that, after 50 years, it must be very difficult for any witness to bring forward, from the back of his memory, proper identification of people who in that 50 years will have changed, possibly beyond recognition. That point must be borne in mind when we consider what trials will take place in this country.

I come now to the question of defence. In the debate to which I have just referred, Lord Hailsham made very clear the problems that the defence will face in trying to bring forward evidence. The defendant will be denied the opportunity to go to the USSR or to the Baltic states, to interview people, to consult the official records, to find the evidence. All these facilities will be available to the prosecuting authorities, but will be denied to the defence, which will therefore be placed in a very difficult position. That matter has not been taken properly into account in considering whether these people will get a proper trial.

Mr. Archer: The hon. Gentleman has made the very definite assertion that the defence will not be able to go to

the Soviet Union and make these searches. Would he like to give a reason for saying so? what he says is certainly contrary to the views stated by Hetherington-Chalmers.

Mr. Bennett: I refer the right hon. and learned Gentleman to the speech of Lord Hailsham—column 631 of the House of Lords *Official Report*. I am not allowed to quote the noble Lord's remarks, but suffice it to say that he demolished to his own satisfaction—and, as a former Lord Chancellor, he is worth listening to—the argument that it would be possible for the defendant in such a trial to obtain the evidence that would be available to the prosecution.

Mr. William Powell (Corby): I think that we may assume that any defendant would be on legal aid. Can my hon. Friend confirm that, to enable a legally aided defendant to make inquiries of the sort to which he is referring, it would be necessary not only to change the regulations on legal aid but almost certainly to introduce primary legislation? There is no such power at the moment.

Mr. Bennett: I am afraid that, as I am not a lawyer, I am not able to confirm or deny what my hon. Friend says. I believe that he is a lawyer, and I suspect that he would not have asked the question if he had not known the answer already.

On the question of what would happen should a trial take place, concern has already been expressed about the impact that it would have on public opinion. I believe that it would not be in the interests of British justice or of the good name of our courts if three elderly men were put on trial—with all the difficulties that they would have in producing evidence, the problems of identification, the time that had elapsed, and the cost of the prosecution. I do not believe that the British public would feel that that was a good use of judicial resources or of the time of the police. It would bring the courts into disrepute.

I want to finish with two quotes. One is from remarks of Lord Shawcross, who has already been quoted in this debate. I refer not to his letter in *The Times* of last Saturday but to his letter to *The Times* of 29 July 1989:

> "I cannot believe that a revival of all these sad and terrible matters by sensational trials of a small handful of aged men, which will take years to conduct and which will start with an assumption of guilt, will help to promote understanding and friendship between the different peoples of the world, will help to eliminate the evil of anti-Semitism or—still less—enhance the respect for British justice."

Lord Shawcross was not only Attorney-General in the Labour Government of 1945-50 but also chief prosecutor at the Nuremberg war crimes tribunal. We ought to remember also the words of Sir Winston Churchill when, as Mr. Churchill, in a speech in Zurich on 19 September 1946, he said:

> "There must be an end to retribution. We must turn our backs upon the horrors of the past, and we must look to the future."

The men at whom this legislation is directed are near to death. I suggest that we leave it to God to deal with them.

7.8 pm

Mr. Ted Leadbitter (Hartlepool): This is our second time round the course of the debate on alleged war crimes. In December 1989, the House gave its response to the Hetherington-Chalmers report, and the Home Secretary has now come to the House with a Bill that is not retrospective. I am surprised at the number of hon. Members who have sought to defend preconceived notions about its being wrong that this Bill should be retrospective. The title of the Bill exposes the fallacy of their case. In December, I dealt with two aspects of alleged war crimes —morality and retrospectivity—and the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) left the Chamber, as, indeed, he is now doing. I see that he is returning. That is kind of him. He will not learn anything original, but I hope that he will realise that I am trying to be objective about this subject, as he was.

An interesting thing about this debate is that there is right in all the arguments. Hon. Members have spoken with sincerity. In December, I said that we should put emotion and feelings of that kind behind us, and that we should not seek retribution. I draw a comparison between the judgments that we make when we are young and those that we make when we are older, with the benefit of experience. There should be no unreasonable criticism of any right hon. or hon. Member's contribution to this debate—certainly not that of the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup, whose work in Europe and in this House have been outstanding.

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: How can one put emotion and retribution behind one in the case of crimes that are unique in their enormity? Is the hon. Gentleman suggesting that we should put aside emotion and ignore the fact that millions of people died in gas ovens, or were shot and thrown into pits at Minsk in Russia, and in other places? If we are not concerned with retribution and with the emotion that those evil crimes arouse, why are we having this debate? Either we are introducing a unique measure to deal with unique crimes, or we are not.

Mr. Leadbitter: The hon. Gentleman makes a legitimate point. I am not suggesting that emotion and anger do not exist, but that they should be put aside in making judgments on securing a fair trial. That objective will not be achieved if anger and emotion, rather than reason, lie behind the creation of the legislation. Reason must predominate, and that is the test.

I am sure that the hon. Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Mr. Beaumont-Dark) shares the beliefs of most right hon. and hon. Members who visited, and certainly of anyone who experienced, Belsen, who witnessed the dreadful consequences of the invasion at Dieppe, who fought in the north African campaigns and in Italy, or who remembers the dreadful outcome of the Salerno affair. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman shares the views of those who saw what Dunkirk really meant and the feelings of us all when VE day arrived. Yes, they all raised emotions, because we were fighting a war not for territory but for freedom and liberty.

As to the time scale, is there any example in law of a time scale on criminality? There is not. We must set that aspect aside, because if we can establish criminality, there is no justification for attaching a time scale to it. In our debate last December, I said that I was sorry that Sir Anthony Blunt had been exposed only because the Government should have dealt with him earlier and not covered him up for so long. The courts will take the defendant's age into account in any trial, so it is not for this House to decide a time scale on criminality. The Bill makes it clear that it is not retrospective at all. The full title states that its purpose is to

> "confer jurisdiction on United Kingdom courts in respect of certain grave violations of the laws and customs of war".

[Mr. Leadbitter]

Anyone who has given service to this country knows that in the 19th century and in the early part of the 20th century—particularly following the first world war—a series of conventions and treaties was formulated, setting out specific customs and laws of war, to which we were signatories. In addition, the European convention on human rights makes it clear that no one can be charged with a criminal offence that was not an offence at the time that it was committed—excepting that article 7.2 of the convention makes it clear that a person shall be tried and punished for offences that existed in accordance with international law. We are also a signatory to that article.

In case any doubt remains on the question of retrospectivity, I quote that article:

"This Article shall not prejudice the trial and punishment of any person for any act or omission which for the time when it was committed, was a criminal offence according to the general principles of law recognised by civilised nations."

The Hetherington report shows that, there is a special distinction to be drawn between that and the conventional caveat of non-criminality, where an offence did not occur in law when it was committed. Article 7.2 allows nations later to take jurisdiction over acts which, at the time of their commission, were regarded already as being criminal by international standards.

It has been established that, in accordance with the laws and customs of war to which we have been signatories for more than 100 years, and in accordance with the European convention on human rights, to which we are also a signatory, the Bill will merely put in place a provision that is already accepted in international jurisprudence.

The question arises why it is necessary to establish new paraphernalia to pursue just a few war criminals. Since when did this House decide to enact any law on the basis of the possible number of convictions that it would allow? Since when did any Minister say, "We shall pass a law to make it an offence to do so and so, but not if someone argues that only two or three people might commit that offence"? In terms of time scale, international jurisprudence, existing law, the customs of war, and the numerical justification for law-making, the Home Secretary appears to have produced a wise, short and reasonable Bill that has regard to the argument made by those seeking such legislation—that they want action to be taken only in cases where there is evidence of a war crime.

I concluded my contribution to last December's debate by saying that it is not the business of this House to anticipate the action of the courts. Our function is to fulfil the legislative requirement that will allow the courts to function. I would not be too worried if the courts decided not to imprison or pursue a war criminal for reasons of age. I would be happy to see the mere exposure of such a person.

Hon. Members have been talking about the future. Since the last war we have been living with a fallacy—that we have had peace in Europe for 40 years because of the atom bomb. We have been lulled into thinking that there will be no more wars. Some people say that the time has come when we do not need the atom bomb. They say that we are more civilised and that, because of the new feelings and drives towards unity, co-operation and harmonisation in Europe—as the hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup said—there is unlikely to be another war. How foolish. There have been more wars in the world since the second world war than at any time before it.

It is a sickening experience to witness international bodies such as the United Nations standing aside and all the paraphernalia of conventions being put aside for political reasons—expediencey and aquiescence—while murder has taken place in the rest of the world. Who lifted a finger to help Cambodia and to stop that happening again? Who worried too much about Vietnam? Who is worried about the misery in the Philippines? Some states, for political reasons, will not even provide aid to the thousands of hungry and pathetic women and children in Ethiopia. Who says that it will not happen again?

Our legislation must provide for the future. I agree with the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup that we must look to the future. One cannot be certain of getting rid of the horrifying consequences of criminality, torture, murder and genocide if those who are prepared to carry out such acts know that Great Britain will be a haven for them. We must make it abundantly clear, in the Bill, that we respond to the growing international library of jurisprudence and to all the good sense in the laws and customs of war. We must make it clear that we are not just being retrospective but that our legislation is responding to conventions and treaties. We must ensure that no crime committed against international jurisprudence can escape justice by default in Britain.

In 50 years' time, people may say that it was a good thing that Britain woke up and got into line with America, Australia, Germany and even East Germany. Those countries have put into their legislation the provisions that we are seeking in the Bill. The likelihood is that there will be another maniac. There are always the Idi Amins of this world. There is the beast in Iraq, who is not fit to walk in a pigsty, but is often drinking cocktails with other politicians. We should not be concerned about political expediency while the people whom we represent are at risk. Therefore, we must put something that our children will say is wise into our legislation.

If another dictator arises, if the jackboot is allowed to march again, and if there are other concentration camps with other kinds of brutality, the people who perpetrate such crimes should know that they will not get away with using Britain as a haven.

At present we are prepared to take a British subject to court, if the evidence shows that he committed a war crime, but not an alien, who has perhaps got British nationality by questionable means—as some of the evidence shows—and who might live in the same street. We are prepared to take to court the person who is our true kith and kin but not the other, an alien who has managed to become a naturalised British citizen. The treatment of those two people cannot be fair. More than three people may be convicted because of the Bill and, whatever their age, if they are found to have falsified information to get British naturalisation papers they should be sent back whence they came.

We are trying to comply with good sense and good reason in international law. The war is still very much on our minds and if we cannot understand war and its consequences we will never fully understand peace. Our language is built on opposites to enable us to understand the meaning of the words that we use—such as war and peace, night and day, long and short. Those words have a meaning only if they have an opposite. The consequences

of war are horrific. They are more dangerous today than before the second world war, as the whole world could now be obliterated without much effort—it needs only one maniac.

If we can understand war, we shall have a better understanding of how we can promote peace. As a part of that process we must make it abundantly clear that people who brutalise others or commit offences against human dignity will be prosecuted.

7.28 pm

Mr. William Powell (Corby): One week before I was born, the then Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs made a statement to the House to the effect that it would no longer be Government policy to seek the extradition of people on British soil or in British-occupied territories for trial here or in other countries. At the time he had all-party support for that. It was decided that we should, to use Sir Winston Churchill's words, draw the sponge over war crimes trials. That was a deliberate, calculated and almost universally approved decision.

The Under-Secretary of State at the time was the Member of Parliament for Norfolk, South. He is now Lord Mayhew. He made a speech about this in the other place when the matter was debated in December. He made it plain that he was aware at the time that thousands of people, possibly tens of thousands of people, who had come to this country from Yugoslavia and all over eastern Europe had not been adequately screened and that a deliberate decision had been made not to investigate and screen them further but to draw the sponge over them.

For the next 41 years, that policy stood: that people who had come unscreened to this country would not be investigated and that all those old matters would not be reopened. We have to ask ourselves in this debate, as in the earlier debate, whether that decision should be revoked. Lord Mayhew said that that should be done only if the 1948 decision were grossly wrong.

We have to ask ourselves a fundamental political question: should we reopen what was deliberately closed in 1948? I approach that question with the same degree of doubt as the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) approached it in his speech. There are many arguments on both sides of the question. We should be well advised to pay attention to what is said on both sides.

I have read many times every word that was said in the debates in the other place and in this place, and I have come to the view that we should not reopen the decision that was made in July 1948. Are the circumstances surrounding that decision so grossly wrong as to justify us, all these decades later, changing our minds? I do not believe that they are.

I have the honour and privilege to represent many hundreds of people who were born behind what used to be called the iron curtain, rapidly disappearing. The largest number come from Latvia, a country forgotten for decades but now re-emerging in newspapers and on television and radio. I know many of the people who came to this country from Latvia in the years immediately after the second world war. Some of them made their way on foot from Latvia across northern Europe, from the Baltic across the Carpathians and by way of Feluccas through the Greek islands to north Africa where they joined Her Majesty's forces in the Eighth Army and fought with distinction with the British forces in both north Africa and Italy.

Others had even more extraordinary experiences. They became slaves—there is no other description for it—for the Nazis. In due course, they fell into allied and British hands. Awful things were done in those years. No hon. Member, or anyone who lives in Europe, can forget what happened. The Latvians feel threatened by some of the publicity that is swirling around this matter.

Mr. Allason: Why?

Mr. Powell: My hon. Friend asks why. The popular press in particular has identified groups and individuals as people who were involved in war crimes. However, there is no evidence for that. Not one of those people is named in the report. However, Latvians are undoubtedly being identified as having been involved in war crimes. One of my constituents has been so identified, but I understand that his name does not appear in the report.

Mr. Allason: Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Powell: No. I want my hon. Friend to listen for just a moment.

People who have made an important contribution to this country since the second world war feel that they are threatened. That may seem irrational. However, certain immigrants feel threatened by the publicity that is swirling around them. We know that is true of the Bangladeshis and the Jews——

Mr. Allason: Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Powell: My hon. Friend must please contain himself. All being well, he will have an opportunity to make a contribution in his own way. I am surprised that he has adopted such an attitude. He was the Conservative party's parliamentary candidate for part of my constituency in the 1979 general election. He is as aware as I am of the Latvian community in the constituency.

I have a duty to draw the attention of the House to the fact that hundreds of my constituents have said to me again and again that the ugly, slanderous reports that have appeared in the newspapers in this country are deeply offensive to them.

Mr. Allason: Then they should sue for libel.

Mr. Powell: My hon. Friend knows that that is an utterly unworthy answer. These people are of modest means and outlook. They do not have the resources to take on the giants of Fleet street who are prepared to say almost anything to sell newspapers.

I have a duty on behalf of my constituents to say that some of the publicity has been offensive and wrong and without any foundation. Therefore, the atmosphere in which future trials may take place will not be calm and deliberate. Sensationalism will take its place.

I spent some years appearing before British juries—with only, I have to confess, modest success. I do not doubt, though, the ability of an English jury—I use that description deliberately, in deference to my hon. Friend the Member for Halesowen and Stourbridge (Sir J. Stokes)—to reach a fair result. If the Bill becomes law, what worries me is that, if old men are brought to court, they may be acquitted because the evidence to convict them will not hold up in court. What could be a greater travesty of

[Mr. Powell]

British justice than for people who may have been involved in the early 1940s in unspeakable crimes to be brought before English courts and then acquitted because of the depressing quality of the evidence?

I respect what the hon. and learned Member for Montgomery (Mr. Carlile) had to say. He spoke with conviction and with a flavour that did not only him but also his family justice. Nevertheless, he knows, as I know, that when people give evidence in court they can be utterly certain about the identification that they make; nothing can shake their conviction about the accuracy of their memory, but they are, nevertheless, wrong.

The House is normally concerned with the dangers of evidence about identification. This matter is normally discussed in that context. A witness who is correct is better than any number of witnesses who are incorrect, but no hon. Member has the right to forget, just because we are discussing unspeakable and unforgettable past crimes, the real dangers that arise when witnesses appear to be certain, are convinced that they are right but nevertheless are wrong.

Mr. Carlile: As he would expect, I agree with the hon. Gentleman about the dangers of acting on identification evidence alone. However, does he not accept that in most of the cases which are likely to be brought before the courts there will be plenty of documentary evidence in the archives to show that the people charged were present and participated in the actions in which they are alleged to have taken part? Does he agree, therefore, that there is likely to be very little issue about identification in those cases?

Mr. Powell: Most interventions in the House are not very helpful, but the hon. and learned Gentleman has brought me to my next point. His intervention enables me to say that I accept that the evidence likely to be placed before the courts is unlikely to be confined to the evidence of identification.

That question was addressed directly in a letter that appeared in *The Times* last Saturday. Below the letter by Lord Shawcross, which has already been mentioned and which was definitive in its terms, was a letter from Sir Frederick Lawton. The hon. and learned Gentleman knows as well as I do that there has been no more distinguished judge in criminal cases than Lord Justice Lawton. He identified the difficulties that would face a judge in summing up fairly so as to give a jury an accurate and fair opportunity of assessing the quality of the evidence before it. What Sir Frederick Lawton had to say should not be brushed aside as of no consequence, as clearly judges would have to face a real difficulty in those circumstances. I hope that the House will not overlook that dimension, which so far has not received much attention.

The speech in the other place which I consider particularly important was made by the Lord Bishop of St. Albans. He spoke, as a bishop and a Churchman with experience of Israel, having taught at the Hebrew university, of his reactions to the proposals before the House. Having concluded that it would be wrong to proceed, as did virtually everyone in the other place—not only the lawyers, but virtually everyone—he then relied upon something which is of personal importance to me, and, I imagine, to a number of right hon. and hon. Members. In due course we will all face the ultimate judge of all our actions. It may well be that our criminal justice system will be imperfect for those people who survive and those who did not and for the 42 years between a decision to stop prosecutions and a decision that we may be making to reopen this can of worms. Nevertheless, we will all have to face the ultimate day of judgment, and that judgment will be a great deal more terrible than we earthly men can inflict on their fellow human beings.

7.43 pm

Mr. Jacques Arnold (Gravesham): I should like to re-focus on what the Bill is all about. Like the hon. and learned Member for Montgomery (Mr. Carlile), I declare a personal interest. My father came to Britain as a war refugee in 1940 from his native Holland. In 1945 he returned to Amsterdam to trace his family. Hon. Members can imagine his hurt when he found that, of the descendants of his grandparents and their families, no fewer than 36 men, women and children were torn from their homes, loaded on to trains and transported to the east, never to return.

However, one cousin managed to survive and his case is relevant to the debate. He was two years old and his mother was expecting another child. Mother and child were afflicted by an ailment which took them into hospital where the baby was born. The Germans came for all three. One nurse, on being asked for the little boy, was quick-witted enough to hand over the corpse of another young boy, thus saving my cousin's life. The little boy spent the rest of the war with the nurse's family who were woodcutters in the Dutch countryside, and survived to become an architect and the father of a young family.

During my lifetime I have been conscious of my father's great hurt, which he took to his grave. Hon. Members can imagine the shame which I felt when it recently became clear that some of those murderers have long found sanctuary in Britain, free from prosecution because they were not British when they committed the crime.

The survivors, their families and the world look to Britain as a country where justice prevails. It would be to our shame if the situation that we are discussing today were to continue.

The House is being asked to allow those people to be subject to British justice in the same way as all other British residents. Through the Bill we shall ensure that our jurisdiction covers their cases. I urge all right hon. and hon. Members to vote for the Bill, uphold Britain's reputation and let justice be done.

7.45 pm

Mr. Gerald Bermingham (St. Helens, South): I listened with some interest to the words of the hon. Member for Corby (Mr. Powell) who spoke about the Latvians. There are not many Latvians in my constituency, as far as I know, but there are a considerable number of Ukrainians, who came over after the war to work in the coal mines in south Lancashire. Their land was also overrun during the second world war. Allegations have been made against Ukrainian prison guards and some cases have been proved in countries throughout Europe. However, that does not mean that the Ukrainians in my constituency say to me that there should not be justice for the sins of the past; on the contrary. I took the trouble to find out as I knew that this debate was forthcoming.

I declare an interest as a practising barrister, and like any lawyer I have looked at the Bill, questioned the fact that it is retrospective and wondered whether there is a better way. I have also looked at the justice that lies behind the Bill.

One can have reservations, and I shall come to those in a moment, but the real question is what is just, not purely in English terms, but in European terms and in terms of humanity. What are we talking about? Relatives of mine were among the first soldiers into Belsen and other concentration camps. The scenes they described to me years later have left me cold ever since. The concept that women and children could be squeezed into a cattle truck, transported across Europe without food and sanitation, bundled out, stripped off and gassed to death is abhorrent. Surely anybody who participated in that bestiality needs to be brought to justice.

My predecessor but one, Lord Shawcross, has changed his view since 1948 when he prosecuted the Nuremberg trials. I say openly that he is wrong. What was a crime in the 1940s is still a crime today. Time does not diminish criminality. Perhaps it is a slur upon us that people have not been brought to justice through the passage of time. Perhaps that is where we were wrong and, as my hon. Friend the Member for Hartlepool (Mr. Leadbitter) said, perhaps the time has come for us to bring ourselves into line with other nations and other systems. That is not a large step to take, but it is a proper one.

I said earlier that I have two reservations. First, I am concerned about identification evidence. The history of our legal system has taught us time and again that identification is a treacherous area; mistakes have been made. We all know that a month after an event someone can make a mistaken identification, and one suspects that 50 years later there will be real and grave risks. I understand that up to 75 cases may come before the courts, but identification may not be the major criterion.

When identification is at issue in a trial we should be careful how it is carried out. We should perhaps give some thought to instituting a system—it may serve us later in cases of another nature—that ensures that we are extremely careful in the identification process. It could be the subject of a preliminary voir dire before the main trial begins. The majority of cases are well documented, so I suspect that identification will not be a problem.

I hope that the Bill will get on to the statute book, because criminality and bestiality are not confined to between 1939 and 1945. As my hon. Friend the Member for Hartlepool said only too ably, it exists in the far east, in the middle east and throughout the world. Perhaps one day tyrants will learn that cruelty does not pay because the rest of the family of nations is only too ready to bring them to justice.

The second question raised in my mind is that as we look at the changing face of Europe—politically, it has changed in the past 12 months—we should begin to consider our extradition treaties with other European countries. One of the problems with war criminals has been that we have not had extradition treaties with certain countries. Thus "refugees"—escapees would probably be a better way of describing them—have been able to avoid justice. They were able to lie and cheat their way into not only Britain but other countries. We should consider the extradition treaties that we have, or do not have, with countries that we called part of the eastern bloc, because I suspect that before too long they will be part of the European bloc.

I said that I would not speak for long because the issue is extremely simple. Either one believes in justice and that it is timeless or one does not. I believe in justice and that it is timeless and that the Bill should receive the support of the House.

7.53 pm

Mr. David Sumberg (Bury, South): If there was one remarkable feature of last December's debate on the Hetherington report, which I remind the House concluded with an overwhelming majority in favour of legislation along the lines of the Bill, it was that hon. Members on both sides of the argument drew on their personal experiences. I shall never forget the speech of the hon. Member for Newcastle-under-Lyme (Mrs. Golding), in which she recalled the experiences of her late father, Ness Edwards, or the speech of the hon. and learned Member for Montgomery (Mr. Carlile), whose family were victims of the Nazi holocaust.

I cannot follow that theme because, by the grace of God, my forebears left Europe long before Hitler for the United States. If I cannot make that personal contribution, I can perhaps speak on behalf of those who could if they had the privilege of being a Member of the House.

My constituency, like many others, comprises people of all faiths and backgrounds, but among those who live in it are a substantial number of the Manchester Jewish community. Like many others, they have been the victims of what we have been discussing. Some members of that community came to Britain before the gates closed in 1939. As small children, they were sent here by their parents, who knew what would happen to them. They never saw their parents, friends or homes again. A precious few, by a miracle, survived the camps and made their way to Britain after the war.

I know those people not only as constituents but as clients when I practised as a solicitor in Manchester before becoming a Member. I said to them, "You urged me to vote for the Hetherington report, which I did, and you urged me to vote for the Bill, which I will, but I must tell you that some Members of Parliament say that you want these measures because of a desire for revenge." Without exception, they said, "Even if that were our motivation, the Bill and the prosecutions that may follow will never avenge the loss of our parents, friends or homes and the loss of the innocence and peace of childhood."

What motivates those people to urge me to vote for the Bill? It is not revenge or the need for retribution but the need for justice. Justice means many things to many people and I shall not try to define it, but it is not allowing a group of people who lied and deceived the authorities to obtain residence and British citizenship, and who may have committed the foulest and most awful crimes, to escape being brought before the courts merely because of the jurisdictional quirk that because they were not born here they cannot stand trial, while I and the majority of hon. Members could stand trial. To allow that to happen is not justice, however and whoever defines it.

I shall deal briefly with two of the principal arguments against the Bill. The first, and we have heard it from both sides, is that the evidence given in a trial would be too old

[Mr. David Sumberg]

or too blurred by the passage of time—the phrase used in the other place was "old men forget"—for any prosecution to be brought or any verdict to be given. That is not a matter for Members of Parliament. Whether a prosecution is brought, whether the evidence behind it is sufficient, whether the accused is fit to plead and whether public policy dictates prosecution are decisions for the prosecuting authorities. Whether there is a conviction and whether the evidence can sustain a conviction is a matter for the judge and jury of the court.

It would be a bleak day for the country and for the House if ever Members of Parliament decided who should be prosecuted or, worse, who should be guilty and who innocent. The House has a duty to determine the law. Others have a duty to put it into practice.

On the historic nature of the evidence, I remind the House that a few months ago Lord Aldington brought an action for defamation in the civil courts. He was awarded the largest amount of damages for a libel case—£1·5 million—in the history of the English and, for all I know, the Scottish courts. I shall not go into the facts of that case. Suffice it to say that it revolved around events that occurred immediately after the second world war, just 43 years ago.

A similar period has elapsed since the matters that we are discussing took place. As far as I am aware, no one in that trial suggested that the events took place too long ago. Presumably the jury included men and women who were not even born when the events took place. No one suggested that it was too long ago for the courts to come to a proper decision. It has never been part of English law, either in criminal or civil matters, that there is a time bar on bringing cases or prosecutions.

Another argument against action on the lines proposed by the Bill is that we should let sleeping dogs lie. I mentioned earlier that I came from Lancashire. A horrendous crime took place 24 years ago on the Pennines. By dint of good police work the people who committed the moors murders were arrested, brought to trial and convicted. Until this very day they are still in custody. If, instead of being caught, Myra Hindley and Ian Brady had escaped the net and had not been discovered until, say, 24, 34 or 44 years after the crime was committed, no Government whatever their colour would have dared come before the House or the country and suggest that there should be no prosecution and that we should let sleeping dogs lie.

Mr. Bermingham: I entirely endorse the hon. Gentleman's proposition. In a recent case that came before the courts—I cannot remember in which part of England—the body of a wife was found in a lake and the husband was prosecuted for her murder 10, 15 or 20 years after the event. Time has never been a bar.

Mr. Sumberg: I entirely agree. Time has never been and never will be a bar.

In putting the let-sleeping-dogs-lie argument against the Bill, some say, "We know about the holocaust. We know what went on and we condemn the horrors. It was a time that was ghastly and awful. We know that racism, prejudice and intolerance can, if unchecked, lead to Auschwitz, Treblinka and Belsen." One of the most distressing by-products of recent events in eastern Europe, of the rebirth of freedom and the re-creation of democratic life and speech, has been well reported by the press and in the House on other occasions. Since that rebirth of freedom there has re-emerged some of the historic anti-semitism that may have been the basis for what took place 50 years ago.

As democratic politicians, and because Britain was the beacon of hope throughout the war years as the nation that fought Nazi Germany from beginning to end, we have a duty to make it absolutely clear to the new democracies, which we welcome——

Sir Nicholas Fairbairn (Perth and Kinross): We are not discussing anti-semitism. We are discussing retrospective prosecution, in which extradition would be available. It is not because of the nature or the race of the victim that prosecutions should be brought. Surely my hon. Friend is not saying that. I have just returned from Auschwitz, where I saw young French Jews throwing stones through the window of a Christian church. We are discussing whether it is right to change the law of England and the law of evidence in Scotland to take revenge against people or convict people, regardless of their race. It is their crime that matters.

Mr. Sumberg: My hon. and learned Friend may not have heard the early part of my speech when I dealt with the legal aspects. I was simply saying that there is a wider context. As politicians and parliamentarians we have a duty to make it clear to the emerging European democracies that such behaviour will not do. If we did not agree to the Bill we should send the wrong signal to the Europe of today and of tomorrow and we should undoubtedly give the wrong epitaph to the Europe of yesterday.

8.7 pm

Mr. Michael Irvine (Ipswich): Of one thing we can all be sure: hon. Members are united in revulsion at the terrible deeds that were committed in eastern Europe during the second world war.

Sir Nicholas Fairbairn: By whom?

Mr. Irvine: That is another issue, which I shall deal with later.

Terrible deeds were committed. I can say with complete confidence that the House is united in its revulsion. The scale of the deeds and crimes committed, and of the suffering of those who were oppressed and the barbarity of the oppressors were terrible. Such matters stir the emotions of us all. It is at this point that we must be cautious. It is precisely when our emotions are stirred and our sensibilities affronted, and we are seized by the feeling that there must be retribution, that emotion takes over and justice is diminished. It is precisely now that the greatest vigilance is necessary to make sure that justice is defended.

Mr. Winnick: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Irvine: No. I wish to press on.

Although the suggestion has been challenged during the debate, we should make no mistake about the fact that this is retrospective legislation. When the crimes were committed in the years between 1938 and 1945, they were not triable in our courts. They are not triable now. We need the legislation in the Bill to make them so triable. That is retrospective legislation. Retrospective legislation

is always a dangerous enterprise when it relates to civil issues—for exanple, taxation—but it is even more dangerous when it relates to criminal law and when a person's liberty is involved.

The fact that legislation is retrospective is not my greatest concern, as there are other, more serious and fundamental, objections to it. The key issue in most war crime trials will be identification. It is likely that it will be proved beyond any question of doubt that the crimes under scrutiny were committed, but by whom? Were they committed by the man in the dock? The issue of identity will be at the heart of that question.

Identity is a dangerous area of criminal law at all times when it is used in evidence. Even when the crime is comparatively recent and the person giving evidence saw the person in question in circumstances reasonably favourable to identification, with every year that passes the greater is the risk that the evidence of identity is wrong. After three to six years, the evidence of identification becomes unlikely, after 45 years it is wholly unreliable, if not impossible.

In a powerful and moving speech, the hon. and learned Member for Montgomery (Mr. Carlile) gave examples of how such dreadful crimes had touched members of his family. He told us about members of his family who had managed to survive, who were, on occasions, assaulted or otherwise abused by soldiers. He said that those occasions had been burnt into their minds and that they could remember vividly the look of the soldiers involved.

The problem is that the people in the dock will not be anything like those same soldiers. In the past 45 years, their faces, their bearing, possibly their very characters and attitudes, will have changed immeasurably. It will be virtually impossible to identify them.

Mr. Allason: This point has been covered by the Hetherington-Chalmers report. The cases studied in that report have no doubts attached to them in terms of individual identification. There is documentary evidence and testimony from the individuals themselves about where they were, what they were doing and to which einsatzgruppe they belonged. All that is beyond doubt.

Mr. Irvine: My hon. Friend's intervention worries me, as it suggests that he, for one, has already jumped the fence and is certain of the nature of the defence. We do not know the nature of that defence until people give evidence in the witness box and the case is presented. It is dangerous to presume that identity will not be an issue—it is overwhelmingly likely that it will be.

That the dreadful crimes were committed will not be at issue, but the question will be whether the individual in the dock was present and what was his precise part in the events. Identity will be at the heart of those cases, but evidence of identification after 45 years or more is a dangerous thing to rely upon.

In chapter 9.44 of their report, Hetherington and Chalmers acknowledged that the difficulties facing the prosecution are not to be under-estimated. They can say that again. Those difficulties are manifest in the report, which records the problems encountered in tracing suspects and witnesses and the problems in relation to the documentation and other evidence. The authors of that report had great support from a skilled team of former Metropolitan police officers and help from a range of specialists. They also enjoyed the co-operation of the Soviet authorities. Despite that help and back-up, they still encountered all manner of difficulties in tracing and identifying suspects and witnesses. Well may they say that the difficulties of the prosecution should not be under-estimated.

If the prosecution faces difficulties, they will be nothing to those faced by the defence. I greatly doubt that the defence will have available to it anything like the skilled back-up team available to Hetherington and Chalmers. All the defendants will probably receive legal aid, and they will be subject to the restrictions imposed upon them by that aid.

I have no doubt that the authorities will be as generous as they can in the particular circumstances, but the defence in those cases will not have the resources available to the prosecution. The defence will encounter many more difficulties than the prosecution in preparing its case. I forecast that it is likely to receive much less co-operation from the Soviet authorities. It is less likely that people will be willing to come forward to give evidence on behalf of the defence, especially if they live in the Soviet Union. The defence will be at a disadvantage compared to the prosecution.

Another worrying aspect is the provision in the Bill of a procedure for transfer to the Crown court without committal proceedings. Every lawyer who has practised in the criminal courts knows very well that the skilful use of committal proceedings by the defence can be extremely helpful to it—and furthermore, helpful to the cause of justice. The committal proceedings allow a defendant to test the strength of the evidence against him, to assess the demeanour and credibility of witnesses for the prosecution and to probe, elucidate and tie down the evidence. Those proceedings are especially useful in bringing out errors of recollection.

Apart from that, those proceedings afford the examining magistrate an opportunity to throw out a case at an early stage if, in their view, the evidence is too weak to be satisfactory. Let us make no mistake: the absence of committal proceedings will make things easy for the prosecution and overcome some of the difficulties which stand in its way. Conversely, that absence will make a difficult task more difficult for the defence.

The Bill poses great dangers. Many people feel so strongly that something must be done because of the horrendous nature of the crimes and because of the emotion that understandably wells up.

Sir Nicholas Fairbairn: We want to be extremely careful about this matter, assuming, as I do, that those who might be accused in Scotland are Lithuanians who were invited by the Germans to murder Russians who had just murdered their families. That is a rather different emotional pattern. Are we certain that there are no people residing in this country who were among those who executed 14,000 Polish officers at Katyn? Are we certain, and are we passing the Bill against them? I do not think that we are, but we should be if we are to be even-handed.

Mr. Irvine: I acknowledge the validity of that point. I fear that the Bill is, to a great extent, charged by emotion, which can be the enemy of justice. My fundamental objection to it is my certainty that it will be impossible now for anyone accused under the legislation to have a fair trial. The idea behind the Bill is fundamentally and profoundly mistaken.

8.21 pm

Mr. Rupert Allason (Torbay): I am grateful for this opportunity to correct an injustice. Many people, including me, were profoundly sceptical and cynical about the Government's intentions. My colleagues who served on the all-party parliamentary war crimes group were worried when the Government announced that there was to be a committee to look at the allegations made by the Simon Wiesenthal Centre. It is good "Yes Minister" material to refer difficult problems to a committee and, invariably, it amounts to shelving the matter.

I discussed the issue with Tony Hetherington, and originally he admitted that he was profoundly sceptical about the undertaking, but after he started looking into the problem he became absolutely convinced that legislation was required. He had a distinguished legal background, looked at the problem dispassionately, perhaps even with an element of scepticism and, with his colleagues, came to the conclusion encapsulated in the report. It says nothing about three elderly men. I believe that about 70 people may be caught up in the legislation that we are contemplating.

The legislation will merely close a loophole which has existed in the law and which has been exploited consistently by people not born in this country who have committed crimes overseas. It should be remembered that, if a British subject had committed such a crime while overseas, he would be liable for prosecution for murder in this country. There would be no statute of limitations. He would continue, for the rest of his life, to be vulnerable and susceptible to prosecution.

However, that is not the case with somebody who was born overseas, committed an appalling crime overseas, came to this country and subsequently acquired British nationality, perhaps by deception. Thereafter, he could not be prosecuted for a crime committed while he was a foreign subject. That anomaly is shared by just one other country. Damascus and the United Kingdom are the only two places which offer a safe haven for war criminals so that they can live openly and have their names and addresses in telephone directories.

This leads me neatly to the issue of the "problem" and the "solution". There were three possibilities for the Government. First, they could allow those people who had been identified by overseas authorities to be extradited. That option was wholly unacceptable to the Government and I accept that, rightly, they were not prepared to send people to face perhaps the death penalty or uncertain justice in another country.

The second option, which was looked at in considerable detail by the all-party parliamentary war crimes group, was deportation. Those involved had come to this country, probably lied about their background and acquired their naturalisation papers by deception. Might it not be possible, as invariably happens in the United States, to have a judicial review so that the individuals could be stripped of their citizenship and deported to whatever country was prepared to take them? That would be a boost for Syrian airlines but nobody else.

I am disappointed that my hon. Friend the Member for Corby (Mr. Powell) has left the Chamber. He did not allow any interventions and spoke about a constituency that I know well because I was a parliamentary candidate there during the 1979 general election. He alleged—I thought it rich coming from a lawyer—that there was a community in his constituency that felt vulnerable to the legislation. I find that hard to believe.

My hon. Friend the Member for Corby alleged that there were Latvians in the Corby constituency who were utterly opposed to any delving into the past, had been identified by the newspapers and felt that their goods had been rubbished. There is a civil remedy for that; it is called the law of defamation. As has already been said; record damages were awarded in a recent libel action.

Out of the last 35 libel actions in this country, 33 have been won by the plaintiff. Those are cases which actually reached the court; the figure takes no account of the dozens of other cases which never get to court because the newspapers settle out of court. I wish that my hon. Friend were here so that I could remind him that those damages are tax-free and quite attractive. If a lawyer such as he were prepared to offer his services free, I am sure that they would be gratefully accepted by Latvians in his constituency.

There is an element of retrospection in the legislation. I realise that it must have caused lawyers great worry, but it must be accepted that the people who committed those appalling atrocities were not committing crimes which existed only in British law. When they committed those crimes, they were well aware that they were breaking the law. They were breaking the laws of civilisation, the laws laid down in the Wehrmacht military handbook and every kind of law. There should be no pretence that those individuals are suddenly being caught by entrapping, retrospective legislation, deliberately designed to catch people who were, at the time, unaware that they were breaking the law.

One alternative might be to let sleeping dogs lie. There is a certain amount to be said for that option. We have heard about opening old wounds, and the Pandora's boxes which might well reveal some people's pretty ugly pasts. I accept part of that argument, but there is a corollary. What is the time limit on murder? If one is a successful murderer and gets away with it for 10, 20 or 30 years, what is the time limit? The answer must be that there can never be a time limit for murder.

I turn now to the quality of evidence. Based on the criterion that made Tony Hetherington such a respected Director of Public Prosecutions—the strong likelihood of obtaining a conviction based on evidence—Mr. Hetherington is quite satisfied, according to the report, that convictions can be obtained. So the grave difficulties of identification that have preoccupied speakers this afternoon will not exist.

There may well be problems about obtaining evidence in some of the eastern countries, particularly in Latvia and Estonia. However, we originally urged the Government to take action more than a year ago when conditions were quite different in eastern Europe, and some of us who were used to disinformation and black propaganda were a little worried about some of the documentary evidence that might emanate from the east. But as every week goes by —in Lithuania, as every day goes by—the chances of obtaining such documentary evidence and of ensuring its authenticity become much more satisfactory.

Why did these people—especially the Ukrainians—come to this country? I have done a certain amount of research into this, and I assure the House that they did not come here seeking a safe haven. Quite a number of them came at the invitation of the British Government and of

British intelligence. They went up to RAF Crail, then the language centre operated by most of the services. RAF Crail has now closed and its operations have been transferred to Bodmin. The Ukrainians went to Crail, and I have obtained evidence from people who served there and were taught Russian by people who openly boasted about the atrocities that they had committed against Jews in Baltic countries during the war. Those boasts were known to British national service men going into the Intelligence Corps and they must have been known to the British Government in subsequent years.

Of course, there was insufficient screening of people coming to this country, but the Government have conveniently tended to overlook the motives of these people. They were brought here because they knew Russian and very few people in the immediate post-war period possessed that skill——

Sir Alan Glyn: Does my hon. Friend agree that some of the people who came here were brought over deliberately on a sort of free passport on condition that they provided information, or a language, or something, in exchange for their liberty?

Mr. Allason: My hon. Friend has it in one: he is absolutely correct.

When the police team that my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary discussed earlier undertakes its research, it must have access to all documents relating to the suspects, including all documents that are closed off in the Public Record Office. That is not a new plea, but it is an important one.

It was a cause of great embarrassment two years ago that the British Government flatly refused to disclose the contents of the Klaus Barbie file held by the Foreign Office. I went to see the Minister concerned. She said, "Listen, dear boy, this is very grown-up stuff. The Klaus Barbie file is full of terribly sensitive material. It discloses intelligence methodology and techniques, and it could still be significant today." I said, "Hold on a minute, Minister. Do you understand who was head of the British secret intelligence service anti-Soviet section in 1946 when Klaus Barbie was in British hands?" She thought about that for a moment, being reluctant to admit that SIS had ever existed. I asked her who we were trying to keep these matters a secret from—Kim Philby? The Soviets had known all about them for years; only the great British taxpayer was not allowed to know.

Worse, I brought a certain book to her attention. The United States Government suffered a similar trauma in 1983, when they were appalled to discover, or rather the US Attorney-General was appalled to discover, that Klaus Barbie had been employed by American intelligence. One can adopt either of two attitudes to that. The Americans said that they regretted the facts and were embarrassed by it and would reveal all the documentation by putting it in the public domain. The British Government's attitude was that the affair was terribly secret despite being 40 years old. They said that it might involve intelligence techniques and decided not to say anything about it.

I lent the Minister my book, "Klaus Barbie and the United States Government: The Report, with documentary appendix, to the Attorney-General of the United States" by Allan A. Ryan, Jr. It is a large book, running to 541 pages, of which only 81 are the report itself. The remaining pages are fascinating, however. They comprise authentic documents from American intelligence files, in the form of genuine reproductions. Many of them concern the time in 1946 when Barbie was in the hands of the British intelligence.

These documents have been released by the United States but are apparently too secret to be released here. If the Government are determined to allow the Bill to go through and to give full powers to the police officers who will investigate these appalling crimes, it is right that they should be allowed to see all the closed files in the Public Record Office.

I should like to prove the case that these papers exist. Several facsimile documents in the United States Attorney-General report are specifically about the employment of German war criminals by the British Government. One of them, dated 23 June 1947, refers to British special interrogation report number 55, DIC CCG (BE), which stands for the control commission for Germany, British element. Its subject is Operation Dry Martini, and the person involved on that occasion was a war criminal called Kurt Burkhausen.

There is also a reference in the Barbie evaluation, which was declassified in July 1983. It states:

"I spoke to Barbie at length as to his activities during Selection Board and immediately thereafter, to include his arrest by the British."

That is dated 22 November 1948. In the following year we find the following:

"Upon interrogation of Barbie it was discovered that he was very closely tied in with Selection Board personalities; that he had been arrested by the British and had escaped; and that he had made overtures to the British to work for them as an informant through one of the Selection Board personalities by the name of Dr. Hoffmann."

That is further proof of the material that lies in Foreign Office files and relates to a convicted war criminal about whom the British Government are not prepared to disclose information.

From a French document we learn:

"Lavoie became aware that British intelligence was looking for information on Barbie because they were concerned that Barbie might be organising an effort to 'eliminate' Germans who spied for the British."

These documents exist in the Foreign Office and they must be made available to the police who are to pursue the allegations. We know from Hetherington and Chalmers that there are substantial allegations against about 70 people. It is vital that the police inquiry should not be hamstrung in any way.

It is marvellous that in the United States there is such a healthy attitude to documents generated by Governments. They take the view that the public have the right to read any document prepared by a publicly paid official unless an independent federal judge can be persuaded by the Government that disclosure is likely to put somebody's life at risk. In Britain we have quite the reverse attitude. We seem to take the view that nothing can be disclosed at any time because civil servants should not be held accountable or subject to ridicule and certainly would not be able to give unbiased advice to Ministers in the frank and candid way that they do if they thought that it would be publicly revealed afterwards.

The material is all in files. We have heard much in the debate about the difficulties that face the prosecuting authorities. I believe that there will be only a minimum of obstacles in the way. We propose to close a loophole that actively discriminates against British passport holders. There is no question of hounding old men, and we are

[Mr. Allason]

closing a loophole that has made Britain an embarrassment. When one goes to a war crimes conference here or overseas and listens to what the Australians, the Americans and Canadians have done, it is embarrassing to know that we have put off taking action for so long. I urge the House to vote in favour of the Bill.

8.41 pm

Sir John Stokes (Halesowen and Stourbridge): After more than five hours of debate, I will neither titillate nor weary the House with revelations about spies and spying. Like other hon. Members, I served throughout the last war, and I saw some horrors and heard about more. I listened with great feeling to the remarkable accounts by some hon. Members whose families were brutally treated by the Germans and others during the war. Those accounts were very moving.

The question that we have to address is whether we should give the Bill a Second Reading. I studied the matter carefully last December and took part in the debate at that time. I have thought about it since and have not changed my mind. It would not be wise, in the best interests of this country or anybody else, or good for the future, to give this rather special Bill a Second Reading. I agreed with the speech by my hon. Friend the Members for Orpington (Mr. Stanbrook), the powerful speech by my right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath), and the practical speech by my hon. Friend the Member for Ipswich (Mr. Irvine), who spoke as a practising lawyer about the difficulties that we all know must occur if the Bill goes through.

I am thought to be a hard man. I believe in capital punishment for murder, and I think that the punishment should fit the crime. The crimes that we are considering in this debate are certainly horrendous and were on a colossal scale quite different from ordinary crime. But again and again, I ask myself whether we are right after nearly 50 years to bring forward special legislation for a special category of people.

That legislation will be retrospective and new and quite different from anything in our legal history. The Bill came before us rather sooner than I had expected. As the Government have put it in with so many other Bills, they must attach great importance to it. We have, of course, far too many Bills anyway and we could have done without this one.

Although the words in the Bill sound bland, they propose a change in our legal procedures and that raises all kinds of questions. Why has the matter suddenly come before us after more than 40 years? What have Governments of both parties been doing on this subject for the past 40 years? Why have other war crimes been allowed to go unpunished? What is the point of the Bill? If we are suddenly to devise a change in our legal procedures, it should concern only matters of the highest importance touching the constitution and our whole system of law. Why is there this particular and somewhat narrow basis for such a fundamental change?

I ask again, what is the point of the Bill? We cannot execute or flog the people whom we find guilty. The only punishment we can find for them is imprisonment. We have heard about four alleged war criminals. One has died and one is ill. If anyone is sentenced to a long term of imprisonment at that age, how many years will he serve? Of course, there is always the chance that they can flee the country.

The whole matter smacks of special pleading. We know that great wrong was done in the last war. Captured British soldiers and airmen were sometimes shot in cold blood, and since 1948 no attempt has been made to find and try the culprits. Why have these few alleged criminals that we are discussing been singled out for special treatment at this late stage?

Almost everyone has spoke about the severe practical difficulties of trying these people. The normal rules of evidence will be waived. Many of us look with great suspicion at evidence produced by the Soviet Union, but those committed for trial will not be able to go there. They cannot get hold of witnesses.

There were powerful speeches in the other place against the Bill: the speakers included Lord Hailsham and many of our judges. Another speaker was Lord Shawcross, who knows more about this matter than anybody else, and who has recently written another powerful letter to *The Times*. No one admires the British jury system more than I do, but do we really believe that these trials will be the same as other trials before a British jury? They will be luridly covered in the media, and in the gutter press. Good heavens—we shall read about nothing else for weeks beforehand.

Of course I respect the deep feelings of Jews and others whose families suffered so dreadfully in the last war, but the Bills smacks more of revenge than justice. Jews believe in God, as do we Christians, and we both believe that God may punish. Should we humans now devise a new and special means of bringing to trial and punishing a small number of people in a special category?

When I last spoke on this subject I said:

"To put many great wrongs right, should we commit another wrong?"—[*Official Report*, 12 December 1989; Vol. 163, c. 911.]

To change the laws of England would be wrong. I have no criticism whatever of those who hold views that are different from mine, and the majority of hon. Members are of that mind. I hope that they will be indulgent to me. When history comes to be written, it will judge these proposals as wrong. I fear that we are sowing dragon's teeth and that we shall regret it bitterly as time goes on.

8.48 pm

Mr. Greville Janner (Leicester, West): We humans—the phrase used by the hon. Member for Halesowen and Stourbridge (Sir J. Stokes)—can only administer human justice, and that is what we lawyers try to do. The argument that we can leave the punishment of murderers to some higher being would not find great appeal at the Old Bailey or anywhere else where we to seek to bring to justice those against whom there is adequate evidence of personal involvement in major crime.

We deal with this matter according to our own form of justice. It is not perfect, but it has evolved in a way of which we in this land can be proud, a way in which it is rarely administered in other lands. For that reason, the Government have decided that, whatever the evidence against these alleged war criminals, they should be tried here and not deported to the Soviet Union.

I have reservations about that decision. I have felt all along that it would not necessarily be wrong for people to be tried in the land where, if it be correct that they have

carried out these murders, the victims were to be found. I have even more sympathy with my view now that the scene in eastern Europe has changed. However, it has been decided that that must be avoided, and it can be avoided only through implementation of legislation to allow those who are living here to be tried here, according to our rules of justice.

I have listened throughout almost all the debate, and with great respect, to those who are against the legislation. I feel that they sometimes forget that we are talking about people who are living in this country. We have no evidence, and I doubt whether there will be evidence, of people who, for example, were involved as Japanese soldiers in the murder of people on the railway in Burma.

I know one hon. Member who voted against the principle behind the Bill the last time we debated it because he said that he could not see why Nazi war criminals should be prosecuted when Japanese war criminals had got off scot free. I have some sympathy for that point of view —I do not believe that the Duke of Edinburgh should have gone to the funeral of Emperor Hirohito—but as far as we know, no Japanese war criminals live in this country. The Bill deals only with people who are living here.

The hon. Member for Halesowen and Stourbridge is wrong to talk about three people. I fear that he has not read the Hetherington report. He has it in his hand, but that does not mean that he has read it. Perhaps he might like to settle down and look at page 106, where he will find the answer to the point that he raised, which would otherwise be valid. It is not, because he is wrong on his facts. It says:

"Consideration should be given by prosecuting authorities to prosecuting in three cases in which there appears to us to be a realistic prospect of conviction on the evidence already available."

That is what the hon. Gentleman was referring to.

The report continues:

"This action should be taken at the earliest opportunity as some preparations for prosecution could precede the enactment of any legislation."

The Home Secretary has said that he wishes to wait until after the legislation is though before setting up the investigating authority, and I understand that. However, for reasons that I shall give a little later, it will not have quite the weight that it might otherwise have done.

I emphasise that these independent inquirers are not members of the all-party parliamentary war crimes group. They are not members of Her Majesty's Government or of the Opposition Front Bench. These are independent, eminent, distinguished lawyers; more than that, they are people whose training and experience lies in assessing evidence on prosecution. They are a former Director of Public Prosecutions for England and Wales and his Scottish equivalent.

Sir Thomas Hetherington and William Chalmers are outstanding people and they have said in public since their inquiry that they went into it with some doubt and hesitation and some feeling that it could lead nowhere. They have come out to talk not merely about three people.

I draw the attention of the hon. Member for Halesowen and Stourbridge to the bottom of page 106, where they say:

"Further investigation should be undertaken in three cases in which we have carried out detailed investigations, but are not yet satisfied with the available evidence . . . Investigation should also be carried out in 75 cases of allegations which were not being investigated in detail . . . Investigations should continue to attempt to trace the 46 suspects remaining untraced . . . All these investigations should commence as soon as possible".

We are dealing not with three, six or even 75 people. We are dealing with over 120 people living in this country who, on the evidence of independent investigators given their jobs by the Government, are people against whom there is massive evidence.

It is not for the House to decide whether that evidence is sufficient in weight, substance or quality to warrant putting people on trial. That is a matter for the Director of Public Prosecutions. That is a matter for the successor or successors of those who produced the report. They will weigh that evidence, and if they believe that justice cannot be done, these people will not be tried. It is not for the House to make that decision.

The hon. Member for Halesowen and Stourbridge spoke about old people. I was a war crimes investigator in Germany. We knew that some of these people had committed offences. Some of them admitted to it. At that time, they were aged anywhere between 18 and 60, and the young ones are still not old. I doubt whether they are any older than the venerable and distinguished knight of the shires, the hon. Member for Oldbury and Halesowen. Nobody would dream of suggesting that he is not fit to stand trial in the unlikely event of there being powerful evidence of his having committed anything other than a political offence. If he can stand trial, why should these other people not stand trial?

I shall now deal with some other fairly venerable people —Lord Shawcross and Lord Mayhew. Why are they so keen to stop this Bill going through? The reason is perfectly plain. They were both members of the Government who, in 1948, decided not to proceed with further war crimes trials. They are engaged, as I suppose must of us would be, if we had made such a horrendous mistake, in trying to justify themselves. It is unlikely that they would say, "We got it wrong." Not all politicians are prepared to admit fault readily and swiftly. These gentlemen have not admitted it and will not admit it. They were wrong when they stopped the prosecutions and they remain wrong now. They will not admit that they were, or are, in error—far from it.

Lord Shawcross has produced yet another letter to *The Times*. It was headed

"Prospect of Nazi War crimes trials *From Lord Shawcross QC.*"

Part of the letter reads:

"By 1947-48 all political parties had concluded that the prosecution of war crimes should be brought to an end."

I have read the papers of that time, not least because my distinguished father, Barnett Janner, was then a Member of the House. I thought it extremely unlikely that he would have maintained silence in the face of such a decision by the House.

The Minister of State, Home Office (Mr. John Patten): You are like him.

Mr. Janner: I would like to be like him. As said in a recent play, we inherit madness from our children and distinction from our forebears.

I could not believe that my father would have sat through a debate on the conclusion of war crimes trials without having denounced the idea as monsstrous, and I can tell the House that there was no such debate. The House did not make such a decision. As far as I can see,

[Mr. Janner]

the House did not come to a decision on the prosecution of the sort of people whom I, as a war crimes investigator, was chasing.

There has been talk about manhunts. It is always a manhunt or a witch hunt if someone does not like that which is proposed and a search to bring criminals to justice if someone likes the idea. We were seeking justice. I have in mind the sort of people that we were after at the end of the second world war. We had evidence of their involvement in concentration camp killings. I became a sergeant because I found a man whom it was wished to charge with having killed British prisoners of war who escaped from stalag luft 3—the great escape. He hanged himself the following day. It was the first time that I had seen a dead body. That is something that we do not forget, and I still remember his face well.

These people were criminals; they were murderers. They did not become any the less criminals or murderers because they managed to sneak into this country. The hon. Member for Windsor and Maidenhead (Sir A. Glyn) intervened and said, in effect, "Surely it is not suggested that these people could have been let into the country because they had information." Come on! There is a book——

Sir Alan Glyn: Perhaps I did not make myself clear. I asked whether it was correct that some of these people may well have been let into the country with the connivance of the Government because they had information that was useful.

Mr. Janner: I am much obliged to the hon. Gentleman. We are on the same side. I am deeply surprised—and overjoyed, apart from being obliged. I look forward to seeing the hon. Gentleman in the No Lobby tonight. If he recognises that that is what it was about, all the rest flows.

Why were these people allowed into the country? In a statement, Lord Mayhew vigorously denied that it had anything to do with the Government of the day—alas, a Labour Government—not caring. If they cared, why did they not check on people? Either they did not care and they let them in uncaring or they cared and they messed it up. Either way, these people came in.

As a 19-year-old war crimes investigator, I remember the day when I was called into the chief's office. The captain said to me, "They are packing us in." He did not understand why that was happening, and nor did I. I asked him what he made of it and he replied, "It is the cold war. They are really only interested in who will be in on our side against the Russians. That is why they want to bury what has happened in the past along with the corpses of the people whose murderers we are hunting." I remember well that the name of the head of my section was Priestley. He got out of Dachau in a coffin. He reckoned that he was taken out in it immediately before it was used for the corpse. That was before the war.

We are talking of war crimes that do not come within the normal meaning of the term. I have listened to those who have talked about the way in which people behave in wars, but we must remember that we are concerned with acts that had nothing to do with war, which involved the killing of those who had no connection with it—neither they nor their parents, families or anyone else.

The war crimes trials were stopped; that was wrong. It was post ergo propter hoc, as we lawyers call it. There was attempted justification by Lords Shawcross and Mayhew and others. I endured their debate. I listened as Lord after Lord said that we should not legislate for change.

I do not understand what a legislative assembly is for if it is not to legislate for change. We are not seeking to create a new crime, because the crime was already established. The problem was that some people could not be charged with it, because they did not come within the jurisdiction of our courts. That is the only real change. British citizens could always have been charged with the offence. The Government allowed those who were not British citizens to escape, but why should they be better off because they later became British citizens or residents? Why should they be better off than those who were British citizens at the time?

Some of their Lordships say, "We cannot accept the Bill because it is retrospective legislation." It is not retrospection of the sort denounced by the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath). Retrospective legislation involves the creation of new crimes. The Bill provides, in effect, that an old crime, which has always been subject to the jurisdiction of the courts and which has always been a crime to humanity, will apply to those who were not previously subject to it. Even the most doughty opponents of the Bill have not suggested that anything but heinous offences have been committed. No one has suggested that we have thought up a new offence; murder goes back to pre-biblical days. Tonight, I hope that we are ensuring that it comes home to roost, and that we understand what happened and who did it.

The right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup said that only a lunatic would deny the truth of what had happened, but that immediately puts the seal of lunacy on one alleged historian called David Irving, who, in today's *Daily Telegraph*, has a two-column letter headed

"Laying the Myth of Nazi 'factories of death'.".

If that is lunacy, *The Daily Telegraph* should be ashamed of itself for publishing it. If that is the type of propaganda that is acceptable to a great British newspaper, we must watch out for others who engage in what is called revisionism in the anti-fascist world.

Many of us can testify to what happened. I listened with emotion to the hon. and learned Member for Montgomery (Mr. Carlile), who spoke today, as I did to my hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle-under-Lyme (Mrs. Golding) in our previous debate. That was the only occasion on which I have sat in the House and cried: I will never forget her speech.

The hon. Member for Halesowen and Stourbridge (Sir J. Stokes) said that we should not build on emotion. As I have said before, it is an emotional subject. Human beings react to their own emotions, and human beings who care react because they have learned something from the past.

A noble Lord told me the other day that he had had an argument with one of his mates, who had said that he lived in the past. My friend said that he did not, but that he remembered the past and learned from it. There is all the difference in the world between living in the past and learning from it. If the House passes the Bill, it will show that it has learned from a past so horrendous, horrific and awful that we must never let it happen again.

My motivation has nothing to do with revenge, but a great deal to do with trying to prod the memories of the

young. I wish that the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup was here, because I interrupted him when he referred to a new generation having grown up, who understandably take a different view from the old soldiers. I thought that a bit offensive to some of the old soldiers sitting alongside me. I suppose that I am a bridge between the wartime soldier and the non-soldier, as I was a national service man. Working as a war crimes investigator, I thought that that was a pretty poor vision of what older people think. My mail bag—I am sure this applies to all hon. Members—comes from both the old and the young, who are nearly all concerned—whatever their views on the Bill—that such crimes should never recur.

The war crimes trials stopped; why should there be a 40-year break? That is a fair question. I will tell the hon. Member for Halesowen and Stourbridge the answer: it is because we do not have the evidence—it was buried and nobody had it. I remember well the day that the Simon Wiesenthal Centre emerged, in Los Angeles or San Francisco, with a list of 70 war criminals who were living in the United Kingdom. I objected strongly to that: I thought that they should have been more courteous, and brought the list across the Atlantic and presented it to the then Home Secretary. Although there may not be 70 people, there may be three and they may well be monsters. The centre had the evidence made available to it by the back door, because there is a conspiracy to keep that type of evidence away, as the hon. Member for Halesowen and Stourbridge said.

Only now is it opening up, even in the rest of Europe—that has been the problem. I wonder how many hon. Members saw the account of the new documents that have been made available in the new Europe. The case died in 1948—killed off by Lord Shawcross, Lord Mayhew and others, without any debate, without any outcry, without my dad even being able to denounce them. I was sacked—made redundant—and that was the end of my military career.

Now we have the problem of how to bring people to justice. It is here that the situation gets really interesting. We are not starting from scratch. My reason for not making any protest at the Home Secretary's decision not to start investigations in a big way until the Bill has been passed is twofold. First, I congratulate the Government on the speed with which this legislation was brought forward. It is admirable that, despite the fact that much legislation had to be dealt with, the Bill was introduced so quickly. Secondly, in Australia, Canada and the United States, investigations of this sort have been going on for a long time. People in those countries are very skilled in this field.

A short time ago I went to Australia and was shown round the unit that investigates war crimes, which is run by a very doughty QC. I was asked, "Did you lose anybody?" I replied "Yes." I was asked where the people I had lost had come from, and replied that it was Lithuania. I was asked how my family had died, and I said, "To the best of my knowledge, they were put into a synagogue, locked up and set alight." I was then told, "You know, we have a number of cases like that. What was the name of the town?" When I said that the town was Plungyan, the response was, "Wait."

Off the gentleman went, and he came back with a sheet containing the names of towns in Russian, Lithuanian and Yiddish. It included a town called, I think, Plonyas, of which the Yiddish translation was Plungyan. I said, "Fine. Can you find what happened to my family, please?" I was shown a file about how the Jews at Plungyan had been killed by local people, not by German soldiers. One right hon. Gentleman said today that it was the German soldiers who had saved his mother. My family had been killed by local people such as those with whom we are dealing today.

I found a family name that I recognised. It was only a little story, but it told—and I have the papers—how a man whose name was Rudaizky, a cripple, was forced to climb up and down a tree until he died from exhaustion. Why was I able to find out in Australia what had happened to a family in Lithuania? Because the Australians have 40 people working on this matter. They are not just ordinary people, but include historians and support staff who understand the very difficult and complex nature of the evidence.

I hope that Ministers will assure us that they will go to Australia, Canada and the United States and cull whatever they can from the evidence that the people in those countries have gathered, and from their methods. I can assure the Government that they will receive full co-operation. We met the Australian team when they were here for a conference. All the units in those countries regard it as a matter of great importance that Nazi war criminals, people against whom there is powerful evidence of involvement in war crimes—in killing—should be brought to justice. They regard it as a national matter. It is not, in the ordinary sense, a Jewish matter.

Equally, of course, Jewish people are very keenly concerned about it, as is to be expected. It is a matter that concerns all sorts of local people in all parts of the Soviet Union, whether or not they are going to be free. It concerns dissenters, trade unionists, Catholics, gipsies and gays. It concerns anyone who wanted to be different at a time when that meant the gas chamber.

I pay tribute to my colleagues on the all-party war crimes committee—not least its distinguished chairman, my right hon. Friend the Member for Morley and Leeds, South (Mr. Rees). If it had not been for their devotion and for my right hon. Friend's leadership, I do not suppose that the Bill would be before the House.

This is not a party matter, but one of the few issues dealt with by this House that has nothing to do with party politics. We have been working at it for three years, and I have never known anyone to make a party political point. It is an issue about which neither party can be terribly proud of the past—least of all my own. I do not believe that it could be anything but an all-party matter.

Nor would the principle behind the Bill have received the enormous support that it did last December if it were anything but an all-party measure. When the other place casts its beady eye and rasping tongue over the Bill, it should bear in mind that last December this elected House gave a motion to introduce such a Bill a majority of 3:1. A substantial majority of Conservative and Labour Members, as well as right hon. and hon. Members of other parties, support that motion. I am sure that their Lordships will think carefully before seeking in any way to interfere with the Bill, and that they will not do so. Their Lordships will no doubt speak their minds, as they are entitled to do. They may support or denounce the Bill, but I do not believe that they would be so constitutionally unrealistic or so wrong as to interfere with it.

We may sometimes forget the Bill itself, which is one of the shortest that the House has ever considered. Its sole

[Mr. Janner]

purpose is to bring within the jurisdiction of our courts people who were not citizens of, or resident in, the United Kingdom at the time that alleged offences were committed.

The Bill makes minimum changes to the law. It has been argued that it seeks to change all the rules of evidence just to nail down a few war criminals, but that is not so. The changes relating to committal proceedings will only put in place provisions that already apply in cases of major fraud. It would have been wicked not to introduce such a measure in a Bill, because otherwise it would be argued that people were being unnecessarily dragged twice from the other side of the world when they were old or ill, and that the accused could not make their case properly.

The Bill has a weight far in excess of its two pages. It provides Parliament with an opportunity this decade to pay a tribute to former Members of Parliament who fought in the war, and to those whose memories are long and clear. I hope that the Bill will enjoy the massive support that was given to the motion from which it originated, and that it will enjoy a 3:1 majority in precisely the same way that its principle did—even if some right hon. and hon. Members are canvassing elsewhere and others have to travel down from Scotland. The Bill is a very important Bill indeed.

9.18 pm

Mr. Anthony Beaumont-Dark (Birmingham, Selly Oak): Some hon. Members have argued that I did not take part in the second world war, which is true, and that many of us are here only because of that war. It is argued also that the Bill serves only to rake up the embers of the past. It does that, but we are also remembering what happened in that age to some people. Some hon. Members say that we should think to the future, but one cannot do that without thinking also of the past. One cannot think of the future without considering the past.

In the build-up to Nazi Germany, crimes were committed which, as was said at Goering's trial at Nuremberg, were unique in their enormity. Some hon. Members have tried to say that some of the crimes committed by the Russians were almost as bad. Were they? Between 25 million and 30 million Russians died because of the military adventures of Nazi Germany. Of course some of the things that took place were evil, but I urge anyone who errs on the side of saying, "Let the dead bury their dead," and, "Let the past think only of the past," to read Martin Gilbert's classic book on the holocaust.

It was not only Jews who went to their deaths, into the "crashing doors of hell", as the evil was described in a classic poem about Warsaw. Not only Jews died in the holocaust of Nazism, but Catholics and people who disagreed with one man's evil genius and with his cohorts —whether they were chicken farmers like Himmler or admirals like Doenitz, who were willing to say, "Why not support him, he seems to be winning." One of the great dangers in any age is when people say that they will follow a leader because he seems to be successful. Nearly all the evils of mankind have been caused through that. People followed Attila the Hun, the Roman emperors and great military leaders such as Napoleon. Evil men have strutted round this world, but no evil man has ever stood astride more of the world than Adolf Hitler.

If for no other reason, I support the Bill because the men who committed war crimes—they know who they are even if we do not—should be unhappy for as long as they live. They should never have a moment's peace. If the Bill makes one of them fear justice knocking on the door, as they caused hundreds of thousands of people to fear tyranny knocking on the door, that is good. Perhaps the Bill will not mean that some of those evil men will face justice in the end, but they will fear justice and so they should. They will suffer, as millions suffered 50 years ago because they were Jews or Catholics or because they did not agree with the Government who were in power, or because they were deformed in one way or another.

Parliament must believe that however long we have to pursue evil and injustice and no matter how old a person is or what age they live in, we are right to do so. My right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) said that we should think of the future and of uniting Germany, but we should think of the families in Poland and Hungary that have suffered for all those years. The House should make it clear that this country cares about the injustice that has been suffered. Therefore, I shall vote for the Bill—not for the sentiment of the future bur for the suffering of the past.

9.24 pm

Mr. Alistair Darling (Edinburgh, Central): I have no difficulty with the principle underlying the Bill. The charges laid against these people are serious and must be answered by them. I do not agree with the hon. Member for Orpington (Mr. Stanbrook). These crimes are almost beyond comprehension. They cannot and should not be forgotten.

The Bill seeks to extend the jurisdiction of the courts to try these cases. To that extent, I have no objection to, and I propose to vote for, the Bill. There is no reason why a man should escape justice simply because he was not a United Kingdom national at the time that the alleged offence was committed, or because it was committed before 1957. Deportation is out of the question. It would be wrong for us to seek to transfer the problems that we are about to face to another country, or to turn individuals over to countries in whose judicial system we have no confidence.

The right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) referred to retrospection. He was right to do so. It is serious when Parliament decides to enact any legislation that is to any extent retrospective. It is wrong to pretend that, in so far as it affects British jurisdiction, the legislation is not retrospective. As the right hon. Gentleman said, if it was not retrospective there would be no need for the House to debate the Bill.

We are not legislating for a new offence. The complaints that have been laid against these people relate to activities that have always been considered to be a criminal offence both in this country and in the countries in which they allegedly took place. These people will not, therefore, be treated unfairly. To that extent, the legislation that we are invited to support is justified.

Throughout this long debate, most right hon. and hon. Members have said that they believe that the Bill should be given a Second Reading. I do not propose to rehearse all the arguments; it would be redundant to do so. However, Parliament has the comparatively easy job; in just three clauses it will extend the jurisdiction to try alleged war

crimes. The difficult job will fall upon the men and women who sit on the juries that will try these cases. They will have to decide whether these people are guilty. They will have to evaluate evidence that is almost 50 years old, perhaps without seeing the witnesses in court—just on a television screen. They will have to reach a verdict that is beyond reasonable doubt.

The difficulty with the Bill is not what it says but what it does not say. In their report, Chalmers and Hetherington anticipated that changes to the law of evidence may be necessary to secure convictions. That is very dangerous ground. If changes to the law of evidence are necessary to convict, that matter ought to be dealt with in this Bill so that it can be considered as a whole. We ought not to be invited to consider additional proposals in measures yet to come before us.

Mr. Cormack: Does the hon. Gentleman agree that this is a constitutional Bill and that for that reason it ought to be considered by a Committee of the whole House?

Mr. Darling: No, I do not agree with the hon. Gentleman. Certain Bills ought to be considered by a Committee of the whole House, but whether the Bill is constitutional or not is beside the point. During my short period as a Member of Parliament I have seen one major measure taken on the Floor of the House—the Official Secrets Act 1989. It received scant attention because of the ability to exploit the fact that the Bill was being considered by a Committee of the whole House. The result was that the detailed scrutiny that would have taken place in a Standing Committee did not take place. If the hon. Gentleman wants this Bill to be scrutinised, I urge him not to pursue the course that he might be minded to follow at the conclusion of the debate.

The changes anticipated by the Government to ensure that the legislation comes into effect have been left out of the Bill. It was quite wrong of the Government to do that simply because they knew that unless they put the necessary provisions in other legislation they could not guarantee the passage of the Bill through the House. The Home Secretary claimed that the objection was that they were special rules changed only for those specific crimes. Of course they are not, but the objection is that the changes to the law of evidence in Scotland in particular would not have been made now but for the Bill.

I remind the House that the Government are proposing that a change in the law of evidence in Scotland necessary for the purposes of the Bill will be made in another Bill that addresses no fewer than seven subjects. We know that the Government are unable to produce the troops to scrutinise Scottish legislation, with the result that most of it is being parcelled into one omnibus piece of legislation which will contain subjects as diverse as charities, legal services, rights of audience, licensing, social work, prisons, divorce, trade and now a fundamental change in the law of evidence of Scotland. Changes to the law of evidence of Scotland or England should be considered on their own merits and not tacked on to an omnibus Bill to avoid having them discussed with other measures such as those that we are discussing.

The problem is that in future others will face trial charged with other crimes and will be subject to the same laws of evidence now changed to accommodate the Bill.

A number of hon. Members have expressed concern about the difficulties in the legislation. I share much of that concern, but it is not enough to justify opposing the measure. However, it is worth examining some of those concerns.

The first problem is the definition of war crimes, which is quite specific. It refers to crimes committed between 1 September 1939 and 5 June 1945 on German territory and German-occupied territory. Hon. Members on both sides of the House have said that we do not know whether there are people living in Britain who might have been involved in crimes committed outside that period or outside those territories. It might have been better had the Government considered legislating to cover that eventuality so that we did not have to produce separate legislation should facts come to light tending to disclose the existence of someone who might have been guilty of war crimes comitted at another time and place.

There is also the difficulty relating to the evidence itself. I have already referred to the live video link. I understood that that provision was introduced to relieve child victims of sex offences from having to give evidence in court. I also understood that it was anticipated that in fraud cases it would be much more convenient for members of the jury and for the court to have that video facility. However, I had not anticipated that it was ever intended to cover cases involving war crimes, because identification of the accused surely is the most crucial element in any criminal trial. It is difficult at the best of times.

Anyone who has any experience in court will know how difficult it is to remind witnesses of what they might have seen a short time ago, let alone 50 years ago. I hope that judges will make it clear that video evidence should be allowed as a last resort and should not be regarded as the norm.

Mr. Alex Carlile: The hon. Gentleman seems to be suggesting that those of us who are in favour of the Bill expect court room identifications to take place. Every one of us would be vehemently opposed to court room identifications. The hon. Gentleman is talking about a problem that does not exist. As he well knows as a practising lawyer, court room identifications are practically never allowed in the courts of England and Wales, or Scotland for that matter.

Mr. Darling: As a practitioner in the Scottish courts, that comes as a great surprise to me. My hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) is quite astounded. It is almost a basic rule that, unless the witness identifies the accused, the whole Crown case collapses. That has happened. I would not wish to speak for England and Wales, but if the hon. and learned Gentleman is telling me that the question of identification will not enter into any of the trials, I find that very hard to believe.

Surely to goodness those people have to be identified as the perpetrators of the crimes. If that does not happen, I wonder what sort of trial it will be. I may stand corrected about what will happen in England and Wales, but as one of these trials will take place in Scotland, and as identification will be crucial, I should not wish it to be made by a video link.

When tackling the supposition that old men forget, the hon. and learned Member for Montgomery (Mr. Carlile) suggested that perhaps they do not. I accept that perhaps they do not, but we must be sure that they remember who perpetrated the crimes; otherwise, we risk a grave miscarriage of justice.

[Mr. Darling]

There are also difficulties with records. In their excellent report, Chalmers and Hetherington paint a graphic picture of confusion during the war years. They also explain the deception that took place during the cold war, when documents and evidence were suspect, to say the least. I am sure that hon. Members will understand that documents that were not prepared at the time may have been put among other records for the purposes of propaganda of the cold war.

We should be wary and should appreciate the difficulties that will lie between the Crown and a successful conviction and between the defence and its preparations for the trial because of the time gap, and because of problems that would not be encountered in a normal trial in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: I understand the point that the hon. Gentleman is making about justice, but does he not accept that if we do not pass the Bill evil men, however long ago they committed evil, will be able to set their hearts at rest and say "Thank God we are free, even if our victims are not"?

Mr. Darling: The hon. Gentleman misses the point. I made it clear that I propose to support the Second Reading of the Bill, but I caution him and other hon. Members about the trap that we so often fall into of knowing that a dreadful crime has taken place and being determined almost to see a conviction of someone at any cost. If a trial takes place, we must be aware of the pitfalls and that there is a significant chance that the wrong person will be convicted simply because he is the only person before the court.

Given the atmosphere that may surround such a trial, juries may be under much pressure to convict because of the truly horrific nature of the crimes about which they are hearing evidence. Judges will have a heavy duty to caution juries against being influenced by what they may have read or heard and not by the evidence.

I hope that the Minister of State will address himself to a problem that exists in England and Wales but not in Scotland—newspapers influencing trials in advance of and during them. There is nothing in the Bill to tackle that problem, and we have not been referred to future legislation that will do so. The Guildford, Broadwater farm and Birmingham cases rammed home to us the fact that newspapers can influence juries.

It is no use a judge telling a jury that it must disregard anything that it has read, because jurors read newspapers and are influenced by them. I hope that the Government will accept that there is a major risk of prejudice in these trials because of the nature of the subject that they cover, because of the time gap and because of newspapers' interest in making a story out of such events. It is regrettable that the Government did not address themselves to that problem, because this is not a subject for trial by newspaper.

There have already been proceedings to obtain an injunction in England and an interdict in Scotland to stop individuals being accused by the press in advance of any trial. Indeed, civil courts may review the evidence that a subsequent criminal court will be invited to consider. Certainly that is the case in Scotland and it may well be the case in England. As a result of that, there could be no trial whatever.

The hon. Member for Corby (Mr. Powell) mentioned in an intervention the problems of legal aid, and the right hon. Member for Morley and Leeds, South (Mr. Rees) mentioned the difficulties that may arise with the national police unit. Those are matters which will require further scrutiny in Committee.

The Home Secretary said that central Government will meet the costs in England and Wales. Will the Minister of State say something about the costs in Scotland? The burden of investigating the crimes will fall on the local police forces, and therefore the local councils. Who will fund, for example, a case that takes place within the jurisdiction of Lothian and the Borders? Police forces could have a heavy burden placed on them which they did not otherwise anticipate. I see that inquiries have been put in hand even as I speak.

The Bill is worthy of a Second Reading. I support its principle, but we should be aware of its pitfalls. We are dealing with extremely serious matters and extremely serious charges. We should all remember that any individual is innocent until guilt is established. There has been a temptation this evening, and certainly outside the House, to talk as if those involved were guilty and it were simply a formality to put the necessary legislation on the statute book and have the trial. If we are to give courts jurisdiction to hear cases, it is essential that they are aware of the pitfalls. We, too, must do our best to ensure that juries can hear cases in such a manner that the accused are given a fair trial.

The right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) said that the trials that took place after the war were abandoned in 1948 because the world wished to look to the future. I understand why they were abandoned then. We are looking to the future. But if we are to look to the future, surely we must attend to the problems of the past.

9.41 pm

The Minister of State, Home Office (Mr. John Patten): I am pleased to follow the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Central (Mr. Darling) who I know is an advocate in Scotland. I can answer some of his questions directly. The funding for the investigations will be made available to the Crown Office. I shall certainly reflect on what he said about newspapers and trial by newspapers. I share his anxieties about that.

In the limited time that I have to reply to the debate——

Rev. Martin Smyth (Belfast, South): Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Patten: The hon. Member was not present during much of the debate and I must respond to the points made in this long debate.

I can do scant justice in the time available to Conservative and Opposition right hon. and hon. Members who spoke in favour of the Bill. Some 15 hon. Members spoke and I can refer only briefly to what they said.

The speech of the Father of the House, my right hon. Friend the Member for Castle Point (Sir B. Braine), was magisterial. The hon. Member for Walsall, North (Mr. Winnick) was first to remind us that the issue was not a

Jewish issue but one that affected everyone who was persecuted. Then the hon. and learned Member for Montgomery (Mr. Carlile) managed to make a moving speech without using emotional language or altering his normal, level and measured way of addressing the House. On that I congratulate him, because, with his family history, it must be hard to exercise such self-control.

The hon. Member for Birmingham, Perry Barr (Mr. Rooker) was good enough to congratulate my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary on the speed with which he brought the Bill before the House. He also made an important point about citizenship on which I congratulate him. It gave me cause for thought. The right hon. and learned Member for Warley, West (Mr. Archer) addressed us as we would expect a distinguished former Solicitor-General to do. My hon. Friend the Member for Westminster, North (Sir J. Wheeler) spoke with his usual authority on this issue, in which he has a long and deep personal interest.

The right hon. Member for Morley and Leeds, South (Mr. Rees) made several points which, as he said, were issues to be discussed in Committee. He gave overall support to the Bill, which was important. The hon. Member for Hartlepool (Mr. Leadbitter) referred to retrospection and to the important issue that there should be no time scale during which justice will run out. I shall return to those arguments when I deal with the issues raised by my hon. Friends who are against the Bill.

There were other notable contributions from my hon. Friend the Member for Gravesham (Mr. Arnold), the hon. Member for St. Helens, South (Mr. Bermingham), my hon. Friends the Members for Bury, South (Mr. Sumberg) and for Torbay (Mr. Allason), and the hon. and learned Member for Leicester, West (Mr. Janner). My hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Mr. Beaumont-Dark) wound up the speeches in favour of the Bill and reminded us of the carnage that we must never forget.

In the time available I shall reply to the points of the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley).

Mr. Cormack: Does my right hon. Friend agree that the issues raised by the Bill are of such fundamental importance and the Committee stage so vital that it should be taken on the Floor of the House?

Mr. Patten: I do not agree with my hon. Friend. I know that he feels strongly about this issue, but the arrangement of business is a matter for agreement through the usual channels. There are conventions that normally govern legislation to be considered by a Committee of the whole House. I do not believe that this legislation falls within that category, nor do I believe that the time constraints are such that an immediate decision should be taken tonight on whether a Committee of the House is required. I cannot commend my hon. Friend's suggestion to the House and I hope that he does not feel that he must press it to a Division.

Mr. Cormack: Do I take it that my suggestion will be given serious amd proper consideration or is it being dismissed?

Mr. Patten: I have already said that tonight is not the time to decide about any issue of business management. I do not believe that this issue should be taken on the Floor of the House. Should my hon. Friend push this to a Division, I am afraid that I must advise the House to vote against it. I am sorry to say that to my hon. Friend and to disagree with him on this issue.

I respect the way in which the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook weighed up the arguments in a provoking speech. He marvelled at the certainty of right hon. and hon. Members on both sides of the argument in coming to a decision about whether to oppose or support the Bill. I agree that some people are able to come down strongly in favour of one opinion, but the right hon. Gentleman was certain that he had an abiding revulsion that persuaded him to vote in favour of the Bill. I hope that that will carry many of his right hon. and hon. Friends through the Lobby tonight.

The right hon. Member for Sparkbrook and the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Central asked direct questions about the Scottish provision. The provision of live television evidence was agreed by Parliament for criminal trials in England and Wales. That was done in the belief that the procedure would benefit criminal trials generally and would be perfectly fair to the accused. I believe that the Government have not hidden from making it clear to the House and to Scotland that they are seeking to bring forward changes in legislation that had been brought to our attention by the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill now passing through the House.

The decision to implement the provision now is linked to the decision already taken in earlier legislation in England and Wales. I do not believe that that affects the fairness of the position in Scotland.

Mr. Darling *rose*——

Mr. Patten: There is little time and I must try to reply to the issues raised.

The Government have not denied the link with war crimes in their intention to legislate on television evidence and the video recording of evidence. The Government are taking the step for Scotland with the English precedent in mind, as well as for a much wider range of reasons than just war crimes. I see no injustice in that.

Some of my right hon. and hon. Friends have made powerful speeches against the Bill. I shall deal with those arguments as quickly as I can under three headings. First, it was argued that what we are doing flies in the face of undertakings given by a former Attorney-General and Lord Mayhew that war crime trials would come to an end. Secondly, I shall consider the arguments about the supposed retrospective nature of the legislation. Thirdly, if we seek to go ahead with legislation for the period before 1957, it should be widened to take into account all crimes committed by whoever in whatever part of the globe, where there might be any taint or suggestion that they were war crimes or crimes against humanity. I shall try to deal with those three arguments, grouped in the way in which my right hon. and hon. Friends referred to them.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Brighton, Pavilion (Mr. Amery) felt that the Government of the day in 1948 had decided to discontinue war crimes trials in this country. I can rest on the statements of my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary in the debate on 12 December last year and in an intervention earlier this afternoon. However, I shall add—I speak as advised by my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General who is here this evening—that any decision taken then to

[Mr. Patten]

continue or discontinue trials was a matter not for the Government, but for the Attorney-General of the day and the independent prosecuting authorities of which he was head. I am advised that in such matters the Attorney-General acts independently when deciding whether prosecution should take place. That remains the position today; it is a matter for the Attorney-General of the day to take those difficult decisions, and will always remain so.

My hon. Friend the Member for Corby (Mr. Powell) made an important and related speech when he said that the statement made at this Dispatch Box by the then Under-Secretary of State, Lord Mayhew, in 1948 gave a clear indication—so my hon. Friend the Member for Corby would have it—that all war crimes trials were about to stop. The statement made by Lord Mayhew did not involve British citizens or other citizens living in this country, but the cessation of trials in occupied Germany by the allies. The task of pursuing those trials moved to the German Government. They accepted the task willingly and have continued to pursue war criminals ever since.

It is important to direct the attention of the House to paragraph 9.6 of the Hetherington-Chalmers report, which states:

"Responsibility for war crimes trials in the British zone of occupied Europe was soon handed to the German authorities. The problem was, however, perceived as one of occupied Europe. . . . It cannot be argued, therefore, that the British Government took a positive decision not to prosecute war criminals in this country, or that it was intended that war criminals should find shelter here."

The most important sentence is:

"War criminals were not given an assurance that they would not be prosecuted here, and we see nothing in the policy or practice of successive British Governments that would prevent the present Government taking whatever action it considers suitable."

I have scrutinised the record most carefully and I do not dissent from that.

To borrow an idea from the hon. Member for Perry Barr, if the House passes the Bill, one British citizen will be treated like any other in respect of these crimes.

Extremely important points about retrospection were made by my right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath), my hon. Friends the Members for Pembroke (Mr. Bennett) and for Ipswich (Mr. Irvine) and others. The Bill does not impose criminal penalties on conduct that was legitimate under our law when it occurred. It confers jurisdiction on our courts to try proceedings for conduct that has always been criminal under our law. It does so only from a future date when the Bill receives Royal Assent and comes into force.

Sir Nicholas Fairbairn *rose*——

Mr. Patten: If my hon. and learned Friend will forgive me, I do not have time to give way.

In essence, the Bill gives quite long notice that a procedural barrier to criminal proceedings for criminal conduct will be removed.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Pavilion seemed to advance a third argument; it was also implicit in what my hon. Friend the Member for Orpington (Mr. Stanbrook) said. I listened carefully to his speech, because he is acknowledged as an expert in extradition law. They said that if we followed this course we should go the whole hog and make it possible to bring war crimes charges against people who were alleged to have committed crimes in any country or any war. They suggested that we should not restrict them to the conflict on German of German-occupied soil.

I am afraid that they would cause a number of problems. First, we seek in the Bill to implement only the Hetherington-Chalmers recommendations, which have been carefully thought out and arrived at on advice. It would not be right to move outside such advice and widen jurisdiction in this way without careful reflection.

Secondly, we should be in some danger of allowing a genuine and obnoxious retrospection to creep in. The 1957 Act reflected the provisions of the 1949 Geneva convention, which went much further than the fourth Hague convention of 1907—the convention that is reflected in this Bill, comprising the international law that obtained at the time, not later.

I assure my hon. Friend the Member for Pembroke, to whom I listened with care, and other hon. Members that we should of course consider moving to legislation to cover Japanese war criminals or war criminals from any other theatre of war who were alleged to be living here if there was evidence that any of them was living within our jurisdiction. There is no such evidence. This House legislates when there is a need to legislate: such is our duty. But we can consider these points in Committee and I look forward to the debates.

My hon. Friend the Member for Pembroke and the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Central asked whether legal aid would be available to cover trips to the Soviet Union. The answer is yes. Legal aid boards have wide discretion to make exceptional payments for the defence when necessary extra expenditure is incurred while collecting evidence—for example, travelling to the USSR, Latvia or Estonia, or to one of the other countries mentioned by my hon. Friend the Member for Hendon, North (Mr. Gorst).

Sir Julian Amery: Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Patten: No, if my right hon. Friend will forgive me.

We have no statute of limitations in this country and have never had one. We have always taken the view, especially on serious offences, that there is no point at which a crime can be forgotten merely because it took place a long time ago—I say that with due respect to my hon. Friend the Member for Halesowen and Stourbridge (Sir J. Stokes). Hon. Members who do not agree with the Bill must agree that, in that case, we should have a general statute of limitations declaring that after 10, 20 or 30 years murder becomes out of date. We can forgive or forget, but decide never to prosecute after a certain time limit. It would be a bad principle if Parliament were to decide that at some stage a crime stops being a live crime and becomes a dead one; which is not to under-estimate the serious difficulties that face us all when addressing this Bill.

The House is united in its abhorrence of these crimes. There is common ground between us and no one could suggest otherwise. It is now on the agenda and we cannot shirk our responsibilities. The war crimes inquiry found that there are people living in Britain against whom, in its opinion, there is sufficient evidence to justify prosecution. It would be wrong for us to ignore that fact.

It is not for us in this place to say that we can take it on ourselves to forgive the wrong done to others. That is why I commend the Bill to the House.

Question put, That the Bill be read a Second time:—

The House divided: Ayes 273, Noes 60.

Division No. 136] **[10.00 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Amess, David
Arbuthnot, James
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Ashby, David
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Beckett, Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Bendall, Vivian
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bermingham, Gerald
Bevan, David Gilroy
Boateng, Paul
Boswell, Tim
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Boyes, Roland
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Burns, Simon
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Carrington, Matthew
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Chapman, Sydney
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clelland, David
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Conway, Derek
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Corbett, Robin
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Curry, David
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Day, Stephen
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Durant, Tony
Eastham, Ken
Eggar, Tim
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Flynn, Paul
Fookes, Dame Janet
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Foster, Derek
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Fraser, John
Freeman, Roger
Fyfe, Maria
Galloway, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Golding, Mrs Llin
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gordon, Mildred
Gorst, John
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Grist, Ian
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hague, William
Hannam, John
Hardy, Peter
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harman, Ms Harriet
Harris, David
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Haynes, Frank
Henderson, Doug
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holt, Richard
Howard, Rt Hon Michael
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Dr. Kim (Pontypridd)
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Ingram, Adam
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Janner, Greville
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Knapman, Roger
Latham, Michael
Leadbitter, Ted
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Leighton, Ron
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
McFall, John
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Maples, John
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Meale, Alan
Mellor, David
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morgan, Rhodri
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Rt Hon P *(Chester)*
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Murphy, Paul
Neale, Gerrard
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Norris, Steve
O'Brien, William
Oppenheim, Phillip
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Page, Richard
Paice. James
Patchett, Terry
Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, Rt Hon John
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pike, Peter L.
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Randall, Stuart
Redwood, John
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Richardson, Jo
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Rt Hon Nicholas
Sedgemore, Brian
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shersby, Michael
Sillars, Jim
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Steen, Anthony
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Thatcher, Rt Hon Margaret
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Thorne, Neil
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Twinn, Dr Ian
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Waldegrave, Rt Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Wall, Pat
Waller, Gary
Walley, Joan
Wareing, Robert N.
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Wheeler, Sir John
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Wilshire, David
Winnick, David
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Stephen Dorrell and
Mr. Irvine Patnick.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Amery, Rt Hon Julian
Bellingham, Henry
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Budgen, Nicholas
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Cormack, Patrick
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Fairbairn, Sir Nicholas
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heath, Rt Hon Edward
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Irvine, Michael
Knox, David
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
McCrindle, Robert
McNair-Wilson, Sir Patrick
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*

Mates, Michael
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Morrison, Sir Charles
Moss, Malcolm
Mudd, David
Nelson Anthony
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Rathbone, Tim
Robertson, George
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stokes, Sir John
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Viggers, Peter
Walters, Sir Dennis
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Neil Hamilton and
Mr. William Powell.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Bill read a Second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, That the Bill be committed to a Committee of the whole House.—*[Mr. Cormack.]*

Question put:—

The House divided: Ayes 59, Noes 224.

Division No. 137] **[10.13 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Allason, Rupert
Allen, Graham
Amery, Rt Hon Julian
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Bellingham, Henry
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Body, Sir Richard
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bowis, John
Budgen, Nicholas
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Cormack, Patrick
Cryer, Bob
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Fairbairn, Sir Nicholas
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Heath, Rt Hon Edward
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Irvine, Michael
Knox, David
Litherland, Robert
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Mates, Michael
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Meale, Alan
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Morrison, Sir Charles
Nelson, Anthony
Oppenheim, Phillip
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Rathbone, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Richardson, Jo
Robertson, George
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Speed, Keith
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stokes, Sir John
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Walters, Sir Dennis
Whitney, Ray
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilshire, David

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Nicholas Bennett and
Mr. Neil Hamilton.

NOES

Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Alton, David
Amess, David
Arbuthnot, James
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Ashby, David
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Beckett, Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Bendall, Vivian
Bermingham, Gerald
Bevan, David Gilroy
Boateng, Paul
Boswell, Tim
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Boyes, Roland
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Burns, Simon
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Carrington, Matthew
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Chapman, Sydney
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Cohen, Harry
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Curry, David
Darling, Alistair
Day, Stephen
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Durant, Tony
Eastham, Ken
Eggar, Tim
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Flynn, Paul
Fookes, Dame Janet
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Foster, Derek
Franks, Cecil
Fraser, John
Freeman, Roger
Galloway, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Glyn, Dr Sir Alan
Golding, Mrs Llin
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gordon, Mildred
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Grist, Ian
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hannam, John
Hardy, Peter
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Haynes, Frank
Hayward, Robert
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holt, Richard
Howard, Rt Hon Michael
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Ingram, Adam
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Janner, Greville
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Knapman, Roger
Latham, Michael
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas
McFall, John
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Morgan, Rhodri
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Rt Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Norris, Steve
O'Brien, William
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patchett, Terry
Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, Rt Hon John
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pike, Peter L.
Portillo, Michael
Prescott, John
Randall, Stuart
Redwood, John
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Rt Hon Nicholas
Sedgemore, Brian
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shersby, Michael
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Steen, Anthony

Stevens, Lewis	Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*	Waller, Gary
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*	Walley, Joan
Sumberg, David	Wareing, Robert N.
Summerson, Hugo	Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*	Wheeler, Sir John
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*	Widdecombe, Ann
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*	Wilkinson, John
Thatcher, Rt Hon Margaret	Winnick, David
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis	Wolfson, Mark
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*	Wood, Timothy
Thorne, Neil	Young, Sir George *(Acton)*
Tracey, Richard	Younger, Rt Hon George
Trippier, David	
Twinn, Dr Ian	Tellers for the Noes:
Waddington, Rt Hon David	Mr. Stephen Dorrell and
Waldegrave, Rt Hon William	Mr. Irvine Patnick.

Question accordingly negatived.

Bill committed to a Standing Committee pursuant to Standing Order No. 61 (Committal of Bills).

WAR CRIMES BILL [MONEY]

Queen's Recommendation having been signified—

Resolved,

That, for the purposes of any Act resulting from the War Crimes Bill, it is expedient to authorise the payment out of money provided by Parliament of—

(a) sums in respect of expenditure by the Receiver of the Metropolitan Police District on the investigation by officers of the Metropolitan Police (with or without other officers) of offences to which that Act applies; and

(b) any increase attributable to that Act in the sums payable out of such money under any other Act.

—*[Mr. Nicholas Baker.]*

Rate Support Grant (Scotland)

10.24 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland: (Lord James Douglas-Hamilton): I beg to move,

That the Rate Support Grant (Scotland) Order 1990, dated 26th February 1990, a copy of which was laid before this House on 27 February, be approved.

This is likely to be the penultimate order dealing with the old local government finance system. It represents good news for Scottish local authorities, and I do not think that I need detain the House long in explaining its purpose.

The order adjusts rate support grant entitlements for Scottish local authorities for the three years up to and including 1988-89— the last year of the old system. That adjustment can be made in the light of more up-to-date information on expenditure during those years. The main impact is in relation to 1988-89, during which authorities further reduced expenditure, as compared with their original budget figures, by £26 million, as a result of which —if the House approves the order—we will return to them about £30 million in grant. There are also minor adjustments of grant for the two previous years, 1986-87 and 1987-88. The Convention of Scottish Local Authorities has been consulted about the contents of the order and has welcomed it.

As I suggested, one further order is likely to be required in the future to make the final adjustments to authorities' rate support grant entitlement for the years before the introduction of the new system. But those adjustments are likely to be minor, as in the vast majority of cases, we now have a clear picture of actual spending levels in the years in question. So this order represents the last significant step in the process of adjusting grant following changes in grant penalties.

Authorities' total budgets for 1988-89 were £3,742 million, which was £136·5 million above the guideline set by my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State. The grant apportionments of those authorities budgeting above guideline were initially reduced in the Rate Support Grant (Scotland) Order 1988. The tariff of grant penalties imposed in that order was moderate and reasonable when compared with the huge budgeted overspend. Modest penalties were imposed on those authorities that were budgeting only slightly over guideline. The penalty tariff increased for authorities budgeting at 4 per cent. or more over guideline, because it was in relation to those authorities that the greatest pressure required to be exercised.

The initial response of authorities to the penalty tariff was well demonstrated in the provisional outturn figures for the year. Authorities reduced their overall spending by £48 million, compared with their original budget figures. That enabled the Scottish Office to return to authorities by means of the Rate Support Grant (Scotland) Order 1989 —which we debated last July—the sum of £70 million. The final outturn figures for 1988-89 now show that authorities have made a further reduction in spending of £26 million.

As I said, that permits the return of about £30 million of grant penalties. It is pleasing to note that, whereas 31 authorities were subject to grant penalties at the provisional outturn stage, that number has been reduced at final outturn stage to 20. As was the case at provisional outturn stage, the authorities that have reduced their expenditure most are Strathclyde and Lothian. Those two

[Lord James Douglas-Hamilton]

authorities are therefore the major beneficiaries of tonight's order—which, if approved by the House, will permit £10·8 million to be returned to Strathclyde and £11·1 million to be repaid to Lothian.

Other authorities that will be repaid significant amounts as a result of the order are Central and Fife regions and Aberdeen and Cunninghame districts. A small number of authorities have, regrettably, increased their spending in 1988-89 at final outturn stage by small amounts, and have had their penalties increased.

Grant adjustments in respect of 1986-87 and 1987-88 are very small, and affect only a handful of authorities. They make merely minor adjustments to those authorities' accounts in the light of recently received final information on their spending in the relevant financial years.

The overall effect of the order is to reduce grant penalties by almost £30·7 million and to increase penalties by £0·7 million. The net effect is that the sum of £30 million will be repaid to authorities with, as I said, £23 million of that total going to Strathclyde and Lothian.

The order demonstrates that, under the old system, grant penalties were effective in curbing excessive expenditure by authorities. Now, of course, we have a new local government finance system in which the discipline of grant penalties is replaced by local accountability and the need for authorities to justify their spending levels to the local electorate, many more of whom now have, as a result of the community charge, a direct stake in those local decisions.

Following this morning's full debate on local government finance matters in the Scottish Grand Committee, I shall resist the temptation to stray into discussing the new system and the alternatives to it which have been proposed by the Opposition parties. Tonight's order represents good news for Scottish local authorities and has been welcomed by COSLA, and I commend it to the House.

10.30 pm

Mr. Donald Dewar (Glasgow, Garscadden): The Under-Secretary is never at his best when he is trying to sound like a severe bank manager reprimanding a profligate client. When he starts talking about huge overspending and the modest penalties imposed by this munificent Government, he tempts me into a longer speech than I had originally intended. However, I shall resist that temptation on this occasion.

I can put some hon. Gentlemen out of their misery by saying that the official Opposition have no intention of dividing on the order. It would be ungracious to do so because it marks another stage in the final dismantling of a resented and oppressive penalty system, and it will give back some £30·2 million to Scottish local authorities—£30·2 million which I believe should never have been removed from them.

This is almost the end of an auld sang. I have spent a great deal of parliamentary time during the past decade or so, usually late at night, discussing the arcane niceties of the guideline procedure—guidelines that became mandatory as the years rolled by—and discussing, with successive Scottish Office Ministers, the philosophical basis of the words "excessive" and "reasonable." I do not disguise my pleasure in seeing those words, if not expunged from the language, at least removed from the common currency of Scottish politics. That is a cause for celebration among almost all hon. Members present.

Before the Under-Secretary gets the idea that we propose to give him a pat on the back and three cheers to send him on his way, I must say that in the order we are undoing damage which, predictably, did not occur as there was no huge overspend. The Under-Secretary talked about the enormous cumulative total of local authority spending. I think that he mentioned a figure of more than £3,000 million. In those terms, an overspend of £136·5 million could hardly be described as earth-shattering.

In return for that overspend—an overspend against arbitrary guidelines—we got a penalty of £140·5 million in the past year. Now we are getting a repayment because, predictably, the estimated budgets were somewhat higher than the outcome expenditure figures of the local authorities concerned. The Under-Secretary said, as Ministers will, that that showed how effective the system was. In fact, in almost every year that I can remember that has happened, and it would have happened whether there had been a penalty system or not.

The Under-Secretary is right to say that it was a modest penalty. The £136·5 million overspend attracted a penalty of just over £140 million. In previous years, it was well over that. In one year, it was 125 per cent. of the overspend, and it may even have been higher than that at one point. So, to some extent, this was less harsh, but it was punitive and unnecessary because it runs counter to the basic process of local democracy, in which elected councils assess local need, setting a rate to meet that need—as they did in those days—and answering for what they did at the ballot box. There is no need to make a great meal of this because the system is rapidly fading from memory. This may not be the last adjustment order, but it is certainly the last substantial one that the House will have to consider.

In the corresponding order last year, there was a repayment of £69·6 million as against a penalty of £140 million. Now we are getting £30·2 million. According to simple arithmetic, and in round terms, the authorities have lost £40 million as a result of the penalty system and their alleged over-provision of services. Strathclyde has been given £10·7 million, but it is still £24 million short as a result of the exercise. As the Minister mentioned, Lothian's repayment is £11·1 million, but it is still losing £9 million because of what is regarded as its failure to comply with the Secretary of State's whims. We are better off without the system. I am glad that it is about to be consigned to the scrap heap.

The penalty system has been consistently reinforced by other Government decisions. The Minister referred to this morning's proceedings in the Scottish Grand Committee. I do not intend to refer to the arguments that were rehearsed in Committee, but it is well known that the revenue support grant figures for this year have again victimised many of the authorities that we are considering. I hope that we have seen the end of the penalty system and that it will not return under a new guise. The Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc. (Scotland) Act 1987 would allow poll tax capping. We have already entered into an interesting guessing game as to how many authorities south of the border will fall victim to that ploy. Earlier today the Under-Secretary of State suggested that the Government would not go down that road. I hope that he will be able to hold to that assertion.

I am glad that this oppressive machinery is to be abolished and that local authorities are to be granted some rebate. Therefore, I am perfectly happy to agree to the order.

10.37 pm

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North): I welcome the order. It shows that the Government are responding, as they said they would, to authorities that have made some attempt to fall into line.

Over the years, authorities have indulged in expenditure that they deemed that they required, yet when their expenditure was compared with that of more prudent authorities it was clear that the prudent authorities did not enjoy the rewards that were enjoyed by the high-spending authorities, which started from a broad base. Even after penalties had been imposed, their base was still much broader than that of the prudent authorities that started with slim budgets.

I am glad that this is the penultimate order. It is the last major order that deals with this aspect of local government activity. We have not enjoyed coming to the House late at night to deal with the guidelines, the grant penalties and all the other adjustments that were required. One had to be almost a barrack-room lawyer to understand how the figures were arrived at and how to make sense of them. I tried to do so but I failed. However, I do not think that I was the only person who could not work out how the guidelines were arrived at and, worse still, how the penalties were apportioned.

Mr. Dewar: Now he tells us.

Mr. Walker: I have always said so. I have never understood it, and I have never pretended otherwise.

I have never understood why a good Conservative-controlled authority such as Perth and Kinross district council was penalised many years ago. Because it was good, it had to share the misery with high-spending authorities. That never made sense to me. I never understood it, and I said so at the time. I shall not bore the House, but I have said consistently that I thought that good authorities should be properly rewarded and those which had defaulted should be penalised. I am not about to change my views on that.

I welcome the fact that we have now changed to a system of much greater accountability. Whatever else one can say, there was very little local accountability under the rates systems. With the community charge, it is now certain that there will be greater local accountability.

If I can make one comment about this morning's activities in Scotland, the total absence of any demonstration was noticeable to me and, I suppose, to everyone else who attended. It is the first time that there has been a Grand Committee meeting at Edinburgh without a single protest being made. One can only presume that the old guidelines and the penalties that we are discussing tonight stirred up much interest, and the community charge is now working so well that people are no longer protesting.

10.40 pm

Mrs. Ray Michie (Argyll and Bute): I, too, welcome any money which is returned to local authorities. The grant penalty has always been unacceptable and unfair and I hope that we are seeing the end of it.

I should like to ask the Minister two questions. First, can he confirm the figures for the years that we are discussing, the money that is being returned to local authorities that were penalised, and the money that is not being given back? Has the Minister had the chance to query those figures, if that is necessary, or will he have an opportunity to do so in the near future? The Minister is aware of my concern that there should be a realistic formula which takes into account the needs element of support grant for Argyll and Bute district council, for example.

Secondly, in view of the delay in bringing the order to the House—it was on the Order Paper for one day last week but was postponed until tonight—can the Minister confirm that the refunds are on target for 28 March? I should be interested to receive answers to those two questions.

10.42 pm

Mr. Harry Ewing (Falkirk, East): Like other hon. Members who have spoken, I shall be brief. It would be churlish not to recognise that Central region will be receiving £1·3 million out of the refund to local authorities in tonight's order. But I cannot allow the impression to go abroad that the Government's discipline on Central region has brought that authority within their spending guidelines and that Central region was surcharged because it was overspending. That was not the case, and it is important for Labour-controlled Central regional council that I put on record the fact that it was in such trouble.

I have related the story to the House before, but it is none the worse for being repeated. It has its origin in the Government's decision to remove outside plant and machinery from the rating and valuation of the petrochemical industry at Grangemouth in my constituency, thereby removing £8·5 million worth of rateable value—not rateable income but rateable value.

When I took a deputation to see the former Minister, the hon. Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart), who is not present tonight, he said that he was refusing to reimburse Falkirk district council, within whose boundaries Grangemouth is situated, or Central region, because, surprisingly—in his words—rates in Central region were below the Scottish average per head of the population.

Therefore, the removal of £8·5 million-worth of rateable value served the purpose of bringing Central regional ratepayers and Falkirk district ratepayers up to the Scottish average. As a result, Falkirk district council had to make an increase of 4p in the pound and Central region an increase of 6p in the pound. Having done so, Central region was penalised by the Government for being an overspender.

To compound that felony, the removal of £8·5 million of rateable value did not bring Central region into the needs element of the rate support grant. It therefore suffered the worst of both worlds, because its resource element income from industry, particularly from the Grangemouth area, even after the removal of £8·5 million of rateable value, was too high to bring it within the needs element and the Government would not make good the shortfall that arose from the removal of that £8·5 million.

Over the years, Central region has maintained good services, such as the homehelp service, and it offers the only mechanised emergency care service in the country,

[Mr. Harry Ewing]

whereby elderly people can get care at any time of the day or night. The Labour-controlled council has maintained those services despite being penalised.

I should not want anyone reading the debate to think that Central region was penalised because it was a big spender. It was a prudent and responsible spender and provided outstanding services to people in the region. It therefore struck me as unjust that it should be penalised. Although I am pleased that it is being refunded £1·3 million under the order, it is right for me to place on record on its behalf the circumstances in which it was placed, not by overspending but by the Government.

10.47 pm

Mrs. Maria Fyfe (Glasgow, Maryhill): I am not surprised that the hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) could never understand the formula for deciding the needs and resources because there was no formula by which each local authority could calculate what it would receive. During my days on Glasgow district council, when I pored over its figures and those for other authorities, I became convinced that there was an "X" factor known as the "Och to hell figure" in the Scottish Office. There was no way of accounting for the differences between authorities.

Does the Minister recall his answer to my written question in which I inquired about the cost of administering the community charge, or poll tax, in 1989-90? His answer was that the cost of administering it in the year just ending had been estimated at £43·5 million, whereas the cost of administering the last year of the rating system was £31 million.

Have local authorities been fully compensated for the extra amount that will have to be spent? I see that the Minister is looking for a quick answer to that question. If not, when will they be so compensated? Does he think it sensible to waste £12·5 million on a much-hated system? Would it not be more sensibly spent on the services for which people are crying out?

10.49 pm

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Clearly the hon. Member for Falkirk, East (Mr. Ewing) asked the Scottish National party such a devastating question this morning that none of them has turned up for the debate this evening. However, I note what he said. He was discussing meetings with a former Minister. His own local authority, Central regional council, has had returned to it £1,332,632. If he wishes me to follow up any particular points, I shall be glad to do so.

The hon. Member for Glasgow, Maryhill (Mrs. Fyfe) mentioned the cost of collection. I stated correctly that the extra cost would be £14·5 million. We always recognised that the community charge would cost more to administer than rates, not least because twice as many people will pay it. She also asked about the Government making provision. I am glad to confirm that full provision for local authorities' implementation and running costs was based on COSLA's own estimates. Any hon. Member is free to raise the question of running costs again in the current round of discussions in the working party on local government finance.

Mrs. Fyfe: It is still a sheer waste of money. Even if the Government are compensating local authorities, it is £12·5 million down the drain for running a tax that no one wants.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: We considered that the advantages of increased accountability outweighed the extra costs.

The hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) mentioned the possibility of selective action. I said this morning that the greater accountability of the new community charge arrangements should reduce the need for Government intervention in the form of selective action. My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State said in January that he would be reluctant to initiate such action this year. However, we shall not make a final decision until all authorities' budgets have been carefully examined.

I was pleased that my hon. Friend the Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) welcomed the order. I am following up the questions that he asked this morning about flood banks. I shall write to him fully on the matter in due course.

I welcome what the hon. Member for Garscadden said. As he said, £30 million is being returned. I should also emphasise a point that COSLA has made. With this order we are now close to putting the old system completely to rest. Grant penalties are a thing of the past. The books for the years prior to the introduction of the new system in Scotland on 1 April 1989 have not yet been closed and there will be a further opportunity for final adjustments to be made to grant penalties. Hopefully, that will not take too long.

The hon. Member for Argyll and Bute (Mrs. Michie) raised a question which affects her constituency. Her authority feels that it is disadvantaged by the present system. As she knows, the system is worked out by the methodologies agreed with COSLA. The client group assessment arrangements are used in determining the relevant grant aid expenditure. It is open to any authority which feels that it is disadvantaged by the present arrangements to present a detailed case for change to the distribution committee which comprises representatives from both COSLA and the Scottish Office. It is important to emphasise that not only the Scottish Office but the convention and other Scottish local authorities have to be convinced of the case for change.

The hon. Lady also asked about the delay caused by the fact that the debate was not held last week. I assure her that we are on target for the end of March and the required date. No disadvantage will have been sustained by any local authority. With that, I commend the order warmly to the House.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That the Rate Support Grant (Scotland) Order 1990, dated 26th February 1990, a copy of which was laid before this House on 27th February, be approved.

Cleddau Bridge, Pembrokeshire

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Chapman.]*

10.53 pm

Mr. Nicholas Bennett (Pembroke): I am grateful for the opportunity to speak to an Adjournment motion on a subject of great interest to my constituents—the tolls for the Cleddau bridge in Pembrokeshire.

It may help the House to begin by describing the location and some of the history and background of the bridge. The bridge spans the Cleddau river some miles downstream from the mouth of the River Cleddau, not far from Neyland and Pembroke Dock. It replaces a ferry which came into use in 1840 between Neyland and Hobbs point. The ferry was discontinued once the bridge came into being.

The history of the construction of the bridge goes back to proposals made in 1943 and 1945 for a bridge across the river downstream from Pembroke Dock. That scheme was not implemented, nor was the proposal, made in 1959, for a barrage across the river. In 1964, further proposals were made for a bridge to cross the River Cleddau, and in 1965 the House passed the Pembrokeshire County Council Act, which gave the council permission to construct a bridge across the river.

Tenders for the bridge were put out in 1968 and the original cost was £3 million. Unfortunately, on 2 June 1970, the bridge under construction collapsed into the river, killing four workmen involved in its construction. Following the collapse, an inquiry was set up under the Merrison committee to look into the construction of the bridge. It had been built on the box-girder principle, but with the collapse of that bridge and one in Australia, doubts were raised about that method of construction. As a result, progress on the Cleddau bridge was held up for a considerable time while the Merrison committee examined the principle of construction.

It was not until 1974-75 that the county council approached the end of construction, having taken on board the recommendations of the final Merrison inquiry of 1973.

The bridge opened in 1975, and it was tolled from the start. The purpose of a bridge at that point was to facilitate crossing the river and to save my constituents a detour up to 28 miles that would have meant them going via Canaston bridge and the village of Nash. The people of Pembrokeshire have saved considerable time since the bridge was constructed.

Ever since the bridge opened, a battle has been waged against the tolls. In 1974, the county council expressed concern that the cost of the bridge had escalated considerably as a result of the need to reconstruct it under the new building principles. The bridge, which started off costing £3 million, ended up costing nearly £9 million. The county council therefore felt it right at that stage to approach the Secretary of State for Wales, then the right hon. and learned Member for Aberavon (Mr. Morris) with a request for assistance in view of the increased costs caused to it by having to rebuild the bridge according to the latest safety standards.

In spite of delegation after delegation, and requests from the county council, the then Secretary of State refused to assist Dyfed county council. In a letter of 11 January 1979, the private secretary to the Secretary of State wrote to the county secretary of Dyfed county council:

> "I write to tell you that the Secretary of State regrets that the facts do not, in his view, provide any basis for action on his part."

My predecessor as Member for Pembroke, now Lord Crickhowell, who was also to become Secretary of State, went to see the Labour Secretary of State. In response to the plea for assistance from Mr. Edwards, as he then was, the Secretary of State said: "I wash my hands of the matter." Mr. Edwards replied, "Like Pontius Pilate."

When Lord Crickhowell took office as Secretary of State in May 1979, he immediately put into effect in the Welsh Office an inquiry to fulfil an election promise made in the Welsh Conservative party election manifesto of 1979 to provide assistance to Dyfed county council. That led to an award of £4 million as an interest-free loan for 40 years to the county council. The decision to make an interest-free loan rather than award a grant outright was for legal, not financial, reasons. The Pembrokeshire County Council Act 1965 contains a provision that prevents toll income from being used to meet any of the bridge costs, which are also grant-aided. The Welsh Office saw the loan as the best way to help the county council.

I am grateful, as are the people of Pembroke, for the swift progress made by Lord Crickhowell, then Mr. Nicholas Edwards, to fulfil that election manifesto in a matter of months.

I shall now consider the costs of the bridge—first, the loan costs. I was told in a letter from the county council on 5 December 1989 that the approximate total cost to Dyfed county council had been £9 million. That was despite £3 million compensation that was given to the county council following the collapse of the original bridge.

The running costs for the bridge are equally heavy. In the latest financial year for which I have figures, 1988-89, the running costs were £83,607, and the collection costs were £176,054, giving a total running cost of £259,661. The debt charges have now risen to £11,208,639, of which £2,493,710 is the principal amount, the other £8,700,000-odd being the interest.

Toll takings have risen considerably in the past few years. In 1988-89, the total toll income was £1,079,722. That reflects the growing importance of the bridge as part of the economic infrastructure of the county. I have received from the county council the latest figures for traffic flow over the bridge. In an average month, about 2,007 vehicles cross the bridge in each direction.

Why is it that, after nearly 20 years, the people of Pembrokeshire are still opposed to the tolls? There are a number of reasons. First, the bridge's economic impact on the county is divisive. The bridge spans both South Pembrokeshire and the Preseli Pembrokeshire district council areas—the two parts of the county. Many people who work or live on one side of the bridge travel across the bridge to work. They find the cost, at 50p each way, or £1 per day—£2 if they travel across twice a day—extremely excessive.

The effect on local industry is particularly hard. It is surprising, given that this part of my constituency is an enterprise zone, that the Government have not recognised the economic cost of the bridge on local industry. Given that we have higher than average unemployment and

[Mr. Nicholas Bennett]

lower than average wages in Pembrokeshire, it would be simple for the Government to look again at the justification for tolls on the bridge.

People have to use county facilities which are located on the other side of the river. For example, Withybush hospital, our district general hospital, is situated in Haverfordwest, and everyone who is referred to that hospital in south Pembrokeshire either has to make a long detour or must cross the bridge and pay tolls. We should look at the raison d'etre of charging to go across the bridge.

I bear in mind the second report of the Select Committee on Transport in 1985-86 when it specifically considered tolled crossings. It stated:

"Among the issues it decided to examine were:

(i) The underlying principles which have justified the policy of successive Governments of imposing tolls on road users only for estuarial crossings;

(ii) The costs of installing and operating toll systems;

(iii) The scale and cost of delays to road users caused by toll systems;

(iv) The way in which toll charges are determined, and the extent to which net revenues from tolls are sufficient to defray the capital and maintenance costs of estuarial crossings; and

(v) The net cost to the Exchequer of abolishing tolls at estuarial crossings."

There are 11 major tolled crossings in the United Kingdom, and one of them is the Cleddau bridge. However, other major crossings are not tolled. There is a disparity in Government policy on the Cleddau bridge and on the other 10 major crossings, and those other crossings, such as the Medway bridge on the M2, where no toll is made for the crossing. It seems completely unfair that a crossing charge should be made on this estuary and nine or 10 others, yet at other major crossings across estuaries, the road user goes free.

The reason for this is that we have a captive monopoly. There is no absolute logical case for the Government making charges on one crossing and not on another, apart from the fact that they think that they can get away with it. In a Treasury minute of 5 July 1979, when the interest-free loan of £4 million for the Cleddau bridge was being discussed, the Treasury admitted, when the opposition was put, that there was no justification in principle for treating expenditure on river crossings differently from expenditure on other roads or similar crossings which were toll-free, and that the arguments in favour of tolls could be applied equally to other major road schemes, including motorways. The Treasury minute says:

"That is true and in principle there is much more to be said for a more widespread use of road pricing. The case against charging for motorway use is a practical one, namely, that in this country there are too many opportunities for avoiding tolls by switching to smaller toll-free roads."

We have a toll on this bridge not for reasons of logic or principle; it is simply that Governments of both political parties have over the years recognised that they have a captive monopoly clientele and that the motorist has nowhere else to go, so it is convenient to charge him. That is most unfair. These bridges are part of our national road system. The Cleddau bridge links two major trunk roads. We do not pay to go on the trunk roads or on the motorway that runs from near Pembrokeshire to London; yet to cross the bridge, my constituents are charged £1 for a return ticket.

The report by the Select Committee on Transport also recognised that convenience was the only reason why the Government have imposed tolls. It says that the Committee believes that crossings which are the responsibility of local authorities should be handed over to the Government and acknowledged as part of the major road system. These views are supported by the RAC, which has said that it can see no rhyme or reason why such crossings should continue to be charged for.

I conclude by drawing attention to one or two personal cases of constituents who have written on this issue to show the sort of costs that people are facing. I refer, for instance, to a number of people on the staff of the South Pembrokeshire hospital in Pembroke Dock, who live on the north side of the water and have to pay £4 a week each to cross the bridge—that is, after taking account of the concessions that are available for people who are regular users.

Mr. P. Sharpe, the headmaster of the Cosheston voluntary controlled school in Pembroke Dock, lives in Milford Haven and calculates that, because he has to go back to school frequently in the evenings, he has to pay £230 a year in tolls. Similarly, Mr. Simes and his fellow workers at the Texaco refinery have calculated that they are paying considerable amounts to cross the bridge.

Lastly, I draw attention to the absurdity of absurdities: the fact that even the district health authority has to pay for emergency ambulances crossing the bridge. The general manager, Mr. Brian Davis, wrote me a letter last year, in which he said:

"Each ambulance and hospital vehicle pays the appropriate toll and for the last twelve months this has amounted to a sum a little in excess of £3,000. In addition to this amount we re-imburse toll fees paid by other staff who need to cross the bridge in pursuance of their duties. Staff in this category will, of course, include district nurses, chiropodists, speech therapists and many other of our professionals going about their daily business. . . . The only occasion when one of our vehicles passes through the toll without payment is when an ambulance is displaying its blue flashing light but it is then required to pay a double toll on its return journey!"

I am told by local people who live near the bridge that, when an ambulance is on an emergency trip on the way back, its number is taken and the bill is sent to the district health authority.

There is no justification for treating the bridge as anything but part of the national road system. It is unfair that the ratepayers under Dyfed county council and the people who use the bridge should bear the total costs of using it, given that the rest of the system is free. We should abolish these tolls and make the bridge part of the national road network.

11.8 pm

The Minister of State, Welsh Office (Mr. Wyn Roberts): My hon. Friend the Member for Pembroke (Mr. Bennett) has made clear his concern about the toll charges on the Cleddau bridge and their effect on his constituents, and not for the first time. He has touched on this theme many times, and I pay tribute to him for his genuine concern for his constituents.

Although my hon. Friend has told the House much of the story, it might be useful if I, too, recapitulate the interesting history of the Cleddau bridge.

The estuary at Milford Haven divides the former county of Pembrokeshire into two unequal parts. Before the building of the bridge, the estuary constituted a serious

barrier to land communications within the county. The only available direct crossing was by the Neyland to Hobbs point car ferry, but the two vessels used there could not carry large modern lorries, the weight limit being only five tonnes. In later years, the ferries proved inadequate to cope with the greatly increased volume of traffic. During the periodic overhaul of each ferry, only one vessel was available, and in fog and stormy weather, at very low tides and at night, the service was suspended altogether.

The alternative land route between the two shores of the haven involved travelling some 28 miles. Various proposals were therefore considered over the years to bridge the Haven. These culminated in a county council scheme to provide a high level toll bridge, the powers for which were granted by Parliament in the Pembrokeshire County Council Act 1965, as my hon. Friend recounted. Construction of the bridge began in 1968. The bridge was to be a self-financing project, with debt charges being recovered over a 50-year period. These charges, together with the operation and maintenance costs, were to be met by tolls levied on the users of the bridge.

Work on the bridge started in September 1968 and should have taken two and a half years to complete. However, 20 months into the contract, in June 1970, the bridge superstructure collapsed. Work could not be restarted until March 1972, and the bridge was finally opened in March 1975, by which time costs had increased from £3 million to £12 million. The increase arose from the delay in construction and the need to comply with the recommendations of the Merrison committee on box girder bridges.

The Government inspector who took the public inquiry into a tolls review in 1974 took the view that the circumstances which had given rise to such increased costs were so exceptional that it would be unfair if there were no special Exchequer assistance. He recommended that the additional costs to the county council of applying the Merrison committee's standards be transferred from the ratepayers to the Exchequer. The inspector estimated these additional costs to be £7 million or more.

Dyfed county council, which took over responsibility for the bridge following local government reorganisation, reached an out-of-court settlement for £3 million with the consulting engineers who designed the bridge. That left the sum of £4 million attributable to the Merrison requirements. This Government, when they came to office in 1979, took the view that, because of the wholly exceptional circumstances, it was appropriate to give assistance to the county council on a one-off basis.

The terms of the Pembrokeshire County Council Act 1965 meant that assistance could effectively be given only by means of an interest-free loan. Accordingly, we approved an interest-free loan of £4 million to the council, repayable over 40 years. This loan is being used to relieve the ratepayers of Dyfed of part of the charges on the council's capital debt which would otherwise be payable. Therefore, a considerable measure of on-going assistance is being provided by the Government, without which toll charges would be far higher. The statement of reasons prepared by the county council for the most recent tolls review in 1985 stated that, at that time, the interest-free loan was worth between £400,000 and £500,000 per annum —a very considerable sum, as I am sure that my hon. Friend appreciates.

As my hon. Friend is aware, the bridge is owned and operated by Dyfed county council. It now has sole responsibility for charging, collecting and reviewing tolls under the Dyfed Act 1987 which replaced the Pembrokeshire County Council Act 1965. It is therefore for the county council to decide whether tolls should continue to be levied and, if so, at what level. Further Government assistance is not an option. The assistance given in 1979, which continues to benefit the people of Dyfed, was given because of the exceptional circumstances involved.

The bridge scheme was promoted in the 1960s on the basis that tolls were the best means of getting the crossing built without placing an intolerable burden on ratepayers. This has remained the policy of the county council. Furthermore, in seeking to pay for the Cleddau bridge by levying tolls, the county council has followed the policy established by successive Governments for charging tolls on major estuarial crossings. This is justified on the grounds that users of such crossings are able to make considerable savings in terms of costs and time, given the lengthy detours that would otherwise have to be made.

Accordingly, we take the view that, unlike ordinary roads, the costs of estuarial crossings should be paid for by the users rather than tax and ratepayers in general. I suggest to my hon. Friend that car drivers in his constituency are getting a good deal in paying 50p to avoid a 28-mile journey.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: In that case, why is it that there are estuarial crossings that are free and part either of the national road network or the motorway network? Why is it that this bridge and 10 others have been singled out for a toll when other crossings are free?

Mr. Roberts: My hon. Friend has it slightly wrong, in that estuarial crossings are generally tolled where there is a distinct saving in journey time and costs. I think that he will find that untolled crossings are generally crossings where an alternative is available.

There is no evidence to suggest that economic development in Pembrokeshire has been inhibited by the levying of tolls on the Cleddau bridge. Since May 1987, unemployment in my hon. Friend's constituency has fallen by 40 per cent., and now stands at 3,651. It is quite clear that activity in the Milford Haven enterprise zone—supported by some £11·5 million public sector investment —has benefited both sides of the waterway. The zone now provides some 2,500 jobs, and has undoubtedly helped to broaden the areas's economic and industrial base.

There is a new air of optimism in Pembroke Dock. Work under way on the "route 9" road scheme is already adding to the town's attractiveness and should help in securing a range of new investments and jobs, building on the success of Govan Davies's deep-water facility. Across the Cleddau bridge, the Honeyborough estate is a well established centre for local business and I anticipate that the exciting plans for Barnlake and further growth at Brunel quay will generate more local job opportunities.

As to Milford Haven, the Welsh Development Agency's business plan has given a considerable boost for future confidence and progress. There are exciting proposals for the docks and, with support from the Welsh Office and the agency, Preseli Pembrokeshire district council is to extend the Thornton business park, which should create an additional 400 jobs.

The Government cannot alter geography, but we are seeking to alter the perception of west Wales as peripheral

[Mr. Roberts]

in terms of potential for growth. Improved communications, particularly by road, are the key. One of our main priorities for the roads programme is the improvement of the A48-A40-A477 Euro-route, which links Carmarthen, Haverfordwest, Milford Haven and Pembroke Dock with the M4 motorway, and the completion of the M4 between Baglan and Lonlas. Since 1979, over £96 million has been spent upgrading the trunk road system from Pont Abraham westwards.

Major schemes completed include the Cross Hands-Llanddarog bypass which I opened personally, the Carmarthen southern bypass, the St. Clears bypass, the Haverfordwest relief road and bypasses at Kilgetty and Stepaside. A number of smaller projects have also been completed including those at Black Bridge, Pont Loerig, and Castell Heli. Currently the two major schemes, Nantycaws bypass and Haverfordwest eastern bypass, are under construction, at an estimated cost of £16 million. Planned schemes, including bypasses for Whitland, Robeston Wathen, Redberth and Sageston, will account for a further estimated expenditure of £14 million. I can assert with confidence that we are far from neglecting my hon. Friend's constituency, and that is largely due to his constant efforts. These road improvements are providing a modern road network into west Wales, with quick and easy links to the motorway system.

I am sorry that I cannot respond to my hon. Friend on the Cleddau bridge issue as he would wish. The cost of the tolls to users must be set alongside a recognition of the benefits which the bridge has brought to the area, and of the growth in economic activity which has taken place and is in prospect.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at twenty minutes past Eleven o'clock.

House of Commons

Tuesday 20 March 1990

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Oral Answers to Questions

HEALTH

Prescribing Costs

1. **Mr. Carttiss:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how prescribing costs under the proposed National Health Service changes will be monitored.

The Secretary of State for Health (Mr. Kenneth Clarke): Under the indicative drug budget scheme, practices will be able to monitor their own expenditure on drugs by means of a simple monthly statement from the Prescription Pricing Authority.

Mr. Carttiss: I thank my right hon. and learned Friend for his reply. Has he seen the circular letter sent to local medical committees by the hon. Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman), repeating the Opposition claim that drug budgets will be cash limited? As the hon. Lady declines to recognise the repeated assurances that that is not so, will my right hon. and learned Friend take this opportunity to reiterate that drug budgets will not be cash limited, and that no patient will go without necessary drugs?

Mr. Clarke: We demonstrate repeatedly to the British Medical Association and to the hon. Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman) that indicative drug budgets will not be cash limited and that every doctor will be free to prescribe whatever drugs a patient needs for his or her condition. The hon. Lady continues not to produce any evidence for her contrary assertion, but she keeps making it. Therefore, I intend to write to all local medical committees yet again, refuting her suggestion and giving reasons, if I can persuade the British Medical Association to give me the addresses of the local medical committees to which she wrote.

Ms. Harman: Will the Secretary of State please investigate the case of David Whitton, a former chairman of the Royal Free hospital kidney patients association, who had to change his general practitioner because his GP would not prescribe for him cyclosporin, an expensive drug which he needs to keep his transplant in place? Will the Secretary of State acknowledge that cash-starved hospitals are passing on to GPs expensive drug costs? How will patients get the drugs that they need when GPs' drugs budgets are capped under the National Health Service and Community Care Bill?

Mr. Clarke: I shall look into that case, as I look into all the cases that the hon. Lady refers to me. So far, not one of the cases that I have looked into has justified the particular assertion that she made on the Floor of the House. Certainly, I disapprove of the attempt by some hospitals to shift the prescription of drugs for which their consultants are responsible on to GPs. A GP has no budgetary reason for refusing to dispense a drug, but some of them are quite correct in insisting that they will not prescribe drugs when a consultant continues to be responsible for the patient. I shall look into that case and see whether it gives rise to some cause to intervene.

Mr. Brandon-Bravo: Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that no practice or doctor objects to the monitoring that is suggested? Does not he deplore the conduct of Opposition politicians and, sadly, unprofessionally, some doctors who are still frightening the life out of elderly and disabled people by telling them that the drug budget will stop them having the drugs that they need? Will he nail that lie once and for all?

Mr. Clarke: I agree with my hon. Friend. Most doctors already prescribe responsibly. The vast majority welcome the introduction of the information system known as PACT—prescribing analyses and cost—which tells them what they are spending now, and most will welcome the opportunity to monitor their own drug spending. I have already refuted the ridiculous allegation that patients might not get the drugs that they need, on grounds of expense. I continue to insist that in a minority of practices there is a sensible case for tackling avoidable and unnecessary costs in prescribing—perhaps they are dispensing drugs that are not needed by the patient, or expensive drugs when cheaper ones are available. The savings made by extending good prescribing practice will be ploughed back into the National Health Service to help improve services.

Cervical Cancer Screening

2. **Mr. Norman Hogg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on cervical cancer screening.

The Minister for Health (Mrs. Virginia Bottomley): The cervical screening programme forms an important part of our strategy to promote women's health. Between 1978 and 1988 deaths from cervical cancer in England and Wales fell by 10 per cent. to under 2,000 women per year and the death rate per million women aged 20 to 74 years fell by 16 per cent.

Mr. Hogg: Is the Minister aware that about 90 per cent. of the 2,000 deaths that occur each year could be avoided by a proper and effective screening service? What positive steps is she taking to ensure that her Department is providing an effective screening service? What improvements are there in uptake, and what is the hon. Lady doing to ensure that women at risk are aware of the services that are available?

Mrs. Bottomley: I entirely endorse the hon. Gentleman's point about the importance of the cancer screening programme. Regular screening can prevent deaths. We were the first country in Europe to introduce a national call and recall scheme for cancer screening. Great headway has been made with the scheme, but we are determined to improve on delays or difficulties in its implementation. Great successes have been achieved

already and under the new contract we expect general practitioners to achieve targets, to ensure that they are proactive in encouraging women to realise the importance of health promotion and of having the test.

Mrs. Maureen Hicks: I have some of the most conscientious doctors in my constituency, but is my hon. Friend aware of the concern among many doctors, particularly in deprived areas, about encouraging people to come forward, to help them reach their targets? What should my message be to doctors who fear that there will be no incentive if they do not reach their targets?

Mrs. Bottomley: I hope that my hon. Friend will make it clear to those general practitioners that the payment for screening is part of the capitation fee. The intention of the target is to encourage doctors to go out of their way to help those who might not have realised the importance of screening tests. The lower target of 50 per cent. is achievable by most; the 80 per cent. target will be more of a challenge, but often health needs are highest in precisely the areas where there is a challenge.

NHS Trusts

3. **Miss Hoey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received on the staff ballot in the West Lambeth health authority on the establishment of a self-governing trust.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I have received two letters on the matter, including one from the hon. Member.

Miss Hoey: As the Secretary of State's attempts to use cuts to persuade hospitals to opt out were repudiated by 80 per cent. of the staff at St. Thomas's voting against opting out last week, will he take immediate steps to reverse the underfunding of West Lambeth health authority? Is he aware that next week it will be taking decisions to cut another 160 beds, to cut out-patient services and to cut the number of people who can use the accident service? Is he further aware of the strong feeling on the matter, and will he assure the House that St. Thomas's will be taken off the list of hospitals that can opt out—[HON. MEMBERS: "Too long."]—and ensure that it is not allowed to wither away from being a fine hospital?

Mr. Speaker: Order. I ask for single questions, or our proceedings will be delayed.

Mr. Clarke: That question started on a rather extraordinary premise, and I am afraid that the end of it was almost inaudible. There is no question of cuts in West Lambeth health authority. Its funding increased by 7 per cent. in real terms this year and it is treating the planned number of patients. Most people attribute its difficulties to financial mismanagement. Indeed, I have seen letters from the hon. Lady complaining about the position in West Lambeth, in which she mentioned financial mismanagement, which no doubt is why she welcomes the fact that the regional health authority has asked John Barnes to study it. No one has made an application for self-governing status, but there will be full public consultation if St. Thomas's makes such an application. We shall then consider the proposals for patient services and for better financial management.

Mr. Bowis: We have the highest regard for people working in the Health Service, but does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that the purpose of hospitals is to benefit patients, not staff? Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that where a hospital trust is established, it will be because the flexibility and autonomy of such a trust will be in the interests of patients?

Mr. Clarke: I agree with my hon. Friend. Only one judgment should be made on an application for NHS trust status—whether the application is in the interests of the hospital unit, particularly the interests of the patients and the population whom it serves. Staff views are extremely relevant and cannot be disregarded, but the proper way to test those views is to consult staff and the general public when there is a formal proposition. The ballots that are being held about propositions that are not yet forthcoming are somewhat pointless.

Mr. Robin Cook: Why does not the Secretary of State admit that he cannot sell the idea that their hospitals should go it alone? Is not he aware that it is not just West Lambeth, but there have now been dozens of ballots of staff and of patients, and that he has not won a single one? Is he aware that the average "No" vote across the London hospitals is 89 per cent? Is it not time that he paused to reflect that it is just possible that nine out of 10 people who work in the Health Service are right and that it is just possible that he might be wrong? Why, therefore, does he not now—[HON. MEMBERS: "Ask a question."] I am asking a question. If hon. Members will wait, I shall ask the question and I should prefer it if the Secretary of State would answer. Is it not time that the Secretary of State dropped his deeply unpopular proposal to make hospitals opt out, which the next Labour Government will reverse?

Mr. Clarke: The hon. Gentleman is a bit stuck to find anything to say about National Health Service policy as he has no policy of his own and he is rather repeating his comments last week about our policies at great length. The fact is that we do not yet have any propositions for self-governing hospitals and NHS trusts. When we accept firm applications, we shall have proper public consultations, setting out the pros and cons for patient services, for staff interests and for everything else. There have been places where the staff have voted in favour of being interested in self-governing status, but sensible judgments can be made only after proper public consultation on a serious proposition. For the hon. Gentleman to run ballots or to start saying that he will repeal all my proposals—because after two years he still cannot think of any of his own—is not, at this stage, to make a sensible contribution to events.

Mr. Speaker: I again appeal to the House to ask single questions. We then get briefer answers and proceed with greater speed down the Order Paper.

Voluntary Groups

4. **Mr. Knapman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assistance is being given to voluntary groups working with under-fives.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The Department provides grant aid of about £1 million a year to national voluntary organisations that are active in the under-fives area. This year, we have given a further £425,000 to seven national organisations that have distributed small grants to local

projects providing services to pre-school children and their families. We have also launched the £2 million new under-fives initiative to test out various new policy ideas.

Mr. Knapman: I am obliged to my hon. Friend for her reply and for her consistent encouragement of pre-school play groups and the carers for under-fives. Has she any intention of introducing inspection charges or registration fees for those groups?

Mrs. Bottomley: The Pre-School Playgroups Association receives the largest amount of support from my Department. It is receiving more than £500,000 this year. Under the Children Act 1989, it is necessary for the 17,000 pre-school playgroups to register. We have made it clear that the charges will be modest and we hope that they will be no more than £10.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: What discussions are Health Ministers having with Education Ministers and the Chancellor of the Exchequer to try to ensure that there is provision across the board for under-fives, so that parents have a choice between playgroups, nursery schools or classes, day nurseries and workplace nurseries and can use what is most appropriate for their family needs and for their children?

Mrs. Bottomley: I welcome the hon. Gentleman's commitment to a mixed economy of care for the under-fives, which is precisely the Government's policy. Ninety-one per cent. of three and four-year-olds in this country attend some education or day care provision and this country is among the leaders in the European Community. We shall seek to encourage a range of providers to meet the needs and expectations of those children and their parents.

Cot Deaths

5. **Mr. Hayes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he expects the results of the research into a possible link between fire retardant materials and cot death syndrome to be available; and if he will make a statement.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Mr. Roger Freeman): On 9 March, the Department's chief medical officer, Sir Donald Acheson, announced that he had asked a group of independent experts to investigate a claim that the emission of toxic gases from fungal growth on some cot mattresses is a cause of sudden infant death. He has asked the group to report as soon as possible and will make public its findings.

Mr. Hayes: Will my hon. Friend tell the House what advice he gave to parents during the inquiry? Does he agree that if there was a lesson to be learnt in his Department from listeriosis, it is that the public must be warned at the earliest opportunity of any risk to their health or, of course, that of their children?

Mr. Freeman: I agree with my hon. Friend. There is a sad number of cases—some 1,500—of sudden infant deaths each year. The advice of the chief medical officer, issued on 9 March, was clear: keep young babies warm but not overheated; give children good ventilation in their rooms and keep bedding fresh and clean.

Rev. Martin Smyth: Have not scientists in the Department of Trade and Industry already issued warnings on this issue? Why has the Department of Health been slower in bringing forward such advice?

Mr. Freeman: I am not sure that I can agree with the hon. Gentleman. I understand that the laboratory of the Government chemist could neither prove nor disprove the conclusions of the independent consultant chemist. That is why the chief medical officer has set up an independent and fresh team to review the evidence and advise urgently.

Marriage Registrations

6. **Mrs. Currie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received about his plans to bring forward legislation to reform the law affecting the registration of marriages.

Mr. Freeman: There has been a widespread welcome for the proposals in the White Paper, "Registration: Proposals for Change", which was published at the end of January. There is particular public support for the introduction of greater choice over where a civil marriage may take place.

Mrs. Currie: Given that the discrimination against marriage was removed by the previous Chancellor in his Budget two years ago and given that all of us—married and single—expect great things of his successor this afternoon, would my hon. Friend like to tell me when people will be able to get married in a hotel, on a hillside or in some other place of their choice?

Mr. Freeman: I am sure that, while paying tribute to my hon. Friend for introducing the Green Paper over a year ago when she held my present position, the House will agree that civil marriage is a serious ceremony. I can tell the House that the Secretary of State will seek to introduce a Bill during this Parliament.

Mr. Key: I congratulate my hon. Friend and his ministerial colleagues on an excellent White Paper. Will he consider placing a duty on local authorities to encourage the collection, storage and accessibility of public records, particularly medical records, which will become essential for epidemiological research in the future?

Mr. Freeman: I shall certainly pursue my hon. Friend's suggestion. It is proposed in the White Paper that all records of births, marriages and deaths that are more than 75 years old should be available for research and open to all members of the public.

NHS Unions

7. **Mr. Skinner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent discussions he has had with National Health Service trades union representatives; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: Ministers in my Department have frequent meetings with NHS trade union representatives on a variety of subjects. There were four such meetings last month and I personally met the TUC health services committee on three occasions last year.

Mr. Skinner: Why does not the Secretary of State for Health go to Mid-Staffordshire and speak to Health Service union representatives there? Why does not he

explain to them how he manages to combine cutting the National Health Service and opting out? Why does not he explain to ambulance workers up there in Mid-Staffordshire why he is prepared to offer them only 6·5 per cent., when company bosses got 28 per cent. last year?

Mr. Clarke: My hon. Friend the Minister for Health went to Staffordshire yesterday and tells me that she had an excellent reception. As far as I am aware—and despite the efforts of the hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook), no doubt—health is not a seriously controversial issue in Staffordshire, because the record of advance, in terms of the money spent, the patients treated and the new hospital building already achieved and proposed, has been outstanding. The idea that we can have a serious political argument on the basis that everything that is wrong with the Health Service is the result of underfunding, when we have increased spending on the Health Service by 20 per cent. in cash terms in two years, is nonsensical, and I am told that it has no appeal whatever to the electors of Staffordshire.

Mr. John Greenway: When my right hon. and learned Friend next meets the representatives of the Health Service unions, will he point out to them that there are more people working in the Health Service than ever before and that they are being paid more than ever before? That is a record which the Labour party never could and never will sustain.

Mr. Clarke: The Labour party achieved that record only for some groups of staff who had a habit of going on strike to achieve a higher pay claim. The Labour party reduced in real terms pay of nurses throughout its last six years in office and penalised all those who showed the most dedication to their patients. We have a much better record than our predecessors, in terms of the number of staff employed, their remuneration and making better use of their services to the best advantage of the patients.

Mr. Tom Clarke: When the Secretary of State next meets the unions in the Health Service, such as the Confederation of Health Service Employees, the National Union of Public Employees, the National and Local Government Officers' Association and the GMB, will he accept that their views on community care are highly progressive? As a token of accepting their views, will he ensure some ring-fencing or earmarking of the limited resources that are made available for those purposes?

Mr. Clarke: First, most of the representatives of those trade unions warmly welcome my statement of Government policy on care in the community. Their members are actively looking forward to working with us on that. Secondly, I do not believe that is a correct approach to any part of local government spending to start "ring-fencing", as the hon. Gentleman puts it, by specific grants—set sums of money for set parts of the budget. We are placing confidence in local government to discharge its full responsibilities for choosing priorities within the social service budgets, for making use of the extra funds that we shall give local authorities on quite a scale and for making its own judgment on how to make best use of community charge revenue.

Mr. Jessel: Will my right hon. and learned Friend tell the trade union representatives the excellent news that since the introduction of the waiting list money, in the past year the waiting list for orthopaedic operations at West Middlesex hospital has dropped from 899 to 557, which is a drop of 38 per cent., while there has also been a drop of 45 per cent. in the waiting list for ear, nose and throat operations?

Mr. Clarke: I congratulate Hounslow and Spelthorne on what it has achieved, by a combination of the money that we have given it through the waiting list initiative, and good management, and by studying the causes of the long waiting lists in the first place, which were by no means all financial. I am told that one of its best achievements is that the number of people waiting for an operation for more than one year has dropped by 50 per cent. in the past 12 months. That is a considerable achievement by that health authority for the benefit of all its patients.

NHS Chief Executive

8. **Mr. Andrew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he next plans to meet the chief executive of the National Health Service; and what matters will be discussed.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: Mr. Duncan Nichol has responsibility, with his management executive colleagues, for the operation and management of the National Health Service and the delivery of the objectives set for health authorities in line with Government policies and resources. I therefore keep in constant and regular touch with Mr. Nichol over a wide range of issues and usually meet him several times a week.

Mr. Smith: Will the Secretary of State ask Mr. Nichol to review urgently and sympathetically the capital funding problems facing Oxford region, specifically to enable it to proceed with the much-needed replacement of shockingly sub-standard mental illness wards at Littlemore hospital? Will he consider favourably the loan application that he has received for much-needed facilities for severely disturbed elderly people at Littlemore hospital? Is it not time that mental health received the capital investment that it deserves?

Mr. Clarke: Oxford region has an excellent record of capital investment. I agree with the hon. Gentleman that it is important that it is sustained. At the moment, we are having to consider the position in the light of the drop in the anticipated level of land sales, which has been helping to boost that programme, but I assure the hon. Gentleman that Duncan Nichol and myself will keep a close eye on that. I remind him that, for the first time, this year we have introduced a capital loan scheme. One of its first objects is to enable regions to make progress in building new facilities for mentally ill paitents, so that better facilities can replace the older mental hospitals without having to wait for their closure and sale first. I am sure that Oxford region is considering the possibility of making use of that.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: When he next meets Mr. Nichol, will my right hon. and learned Friend ask him why, when so much additional money is being allocated to the Health Service, so many cottage hospitals are closing and why, when the Health Service is selling so much land in the Macclesfield health authority area, so little goes to Macclesfield and our hospitals and facilities are consistently being closed?

Mr. Clarke: It is the duty of Health Service managers at every level to make the most effective use of the resources at their command. Obviously, we sometimes have difficult arguments about whether a community hospital should be replaced by a facility elsewhere. I wish that, nationally and locally, people would concentrate more on the number of patients being treated and on the work being done by the Health Service, both of which have increased dramatically since we came to office. The number of in-patients being treated each year is 1·25 million greater than when we took over. That is the best measure of what is happening, both nationally and in Macclesfield.

As to land sales, I encourage management so to arrange things that most of any money raised from sales remains at local level. In that way, local management is given the incentive in making disposals. No doubt, Duncan Nichol will have a look at the particular dispute between Macclesfield and its region, which appears to lie behind the question.

Community Care

9. **Mr. Alton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the progress of care in the community as it applies to patients with mental illness.

Mr. Freeman: The Government have set out their proposals in the White Paper, "Caring for People". Key elements are the introduction of the care programme approach, and the specific grant to help increase the social care available for people with a mental illness, which we hope to introduce from April 1991.

Mr. Alton: Has the Minister had a chance to consider the tragic case outlined to him in a letter from me and the right hon. Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe (Mr. Morris), acting as trustees of the charity Crisis, which acts for homeless people? Does he agree that that case illustrates the real problem of discharging people with mental problems into the community? Does he accept that this policy can too easily become dumping in the community, which is in the interests neither of the patient nor of the community?

Mr. Freeman: I shall be replying to the hon. Gentleman on the specific case that he and the right hon. Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe (Mr. Morris) raised. The whole House will agree that in the past some patients have been dumped from mental illness hospitals. There is no question about that. That is why we are pursuing a number of initiatives, including this year a specific initiative aimed at the mentally ill homeless in central London—to be followed in 1991-92, I hope, by a wider national initiative. The situation is scandalous, and I agree with the hon. Gentleman that we must take firm action.

Mr. Simon Coombs: Can my hon. Friend confirm that often the best and most apporopriate quality of care for mentally ill people and mentally handicapped people is provided within the community? To that end, will he promote the citizens' advocacy schemes, which have been growing up on a voluntary basis around the country, notably in my constituency, whereby mentally handicapped people are provided with a friend, advocate and mediator with outside bodies enabling them to establish themselves more easily in the community?

Mr. Freeman: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. I am sure that the whole House agrees with him that caring for people with mental illness or handicap to the maximum possible extent in the community is a humane and civilised policy, but there are limitations. As to advocacy I agree that it has a place, particularly for the mentally handicapped and I am grateful for my hon. Friend's support.

Mr. Frank Field: Do the Government accept that not just a few but thousands upon thousands of patients have been dumped into the community and are literally homeless? Does the Minister accept that the measures that the Government have announced, though welcome, in no way meet the crisis faced by this group? When will the Government announce the provision of adequate resources to house those who are homeless?

Mr. Freeman: I do not disagree with the hon. Gentleman's analysis. We are trying, first of all, to correct the discharge policy, and the hon. Gentleman will know of the very firm steps that we have taken.

For instance, we have indicated that we shall not permit a mental hospital to close until we are satisfied that there is proper provision for those moving into the community. As regards those who are already in the community—the homeless with a history of mental illness—I agree that in Greater London the number is probably up to 3,000. That is why we shall bring to the House shortly concrete proposals to help to address this problem.

Nurses (Pay and Conditions)

11. **Mr. Mans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what changes have been made in the pay and conditions of nurses since 1978-79.

Mr. Clarke: The pay of nursing staff has increased over and above inflation by an average of 43 per cent. in real terms since 1979.

Mr. Mans: Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that in addition to the increases in nurses' pay there are many more nurses working in the National Health Service? Does not this show clearly that Opposition claims that the Government do not care about the NHS are totally false?

Mr. Clarke: I agree with my hon. Friend. We have greatly increased the number of nurses, we have hugely increased their pay, we have improved their training and, through the grading system, we have given them a better career structure. This has been one of the Government's main contributions to making the National Health Service an even finer British institution than it was when we took over.

Mr. Cousins: What action does the Secretary of State propose to take to assist the 650 nurses in Newcastle who are still waiting for their grading appeals to be heard two years after the gradings were first awarded?

Mr. Clarke: I told the trade unions that that sort of delay was inevitable. I deeply regret the fact that they did not act on my suggestion that the appeal system should be improved when we introduced the new grading structure. The unions and I were wholly agreed on the desirability of the new grading structure. I cannot understand why they insisted on sticking to an appeal procedure which is

incapable of sorting out all the individual grievances in a reasonable time. I should like to see a change in the structure to one that could sensibly handle the workload.

Mr. Dickens: I have been in two hospitals in the north-west recently as a National Health Service patient. Is my right hon. and learned Friend pleased to hear that the nursing profession in our hospitals is in extremely good shape, that morale is high and that the nurses are working as hard as ever and are worth every penny?

Mr. Clarke: I trust that my hon. Friend is in good shape as well. He appears to be in extremely good shape. I am grateful to him for his supplementary question. Nine out of 10 patients have nothing but admiration for the clinical and nursing standards achieved by the NHS. Our reforms and the additional money that we are pouring into the NHS are intended to give more power to the elbow of all those doctors and nurses who contribute so much to all those, including my hon. Friend, who need their help.

Mr. Robin Cook: Does the Secretary of State recall that the parliamentary answer to a question that I tabled showed that for eight years under the Government the number of nurses has increased by 9 per cent. compared with 14 per cent. in five years under the Labour Government? Do not those figures show which party is really committed to the Health Service? Do not they confirm that under the present Government the annual rate of increase in the number of nurses has fallen to a third of the level achieved under Labour, and to only one seventh after the reduction in nurses' hours? Do not those figures show clearly why so many hospitals now cannot cope?

Mr. Clarke: Between 1974 and 1979, the take-home pay of nurses fell by 21 per cent. in real terms. The Government have introduced an independent review body to advise us on nurses' pay and we have given them a 9 per cent. award this year. We have reduced their working week, improved their training and raised their pay on average by 43 per cent. in real terms. It is absurd for the hon. Gentleman to make such pathetic claims in respect of the Labour Government's record which was a shameful one in relation to the nursing profession.

Mr. Bill Walker: Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that the figures that he has given show clearly that the Labour party is the party of cheap labour? It increased the number of nurses but reduced their pay whereas we have increased their pay and improved quality. The Royal College of Nursing recognises that.

Mr. Clarke: I agree with my hon. Friend. We have increased the number of nurses in the NHS, and it is plain that we shall continue to do so. By comparing records—*[Interruption.]*—the public should be able to make a judgment about the real concern and commitment shown by the Conservative party to the Health Service compared with that of our opponents—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. I ask the House to settle down. Too much private conversation is taking place.

Hospices

12. **Mr. Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a further statement on funding for the hospice movement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: We have now issued guidelines to health authorities on the distribution of the additional £8 million that we have allocated for 1990-91 to enable them to contribute more to the voluntary hospice movement. These measures underline our commitment to the hospice movement. We very much value the standard of care that it has developed and the comfort that it has brought to the dying and their families.

Mr. Bruce: I thank the Minister for her reply. Given that 60 per cent. of all terminally ill patients are still treated in NHS general wards, that there is clearly a growing demand for hospice care and that some hospices are finding difficulty meeting their obligations, will the hon. Lady undertake to keep the situation closely under review and to increase the allocation of funds if the need arises, as many hospice organisations are saying that it will?

Mrs. Bottomley: There is a great deal of work within the National Health Service providing care for the terminally ill and the dying. Our contribution was intended particularly to give assistance to the voluntary hospice movement, which has done excellent and pioneering work in providing comfort and dignity for the dying. Certainly we hope to move towards a fairer partnership between the public support for the dying and the voluntary hospice movement.

Mr. Hannam: Will my hon. Friend confirm that some 36 new hospices are now being planned by the NHS and the voluntary sector, including one in my constituency on a site provided by the local health authority? Is not that a welcome sign of the improving co-ordination between the NHS and the voluntary sector?

Mrs. Bottomley: It is very important that the NHS and the voluntary sector plan together. That is why the £8 million is being distributed through the health authorities, to encourage better planning and the provision of dignity and proper care for the terminally ill.

Mr. Alfred Morris: Why is the matched giving for hospitals in Scotland, pound for pound of charitable funding, not available elsewhere? When will it be available in England and Wales? Is the Minister aware that more hospices could then give more help to more people at home for whom there is no residential accommodation available and that more could be done to help bereaved families, not least bereaved children?

Mrs. Bottomley: I fully endorse the points made by the right hon. Gentleman about the importance of the hospice movement, for the bereaved family and children as much as for the patients themselves. I am pleased to have been able to announce the 70 per cent. increase in public funds for hospices this year and we have made it clear that we hope that health authorities will move towards an equal partnership with the voluntary hospice movement.

Mr. Sumberg: Is my hon. Friend aware that 36 new hospices are planned in the coming year in the public and the voluntary sector and that one of them is in my constituency? Will my hon. Friend join me in congratulating the people of Bury on raising all the money to build and equip this excellent facility?

Mrs. Bottomley: I join my hon. Friend in congratulating his constituents most warmly on raising the money for that voluntary hospice. It is a magnificent example of what can be achieved for the terminally ill and the dying.

Dental Checks

13. **Mr. McAvoy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will now review his policy of charging for dental checks.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The number of dental examinations has gone up gradually in recent years. We expect this long-term trend to continue. There was a slight dip in the figures for late 1989. More people than usual sought examinations just before the charge was introduced.

Mr. McAvoy: Does the Minister accept that the number of dental treatment courses taken by patients over 18 and liable to charges fell by 10 per cent. between the first and third quarters of last year? Does she accept that the charges are damaging dental care and should be withdrawn?

Mrs. Bottomley: I accept no such thing. The examination charge is £3·45 and it is right that people should make that contribution. When the Labour party was in power there were far fewer examinations. Now there are four examinations for every three that took place then.

Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital

14. **Mr. Speller:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many of the patients affected by an excessive dose of radiotherapy at the Royal Devon and Exeter hospital in 1988 have now received final compensation, interim compensation or no compensation to date.

Mr. Freeman: I understand that the position on 12 March 1990 was that, of the 104 claims received so far, 11 have received full and final settlement of both pain, suffering and amenity and special claims, 57 claimants have received partial settlement, and 36 claimants have received no compensation as yet.

Mr. Speller: Does my hon. Friend realise that it is two years since those people were damaged through the actions of our National Health Service? Will he accept that the pain, suffering and stress are far more than physical pain and suffering and will he do all that he possibly can on behalf of, for example, the only three of my eight constituents damaged who are still surviving, so as to get this unfortunate affair settled quickly, even if it is costly?

Mr. Freeman: I can give that assurance to my hon. Friend, who, in a recent Adjournment debate, stood up most valiantly for his constituents. I will be in touch with the district health authority and I will do as my hon. Friend requests.

West Midlands RHA

15. **Mr. Gill:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people are currently employed by the West Midlands regional health authority.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The latest information is that 5,094 people were employed by the West Midlands regional health authority on 30 September 1988.

Mr. Gill: Is not that rather too many? Does my hon. Friend recognise that the Shropshire people demonstrate the finest of British traits and would welcome greater economy and independence?

Mrs. Bottomley: I fully recognise my hon. Friend's point. Good administration is necessary within the NHS, but we are seeking to devolve as many decisions as possible. That is the intent of our reforms to improve and enhance the NHS.

NHS Allocations

17. **Mr. Beaumont-Dark:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what allowance for inflation has been made in allocations for 1990-91.

Mr. Freeman: Health authority allocations contain no specific provision for inflation. Authorities receive an overall cash allocation and are expected to manage their expenditure within that amount, together with resources released by cost improvement programmes and any additional funding—for example, towards the costs of review body pay awards. The 1990-91 allocations to regional health authorities represent an average cash increase of 9·6 per cent. over the previous year.

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: Bearing in mind the figures on inflation released by the Treasury, does my hon. Friend accept that it is difficult to believe that no allowance is made for inflation within such large sums? Indeed, we are talking about £24 billion to £28 billion. Although the sums that we give to the Health Service are large, does my hon. Friend agree that as only 3·8 per cent. was, I understand, allowed for the rate of inflation last year, another 4 per cent.—£800 million—would make a hugh difference to the hard-pressed West Midlands health authority and, indeed, every other health authority? Does my hon. Friend agree that inflation is of huge importance to the National Health Service?

Mr. Freeman: My hon. Friend is right, and the whole House awaits my right hon. Friend the Chancellor's Budget with great anticipation because keeping down inflation will help the Health Service most.

PRIME MINISTER

Engagements

Q1. **Mr. Pike:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 20 March.

The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher): This morning I presided at a meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House, I shall be having further meetings later today. This evening I hope to have an audience of Her Majesty the Queen.

Mr. Pike: Does the Prime Minister recognise that the basic unfairness of the poll tax means that thousands of people in north-east Lancashire, and millions throughout the country, will not simply be not paying, but will be unable to pay? Because of high inflation and the

Government's policy of forcing up mortgages and council house rents, the position will become worse. When will the right hon. Lady do something to help those who cannot afford to pay their poll tax?

The Prime Minister: The hon. Gentleman comes from Lancashire, where the county has set a very high community charge—indeed, far higher than the amount considered reasonable by the Government. That is being passed on to all the districts. Burnley has received £101 in safety net, so it is better off than many other areas. The taxpayer will be paying about £3 billion towards the community charge rebate and also towards transitional relief. That is an excellent amount to help those who cannot afford to pay and to help those who face a sudden increase to obtain transitional relief.

Mr. Michael Morris: Is my right hon. Friend aware that our right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Health said both today and last week that every patient would have whatever medicine he or she might need? Is she further aware that that statement is enormously welcome? However, while clause 18 on indicative budgets remains in the National Health Service and Community Care Bill, there will always be a worry that an element will be cash limited by some future Secretary of State.

The Prime Minister: I note the inherent contradiction between my hon. Friend's first sentence and his second. An indicative budget is not a rigid budget, and it is precisely for that reason that my right hon. and learned Friend has stressed that doctors will receive the amount of money necessary to prescribe what they think is best for their patients.

Mr. Kinnock: What reward does the Prime Minister have in mind for the hon. Member for Torridge and Devon, West (Miss Nicholson) who, hearing of the decision of councillors in Humberside to resign the Conservative Whip, said, "Well done them!"?

The Prime Minister: I would rather address my comments to the change in Beverley. Beverley is unfortunately in a Socialist county—*[Interruption.]* It has the great misfortune—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order.

The Prime Minister: Beverley is in Humberside, which has a community charge of £83 a head over what the Government consider reasonable. They are prepared to inflict that amount on all their constituents. Beverley neither contributes to nor receives a safety net. All the other districts in Humberside receive a safety net, but Beverley does not. Beverley therefore has very good reason to be dissatisfied with Socialist Humberside.

Mr. Kinnock: The right hon. Lady does not listen to anyone. If she did, she might have heard her fellow Conservative, Councillor Steve Parnaby, chairman of the finance committee of Beverley council, say that the poll tax had nothing at all to do with Labour councils. In his words the poll tax is "not right" and "not fair" and the Government

"has got it [completely] wrong."

Is not that absolutely true everywhere?

The Prime Minister: People in Humberside and many other Socialist or Labour authorities are paying far more because they live in a Labour authority than they would if they lived in a Conservative one. For example, in Conservative Barnet the community charge is £338 compared with next door Labour Haringey's £573, Conservative Kingswood's £395 community charge is compared with next-door Bristol's £490 and Conservative Westminster's £195 compared with next-door Labour Camden's £534. The lesson is that it always costs more to live in a Labour authority.

Mr. Nelson: Is my right hon. Friend aware that there will be a widespread welcome today for the news that additional help in the form of a 30 per cent. increase in allowance will be provided for disabled students in higher education and that new allowances will be made available for their particular needs for care, personal support and equipment? Is that not further evidence that Conservative Governments can always be relied on to help most those in most need?

The Prime Minister: My hon. Friend is absolutely correct, and this adds to the excellent record of the Government with regard to disabled people. We have spent nearly double the amount over and above inflation upon those who are disabled. It is a very good example of how we may not talk so much about welfare but we do a great deal more about it.

Newcastle upon Tyne

Q2. **Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Prime Minister when she next proposes to visit Newcastle upon Tyne.

The Prime Minister: I have at present no plans to do so.

Mr. Cousins: When the Prime Minister next makes it up to our fine and well-run city, what hope does she expect to bring for Gemma Hayley of Blakelaw who has waited three years for a liver transplant, who cannot get it done in her own city, because, although the doctors there are trained, no money has been allocated for them to use their skills, and who has to go backwards and forwards to Addenbrookes hospital in Cambridge, and who finds budgets and figures very hard to understand because she is only six years old?

The Prime Minister: As I know well, and I expect the hon. Gentleman also knows well, that particular hospital in Cambridge is the very best, specialising in liver transplants. I do not think that anyone would complain about going there—it is a quite magnificent hospital.

Mr. Trotter: When my right hon. Friend next visits Tyneside, will she see for herself the visible signs of progress and the success story of the regeneration of our area? Will she accept that there is a new spirit of confidence in the north-east, which is better placed to face the challenge of the future than it ever has been in the past?

The Prime Minister: I agree with my hon. Friend. About a year ago I went up to Tyneside and saw the excellent amount of development that is taking place there and the much better employment position. It has a very good future. Swan Hunter has a good order for frigates, and there are many other things in the pipeline that will bring new prosperity to Newcastle—greater even than it is enjoying now.

Engagements

Q3. **Mr. Douglas:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 20 March.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Douglas: Has the right hon. Lady had any time today to examine her conscience? I take it that she has responsibility for that. If she has done so, will she compare and contrast the position before the law of the Fayeds, who were able to lie and cheat to acquire substantial assets, with that of the poorer sections of the population in my constituency and other areas who, if they cannot afford to pay the poll tax—and many cannot—will be visited by state-sponsored violence in the form of poinding and warrant sales? How does that square with the right hon. Lady's conscience?

The Prime Minister: The hon. Gentleman is fully aware that if people cannot afford to pay the poll tax they will receive a community charge rebate, and an additional 20 per cent. if they are on income support, to enable them to pay the rest. That is being paid for in full by the taxpayer because many Labour authorities have overspent. The overspending by local authorities is in the order of £3 billion, and the taxpayer will be paying an extra £700 million towards community charge rebate to ensure that people do not suffer from the extravagances of Labour authorities.

Mr. Holt: Would my right hon. Friend care to know that tomorrow morning, when the people of Middlesbrough receive their community charge bill, no fewer than 24,660 of them will be in receipt of transitional relief—an average of £48 per household—at a cost of £1·2 million to the Exchequer? That type of relief is available in many parts of the country where there are low-rated houses. It is automatic and not means-tested.

The Prime Minister: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. There are two types of relief—the community charge rebate, which is means tested, and the transitional relief, which is not means tested. I understand that most of the bills that have gone out so far have included the amount of rebate that the community charge payer will receive, and also the transitional relief. That has enabled them not to be worried about a charge that otherwise might have caused them some concern.

Q4. **Mr. Alton:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 20 March.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Alton: With Estonia about to follow Lithuania in demanding the right to self-determination, will the Prime Minister take this opportunity to emphasise to President Landsbergis and to President Gorbachev our country's commitment to the Baltic peoples' right to self-determination in the face of sabre-rattling and intimidation? Will she commend the people of the Baltic states for their courage and resolve?

The Prime Minister: As the hon. Gentleman is aware, we have never recognised the legal annexation of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. We recognise especially that Lithuania has expressed the wish to determine her own future. We hope that the position will be satisfactorily resolved between those who express that wish and President Gorbachev—so that the people of Lithuania may have their wish.

Mr. David Evans: Does my right hon. Friend agree that the community charge, or service charge as it is known in Welwyn Hatfield, is a bargain, as only 25 per cent. is paid by each individual towards its cost? Is not a 75 per cent. discount a bargain?

The Prime Minister: Where local authorities are spending to the amount that the Government consider to be reasonable, their community charges are usually reasonable. If people cannot afford to pay, they will get rebates. The community charge has brought relief to many people who live alone, who were paying high rates and who now, for the first time, have fairness and justice in paying only one community charge, which is often a good deal lower than the amount of rates that they would otherwise pay—*[Interruption.]*—as is clear from many letters in *The Times* in recent months on this subject.

Q5. **Mr. Salmond:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 20 March.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Salmond: Is the Prime Minister aware that the Government have suffered yet another opinion poll setback in Scotland, this time from a BBC pre-Budget survey of Scotland's top 200 companies showing that only a quarter of them believe that the Government are sympathetic to Scottish interests? Is the right hon. Lady aware that that means that Scotland's top companies have joined the rest of the community in concluding that the Government's economic policy in general and the Budget this afternoon in particular will be dictated by economic conditions in the south of England without reference to the needs of the rest of the country?

The Prime Minister: This Government, like our Conservative predecessors, have looked after the needs of Scotland particularly well. We are well aware of the pride of Scotland and how much the Scottish people consider everything Scottish, and therefore we have given them far more per head in expenditure than has been given to England and Wales.

I looked at recent polls on the economy. A recent one in *The Independent* made it clear that twice as many voters would expect the economy to be weaker under Labour, that twice as many people would expect taxes to go up under Labour, and that twice as many people would expect prices to rise faster under Labour. That was a very good write-up for Conservative Government.

WAYS AND MEANS

Budget Statement

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Before I call the Chancellor of the Exchequer, it may be for the convenience of hon. Members if I remind them that, at the end of the Chancellor's speech, copies of the Budget resolutions will be available to hon. Members in the Vote Office.

3.31 pm

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. John Major): The Government's economic policy has two main objectives. The first is to bring inflation down again. Until that happens, we cannot reduce interest rates and keep them down. The second is to enable this country to take the opportunities of the 1990s. In western Europe, the single market is nearly on us. And the whole of eastern Europe, where there is great good will for Britain, has opened up in a most dramatic way. We need to make sure that British business can take advantage of these changes.

These two objectives are closely related. Unless we succeed in the first, we are unlikely to do so in the second. Therefore this Budget will take no risks with inflation. It will maintain a strong fiscal surplus. It will, above all, be a budget for savers. It will provide a range of incentives to save and a novel incentive to give. It will bring the introduction of independent taxation for married women. It will introduce important new measures for business and keep up the pace of supply side reform. It will remove an old grievance from the tax system and make the social security system fairer, and it will abolish two taxes.

In framing the Budget, I have had the great advantage of the fiscal reforms of my predecessor, my right hon. Friend the Member for Blaby (Mr. Lawson). He has left the public finances stronger than at any time in living memory and he was also the architect of as comprehensive a tax reform as any other Chancellor this century. That will be an enduring record.

I will come to the detailed measures later. First, I wish to review the performance of the economy in 1989 and look at the prospects for 1990; I will then deal with monetary policy and public sector finances. As usual, the Red Book, together with a number of press releases filling out the details of the Budget measures, will be available from the Vote Office as soon as I have sat down.

ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE AND PROSPECTS

First, the economic background. The year 1989 saw continued buoyant growth in world trade despite some slowdown in the main economies, particularly in the United States. However, increased inflation and fears of overheating in continental Europe led to higher short-term interest rates in most major economies during the year. More recently, we have seen a rise in long-term interest rates—particularly in Germany, where uncertainty about the effects of unification has been an additional factor.

This general tightening of monetary policy is likely to mean lower growth in 1990 than last year and, in due course, a fall in inflation. We are likely, therefore, also to see slower growth in world trade in the current year, although the astonishing developments in eastern Europe improve the longer-term prospects.

High interest rates also reflect very strong investment growth over the last two years in all the major industrialised economies. This rise in investment is to be welcomed—and indeed may be intensified by the emerging investment opportunities in eastern Europe—but it also emphasises the need for a healthy level of savings to finance it.

The need for higher saving is greatest in the United States and the United Kingdom, where the shortfall is reflected in current account deficits, whereas in Japan and Germany domestic savings have remained more than sufficient to finance their own investment. In the medium term, the United Kingdom's savings and investment need to come closer into line and we must ensure this occurs through a rise in savings rather than a fall in investment.

During the last year, business confidence in Britain has remained a good deal stronger than many expected. New businesses have outnumbered closures, by around 1,500 every week; a larger figure than we expected and a record never before approached. Employment has continued to rise, and unemployment to fall. Almost 27 million men and women are in work today—a larger number than ever before and 1·5 million more than at the beginning of the 1980s. Business investment has risen by a further 9 per cent. in the last year, making a total rise of 40 per cent. over three years and taking it to its highest level ever, and a great part of this investment has been financed from rising company profits. In the last few years, profitability has recovered to the levels of 20 years ago.

As companies have become profitable, they have been investing in more than just plant and machinery. Their spending on research and development has also risen in real terms by almost 50 per cent. in the five years to 1988. They now spend over £5,000 million a year on research and development, nearly all of which is allowable against tax. Similarly, in the five years up to 1989, the numbers of employees receiving training has increased by over 70 per cent.

These are all favourable developments which reflect well on businesses' preparation for the future, but recently, they have been accompanied by the return of inflationary pressures. That, beyond any doubt, is the most urgent problem before us today. To a degree, it is a problem common to all nations. Since its low point in 1986 and 1987, inflation has risen significantly throughout the Group of Seven—the leading economies of the western world—but our affliction has been sharper. There are a number of reasons for this—some welcome and some not. The record rise in business investment is obviously welcome; but it has been accompanied by a rapid growth in borrowing and in consumer spending. Thus, investment has been rising but the savings to finance it have not. This has led to excessive growth in domestic demand, a revival of inflationary pressures and a current account deficit, a good deal of which itself represents suppressed inflation.

Policy was therefore tightened, and interest rates have now been in double figures for 20 months. This tight monetary policy has been backed by large Budget surpluses throughout the last three years. So monetary and fiscal policy have acted together.

Squeezing out inflation is always difficult, but there is now clear evidence that demand is slowing down. High street sales are now only 2 per cent. up on a year ago. The housing market has cooled off noticeably. New car and

vehicle registrations are down, and import growth has been sharply reduced. As demand has fallen back, so has output growth, to just over 2 per cent. in 1989.

No one likes to see the economy slow, but it is inevitable if we are to push inflation downwards. I now expect the economy to grow by only 1 per cent. this year, compared with the above-trend growth of 4·5 per cent. in 1987 and 1988. The size of this slowdown shows the extent of the downward pressure on inflation. But growth should return in 1991 towards its sustainable rate of around 2·75 per cent.

I am confident that the period of low growth will be short-lived—not least because of the permanent improvements in in the underlying economy in the 1980s. For example, investment has grown more than twice as fast as consumption over the last eight years. As this additional capacity comes fully into use, inflationary pressures will lessen and more growth will resume. No one need have any doubt about that.

Last year also saw a record level of foreign direct investment into Britain. Overseas investors see the potential for investment in this country in the 1990s. These investments are particularly welcome as they are in industrial sectors like cars and electronic goods, where a high proportion of the output is traded. For example, Britain already runs a trade surplus in colour television sets, and by the mid-1990s there will be a dramatic improvement in the trade balance on cars.

Increased investment will enable British industry both to meet domestic demand and to respond to export opportunities. Indeed, that is already beginning to happen. The current account deficit for 1989 as a whole was over the £20 billion I forecast at the time of the autumn statement, but the deficit in the last three months was substantially lower than in the previous quarter and, in particular, the manufacturing deficit is now improving. Exports have been growing faster than imports since the early autumn.

The reason for this improvement is twofold. In recent years, rapidly expanding domestic demand sucked in imports to meet a market that fast-growing manufacturing output simply could not satisfy. Moreover, that same demand absorbed British goods that would otherwise have been exported. This pattern is now reversing.

Exports are now growing rapidly, regaining the share of world markets they lost in 1988. Last year, the volume of exports of manufactures grew by 11·5 per cent.—the highest recorded rate for nearly 20 years. So British industry is responding extremely well to export opportunities. The fact that it is doing so clearly shows that the present trade deficit is not caused by poor industrial competitiveness. It is caused by excess demand, and as that is reduced, the current account deficit will fall —initially to £15 billion in 1990 and further thereafter.

But we cannot afford to relax policy, notwithstanding the prospect of lower growth. The buoyancy of past demand means that inflation has been far more stubborn than anyone expected. A significant fall is still some months away, and a number of factors will mean that the position will worsen noticeably before it improves. That will be reflected in the retail price index during the next few months.

The largest single factor is the increase of some £5,000 million in local authority revenue spending next year. This is mainly responsible for the expected growth of more than 30 per cent. in average community charges compared with domestic rates. This will add more than 1 per cent. to the retail price index next month. Similarly, the further rise in mortgage rates last month will also increase the retail price index.

As a result, I now expect that retail price index inflation may still be a little over 7 per cent. by the fourth quarter of this year, compared to the 5·75 per cent. I had previously expected. Beyond that, as the effects of these one-off increases drop out and the lagged effect of monetary tightening builds up, I expect inflation to fall below 5 per cent. during 1991.

To summarise, the economy—both consumption and investment—has been very resilient in recent years. Adjustment so far has been gradual, but this is not necessarily a good guide to the future. The gradual adjustment may continue, but equally, the downturn may become quite sharp. It is against that uncertain background that I must set monetary and fiscal policy, to which I now turn.

MONETARY POLICY

I want to deal with monetary policy and interest rates first, for two reasons: because they are of great concern in the House and in the country, and because, as always, they provide the key to progress on inflation. I repeat, my first priority is to prevent inflation from entrenching itself, for inflation is immensely damaging socially as well as economically. It damages business by undermining planning and investment and it foments industrial strife —and, socially, it penalises the weakest most.

I know that high interest rates are unpopular. They are generally most unpopular as they become most effective. They discourage spending and borrowing. They act directly on the things we have to control if we are to get inflation down. Interest rates are also the most flexible way of responding to what can be a rapidly changing situation. They can be raised quickly when necessary, and they can be reduced just as quickly when it is safe to do so.

In recent months, I have looked carefully to see whether there is any effective alternative to interest rates. I have done so because I am very conscious of the burden they place on business and on individuals purchasing their own homes.

I know that many people favour direct controls on lending, hire purchase and consumer credit. I understand that. In particular, I understand the distaste many people feel for the widespread marketing of credit that is so evident today and that is characterised by indiscriminate mail shots encouraging people to borrow. I believe that the financial institutions would be wise to reconsider their policy, and I hope that the subject will be covered in the code of practice the banks and building societies are currently preparing following the Jack report.

However, having looked at the matter, I have concluded that it is extremely unlikely that credit controls would work in the modern world in anything other than the very short term. They were becoming less and less effective even before exchange controls were abolished over 10 years ago. Their main impact now would be to replace domestic borrowing with overseas borrowing. These days it would, for example, be a simple matter for any high street bank to arrange its lending through an overseas branch.

That, of course, applies to other countries too, and it is for that reason that Governments of all persuasions

throughout the western world are abolishing credit controls and are relying on interest rates to control money, and thus inflation. The same is true of those countries in eastern Europe which are seeking to adapt to the market system.

In recent years, financial markets have become more open to competition, and their behaviour has changed enormously. As a result, monetary conditions have become more difficult to judge. This is one of the problems of financial deregulation, but one that must be set against the benefits that it has brought.

Therefore although monetary policy remains the key to controlling inflation, it is not realistic to suppose that we can take decisions solely by reference to the way any one particular measure of money is growing. In a more sophisticated world, we must apply judgment and take into account the other evidence about monetary conditions that may be available.

In recent weeks, I have looked afresh at the role of monetary targets. Having done so, I am clear that it is sensible to retain a target for narrow money, and that this is best measured by the familiar aggregate M0. Since this is essentially notes and coin, it clearly is not a comprehensive measure of money in all its uses, but it does have value as an indicator of transactions and has been a reliable guide for many years. For next year, I have set the target range at 1 to 5 per cent. Although the growth of M0 has fallen from its earlier peaks, it is likely to start the year above the range, and it may be some months before it falls within it.

In this re-examination of policy, I have also looked closely at the case for reintroducing a target for broad money. I can understand why some favour this. At times, broad money has given a useful indication of the build up of inflationary pressure. The difficulty is that its message has always varied in quality: its growth can represent money that is about to be spent, or money that is very definitely being saved: savings which I wish to encourage, as will become apparent later this afternoon. Although we will monitor M4 carefully, and give it weight in our decisions, I do not intend to set a target for the year ahead.

I have also reviewed whether there should be any changes in the Government's funding policy. The objectives must be to manage public debt in a way that supports monetary policy in bearing down on inflation, without distorting financial markets. I have concluded that, in general, policy should continue to be guided by the funding rule followed in recent years, with the public sector avoiding sustained under or overfunding.

However, I am also clear that, in practice, the rule cannot and should not be operated rigidly. In particular, in recent years there has been an increase in the size of the Treasury bill issue, largely as a result of a change in the financial position of local authorities. I therefore announced to the House on 15 February a range of measures intended to limit local authority borrowing from the Public Works Loan Board. This change should, in due course, allow a reduction in the Treasury bill issue, but in the meantime, the Government will adjust their funding operations if necessary, increasing gilt sales or reducing gilt purchases, to take account of the overall situation in the money market.

Progress on reducing inflation is also a vital precondition of our commitment to take sterling into the exchange rate mechanism of the European monetary system. Our commitment to do so was set out at Madrid. It remains firm, and the conditions for entry remain unchanged. When we join the exchange rate mechanism, it will provide a new framework for interest rate decisions, but even then, no one should suppose it will bring a dispensation from the need for strong domestic monetary control—indeed, quite the reverse. Commitment to the one will reinforce the commitment to the other.

To sum up, interest rate decisions will continue to be made on the basis of the growth of monetary aggregates, and a range of other evidence, most notably the exchange rate. This matters because it provides important information about domestic monetary conditions—quite apart from having an effect on prices. Therefore, I favour a strong exchange rate. However there is, as I have made clear, no single lodestar to guide us in monetary policy. Life would be simpler if there were, but it simply does not exist, so judgment is unavoidable.

My judgment is that interest rates will stay high for some time to come. The moment I judge I can safely lower them, I shall, but to reduce them prematurely only to increase them again would be extremely damaging. When I bring them down, it will be because I believe that they are likely to stay down.

In chapter 2 of this year's Red Book, I have provided a much longer and more comprehensive account than usual of how monetary policy, including funding policy, is to be operated over the years ahead. I hope that this will be helpful to the House and, in particular, to members of the Select Committee on the Treasury and Civil Service when they come to examine the Budget documents in detail.

FISCAL POLICY

Although monetary policy must play the main role in tackling inflation, a tight fiscal policy is also essential. It cannot do the work of monetary policy, but it can and must support it. The dramatic improvement in the state of public finances over the past 10 years under the stewardship of my right hon. Friends is an achievement of which they can be rightly proud. For decades, successive Governments had spent more than they were prepared to raise honestly from taxation and they made up the shortfall by borrowing. They left that bill to be picked up by future generations. Over decades, it mounted to very considerable levels. Today, just paying the gross interest on the accumulated debt accounts for 10p on the basic rate of income tax.

Over the past 10 years, we have reversed that trend and in the past three, we have repaid around £25 billion, reducing the burden of Government debt to levels that we have not seen since before the first world war. The rewards of this repayment will be felt by future generations, but they bring also an immediate benefit. As a result of the debt repayments, we are saving over £2,500 million a year in debt interest. That is sufficient to meet the annual cost of around 150 district general hospitals.

The very large Budget surplus in 1988-89 owed much to cyclical factors. In the current year, as I told the House some months ago, we expect the surplus to fall back. The position, as usual, will remain uncertain until the year is complete, but our best estimate is that the debt repayment this year will be around £7 billion.

The fall in the surplus owes less to the slowdown in growth than to a number of special factors. We have seen a fall in privatisation proceeds from the very high level

achieved in 1988-89. There has also been a sharp and unwelcome increase in local authority spending. This has been particularly marked in their capital spending, as local authorities have sought to forestall the new controls which will take effect in April. As a result, we now expect the public expenditure planning total this year to be overshot by £2·25 billion. Central Government expenditure remains well under control.

Another, but much more welcome, factor reducing the surplus has been the higher national insurance rebates which have resulted from the huge success of personal pensions. This extension of choice is a considerable tribute to my right hon. Friend the Member for Sutton Coldfield (Sir N. Fowler). Over 3·5 million people have now taken out personal pensions. As well as benefiting the individuals concerned, in the long term this will reduce public spending, but it also reduces national insurance receipts, by £2·5 billion this year.

Next year, some of these factors will be partially reversed, but we will see the effect of slower growth on the debt repayment. In particular, corporation tax receipts are likely to fall a little after six years of rapid growth, not least because of the higher investment of recent years which can be offset against tax. These allowances will be worth more than £10 billion to companies next year, as opposed to £9 billion this year.

It is against the medium-term fiscal prospect that I have framed the Budget judgment, for fiscal policy is not, in my view, a flexible instrument which should be altered to meet short-term contingencies. Fine-tuning fiscal policy is not only disruptive to the public sector, to business, and to taxpayers, but its effects on the economy are uncertain and often destabilising.

Accordingly, I am budgeting next year for a further public sector debt repayment of £7 billion—the same as this year. Looking further ahead, I expect our fiscal position to move towards the medium-term objective of a balanced Budget—an objective that I reaffirm today.

The overall effect of the Budget measures that I shall announce today will be to maintain a tight fiscal policy by modestly increasing the yield from taxation by about £500 million next year and just under £1 billion in 1991.

BUSINESS TAXATION

I now come to the detailed measures in this year's Budget, and I shall begin with the taxation of business. Everyone in this country benefits from the success of British enterprise. Tax reform cannot create success, but it can help and encourage it. Within the tight fiscal position that I judge necessary, I am able to make some changes that should help small and medium-sized companies.

Cash flow is particularly important to new and growing companies of this size. I have two measures that should help to improve it.

At present, traders pay value added tax on all their sales, even if their customers do not actually pay the bill. They can claim VAT relief for a bad debt only when the debtor has been declared formally insolvent. As a result, the trader, who has dealt in good faith, can be out of pocket, in some cases for years, and often for large sums.

This has long been resented by businesses and the time has come to deal with it. I therefore propose that, from April next year, all debts that are over two years old and written off in the trader's accounts will qualify automatically for relief from value added tax. This will be worth about £150 million to business next year.

I also propose to help smaller companies by simplifying the rules for traders registering for value added tax. At present, whether or not a trader has to register depends on quarterly and annual turnover thresholds. One only has to say that to realise how difficult it is. Businesses also have to peer into the future to see whether these limits might possibly be exceeded within the next year.

That complication is unnecessary, so, as from today, I propose a simple rule for VAT registration. This will be based on actual turnover in the preceding 12 months and not unknown turnover in the distant future. It will bring certainty and simplicity in place of uncertainty and complexity. It has a second benefit for businesses: because they will, in general, register later than they otherwise would have done, it will save them £35 million in 1990-91 and £75 million the year after.

I have two further value added tax changes. First, I propose to increase the VAT threshold to £25,400, a modest sum, but the maximum permitted under European Community law.

The second change will affect companies that provide accommodation for their own directors. As things stand, the company can reclaim the VAT that they pay on this —for something that is more a fringe benefit than a legitimate business cost. Frankly, I do not believe that this generous treatment is justified. I therefore propose that VAT paid on directors' accommodation should no longer be deductible. This will take effect from Royal Assent.

I also have some changes to corporation tax. While the main rate of corporation tax will remain at 35 per cent., I propose to reduce the burden of tax for smaller companies.

At present, companies with profits below £150,000 pay a reduced rate of corporation tax of 25 per cent. I propose to raise this ceiling by one third, to £200,000. This amounts to a doubling in two years of the profits level for the reduced rate. This will be of special benefit to smaller growing companies.

For companies with profits above this limit, the average rate of tax gradually rises until their profits reach the upper profits limit of £750,000 a year. I propose to raise this limit, again by a third, to £1 million. This means that no single company will be liable for the full rate of corporation tax until its profits reach £1 million a year. These changes will mean that we will have the most favourable structure of corporation tax for small companies anywhere in the European Community.

I also have a specific tax change to help training. One of the most welcome features of the last few years has been the massive sums of money being invested in training throughout the economy by employers in both public and private sectors, large firms and small. Our estimate is that in total this amounts to £20 billion a year.

In addition, the Government are spending £2·5 billion a year on training programmes; and the value of tax relief on companies' spending must be at least as much again.

In future, over £2 billion of our public expenditure on training will be spent through training and enterprise councils, or TECs as they are known, most of which will be coming into operation over the next year. I have no doubt that TECs will do much to improve training in skills and that we shall see the benefits of this in future. They

give employers a genuine opportunity to determine their own needs and will provide generous cash help to meet them.

The Government have already promised to match local business donations to TECs pound for pound within certain limits. I now propose to encourage business to maximise the money they put into training by providing tax relief on business donations to TECs for five years until April 1995. I propose to extend the same concession to local enterprise agencies until the same date.

My next announcement has implications for one in four of the adult population, for that is the number of people—nearly 11 million—who now own shares in the United Kingdom. That remarkable figure—a new record—is published today in the annual stock exchange survey of share ownership.

Over the next few months, the stock exchange will be taking crucial decisions on its plans for a new share-dealing system, affectionately known as TAURUS. This will cut costs, eliminate paper forms, and provide a modern computerised system for transferring shares. Decisions on the design of the new systems for TAURUS will have to be taken shortly. We need, therefore, to decide what stamp duty regime to apply to paperless transactions.

As we approach 1992, we can expect even sharper international competition in financial services, much of it from other European centres. Competitive and practical arguments point in the same direction. I have therefore decided to abolish stamp duty on securities late in 1991-92 to coincide as closely as I can manage with the introduction of paperless trading. Stamp duty reserve tax will also be abolished at the same time.

Both the abolition of the tax and the introduction of a more modern dealing system will help to secure the United Kingdom's position as a leading financial centre in an increasingly competitive world market. They will also reduce transaction costs and permit higher returns for 11 million holders of occupational pension schemes, over 3·5 million personal pension holders, and the many millions of people who hold life assurance policies or unit trusts. It will also be of considerable benefit to small shareholders.

The assumption in the Red Book is that abolition will be at the end of 1991, at a revenue cost of £120 million in 1991-92. This date will be subject to confirmation later, when I have fuller information about the progress of TAURUS. However, although there is some flexibility about the timing, there is no doubt whatsoever about the decision to abolish stamp duty on shares. I have made the announcement now for two reasons: to remove uncertainty, and to make it clear that there is no need to plan for stamp duty within TAURUS. I should add, for the avoidance of doubt, that stamp duty on land and property will be unaffected by this measure.

The Finance Bill will also include a number of measures on life assurance, announced by my hon. Friend the Financial Secretary to the Treasury last December. These measures, which flow from the changes in the Finance Act 1989, followed extensive consultation with the industry. They put the taxation of life assurance companies' unit trust holdings on a sounder footing, and make a number of technical improvements. They will yield £50 million in 1990-91. A further measure will be introduced to ring-fence long-term business assets. Without this measure, there could be a significant loss of tax.

I also have a measure to announce that will clarify the tax regime for banks. Tax relief is rightly available to banks, as it is to other lenders, for bad and doubtful debts, but this has given rise to two problems. First, in recent years, the banks have increased very substantially the amounts written off for their lending to Third-world countries. That has been widely welcomed, but sudden increases do have an adverse impact on the public finances. Over time, the tax cost of the 1989 increases could come to an amount going on for £1 billion.

Secondly, although the principle is clear, it is less clear how to implement it in practice. That is because the relief available depends on the extent to which the debts are estimated to be irrecoverable—and that is often far from clear-cut. This difficulty is magnified when the debts in question are those of sovereign nations rather than of individuals or firms.

This is an extremely unsatisfactory position for the banks, for the Inland Revenue, and for the taxpayer. I have therefore decided to resolve it and to remove the uncertainties in the present law. Banks will continue to be able to offset their losses on sovereign loans fully against tax, but under a clearer mechanism than previously, which will be broadly based on the Bank of England's present guidelines. There will be a limit on future increases in the cost of this tax relief between years.

For the 12 months starting today, banks' tax relief on such provisions will be limited to the same high proportion of debts as this mechanism indicates for 1989. Thereafter, the ceiling will be increased in steps of 5 per cent. a year, so that the banks will, in time, get all the tax relief to which they are entitled. If the banks sell their debt to a third party and crystallise their losses, their tax relief on them will be similarly phased, but where the debt is sold back to the foreign state, to reduce its debt once and for all, tax relief on that loss will be available in full and immediately. This measure will produce a yield of around £200 million in 1991-92, compared with what might have been expected if I had taken no action.

TAXES ON SPENDING

I turn now to taxes on spending. Given the need to keep a tight fiscal position, I have decided that the excise duties, taken as a whole, must rise broadly in line with inflation. Within that overall constraint, however, I have some modest adjustments to make.

First, for vehicle excise duty, I propose a number of changes to remove anomalies in the taxation of different types of lorries. These changes will also dramatically reduce the present vast number of different VED rates. Last year's Budget removed 80 different VED rates, and I propose to eliminate a further 188 today. This will greatly simplify the system.

Vehicle excise duty on cars—the tax disc—will be unchanged once again this year at £100. Nor will there be any change in VED for public or private sector buses, coaches, taxis and many lorries.

I will recoup the cost of this by increasing petrol and DERV duties by rather more than strict revalorisation would justify. These will rise by 10 per cent. This will add 9p to a gallon of DERV and almost 11p to a gallon of leaded petrol. For unleaded petrol, the cash increase will be smaller, at around 9p per gallon. This will widen the tax differential even further in favour of unleaded petrol. This will now amount to almost 16p a gallon. The market share

of unleaded petrol has increased fivefold, to 30 per cent. since the changes in the last Budget. I hope and expect to see it increase even further.

For alcohol, with one exception, I propose to raise the duties in line with inflation. This will put 7p on a bottle of table wine, but only 2p on a pint of beer. Spirits, however, have enjoyed a duty standstill since 1985. I propose therefore an increase of 10 per cent., which will increase the price of a bottle of spirits by 54p.

Cigarettes also were not increased last year. This year I propose a 10 per cent. increase in duty, which will put 10p on a packet of 20 cigarettes. The duty on cigars will rise similarly, and will add 5p to the cost of a packet of five small cigars. But I do not this year propose any increase in duty on pipe tobacco. This at least will be one measure which should command the total support of the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Neil Kinnock (Islwyn): But not of my wife.

Mr. Major: In that case, I shall make my apologies to Mrs. Kinnock separately.

FOOTBALL

I now turn to football. The tragedies at Bradford and Hillsborough football grounds shocked us all. The report by Lord Justice Taylor made recommendations to improve comfort and safety in our football league grounds over the next 10 years.

Implementing the programme of work envisaged in the Taylor report will place a significant burden on football clubs, which many of them will find extremely hard to bear. For many are in a weak financial position, and only a handful are profitable. I recognise this problem, but I believe there is an acceptable way to overcome it. The first priority is to ensure that vital improvements in safety and comfort can be made, and the second is to avert what would otherwise be the closure of many of our grounds. If we help football now, I am confident that football will itself contribute to the improvements in facilities that are necessary.

Let me say first that much of the expenditure required to meet the Taylor recommendations is eligible for capital allowances or for full offset against tax. I know that there has been some confusion about this, and I have asked the Inland Revenue to provide urgent guidance to clarify the tax position.

However, tax allowances cannot help where there is no profit to set costs against. This is the case with many clubs. I have therefore reviewed the rate of pool betting duty —the tax which is paid by the pools companies on the stakes they receive. This currently stands at 42·5 per cent. I propose to reduce it to 40 per cent., on the clear understanding that the full amount saved is passed by the pools promoters to the Football Trust, and is used by it to improve the safety and comfort of fans at English and Scottish football league grounds.

I am confident that such an arrangement can be negotiated with the pools promoters and the football authorities. Provided that we do so, the duty will be reduced, in the first instance for five years. At the end of that period we shall review the position again. [HON. MEMBERS: "You will not."] At the end of that period, I will review the position again.

This reduction will yield around £100 million for football over five years. This is in addition to the £75 million that the Football Trust has already said will be available over the next 10 years. These sums represent very large contributions towards making sure that football league clubs can implement the Taylor recommendations and bring their grounds up to the safety standards both we —and they—want to see. Millions of people watch football every year. With better and safer grounds, I hope that many more will join them.

INCOME TAX

Next, I turn to income tax, before turning to other matters. I have no change to announced to either the basic or the higher rate of tax. They will remain at 25p and 40p respectively. Notwithstanding that, I reaffirm our objective of moving towards a basic rate of 20p when it is possible to do so.

I turn now to personal tax allowances. This year, I propose to uprate the main income tax allowances by the statutory indexation factor of 7·7 per cent., rounded up. The personal allowances will rise by £220 to £3,005. The new married couple's allowance will be set at £1,720, as will the additional personal allowance for single parents and the widow's bereavement allowance. However, the basic rate limit, the level at which higher rate liability begins, will be unchanged, at £20,700 of taxable income. This means that a married man with a £30,000 mortgage will not begin to pay higher rate tax until his income is over £30,000.

The allowances for the elderly will similarly be fully uprated in line with inflation. For those aged 65 to 74, the personal allowance goes up by £270 to £3,670 and the married couple's allowance goes up by £160 to £2,145. For those aged 75 and over, the personal allowance goes up by £280 to £3,820 and the married couple's allowance will rise to £2,185. The income limit for these allowances will also be fully indexed to £12,300.

I also propose to raise the inheritance tax threshold by £10,000 to £128,000, in line with inflation.

The capital gains tax exemption—that is, the amount of real capital gains free of tax in any one year—currently stands at £5,000. However, from April, the introduction of independent taxation means that married couples will be entitled to not one but two exempt amounts rather than having to share one between them as at present. I have therefore decided to leave the exempt amount at £5,000 per person, which effectively gives a married couple an exemption of £10,000 in total.

I also have to set the scales for the taxation of the private use of company cars. The tax treatment of this benefit remains generous, although less so than previously, as a result of the significant increases in these scales in recent Budgets. I therefore propose an increase—but a smaller one than in previous years—of 20 per cent. The yield from this will be £160 million in 1990-91. There will be no change in the fuel scales.

In the tax system there is one allowance, the tax allowance for the blind, that, although anomalous, has long been accepted as a proper recognition of the special difficulties faced by blind people. The allowance is modest, but welcome, at £540 a year. I propose to make it less modest and more welcome and to double it. From 6 April, it will stand at £1,080.

Before I leave income tax, I have a small supply side measure to announce that will help the labour market to work better. We have always made it clear that it is not for

the Government to encourage or discourage women with children to go out to work. That is rightly a decision for them to take, and one in which the Government would be wise not to interfere. However, it is undeniable that an increasing number of mothers do want to return to work, and many employers, in private industry and in public services such as health and education, are keen to encourage them to do so.

If an employer provides a nursery for his staff in order to recruit and retain skilled people, he can set the full cost against corporation tax. However, any employee who benefits and who earns more than £8,500 a year is required to pay tax on the value of the benefit in kind. Many employers have argued that this is an obstacle to the growth of nursery provision and has created recruitment difficulties for them, and many women see that as a positive disincentive to return to work. For those reasons, therefore, I have decided to exempt the value of workplace nurseries and playgroups from taxation as a benefit in kind. That will take effect from 6 April this year.

CHARITIES

I said at the beginning of this speech that this Budget would include incentives both to save and to give. I shall come to saving in a moment, but I want first to deal with giving. I have a number of proposals to help. We are by instinct a generous nation to causes that appeal to us. The tax system already offers a great deal of help to charities. It offers reliefs on their income and on their expenditure, and it provides incentives to encourage charitable giving. There is a relief for charitable covenants that has now been in operation for many years and is worth almost £200 million to charities every year. We have been considering how covenants can be made easier for charities and donors to use, and the Inland Revenue will therefore be issuing new guidance today to simplify them.

Since 1987, relief for covenants has been complemented by the payroll giving scheme, a very user-friendly way to relieve regular giving from tax. The scheme has been doing well since its launch, and I now propose to increase the annual limit from £480 to £600.

These reliefs are focused mainly on regular giving, which is of great importance to charities. However, they are ill suited to encourage the one-off gift which, for a variety of reasons, many people find more convenient. Over the years, that has been a persistent source of concern to charities. This year, I propose to go some way to meet that concern.

I propose a gift aid scheme that will, for the first time, give tax relief for large money donations. It is simply not practical to operate a relief for all small one-off gifts—and in any event, I do not wish to undermine regular giving through the payroll scheme and covenants, which are very important to some charities. Therefore, this scheme applies to larger donations.

The lower qualifying limit for gift aid will therefore be £600 per donation—the new ceiling for payroll giving. The relief will be available on one-off gifts up to an annual ceiling of £5 million per individual donor. The tax relief will be reclaimable by the charity, and payable to it at basic rate. As with covenants, the donor will get any higher rate tax relief that is due direct from the tax office.

This relief, which will apply to gifts by both individuals and companies, will come into operation from 1 October this year. I am confident that it will maintain and strengthen the growth of charitable giving, and I very much hope that charities will promote it actively. It will, of course, be open to the whole range of charities, from social causes to those whose activities are devoted to the arts.

I have a further measure to help charities. This is a package of value added tax reliefs, giving help especially to organisations engaged in sea rescue, medical care and research. These will come into effect on 1 May and give an additional benefit of about £5 million a year to charitable work. Full details are set out in a Customs and Excise press release issued today.

SAVINGS

I now turn to the taxation of savings, where I have a number of measures to announce. As I do so, I am conscious that the majority of personal savings are the fruits of earnings that have already been taxed.

I start with saving in shares. The development of the personal equity plan, which stands to the immense credit of my right hon. Friend, the Member for Blaby (Mr. Lawson), has been an important boost for share ownership. I am pleased to report to the House that last year was a record one for PEPs, with 300,000 plans taken out, to the value of some £750 million. To build on this success, I propose to raise the overall annual limit on investment in PEPs by a quarter, from £4,800 to £6,000. Within that, the annual limit on investment in unit and investment trusts will be increased by the same percentage to £3,000.

I am also sympathetic to the problems that investment and unit trusts face in qualifying for PEP treatment. This arises from the requirement that 75 per cent. of their portfolio should be invested in ordinary United Kingdom equities. I propose therefore to relax this rule to 50 per cent. I also propose to raise the PEP limit for those trusts that do not satisfy this rule from the present £750 to £900.

Last year, my right hon. Friend put employee share ownership plans, or ESOPs as they are known, on the statute book. ESOPs are a vehicle for giving employees a direct stake in the business for which they work. They are an attractive option and deserve further encouragement. One impediment to their growth has been that the transfer of shares to the work force can mean that the company owner faces an immediate tax charge. To prevent this, I propose to introduce a rollover relief from capital gains tax for sales of shares to ESOPs. I believe that this will remove an obstacle to their development and give this form of employee share ownership the fillip that it deserves.

In a moment, I will turn to some new and significant tax changes for savers, but first, I wish to discuss a reform which was announced in the 1988 Budget and which comes into effect next month—independent taxation for women. There is too little understanding yet of what this change will mean, but it will fundamentally change the financial affairs of women.

At present, the taxation of married women's income is wholly inconsistent with their role in society. In tax law, their income is still considered to belong to their husbands. The effect of this is twofold: it denies married women any privacy or independence in tax matters, and too often it results in heavier taxation than is fair. It is time for the system to go, and go it will from April.

In future, a husband and wife will be taxed entirely separately. Every married woman will have a tax

allowance of her own to set against her income—whether this income is from earnings, pension or savings. Three and three quarter million people will gain, of whom two million have incomes of less than £5,000 a year. One million elderly married couples will pay less tax, and 200,000 pensioner couples will be taken out of tax altogether.

No one will be sorry to see the old system go. One of its worst features was its treatment of the savings of married women. Whether they had other income or not, the interest on their savings was added to their husband's income and taxed at his rate. This was a clear penalty on thrift. From April, all that will end. This may well be the area where the reform has its greatest effect and will be most welcomed.

However, independent taxation has thrown into sharp relief another aspect of the tax system that affects all savers, and which no longer deserves to survive.

Some women will see the benefit of independent taxation automatically, if they have their money invested in national savings, or other accounts which pay interest gross of tax, but many women with only small savings prefer to save with high street banks or building societies, and so, frankly, do many other small savers. For all these savers, income tax—or rather, a proxy for it, called the composite rate—is deducted before the interest ever gets to the saver, and whether or not the saver is liable to pay tax.

Composite rate tax was introduced originally in 1894, and put on the statute book in 1951. It currently stands at just under 22 per cent. It is deducted at source. It cannot be reclaimed in any circumstances. This means that basic rate taxpayers gain by about 3 per cent.—the difference between the composite rate and the basic rate of income tax, which is what they should pay. And it means that non-taxpayers are worse off by 22 per cent.

The attraction of composite rate has always been that it allows small amounts of tax to be collected with ease from very large numbers of people. It is very convenient and very cost-effective, but the fact remains that, with composite rate tax, we tax people on low incomes who should not be taxed.

It has, of course, always been possible for these people to avoid taxation entirely, by saving in accounts that pay interest gross or tax-free, or where tax can be reclaimed, but the convenience of using banks and building societies has meant that many of them have not done so.

The scale of the problem is compelling. Once independent taxation is implemented, there will be 14 million people—nearly one quarter of the population—who have savings income that does not merit taxation, but which will be taxed under present legislation. They include some 5 million married women with little or no other income of their own, 4 million pensioners, 2·5 million other adults, and 2·5 million children with small savings accounts—often funded with small gifts of money from grandparents, or savings from pocket money.

There is no way out of this problem other than to abolish composite rate tax entirely. This I propose to do with effect from 6 April 1991, the earliest practicable date. From then on, tax will fall on those who should pay it, and will not fall on those who should not pay it.

We shall discuss with the banks and building societies how to effect this enormous organisational change. I envisage a scheme of self-certification that will allow non-taxpayers to be paid their interest without deduction of tax. For other savers, tax will continue to be deducted at source, but at basic rate. However, unlike composite rate tax, any tax deducted will be reclaimable by any non-taxpayers who, for any reason, may not have been able to self-certify for gross payment.

This change will significantly reduce the amount of tax paid by millions of married women, pensioners, children and others with small savings, and by removing the penalty of composite rate tax, it will play an important part in encouraging the savings habit. Meanwhile, the Department of National Savings also has a part to play in encouraging the savings habit. I am therefore announcing today a 1 per cent. increase in the interest rates paid on national savings investment account and income bonds, where interest is already paid gross. This too will help encourage saving, particularly by non-taxpayers.

However, as well as removing the tax impost for non-taxpayers, I wish to do more to encourage the saving habit among taxpayers—all of them.

In the 11 years that we have been in office, a series of Budgets have removed penal rates of tax, abolished the investment income surcharge and introduced important new schemes to encourage saving and investment. I intend now to build further on those measures, for everyone, and that means going beyond the incentives to saving that we have built up so far. These schemes have been immensely successful in spreading share ownership, and will continue to be so in the future, but I now want to extend savings incentives to the mass of ordinary taxpaying savers—and potential savers—who prefer to put their money in the familiar security of high street banks and building societies.

My next measure is addressed precisely to them. I propose to introduce a wholly new tax incentive which will reward saving and encourage people to build up a stock of capital. The scheme will work as follows. Every adult will be entitled to one tax-exempt special savings account, TESSA for short. All commercial banks or building societies will be able to offer such an account. The essence of the scheme is to encourage people to save regularly over a five-year period. The incentive for them to do so is that all the interest earned on their capital will be entirely free of tax, provided only that the capital itself is left undisturbed over the five-year period.

The annual limit on the amount that can be invested will be £1,800 or £150 a month. In the first year, anyone who has capital that they are willing to tie up for longer can put this money in their account from the outset, up to a limit of £3,000, but the overall limit of £9,000 for the whole plan applies nonetheless.

To cope with the circumstances of many small savers —particularly pensioners—who use the interest on their savings for their everyday expenses, it will be possible to withdraw interest as it accrues, but only up to the net-of-tax level. At the end of the five years, the depositor then gets a bonus representing the money which would otherwise have gone in tax. The depositor will get this provided none of the capital has been withdrawn before the five years is up. They can, of course, withdraw the capital at any time, but without tax relief.

This scheme is convenient, flexible and simple. It extends a form of PEP treatment to ordinary savings. It caters for those who want to save monthly, annually, or in irregular amounts. It represents a substantial incentive to save, and I am confident that it will play its part in reviving the culture of thrift. I also believe that it is both desirable and fair to reduce tax on small savings.

This new relief will be available from next January. Its cost will depend on take-up, but could be at least £200 million in the first full year, and rising thereafter.

This Budget has contained a whole range of savings incentives. It has done so because I believe it is economically right to encourage savings, and because I believe also that it is socially right—not least because of the independence and security it offers to savers as they build up capital of their own. However, there is little point in encouraging savings if we leave in the system an over-severe penalty for doing so. I turn, therefore, to the social security system and to what has become known as the capital rule.

As the House knows, people with capital over £3,000 start to have their benefits reduced, and those with more than a certain level of savings—£6,000 in the case of income support and family credit and £8,000 in the case of housing benefit and community charge benefit—become completely ineligible for all means-tested benefits, however low their incomes.

There must, of course, be some upper limits above which help is no longer given, but the present limits are widely resented as a penalty on thrift and self-provision. *[Interruption.]* This is particularly so in the case of elderly people with some capital but only modest incomes. They believe it is unfair that they must use the money carefully saved during their working lives while others, less provident, have immediate access to the benefit system.

I have therefore reviewed the present limits with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Security, and we have decided that they should be raised. The limit for income support and family credit, where the stress is less great, will rise from £6,000 to £8,000, but the problem is most acute for those whose savings disqualify them from housing benefit and from community charge benefit. *[Interruption.]* I propose therefore, to double the capital cut-off for both these benefits, from £8,000 to £16,000—for housing benefit and for community charge. This new limit will be of particular help to couples, but it will also apply to single people and therefore extend help to some widows and widowers who would otherwise continue to be excluded.

This measure will benefit——

Mr. Donald Dewar (Glasgow, Garscadden) *rose*——

Mr. Major: No.

Hon. Members: Give way.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Clearly, the Chancellor is not giving way.

Mr. Dewar *rose*——

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Dewar: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am sorry to interrupt, but an important concession is being announced at the beginning of the introduction of the poll tax system in England and Wales. The system has been running for over a year in Scotland——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: That is clearly not a point of order for the Chair. Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Mr. Major: This measure—[HON. MEMBERS: "Answer."]—will benefit about a quarter of a million people, two thirds of them——

Mr. Dick Douglas (Dunfermline, West): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You are in the Chair, as Chairman of Ways and Means. Important tax concessions and changes are being made. A principle of taxation in this country——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman knows that that is not a point of order for me to deal with. I am anxious to hear what the Chancellor has to say.

Mr. Major: This measure will benefit around a quarter of a million people, two thirds of them pensioners who are at present——

Mr. Brian Wilson (Cunninghame, North): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I very much hope that it is. It does the House's reputation little good to have the Chancellor's speech interrupted by points of order which are not matters for the Chair.

Mr. Wilson: It is precisely in the interest of the House's reputation that I ask, on a point of order, whether the Chancellor will make clear immediately whether the concessions that he has announced will be retrospectively applied to Scotland.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. That is not a matter for the Chair. Points of order must be for me and not for Ministers.

Mr. Major: This measure will benefit around a quarter of a million people, two thirds of them pensioners who are at present wholly excluded from benefit——

Mr. Jim Sillars (Glasgow, Govan): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Given that many of us, especially Opposition Members, were unable to hear what the Chancellor said because of the noise, would it be in order to get him to repeat the last two passages to see whether that tax concession will be retrospective in Scotland, which got the poll tax a year earlier?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I am not going to listen to any more bogus points of order. I hope that the hon. Gentleman shares my anxiety to hear what the Chancellor has to say.

Mr. Major: For the avoidance of doubt, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I shall repeat that this measure will benefit around a quarter of a million people, two thirds of them pensioners who are at present wholly excluded from benefit. The total cost will be £120 million a year, which will be met from the reserve and will not increase the public expenditure totals.

To avoid delay, my right hon. Friend is laying the necessary regulations today—*[Interruption.]*—so that the limits will be increased when benefits are uprated at the beginning of April. He will discuss the operational implications of this change with local authorities immediately.

PERORATION

This is a saver's Budget. It takes no risks with inflation. It further strengthens the public finances. It helps the less well-off. It gives women a better deal. It offers help to charities and sport, and it reduces the tax burden on growing companies—*[Interruption.]*

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Major: It is the right Budget for this year, and it sets the right course for the '90s. I commend it to the House, and the country.

Several Hon. Members: On a point of order.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. If hon. Members will allow me, I shall put the Question before I take points of order.

PROVISIONAL COLLECTION OF TAXES

Motion made, and Question,

That, pursuant to section 5 of the Provisional Collection of Taxes Act 1968, provisional statutory effect shall be given to the following motions:—

(a) Spirits (motion No. 2);
(b) Beer (motion No. 3);
(c) Wine and made-wine (motion No. 4);
(d) Cider (motion No. 5);
(e) Tobacco products (motion No. 6);
(f) Hydrocarbon oil (motion No. 7);
(g) Vehicles excise duty (rates) (motion No. 8);
(h) Vehicles excise duty (exemptions) (motion No. 9);
(i) Value added tax (registration) (motion No. 10).—*[Mr. Major.]*

put forthwith, pursuant to Standing Order No. 50 (Ways and Means Motions), and agreed to.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I shall now call the Chancellor to move the motion entitled "Amendment of the law". It is on that motion that the Budget debate will take place today and on succeeding days. The remaining motions will not be put until the end of the Budget debate next week, and then they will be decided without debate.

Budget Resolutions and Economic Situation

AMENDMENT OF THE LAW

Motion made, and Question proposed,

That it is expedient to amend the law with respect to the National Debt and the public revenue and to make further provision in connection with finance; but this Resolution does not extend to the making of any amendment with respect to value added tax so as to provide—

(a) for zero-rating or exempting any supply;
(b) for refunding any amount of tax;
(c) for varying the rate of that tax otherwise than in relation to all supplies and importations; or
(d) for relief other than relief applying to goods of whatever description or services of whatever description—*[Mr. Major.]*

[Relevant documents: European Community Document No. 9487/89 on the Annual Economic Report 1989-90 and the un-numbered Explanatory Memorandum submitted by Her Majesty's Treasury on 31st January 1990 on the final version of the Report as adopted by the Council.]

Mr. Harry Ewing (Falkirk, East): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I apologise to my hon. Friends and to the House for the delay to the proceedings, but we are constantly told by the occupants of the Chair, including yourself with respect Sir, that this is a United Kingdom Parliament. However, what should we do when, as hon. Members representing Scottish constituencies, we find ourselves in the position we have been put in today by the Chancellor—we have been betrayed by the Secretary of State and by Scottish Tory MPs——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. the hon. Gentleman knows that that is not a matter for the Chair; it is a matter for debate.

Mr. Malcolm Bruce (Gordon): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Scotland is governed under the terms of the Act of Union, passed by this House of the United Kingdom Parliament. Under the terms of that Act, taxation and benefits should be applied equally. Will the Secretary of State for Scotland make a statement——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I am not responsible for interpreting the Act of Union.

4.56 pm

Mr. Neil Kinnock (Islwyn): I shall begin by following two customs of the House. The first is an ancient custom which requires me to congratulate the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the way in which he delivered his Budget statement. I shall do that gladly, although I shall say at this early juncture, that—and I am sure he will share my feeling—at the earliest possible opportunity he should make it clear to my hon. Friends, and in particular my hon. Friends from Scotland, whether the change that he announced towards the end of his speech will be extended retrospectively to elderly people in Scotland with retirement incomes of more than £16,000. I am certain that he will want to give thought to that, and I hope that he will make a positive response, because it would be a terrible shame if that was to mar an otherwise excellent maiden Budget performance.

I think that everyone will have enjoyed the way in which the Chancellor said what he had to say, even if there will be disagreement over fairly extensive parts of it.

[Mr. Neil Kinnock]

The second custom is quite recent and was established only 12 years ago by the right hon. Lady the Prime Minister, when she was Leader of the Opposition. In 1978, when the first Budget to be broadcast live on radio was debated, the right hon. Lady pointed out that she, like everyone else outside the Cabinet, had had neither sight nor sound of the Budget before the Chancellor made his speech to the House. That system has some disadvantages, but at least it means that Parliament and nation share the same sense of unspoiled expectation—that is not without its virtues in this democracy.

In the Budget statement, the Chancellor announced much that the Opposition welcome and support. Naturally we shall want to scrutinise it in detail, but there is a fair spectrum of agreement on many of the measures and changes that the Chancellor announced. For instance, we welcome the value added tax reliefs for bad debts, especially as they affect small businesses. We welcome the differential—which I believe has increased slightly—between the duty payable on leaded and unleaded petrol. The Chancellor will enjoy support in all parts of the House for that move, as he will for the increased tax allowance for blind people.

There are many other changes which I shall not deal with now, but three merit attention. The first is the Chancellor's proposal that help should be given to users of workplace nurseries. He will remember that the Opposition were extremely hostile to the imposition of what we thought of as penalties on users of workplace nurseries. We are glad that he has responded to our pleas over a number of years to reverse that change.

Secondly, I am grateful, as are my right hon. and hon. Friends, for the additional help that is to be given to the Football Trust. I am sure that, in return, the Chancellor will want to acknowledge the significant contribution that was made to the negotiations with the football authorities and the Pools Promoters Association by my right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Small Heath (Mr. Howell). A development of this kind was announced during an Opposition day debate a few weeks ago, but it is good to have it solidly confirmed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Thirdly, we are very glad—this is a slight repetition, but it does not suffer from being repeated—that the Chancellor has raised the limits on the savings of retired people, thus enabling them to qualify for a poll tax reduction. I hope that he will be forthcoming concerning my request that he should review the position of elderly Scottish people.

Those three changes are ones for which we have called recently. Equally, they are all changes that in recent times the Government have turned down. Who knows, despite the Prime Minister's preferences, just a tiny corner of the Government may be starting to listen. Unfortunately, however, it is just too late to save them.

Other interesting changes have been made. The Chancellor told us, not to our surprise, that interest rates will remain high for some time to come. However, he then said, interestingly, that when they are brought down they will stay down. That is a major change of policy. Throughout the last 11 years, interest rates have come down only just before a general election. Their reduction had nothing to do with the wider economic considerations.

The Chancellor has made it clear in his first Budget speech that he will re-examine several areas. Knowing him as we do, we believe the complete authenticity of his intention to re-examine credit controls, the measurement of money supply and funding policies so that they are not too rigid—perhaps another little preparation for a future election. He gave a further commitment to participate in the exchange rate mechanism of the European monetary system. He truly showed himself in all these respects to have approached them with a new broom. The problem is that that will not be terribly convincing so long as the broomstick is ridden by the Prime Minister. Consequently, I plead with the House not to devalue the Chancellor's contribution.

We understand the circumstances that produced a Budget of this kind. It is something of a bits and pieces Budget. It is something of a stop-gap Budget. It could not be otherwise, given the policies, and the policy failures, of the Government. There was not much else that the Chancellor could do. He could not announce, for instance, that interest rates would be cut, because that would send credit up and the pound down. He could not announce that interest rates would go up, because that would have plunged the economy into recession and the Tory party into oblivion. About the only thing that he could do was to maintain the position. He certainly could not cut taxes, despite the pleadings of some in the City and some in his party. That would have been evidence of complete irresponsibility and would have sent the market into a spin.

There is a real irony in that. It will be within the memory of right hon. and hon. Members in all parts of the House, and of the much wider public outside, that for years the Conservatives have preached that large income tax reductions, especially on higher incomes, were the energiser of the economy and the spur to enterprise and dynamism. However, when all the difficulties associated with a huge balance of payments deficit mean that the Government most need energy, dynamism and a spur to enterprise, they do not even think of cutting income tax because of the devastating effect that that would have on their fortunes in the markets.

How very different from the giveaway Budget of two years ago, when the current Chancellor of the Exchequer was Chief Secretary to the Treasury. I well remember that on the day after the Budget he denounced Opposition Members for their temerity in warning, as he put it,

"that cutting taxes will damage the balance of payments."

He declared boldly in the same passage:

"It is hardly surprising that we should have a current account deficit when growth in the United Kingdom economy is far stronger than that of most of our trading partners."
—[*Official Report*, 16 March 1988; Vol. 129, c. 1129.]

It was during that same month that the Prime Minister described a £1 billion balance of payments deficit in one month as a "freak". That was £40 billion-worth of deficits ago.

The right hon. Gentleman told us then that it was growth that was generating the balance of payments difficulties. It made some sense. If there is high growth, it is not surprising that the country should experience some balance of payments difficulties. But what sense does it make now, when our current account deficit is at record levels and when our growth rate is the slowest among all the major industrial countries? For us to go into deficit and debt with high growth is perhaps defensible, but to go into

deficit and debt with low growth is a shambles, especially when it is the direct consequence of the policies of Her Majesty's Government.

We have not got a huge deficit just on current account. In 1989, £28 billion-worth of long-term capital came into Britain. In the same year, £57 billion-worth of long-term capital went out of Britain. That represents a long-term capital outflow of £29 billion. The deficits—which are of some significance to this economy, which must compete and make its way out of the current problems—total more than £45 billion, compared with the remainder of the world. What a mess. What a way to meet the challenges of the 1990s, as the Chancellor put it in his speech.

He could say, "It is not really my fault. I have been in the job for less than half the financial year." That is true. Midway through the financial year, the last Chancellor of the Exchequer, the right hon. Member for Blaby (Mr. Lawson), who I am glad to see is in his place, left the field. He went off at half time, having been tackled from behind by his own captain. It is a tribute to the resourcefulness of the right hon. Member for Blaby that, after he left the Government team, he still managed to get a six-figure transfer fee, even as a part-time player. Come to think of it, perhaps that is what he meant all the time when he said that he was going to achieve an economic miracle.

There is not much in the way of miracles elsewhere, unless we consider it miraculous to make £65 billion-worth of oil revenues disappear, leaving hardly any trace. That is supernatural indeed. The imposition of interest rates that are higher for longer than ever before in British history is the stuff of which legends are made.

Despite interest rates being higher for longer than ever before, demand has still increased, retail sales have still risen, indebtedness has still soared and, as the Chancellor acknowledged, prices have continued going up. The high interest rate policy that was supposed to cure inflation is now a major cause of inflation. It adds to production costs, it adds to living costs, it provokes higher wage demands and, as the Chancellor acknowledged, high interest rates make lenders more willing to lend. The Chancellor tells us that he is striving to reduce demand in order to combat inflation, yet with every mail delivery, in every newspaper and in every car showroom there are offers of interest-free finance and easy credit.

It is a paradox, and it has perplexed people. It has certainly confused the Prime Minister. On Tuesday, the Chancellor told us that he was determined to be firm in pressing down on demand and spending. On Sunday, in the *Sunday Express*, the Prime Minister was dismissing talk of a squeeze and rejoicing in

"the amount of retail sales, the amount of spending and the amount of overseas holidays."

The Prime Minister was boasting about high consumer spending without appearing to realise that that is what is causing the Chancellor of the Exchequer to lose sleep at night. It is so bad that it even makes the deputy Prime Minister lose sleep in the day.

It also makes a lot of other people lose sleep. People running businesses, especially medium-sized and small businesses, know that high interest rates are hitting their costs, their custom and their investment plans. The high interest rate policy with the resulting mortgage rate burden devastates family budgets.

On the Friday after the mortgage rate went up to 15·4 per cent., I met a young family man in my constituency whose mortgage had gone up from £185 to £290 a month in 18 months—and that was before the latest increase. He saw me in the street in Blackwood and said, "15·4 per cent.! I wanted to buy my house but I didn't want to buy the building society." That is the reaction of many people. They can make no connection between their desire to buy a house and the way in which the cost of trying to fulfil a natural and normal ambition, for which they are prepared to pay, is being made prohibitive by Government policies.

Millions of people are struggling with punishing mortgage bills. Such people greet the Conservative claim to be the party of the family with bitter derision. They bear the burden of huge mortgage repayments, they see what the Government have done to the pensions and housing benefits of elderly people in their families, they know that their child benefit is frozen, and now, on top of everything else comes the poll tax.

That tax is despised and detested across the country, not only because of its cost but because of its fundamental injustice. There is not a single Member on either side of the House who does not understand that, yet yesterday the Secretary of State for the Environment was saying that the principles of the tax were going to stay.

What principle is there in a tax that makes the shop assistant pay the same as the stockbroker? What principle is there in a tax that makes the nurse pay the same as the consultant? What principle demands that a single person aged between 25 and 60 on £64 a week pay the same as someone on £6,000 a week? What principle makes someone with retirement savings of £16,000 pay the same as someone with retirement assets of £16 million?

Although we are grateful for the concession that the Chancellor has made this afternoon, £16,000 in retirement savings is not exactly a prince's ransom. It is certainly not a level of savings put together after a lifetime of work that should in any way disqualify people from assistance in their retirement years. I hope that those thresholds will be further examined, because among the greatest and the most justifiable resentments that are voiced is that people think that they have been conned, betrayed and had, because thrifty people who have set money aside and have lived frugal or simply careful lives carry the same liability as people who have fared much more fortunately. I plead, as I am sure will certain Conservative Members, for a further examination of those levels.

Of course a flat rate tax that affects people regardless of their ability to pay can represent no principle that we recognise as acceptable in a democracy. However, to hear some Conservative Members, one would think that the poll tax and all that it implies was an aberration, a sudden surprise inflicted on the Tory party out of the blue by some malign act of fate. I suppose that is one way of looking at the Prime Minister. I particularly enjoyed the television performance which many of my hon. Friends will have seen by the hon. Member for Shipley (Sir M. Fox) a couple of weeks ago, when he told an interviewer on BBC television:

"Had we known that the charge would be the level that it is, then I don't think the Bill would have had the same sort of passage through Parliament."

As I watched him, I wondered whether I was witnessing the first historic instance of a fox leaving a sinking ship.

The poll tax is not a Conservative aberration; it is not an accident to modern Toryism, it is the epitome of modern Toryism. Because it is a flat rate, like other Tory

[Mr. Neil Kinnock]

charges it is regressive; it is an inflationary and centralising tax. In short, the poll tax is not the exception to Tory policy, it is the rule and now the British people know it.

Against that background, is it any wonder that the majority of British people believe that the country is heading in the wrong direction and that major changes are needed? Of course that is not strange. People know too that there are practical and progressive alternatives to what the Government are doing. We put those alternatives, the CBI and the TUC almost identically put those alternatives as did the Engineering Employers Federation.

The right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) put alternatives to Government policy. [HON. MEMBERS: "Where is he?"] I think that he was here earlier this afternoon. I see the hon. Member for Leominster (Mr. Temple-Morris) pointing skywards. I did not expect such an elevation to be awarded to the right hon. Member for Henley, but I understand he is in a place where I or any other right hon. or hon. Member should not be able to see him. Doubtless he is putting forward his alternatives. Equally doubtless, the Treasury is probably costing his programme at this very moment. Then they will send it to No. 10 Downing street to have the noughts added on to the end of it.

I know that the Prime Minister hates the concept of contemplating the idea of a spectrum of alternatives and agreement about alternatives, but she has to face the fact that there is a broadening consensus among the British people for those alternatives. It is a consensus that favours incentives for investment, including the greatest incentive of stability in the currency and interest rate regime.

There is a consensus that Britain should now be negotiating entry of the exchange rate mechanism of the European monetary system. There is a consensus that there has to be increased investment in education, which the Government have cut in real terms, in training, which the Government are cutting by £300 milliion, in research and development, which is still underfunded, and in the rail and road systems. All those are recognised as essentials as the completion of the single market approaches.

Of course nobody who is part of that consensus believes that such policies would be a panacea or would offer an instant cure for inflation or for the balance of payments deficit. Everyone who is part of the consensus knows that the only dependable way to reduce inflation, to combat endemic inflation and to close those payments gaps is to produce more, to produce better and to sell more competitively. They know that, if that is to happen, long-term investment must take precedence over short-term consumption and that a modern Government have responsibility for actively promoting the objective of a commitment to long-termism.

The Budget yet again completely fails to address that necessity, yet we know that it is the course that must be followed, not only because it makes such sense for our under-invested and debt-ridden economy but because commitment to the long term so obviously works in practice for competitor countries.

Even the Prime Minister stumbles into recognising that sometimes. Three weeks ago, she told the *Sunday Times* that her

"ambition is that we catch up with France and then we catch up with Germany."

There is a fair bit of catching up to do. When the right hon. Lady came Prime Minister in 1979, our trade deficit with France was just over £900 million, but now it is over £1,300 million; with Germany, it was just over £1,500 million, but now it is nearly £10 billion. Even without oil, those countries are known to have better systems of investing in research and development, in training and in transport by road and rail than Britain.

Germany has a Conservative Government and France has a Socialist Government, but they have in common a willingness to work in partnership with industry. They do not have the prejudices of the British Government. They do not think that the dogma of withdrawal and non-intervention is practical, any more than they think that the dogma of domination and perpetual interference is desirable.

After 11 years in power, the Prime Minister says that she wants to catch up with those countries. We all want and need that, but to do so will take a partnership in work, planning and investment. That is necessary and unavoidable in a modern economy. None of it will come from this Government; certainly none of it will come from this Budget; but it will come from us, and for the sake of our country, the sooner the better.

5.22 pm

Sir Neil Macfarlane (Sutton and Cheam): I shall not follow too closely the comments of the Leader of the Opposition. I want to congratulate my right hon. Friend the Chancellor most warmly not only on the quality of his presentation but on the competence that he displayed in confounding the critics who said that this would be a dull Budget. It was resourceful and it certainly carries on the work of the past decade in reforming our taxation system. Overall, I am quite certain that this is a fair Budget that is equitable for everybody, and there is something in it for growth over the next few years.

I welcome the removal of 2·5 per cent. from the pools betting duty, which I am certain will be widely supported by all hon. Members because it has concentrated the minds of many hon. Members for a considerable time. I certainly applaud my right hon. Friend's decision to revert the rate to its 1980 level of 40 per cent.

I ask my hon. Friend the Economic Secretary to the Treasury to make a note of one or two points that I shall make, because the Chancellor's speech touched on taxation in sport and how it might affect sports other than association football. The excellent Taylor report has thrown into sharp focus the problems not only of soccer but of major spectator sports facilities. Many people associated with sport would say that excessive taxation in the post-war years is a prime cause of poor facilities, poor stadiums and a poor expectation among those who attend spectator sports. There is much truth in that, and it is precisely what the governing bodies of sport have been saying for a long time.

West Germany, the United States, France, Italy and Spain have made enormous progress since the war in developing first-class facilities. Almost all, with the exception of the United States, have been helped by their Governments with capital spend, and generous tax exemptions have been offered in the United States. We, alas, have forgotten just how important for national and civic pride are modern and safe facilities for all sports.

Most stadiums have been partly modernised over the past five or 10 years, but most of our stadium stock is the better part of 70 to 75 years old.

My right hon. Friend the Chancellor and the Treasury must consider the merits of sports governing bodies and representative bodies, including the British Olympic Association and the Central Council of Physical Recreation, which are non-profit-making distributing public benefit bodies. Ministers must assist more with the growth, viewing of and participation in sport in the United Kingdom. Surely it should be a Treasury objective to consider total tax exemption of the internal profits and gains of governing bodies. Such a move would command considerable political success, as well as falling in line with most other western industrialised nations.

Sadly, in recent weeks it has become clear that a number of sports clubs will suffer an additional burden as a result of the community charge. Although several sports and recreation clubs will benefit from some reductions, alas, others will experience a considerable percentage increase, and I commend to Treasury Ministers the CCPR national survey on present and future rates. The burdens are considerable, and as a result of our policies many sports clubs will have to pay increases in excess of 30 to 40 per cent., and many may go to the wall.

My right hon. Friend the Chancellor knows only too well the problems facing sports governing bodies. He has taken a close interest in sport over the years and knows in detail how the Test and County Cricket Board, the Rugby Football Union and the Football Association operate. I know from correspondence with him when he was a Back Bencher that he takes a close interest in sport. For the first time since Rab Butler, we have a Conservative Chancellor who understands the importance of sport and its politics. I was interested when he said that there was undoubtedly a need for the Inland Revenue closely to consider how capital allowances apply to the development of new stadiums.

There have been many increases over the years, not just in value added tax and in the burdens of the community charge and the rating system. We return time and again to the problems of gains and taxation within the financial systems of non-profit-making distributing bodies. Most of those involved in the running of sport believe that the Government do not always understand the impact of taxation on sport, leisure and recreation, which is the focal point of the life of the nation.

In recent weeks, I have had one or two letters from old friends. I want to quote from them because I want to send them on to my hon. Friend the Economic Secretary. I hope that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor himself will take a personal interest in the matter because my correspondents cover a wide electoral college. Mr. Dudley Wood of the Rugby Football Union says:

"we made a provision for £530,000 for Corporation Tax"—

that is, in 1988-89.

"We also paid some £450,000 in VAT during the year . . . We take no exception to the relatively low level of the Sports Council grant since it is our aim to be self-financing but, as an amateur, non profit distributing body"—

again, we come back to that—

"it is disheartening to find ourselves penalised by this heavy burden of tax. The harder we work to produce money to finance our game and our facilities, the more tax we pay. Well before Hillsborough and the Taylor Reports, we took a decision to modernise our national ground to bring it over a period of years to a capacity of 75,000, all seated in a well equipped stadium and the rebuilding of the North Stand at a cost of £15 million is well advanced. This will be ready in time for the 1991 World Cup which will be one of the most prestigious and largest world sporting events ever held in this country . . . no tax relief is granted in respect of capital expenditure on ground improvements, although some allowance is made where safety factors are involved. Having said that, the present taxation arrangements are a positive disincentive to our efforts to be self-supporting"

I hope that my hon. Friend the Economic Secretary will take close note of that because it echoes the generous comments that, I think, my right hon. Friend the Chancellor made earlier.

The chief executive of the Football Association writes on similar lines. He says:

"Tax allowances on capital spending and in particular, on seating and on any cover or roof"

are not eligible for any form of tax relief in the form of capital allowances. It is not available

"unless the expenditure is on plant and machinery . . . or is in relation to work which is necessary under the Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975."

That point requires close examination. The association also urges an exemption from corporation tax and suggests that we

"grant the governing bodies of sport a special status similar to charitable status. This would enable sports organisations to enjoy the same benefits as arts bodies organised as charities."

That point is worth considering, but I shall not detain the House much longer on this issue.

The Test and County Cricket Board writes along similar lines. It says:

"Our First-Class County Cricket Clubs and Test Match Grounds depend very much on a successful Australian Tour once every four years to keep them afloat financially during the intervening period. The salaries we are able to pay to cricketers and the money we are able to invest in youth development and the recreational game reflect that the income derived from International cricket has to be spread over a very wide base."

The writer of the letter goes on to talk about the "context of cricket finances". He says:

"VAT is the area where the greatest taxation burden is borne by cricket. The VAT burden on gate receipts, sponsorship, broadcasting income and box hire involves cricket in a net cost somewhere in the region of £3m a year."

I could highlight many other points. The chairman of the TCCB echoes the problems that the RFU, the Football Association and the Lawn Tennis Association have pointed out to me before about the rebuilding of major stadiums and the incentives that are needed. The TCCB talks about unearned income, but time and again, it comes back to the element of disincentive.

I hope very much that my hon. Friend the Economic Secretary will urge those points on our right hon. Friend the Chancellor, who made a most commendable and brave speech today—his first of what I hope will be many to follow. There are many points at which we could justifiably look closely in Committee and when the Finance Bill returns to the Floor of the House in the next few months. Those are important issues. It comes down to one thing. It is a matter of national and civic pride that we should upgrade and improve our stadiums which are such a vital part of many regions of the United Kingdom.

5.34 pm

Dr. David Owen (Plymouth, Devonport): The Budget will, I suspect, take a few weeks to settle in before a fair judgment can be made on whether the Chancellor has grappled successfully with the deeper problems of the British economy. In many ways, it was a characteristic Budget. We all agree that the Chancellor is a likeable

[Dr. David Owen]

Member of the House. He does not have much flamboyance, but he is a kindly person and, within the limits of his brief, he has tried to act fairly. Many people will welcome some of the details of the Budget.

First, however, I must pose the core question, which will be asked not only in this country but in many countries. For all the words and all the rhetoric, has the Chancellor grappled with the basic problem of the British economy, which is the underlying rate of inflation? There is no question but that if, when the dust has settled and the glitter subsided, the judgment is that inflation is still riding through the system and will not be curbed, there will be continued pressure on the pound sterling and continued uncertainty about the Government's resolve to raise interest rates. In all, there will be four or five months of considerable uncertainty.

The Chancellor has chosen—or, more likely, has been told by the Prime Minister—not to say what the markets wanted to hear, and what many hon. Members wanted to hear, about a firm date and intention to enter the exchange rate mechanism of the European monetary system. I do not believe that that automatically provides an instant cure for our inflation problem, but I believe that it sets a disciplined framework within which British economic policy must go ahead. The Chancellor has used no new words and has expressed no new sentiments about the exchange rate mechanism of the EMS. In that sense, he made a deeply disappointing speech.

The Chancellor says that the question is "when", not whether, but in view of the emphasis that he laid on inflation, many people will ponder if it is to be postponed until 1991. We know of the Prime Minister's anxiety about a run-up to the general election with the issue of the exchange rate mechanism still not resolved and of the fear that the prospect of a Labour return might give rise to speculation and that the Government might have to put up interest rates in the run-up. The suspicion must remain that the Prime Minister will insist that we do not enter the exchange rate mechanism this side of the general election.

If that suspicion becomes a fear, I worry about exchange rates in the next few weeks and months. I believe that present exchange rates will firm up slightly. Most Budgets, especially one with new ideas and with a welcome emphasis on savings, have a reasonable reaction in the exchange markets for the first couple of days. I assume that the strategy behind the Budget is to encourage more private saving and giving so as to dampen consumer spending, and I strongly support that. Our savings ratio is disgraceful and the Social Democratic party has long urged the Chancellor, and previous Chancellors, to have a savings Budget. In almost every particular, the measures that the Chancellor has introduced to encourage more saving and more giving are welcome, but—and it is a big "but"—it takes some time for such schemes to have an impact on current consumer spending.

I can only believe that the Chancellor's advisers think that there is already sufficient dampening within the system because of existing interest rate policy. However, they have got that prediction wrong before and many of us now wanted a firmer and clearer fiscal tightening. In January, when the SDP produced its Budget proposals, we warned against overkill on a fiscal stance. We thought that it was possible to have a neutral Budget, but as the statistics began to show increased consumer demand over and above expectations and as the date of a throttling back of the economy seemed to be consistently postponed, we grew more anxious. Added to that was the anxiety about the retail price index.

In the absence of a firm and clear statement on the exchange rate mechanism of the European monetary system, and with no obvious wish on the Government's part to increase interest rates—and understandably so—much of the world's attention will focus on Britain's underlying inflation rate and in particular on the retail price index. That will also be the case on the purely technical ground that, although the Chancellor was rightly sceptical about monetary aggregates, he announced a somewhat looser monetary target of 1 per cent. to 5 per cent. instead of the 0 per cent. to 4 per cent. in the previous Budget. He also implied that he thought that, for most of the period, the figure was likely to be in the higher ranges. The Chancellor also indicated a public sector debt repayment level half the size of that projected in the pevious Budget. That means that in the short term certain questions arise.

The House would do well to ponder the statement on page 44 of the Red Book that the RPI

"is due to rise quite sharply in the next few months."

It is noteworthy that the Chancellor gave a figure of more than 7 per cent. only for the last quarter of 1990. It is incumbent on the Government to come forward immediately with their estimate of the peak that the RPI is likely to reach in the next few months because that will be one of the key factors in wage bargaining. We are already witnessing underlying pressure for wage settlements higher than can possibly be justified in present circumstances.

In addition, by placing so much stress on excise duties, the Chancellor has added a full 0·53 per cent. to the RPI. Moreover, he has readily acknowledged that the poll tax will add a further 1 per cent. to the RPI. That means that, on present levels, there will be a considerable surge in the RPI.

The Economic Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Richard Ryder): Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Dr. Owen: I shall happily give way if the Minister wishes to give us the RPI figures for the second and third quarters, as that would help us in our discussion.

Mr. Ryder: The right hon. Gentleman asserted that the target M0 figures for next year were different from those that we have followed in the past 12 months. He quoted from the Red Book, but paragraph 2.34 on page 15 of the Red Book states:

"The Government will continue to set a target for M0 as a yard stick for its monetary policy. A target range of 1-5 per cent. is being set for M0 in 1990-91, the same as in 1989-90."

Dr. Owen: I accept the correction. I may have been wrongly advised on that. In that case we shall not have a looser target, although we must still remember the warning that the figures will be bumping up off the upper limit.

I know that the former Chancellor did not use excise duties to their full extent last year but left them largely as they were. My own judgment this year, given my anxiety about the retail price index, would have been to favour the adoption of a tighter fiscal stance—by adding 1p to the standard rate of income tax or by increasing the national insurance contribution—rather than placing the full

weight on excise duties. By doing that, the Chancellor has taken a considerable risk with the major statistic and a statistic which causes the greatest concern at present. It is on that principle that I fear that his whole Budget strategy is likely to come unstuck.

The Treasury forecasts admit a margin of error of 1·25per cent. If, in the last quarter of this year, we found the RPI approaching 9 per cent. or more than 8 per cent., there would be considerable cause for anxiety about the exchange rate. I keep coming back to that question. The Chancellor has let the exchange rate slide in the past few months—an open invitation to manufacturers to pass on high wage demands. One of our anxieties must be that, if we have a weak exchange rate at a time of high interest rates, we may undermine the capacity of the British economy and, in particular, our anti-inflationary stance.

In view of the economic figures of the past couple of months and also because of world instability—the rise in the deutschmark following the East German elections and the fragility of the Japanese stock market—the Chancellor should have gone for a tighter fiscal stance or, failing that, he should have shown a greater readiness to enter the exchange rate mechanism earlier and accept the discipline of a firm exchange rate. Time will tell what the result will be, but the only justification for the present strategy would be a readiness on the Chancellor's part, given pressure in the next couple of months, to increase interest rates again. Regrettable though that would be, it would be far better to do that than to allow a further slow erosion of the exchange rate.

The Prime Minister's reluctance to enter the exchange rate mechanism of the European monetary system is no longer even a joke or a subject for badinage between the political parties. If there were a free vote at the end of the Budget debate, there is no question but that the overwhelming majority of hon. Members would vote in favour of a clear decision to enter no later than the autumn. Indeed, there would probably be a majority in favour of going in immediately.

People have grown increasingly anxious about the Prime Minister's so-called Madrid conditions. After all, only a few weeks ago we were being told that the reason why we could not enter the exchange rate mechanism was that the Federal Republic of Germany had a low inflation rate. Yet in the background briefing over the past few days we have heard that one of the reasons for not entering is the danger of a high inflation rate in the Federal Republic arising from its commitments in relation to unification. The ground rules are constantly being changed.

There is also a personal reason why the Chancellor should make a clearer statement. A former Chancellor has resigned on this very issue and it is essential that we should have the feeling that the present Chancellor is master at No. 11 rather than his mistress at No. 10—figuratively speaking, of course. When he winds up the Budget debate, the Chancellor would be wise to find a form of words that is far more generous in recognising the virtues of the exchange rate mechanism of the European monetary system, far clearer about his intentions concerning the exchange rate mechanism of the European monetary system and far more revealing of his personal wishes concerning the exchange rate mechanism of the European monetary system. Without such a commitment, all the fine provisions in the Budget will be seen to be no more than useful fine tuning. We readily acknowledge that they will be useful; many of them have been advocated by the SDP for many years.

I do not wish to delay the proceedings, but I shall leave this Budget debate with a gnawing sense of anxiety. We have listened to the speech of a bank manager—that is not a term of abuse, as there are many enlightened and capable bank managers—who has recognised the specific problems and produced a large number of useful and sensible measures but who has brought to the question no overall vision and no firmness of purpose.

I am left without the feeling that the Chancellor's hand is on the tiller of the economy and with the nagging fear that the Prime Minister's hand is still on the tiller—and that it is the Prime Minister rather than the Chancellor who is the dominant member of the Government in matters of economic strategy. If that is the true interpretation, the chances of achieving by 1992 the recovery on which the Government's political fortunes rest will not have been increased by the Budget.

5.49 pm

Mr. John Lee (Pendle): I am grateful for this opportunity to congratulate my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer on his maiden Budget, and, I should like to thank the leader of the Social Democratic party, the right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen) for his generous and kind tributes to my right hon. Friend.

My right hon. Friend the Chancellor has maintained the family tradition of successfully performing on the high wire. This was a cautious Budget but, as we all appreciate, this is only the first act; act 2 comes this time next year. He rightly concentrated on controlling inflation and on savings.

I was interested that my right hon. Friend acknowledged that he had given considerable thought to and had had a hard look at the possibility of controlling credit and consumer borrowing other than through high interest rates. I am not wholly convinced that there is no alternative to high interest rates. They are a blunt weapon that hurts borrowers and businesses, especially small businesses.

Although I freely acknowledge that the financial community these days is much more international and, unquestionably, some would get round any imposed new credit controls, I cannot believe that the clearing banks, the major lenders and the credit card companies would not respond to requests from the Bank of England or to Government directives, with consequent reductions in credit. Interest rates are now at painful levels, and I sincerely hope that they will not rise any further. They are already causing real hardship to mortgage payers and to businesses.

I welcome a number of the specific measures on savings. The abolition of stamp duty on share transactions is welcome, as is the abolition of the composite tax rate in 1991. The new tax-exempt special savings accounts—or TESSAs—for personal savings are an interesting concept that I am sure will be built on.

The doubling of the capital limits from £8,000 to £16,000 for benefit eligibility will considerably help those who face substantial community charge payments, especially in areas that traditionally have been low-rated, such as in my own area of Pendle and north-east

[Mr. John Lee]

Lancashire, and beyond. I hope that my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Norfolk (Mr. Ryder) is listening. He may well have to deal with that specific problem shortly, but we shall have to see what happens with future ministerial changes.

I very much welcome the Chancellor's determination to allow a £5,000 limit on capital gains tax to both husband and wife, with separate assessments coming through. However, the 40 per cent. top rate of capital gains tax, which still applies, is unacceptably high. I believe that I am right in saying that that is the one tax on savings that our Government have increased. I believe that it causes inactivity in portfolios and often subordinates investment decisions to tax considerations. I hope that that 40 per cent. rate will be reconsidered in our Budget next year.

In conclusion, I should like to welcome a few individual measures. The abolition of the benefits-in-kind taxation on nurseries will be appreciated. Charity giving should be given a substantial boost by the help announced by my right hon. Friend. Tax relief on donations to local enterprise agencies is welcome. Such agencies do excellent work. I have seen that locally in the work of the Pendle Enterprise Trust. My right hon. Friend's anouncement can only give their work a boost. The VAT reliefs and the lowering of the ceiling for corporation tax will substantially help the liquidity of many of our small firms, which, as I said earlier, are suffering because of high interest rates.

Overall, I commend my right hon. Friend's Budget to the House and wish him well.

5.54 pm

Mr. Stuart Bell (Middlesbrough): I am grateful for this early opportunity to speak in the debate and to make some brief comments on the Budget. Like my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition and like the right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen), I add my congratulations to the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the manner in which he made his speech. It was a friendly speech, well put across, and it gained the sympathy and commended the general support of the House.

If we look at the wider issues of the Budget and its context, however, we see that this is not and could not be a consensus Budget. As has been said, the Budget had a 1950s edge. We can agree to a lot of it, but it does not go far enough. The Chancellor did not go far enough in reversing some of the giveaways introduced by his predecessor, the right hon. Member for Blaby (Mr. Lawson) two years ago.

The Chancellor has taken £0·5 billion out of the system —not enough in the context of the Budget—and there is to be a further £1 billion next year, but that will not necessarily be satisfactory to the markets. Since the resignation of the former Chancellor, the markets have been testing the Government and the Chancellor and pushing the exchange rate down. The exchange rate has fallen gradually. Although it has risen from time to time, it is still falling, but we have not seen the application of a further rise in interest rates. One can well understand that, and I am not suggesting that increasing interest rates would be a positive policy.

Clearly, the Government's policy of using interest rates as the only mechanism to determine the exchange rate and to combat inflation leaves a great deal to be desired. It has left the Chancellor unable to raise too much money for fear of reversing the policies of his predecessor, while not satisfying the markets either. My great dread and worry about this Budget is that a further rise in interest rates may be inevitable in the coming months. The Government may even have reconciled themselves to that fate. The business men of Cleveland and my constituents in Middlesbrough would be horrified if that were the ultimate consequence of the Budget, however well it may be disguised today.

The Chancellor declined to use the words "consumer credit". He went to great lengths to talk about the banks sending out unsolicited loan offers and documents to various people. He referred to a warning given to the banks and to a code of conduct both for banks and for building societies, warning them that they should not continue their unsolicited offers of credit. I hope that the banks will take that salutary warning. Perhaps it is the Government's way of introducing credit control in another form.

The great trouble with our economy is burgeoning credit. We give twice as much credit as the French and Germans. As a nation, we are living far beyond our means. It is for the Government to bring that under control, to bring the economy back into kilter and to reverse the trends of the past 10 years.

The Economic Secretary to the Treasury intervened to correct the right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport on the target range of M0 in the last Red Book, which was from 0 to 5 per cent., but he did not say whether that target had been met. My assumption and understanding is that it has not been met and that the Government have not controlled our country's money supply.

The Chancellor said that there was no lodestar of monetarism. After 10 years, we have seen the consequences of the medium-term financial strategy. One of the interesting aspects of the Chancellor's speech was that he mentioned the medium-term financial strategy only once, when referring to his predecessor. I have a feeling that, as we turn the corner into the 1990s, we shall hear less and less about the medium-term financial strategy.

Small business men in Cleveland and particularly in my constituency of Middlesbrough will welcome the changes in value added tax write-offs on bad debts and the bringing of what the Chancellor describes as certainty and simplicity to the VAT rules.

I welcome also the Chancellor's statement about the Football Trust and the fact that there will be an extra £100 million for the improvement of football grounds. My football club—Middlesborough, which on Sunday will be playing at Wembley for the first time in 114 years—has worked well with the Football Trust over the past few years and we look forward to working with it in relation to ground improvements.

It was rather churlish of the Chancellor—again, no doubt, in deference to the Prime Minister—actually to fine the major banks some £200 million for writing off their sovereign debt. When the write-off took place, we heard that the Prime Minister was incandescent with fury. Making the banks pay £200 million is perhaps some kind of revenge.

I end by repeating that I enjoyed the Chancellor's speech very much. However, I fear that this Budget will not advance our economy in any way. There may be many penalties yet to pay for his being a little on the modest side for the age in which we live.

6.1 pm

Mr. David Knox (Staffordshire, Moorlands): It is always a pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Middlesborough (Mr. Bell). I think that in last year's Budget debate he followed me, so perhaps it is right that we should be speaking in reverse order today.

I join all hon. Members who have congratulated my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the delivery of his first Budget speech. His predecessor set very high standards with his Budget speeches over the years. They were always well constructed, to the point, and commendably brief. My right hon. Friend has maintained those very high standards. He has produced a very skilful Budget in what I consider to be extraordinarily difficult and tight circumstances. Although I may have one or two critical remarks to make, I think that overall it is a balanced, cautious Budget and a great credit to my right hon. Friend.

There are four items that I welcome especially. The first is the change in the capital rules affecting income support and family credit, and particularly housing benefit and community charge benefit. The £16,000 upper limit in the case of the latter is obviously more sensible. In the past few weeks especially, all Members of Parliament—apart from those who represent constituencies north of the border—have come across pathetic stories of people, not terribly wealthy but whose savings exceed £8,000, who have not been able to obtain community charge benefit. It is to be hoped that the arrangements announced today will provide some relief for those people as they face what in many cases is a very substantial increase in the amount that they have to contribute to local authority revenue. I welcome the change very much indeed.

I welcome also the tax relief for people using workplace nurseries. This will be increasingly important in the years ahead, with the decline in the birth rate, fewer young people coming on to the labour market and therefore more women having to return to work. I hope that this measure will encourage women with families to return to work. It is to be welcomed very warmly.

As a football fan, I also strongly welcome the reduction in the pool betting duty. It is something for which those of us connected with the all-party football committee have been pressing the Government for some years. It would be churlish not to welcome the proposal. The money thus made available will help the football clubs to implement the recommendations of the Taylor report by improving their grounds. I was very pleased that my right hon. Friend's conceded that most football clubs are losing money and that very few are making large profits.

Mr. Geoffrey Lofthouse (Pontefract and Castleford): I agree with the hon. Gentleman's point about football clubs. Does he agree that, in the context of the Taylor report, bodies such as Rugby League clubs are being given no consideration at all, and that they really ought to be considered?

Mr. Knox: Obviously, I do not know as much about Rugby League clubs as the hon. Gentleman knows. As I have explained, I am an association football fan. However, if what he has said is correct, there is obviously a case for having something done about Rugby League clubs also.

The fourth aspect of my right hon. Friend's Budget that I commend is the incentives to savings. That is very important indeed. One of the very worrying features of developments in the British economy in the past few years has been the fall in personal savings. It is true that in the last 12 months there has been a slight rise, but overall the level of personal savings is still much too low. I hope that the measures that my right hon. Friend announced today will encourage the rise that has started to take place and that we can look forward to a much higher proportion of the gross domestic product being devoted to personal savings in the years ahead. My right hon. Friend said that his purpose was to encourage the culture of thrift—I particularly liked that phrase—and no doubt Members in all parts of the House would wish to encourage thrift.

This Budget will be judged not on its detailed proposals but on its effect on the British economy over the next 18 months. At present, this country faces two very serious economic problems—a massive balance of payments deficit and over-high inflation. Those two problems, like all economic problems, are related. I have no doubt that the balance of payments deficit is the more serious of the two, and that failure to correct it soon will do irreparable long-term damage, as it will transform us from being a creditor country into a debtor country. The fundamental cause of our balance of payments problem and of our inflation problem is excessive demand in the British domestic economy. The high level of home demand has resulted in increased imports and reduced exports. It has resulted in too much money chasing too few goods and, as a consequence, an unacceptably high rate of inflation.

Clearly, the level of domestic demand must be reduced if those two problems are to be overcome. This can be done in three ways—by increasing taxes, by increasing savings, and by high interest rates. All those measures reduce consumption, although probably the most sensible course is to have a combination of all three. So far, Government policy has tended to concentrate on high interest rates. Unfortunately this has not been terribly successful and it has had serious adverse side effects. High interest rates attract money into London and force sterling up to an artificially high level. As a consequence, British exports are dearer than they should be and therefore more difficult to sell in world markets, while imports are cheaper than they should be and therefore easier to sell. In such circumstances it is extremely difficult to reduce, let alone eliminate, the balance of payments deficit.

For those reasons, I am sorry that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor did not indicate that he intended to place less emphasis on interest rates as a means of resolving our economic problems, which suggests that interest rates are likely to remain at too high a level for too long. That is regrettable not only because of the effect on the balance of payments but also because of the effect on house purchasers, who are being hit particularly hard by the present level of mortgage interest rates. There should be less emphasis on interest rates and much more emphasis on taxation and saving if we are to achieve a balanced approach to the solution of our economic problems.

I welcome my right hon. Friend's recognition of the fact that higher taxation and higher saving have a part to play in dealing with our current problems. At least he is moving in the right direction, although I wish that he had gone much further in both respects. No one likes higher taxes—I am no exception, and I wish that they were not necessary but in my view they are necessary at present as a contribution to the reduction of demand, and I am pleased that my right hon. Friend has moved at least a little in that direction in the Budget. I wonder, however,

[Mr. Knox]

whether he was right to concentrate the increases on excise duties, which in effect are a form of indirect taxation. The disadvantage of increasing indirect taxes is the effect on inflation. There is an advantage in increasing direct taxes because there is no inflationary effect. Given our present inflationary problem, it would have been much better to leave indirect taxes alone and to increase direct taxes only.

I wonder also whether my right hon. Friend has gone far enough with tax increases. As they are, in effect, a substitute for high interest rates, it seems that a bigger rise in taxes would permit an earlier fall in interest rates. After all, direct and indirect taxes are a fairer means of reducing demand than interest rates, the impact of which tends to be felt disproportionately by those who are purchasing their houses by means of a mortgage. Nor do direct or indirect taxes have as great an adverse effect on investment as interest rates, and investment is, of course, in the medium and long-term interests of the country.

In current conditions, an increase in savings can have only beneficial economic results. There are no adverse side effects. The decline in savings in recent years, to which I have referred already, has been a worrying feature of our economic performance. It has aggravated both the balance of payments deficit and inflation. This afternoon, my right hon. Friend the Chancellor has introduced several measures to encourage higher savings, and we must all hope that they will have the desired effect. I only wish that he had gone a little further. Saving is the least painful way of righting the balance of payments and fighting inflation. A dramatic rise in saving—involving, as it would, lower consumption—would lessen the necessity for high interest rates and high taxes.

A persistent and alarming feature of the British economy is the rise in earnings above the increase in output, with its consequent inflationary effect. Despite the comparatively high level of unemployment and the freeing of the labour market which has resulted from the Government's trade union legislation, we have an overheated labour market. As unemployment has fallen —it has fallen sharply over the past three years—the overheating has intensified. It is alarming that this has happened with more than 1·5 million people out of work.

Obviously, we need better training and more measures to improve the mobility of labour. Irrespective of what action is taken, it seems inevitable that the labour market will continue to suffer from overheating even in times of high unemployment. I am afraid that we are no nearer solving the great unsolved economic problem of the past 45 years, which is how to control wage and salary cost inflation.

I know that incomes policies have their weaknesses and deficiencies, but we seem not to get on very well without such policies. Is it not time that the Government took a less doctrinaire view of incomes policies? Might not an incomes policy make at least some contribution to reducing wage and salary cost inflation?

6.15 pm

Mr. Roy Hughes (Newport, East): It is always a pleasure to be able to take up the remarks of the hon. Member for Staffordshire, Moorlands (Mr. Knox).

One of the claims to fame of the Chancellor of the Exchequer is his family's connection with the circus. I am reminded of the words of the late President Harry Truman, who said, "If you can't ride two horses at the same time, you shouldn't be in the b—— circus." By common consent, the Chancellor of the Exchequer has had a difficult ride today, and in preparing his Budget after being handed the poisoned chalice by the right hon. Member for Blaby (Mr. Lawson). The City does not appear to be happy. Its attitude was summed up on the front page of *The Daily Telegraph* on Saturday. It appears that Mr. Peter Warburton of Robert Fleming and Co. Ltd. said that we have a grim picture of stagnant output, rising labour costs, destocking and falling profits. It is in that context that we can consider the proposals of the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Most significant, perhaps, was the concession for the poll tax. As my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition said, £16,000 in savings is not exactly a king's ransom. I feel certain that the tax will need to be greatly refined before it becomes acceptable to the British people. I welcome the concession on lead-free petrol, for environmental reasons alone. The continued differential is imperative. Likewise, I welcome the tax concessions for workplace nurseries. Married women who go out to work are now an established part of our system, and the trend is likely to continue in the years ahead.

Financial assistance is to be given to the Football Trust. Such action was vital after the Hillsborough tragedy. The additional revenue of £100 million will be most welcome. It will encourage provision to be made for more comfortable sports grounds.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer was restrained this afternoon. To return to my circus reference, he was restrained because he has three, not two, difficult horses to ride. First, there are the trade figures; secondly, there is inflation; thirdly, there are exceptionally high interest rates. In 1989, Britain had its largest ever balance of payments deficit, of over £20·4 billion. Compare that with the £50 billion surplus of West Germany.

As my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition reminded the Prime Minister, there is a great deal of catching up to be done. There seems to be little improvement in 1990. The January figures show that imports were flooding in. We had the highest ever level —£10,569 million—in one month alone. Concern has been caused, too, by invisible trade, which for the last quarter of 1989 showed a deficit.

There are the joys also of Common Market membership. In 1989, we had a trade deficit with the EEC of £14·4 billion. This year, we shall contribute £4·6 billion to that organisation. That is 15 per cent. of its total revenue. There must be a moral there somewhere.

To tackle the terrible dilemma that the Chancellor of the Exchequer faces, he, like his predecessor, has relied exclusively on interest rates. That is what the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) has described as the one-club approach. By contrast, the shadow Chancellor, my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith), has consistently urged temporary credit controls and a limit on bank lending. That would be a means of curbing excess domestic demand.

The solution, nevertheless, to the trade deficit is essentially a long-term one. Investment in manufacturing industry is vital if Britain is to prosper in the decade ahead. Even the right hon. and learned Member for Surrey, East (Sir G. Howe) now recognises this fact. It is a pity that he

did not realise the error of his ways way back in 1981, when he was Chancellor and so much of British industry was razed to the ground. This Government, like no Government before them, have enjoyed the untold bounty of North sea oil revenues, but the opportunity for investment has been wasted. In fact, manufacturing investment has only just returned to the level achieved by the last Labour Government.

We have had a tight Budget today, but of course it remains the Chancellor's ambition to create an economic upsurge next year to try to save the Conservative party from defeat at the polls. His announcement today certainly points in that direction. It is not difficult to realise, though, that such a short-term strategy is not in the long-term interests of this country. What the Chancellor has tried to do today is simply paper over the cracks. I repeat that the Government, and the Chancellor in particular, should directly encourage investment in manufacturing industry, new technology and the undoubted skills of our people.

Then there is inflation, which the Chancellor's predecessor called the judge and jury. It now stands at 7·7 per cent.—higher than that of any of our major competitors. For example, in Germany it is 3 per cent. and in France 3·6 per cent., while the EEC average is 5·4 per cent. This is not a happy picture, but the Government are not helping. I will give some examples.

Prescription charges have gone up again. Do hon. Members remember that, in 1979, they were 20p? On 1 April this year they will be £3·05. What a contrast that is. Then there are domestic water supplies. In 1990-91, there will be a 16 per cent. increase on the previous year's figure. Bus, tube and rail fares have all been raised above the inflation rate. Rents will rise substantially in the next months. Many Conservative-controlled authorities are imposing increases above the Government's maximum guideline of £4·50 a week. Electricity charges, on average, are up by 7·7 per cent. but in South Wales, an economically weak region, the charges are up by no less than 12·9 per cent. The poll tax is expected to raise the retail price index by 1 per cent.

I notice, too, that wages are up 9·25 per cent. for the fourth consecutive month. Last Friday, the Secretary of State for Employment was warning that big pay rises could cost jobs. Even the Prime Minister is now urging wage restraint. Yet what do we find? The bosses—by that, I mean top chairmen and chief executives—have awarded themselves salary increases of nearly 28 per cent. in the past year. That is nearly four times the rate of inflation. Some would consider that leadership is best shown by example, but here again it would appear that there is one law for the rich and another for the rest of us.

After his appointment less than five months ago, speaking of his economic medicine, the Chancellor said: "If it isn't hurting, it isn't working." There is now a more up-to-date version of those words: it is hurting but it is not working. For industry, a 15 per cent. interest rate is simply calamitous, as the Confederation of British Industry readily admits. Mortgagors are facing a terrible dilemma. They just cannot meet the rocketing repayments demanded.

There are two major side effects of this situation. First, there is debt. A recent study by the Policy Studies Institute showed Britain to be drowning in a sea of debt. Nearly 2·5 million households had difficulty paying their bills last year. Wales has been particularly badly hit by mortgage misery. Cardiff city council has had to set up a special advice centre to deal with the situation.

Secondly, according to Shelter, which knows about these things, homelessness has been increasing for some time, and when the poll tax is introduced in a few weeks' time, there could be an explosion. Poll tax is a story in itself. To me it was best summed up in the words of the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine), the Prime Minister's likely successor, who said:

> "I cannot remember a discussion of the option of the poll tax in which it was not rejected as expensive, ineffective and unfair."

It is for those reasons, of course, that we have had this very limited concession in the Chancellor's statement this afternoon.

But it is not only poll tax; the whole range of this Government's policies are now being rejected by the electorate. The Mid-Staffordshire by-election on Thursday will be an indication of this.

I repeat that all that the Chancellor has tried to do today is paper over the cracks, in the short-term interests of the Conservative party. The Prime Minister is now under constant threat from inside her own party. There has been no economic miracle. A £20 billion trade deficit, inflation at 7·7 per cent. and interest rates at over 15 per cent.—these figures, together with the opinion polls, spell a story of disaster for the Government. The ship is sinking fast. The faster the process is completed, the better it will be for the people of this country.

6.27 pm

Sir Alan Glyn (Windsor and Maidenhead): This is a sensible Budget and one that has been produced against a very difficult background. Nobody knew which way the deutschmark would go and and that is one of the factors that have made it extremely difficult to prepare the Budget. Nevertheless, my right hon. Friend the Chancellor has concentrated on the important things—first, the reduction of inflation and, secondly, the building up of a strong economy in this country. To do that he needed to encourage savings, and many of the measures that he has produced will do that.

I am particularly pleased that he has raised the threshold to £16,000 for poll tax. It always seems to me to be quite incredible that we should encourage people to save and then, at the end of their lives, tell them that they cannot have any benefit because they have saved. That is a positive disincentive to saving. Savings are of the utmost importance to the country. Before the war we were always dependent on our invisibles—in other words, our investments abroad—and the same principle of savings applies today.

I am also pleased to see that my right hon. Friend has at last provided for taxing husband and wife separately and that he is encouraging the small investor and encouraging people to put more money into charities. The VAT changes will help small firms, but they will not match the increase in value that will be placed on the properties and the increase in other taxation.

My right hon. Friend the Chancellor has not been able to repay quite so much national debt as was repaid last year. People do not attach much importance to the repayment of national debt, but it saves about £150 million in interest. Reducing the debt means paying less interest, and my right hon. Friend explained how that money could

[Sir Alan Glyn]

be better spent. I have always believed that restrictions on credit cards and credit generally would be helpful, but I have been told that that would make only a small difference. The loans by big banks to South American countries are of far greater importance and should be carefully considered. My right hon. Friend has paid attention to that point.

The right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen) mentioned the exchange rate mechanism. I do not believe that we should move from the position that we took in Madrid, which was that we should enter the mechanism only when it suited us to do so and not when it suited others. It is for us to judge the moment when we should join.

I especially welcome the increased allowance for the blind to about £1,000. We all know the difficulties that they face and the increased allowance will make a great difference to them.

I am rather divided on the question of workplace nurseries. There are two ways to view the question—first, family life, and secondly, working women. Whether we like it or not, because there is a smaller work force we must accept that there will be more women in employment, so I have no alternative but to welcome my right hon. Friend's proposal.

I say to the House, never mind the petrol, the wine or the beer: what is most important is that the Budget will lay the foundations for a nation which believes in saving, encourages people to work and at the end of their days allows them to enjoy their savings. The taxation system that we have been promised is an encouragement for the future. I am grateful to hon. Members for listening to my speech.

6.32 pm

Mr. David Alton (Liverpool, Mossley Hill): I join other right hon. and hon. Members who have thanked the Chancellor for the way in which he presented his Budget, and I congratulate him on his manner in doing so.

The right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen) said that he regretted the fact that the Budget contained no commitment to join the exchange rate mechanism immediately. I agree that it is a matter for regret and I hope that it will be rectified before too long. Unlike the hon. Member for Windsor and Maidenhead (Sir A. Glyn), I have an enthusiasm for the ERM as I believe it to be the correct structure and discipline within which to order our economy. However, I agree with the hon. Gentleman about the necessity to encourage saving and shall focus most of my remarks on that.

It is a curate's egg of a Budget—we all welcome parts of it, but there are other parts which will not help our constituents. The House will not be surprised to learn that I am especially pleased about the decision on pool betting duties. I represent part of the city of Liverpool, where the two major pools promoters—Littlewoods and Vernons—are based, and it will be good news for them, not least because they have supported the Football Trust for many years. I am sure that they will use their good offices to ensure that much-needed improvements are undertaken to grounds—something that Liverpool, having experienced the Hillsborough disaster, will want to see carried out with great expedition.

I also welcome the proposals for charitable giving. It is the right approach to encourage personal generosity. Many people want to give more and it is right that the state should match that giving.

As I have said, the Budget is a curate's egg. It is scandalous that the Secretary of State for Scotland was not at the Dispatch Box this afternoon to explain what the poll tax exemption would mean to those who have been paying the community charge in Scotland for the past year. The exemption is also of little use to those who do not have any savings. Many of my constituents face poll tax charges of almost £500. For them, the community charge is a regressive form of taxation. Exemptions alone will not ease their minds—they want the community charge replaced by a more equitable form of taxation based on local income tax. The absence in the Chancellor's speech of anything about collecting this tax on the basis of a person's ability to pay is an unfavourable judgment on the Budget which will be made throughout the country.

I welcome what the Chancellor said about reviving the culture of thrift. That is desperately needed. The right hon. Gentleman said that this was a Budget for savers, but it must be said that many of the problems of insidious debt which he says have to be met have been created by the very people now offering solutions.

The Chancellor said that he hoped to pay off £7 billion of public debt in the next 12 months. No hon. Member would oppose meeting some of our debt payments, and it will certainly save on interest charges, but we must contrast this with the position of local authorities. Their rate support grant—and now the community charge grant—has been reduced year by year. As a result, local authorities are encumbered by massive corporate debts. In Liverpool, a 1 per cent. increase in the interest rate means a staggering £500,000 increase in corporate debt, which now stands at more than £700 million.

The Chancellor mentioned that banks had been paying off some of the debts of Third world countries unable to meet debt charges. Again, I welcome that, but the fact is that we have been drawing more from Third world countries than we have been giving them in aid as they struggle to pay off the debt charges with which they have been saddled for so many years. Small movements in interest rates cripple those countries. The one way to stabilise our interest rates is to move rapidly into the exchange rate mechanism, and the sooner the better.

Debt is insidious and destructive—in the Third world, in many of our local communities, and nowhere more so than in its effect on family life, which in many parts of the country is collapsing. One in three marriages now ends in divorce. Marriage breakdown is 600 per cent. higher than it was in 1961, with 150,000 couples divorcing each year. It is clear that many families have great difficulty making ends meet while preserving their marriages. A major contributory factor in the corrosion of family life has been the strain imposed by crippling debt. Last November, in answer to a parliamentary question that I tabled, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury confirmed that Britain's debt now stands at a staggering £378 billion. The fact is that, the poorer the person, the more debt he faces.

Last year, more than 2 million households in England, Scotland and Wales fell behind payments and found themselves in debt. Together, their arrears amounted to £2·9 billion. Our nation of savers, as the Chancellor described it, has become a nation of debtors. What has that meant for families? Last year, more than 23,000 gas

supplies and 73,000 electricity supplies were disconnected, 13,780 homes were repossessed and 70,480 households were in mortgage arrears by six months or more. A recent survey showed that debt led to emotional and physical problems, ranging from feelings of isolation to marital break-up and suicidal tendencies—according to the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children it is even one of the stress factors involved in child abuse.

The Office of Fair Trading says that 3·6 million people feel over-committed with credit, 4·5 million have had difficulty in the past five years with repayments and 8·2 million have taken on commitments that they now regret. Millions of families are living in the hope that something will turn up, pressurised as they are by loan sharks and greedy money-lenders charging usurious rates of interest. A court case under way in Birmingham involves an extortionate annual percentage rate of interest of 1,192 per cent.

What of the household names? Big high street stores offer their own credit arrangements. This month the annual percentage rates of credit at a sample of stores reveals that John Lewis is charging 23·8 per cent., Habitat 34·4 per cent., Marks and Spencer 34·5 per cent. and Next 39·9 per cent. Credit cards range from 22·4 per cent. on Lloyds Gold Card, plus a £30 annual fee, to 31·3 per cent. on the TSB Trustcard/Visa. Advertising continues to stimulate the demand for more credit which in turn will lead to even more indebtedness.

If, along with his Budget today, the Chancellor were forced to present to Parliament an impact statement, detailing how his policies would affect families and communities, he would have to address those fundamental questions. It is families and neighbourhoods who are the foundation and cornerstone of society, not the Dow Jones index or sterling's relative strength against the deutschmark. It would stop this high street daylight robbery and help to curtail spending if we set an interest rate limit on retail sales.

I am also sorry that there was no mention in the Budget speech of credit unions, which I passionately believe should be supported. They establish saving and financial disciplines, promote saving and strengthen communities.

The Government should also consider making provision in the national curriculum for money management education. The younger people are, the more likely they are to be in debt. We should also impose a levy on institutions such as banks and building societies, forcing them to contribute to the cost of setting up proper financial counselling services. Young people especially are simply not given adequate advice. They run up massive debts which, like an albatross round their necks, encumber them for years.

Perhaps politicians should also consider how much worse matters are going to be made by the imposition of the community charge and by student loans. Taken together, these also create a situation in which people simply have to borrow—always borrowing in order to fend off the worst. That in turn puts pressure on communities and families.

The Chancellor sat down at the end of his Budget oration having presented yet another Budget largely geared to the needs of money markets and financial institutions. Economics should be made to serve the people, not the other way round. Success or failure should be measured and judged in relationist terms, not merely materialistic ones. They should be judged by the impact that policies will have on families, communities and ordinary people. By that measure, today's Budget has not addressed any of the fundamental problems in Britain today—it has merely tinkered with the numbers.

6.43 pm

Sir Anthony Grant (Cambridgeshire, South-West): The hon. Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton) referred to the Chancellor's speech as being like the curate's egg, good in parts. I should like to apply the same description to the hon. Gentleman's speech because I agree with some of the things that he said and disagree with others. I wholly disagree with him on local income tax, which I happen to think a nonsense, but I have a lot of sympathy for what he said on the exchange rate mechanism.

Because banking and insurance were mentioned in the Budget, I should at once declare an interest in Barclays Bank and Bowring UK Ltd. I shall be making no direct references to those companies although they may well be affected by the Budget, as will many others, I have no doubt.

I should like to pick up a point raised by the hon. Member for Mossley Hill and by my hon. Friend the Member for Windsor and Maindenhead (Sir A. Glyn) on credit card indebtedness. As has been well acknowledged by the present Chancellor and his predecessor, it represents only 2 per cent. of total borrowing, the overwhelming majority of borrowing being represented by loans to businesses and loans for house purchase. It is as well to understand that and keep things in perspective.

The Budget is both responsible and sensitive. It was brilliantly and lucidly presented by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor. As a neighbour of his in Cambridgeshire, I was particularly proud of the way in which he undertook this daunting task, his first Budget, under the glare of the television lights and in extremely difficult times. He resisted the temptation to take the easy option; on the other hand, he refrained from indulging in what I call the British disease.

Our press and media and, if I may say so, our Opposition—it does not matter which party is in Opposition; we did the same when we were in Opposition—have a unique knack of denigrating and running down our country. That is immensely damaging, because it is always misunderstood overseas. The Chancellor was right to stress in his opening remarks the important factors about our economy, which is basically much stronger than some jittery folk would have one believe. He did us a great service in putting it in perspective. Nevertheless, in view of the international situation, he had to tiptoe delicately along a tightrope.

The Government have used the crude interest rate policy as their main weapon in the battle against inflation. No one in the House or outside it with any sense of responsibility would deny that our major battle is with inflation—it is a curse and a cancer, affecting everybody, from the greatest firms to the humblest citizen in the land—but when it comes to the method used to deal with it, I myself have been publicly critical of the excessive use of the interest rate policy. I dislike high interest rates, even though I recognise the necessity for them, because too great a burden is placed upon three groups of people who

[Sir Anthony Grant]

have borne the brunt of the battle against inflation. In other words, the have-nots have suffered more than the haves.

Those who suffer particularly from a high interest rate policy are the small firms, which, unlike big firms, have been unable to build up large profits and which work on very tight margins; the small farmers, as I know from my experience in East Anglia, who depend very much upon credit and borrowing from banks; and the new home owners, the people who bought their houses quite recently. Those are the people who have to bear a very heavy burden. So I was glad that to some extent the Chancellor recognised, with great sensitivity and sympathy, the problems suffered by those groups.

I was pleased that the Chancellor recognised the problems because, after all, inflation is the responsibility of Government. I recall very well the economic gurus of the 1970s, always telling us that inflation was Government's responsibility, that it was Government who caused it, not ordinary individuals. That being so, it is right that Government should accept a fair share of responsibility in that respect. The Chancellor himself recognised this in what he did for small firms. I was pleased with the value added tax measures, which are particularly welcome. The other tax exemptions will give great encouragement to that immensely important sector of our economy.

My right hon. Friend the Chancellor gave encouraging news. After all, this is the first time in history that I can recall when 1,500 net new firms have been starting up each week. That is not the sign of an economy in depression and decay, but a sign of buoyancy and enthusiasm. It has happened under no previous Government. I was the first Minister responsible for small firms. We were David against Goliath; we were the Cinderellas. We had little support—none at all from the Opposition or the Confederation of British Industry. In those days, nothing approaching that number of people were starting up and successfully pursuing small businesses. The Chancellor has recognised that, and I welcome what he has done to support small firms.

I am also delighted that my right hon. Friend has abolished stamp duty on share transfers. If I have a regret, it is that he could not make a reduction in stamp duty for house purchase, as that might have given a little fillip to the housing market. Stamp duty is a ridiculous tax, and I have not the faintest idea why it was ever introduced. I know that it raises considerable revenue for my hon. Friends in the Treasury, but the sooner it finally goes the happier I shall be.

Let me touch on the macro-economic position. I accept that interest rates must stay, and I appreciate the Chancellor's point that he did not want to suddenly bring them down and then have to put them up again; that would create instability. Likewise, I hope that he has got the position right in believing that his fiscal measures are sufficient to sustain interest rate monetary policy as it is. I respect his judgment that there was no need for any stronger taxation measures than he imposed to avoid putting up interest rates in the future. I profoundly hope that that is right, but it is a tightrope along which he tiptoed with great elegance and skill, as one would expect of someone with his family background.

For two reasons, I did not agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Staffordshire, Moorlands (Mr. Knox) when he said that it would be better not to have increased indirect taxation, but that we should have increased direct taxation. First, that would have put the basis of direct and indirect taxation out of balance, which is the last thing that we want to do.

Secondly, ever since the Government came to power, our policy has been to switch from direct to indirect taxation. Direct taxation is a tax on effort, enterprise and work, whereas indirect taxation is a tax on spending. At this time it was necessary to curb spending, but not necessary to impose a burden upon work and enterprise. Therefore, I support the Chancellor's increase in excise duties—quite apart from the alleged effects on health of smoking and drinking.

The Chancellor described this as a savings Budget, and it was right and proper for him to do so. At a time such as this—when there was room for manoeuvre, and when taxation was constrained and had to be neutral—the one thing that we had to do was encourage savings. He has done that splendidly, with some novel ideas. I am especially attracted by the tax-exempt special savings account, known as TESSA—I know that that will appeal to my hon. Friend the Member for Billericay (Mrs. Gorman)—which will be especially attractive to small or first-time savers. It will appeal to a wide range of people who perhaps had not thought of saving hitherto.

I was especially pleased with what the Chancellor did for unit trusts and employee share ownership, as I was a founder member of the wider share ownership movement before I entered the House. With the late Maurice Macmillan—the son of Viscount Stockton—I formed the movement, and we had a great deal of help from Lord Lever and Richard Wainwright. It was an all-party movement. We struggled desperately to get it going, as successive Governments put more burdens in the path of those who would like to invest in shares. We bumped along against a lack of Government enthusiasm, but our philosophy always remained the same: a desire to spread the wealth of the nation throughout the people.

Many Opposition Members do not understand the need to spread wealth, wanting to collect it into the hands of the state. My desire is always to distribute it, and that is why I support the privatisation programme and home ownership. I hope that that continues and has not been damaged too much by high interest rates. When people acquire savings and earners are turned into owners, they acquire a degree of independence and a stake in their country that they could never have if everything were vested in the central hands of the state. I congratulate the Chancellor on doing what he did.

One of the most creditable features of the Government is that, for the first time in living history, there are more individual shareholders than trade union members. That is a most healthy development, as it has given independence to people, enabling them to stand tall and to own a bit of our economy. That should be encouraged. I wonder whether the Chancellor had a chance to study—if not for this Budget, then perhaps for a future one—the work of the Invest in Britain Campaign. A phrase from the memorandum that it sent him said:

"They sought tax relief on U.K. equity investments up to an agreed ceiling held for a minimum of 12 months and the rollover of capital gains tax liability while the funds remain in U.K. equities."

Perhaps the Chancellor did not go as far as the organisation would like, but his thinking was along those lines. I hope that that will be the theme for the future: the spread of ownership is essential if we are to remain a free society.

I agree with the hon. Member for Mossley Hill on the exchange rate mechanism. We are already in the European monetary system, I understand, but the exchange rate mechanism is the question mark. I understand that a decision was made at the Madrid summit to which the Chancellor, the Government and the Prime Minister are committed. Nevertheless, the sooner we can join the exchange rate mechanism the better it will be for Britain, for our economy and for business generally.

When I talk to business men, I find above all that they want stability of currency. As our erstwhile colleague Sir Leon Brittan—now a European Commissioner—said in a remarkable speech, it is heartbreaking for businesses to work out their activities, to produce things at the right cost, to allow for a sensible profit, to have people working on a scheme and to arrange exports, and then suddenly to find that they are blown off course by a weird movement of currency over which they have no control. As the CBI says, they would welcome an early entry into the exchange rate mechanism. They would accept that there is a discipline attached, and that it is not an easy, soft option.

When the late Lord Stockton urged entry of the Common Market, he said that it was not a warm Turkish bath, but a cold bracing shower. However, for the sake of stability, a degree of discipline is acceptable. So we should look again at the Madrid summit conditions and, if they seem excessively rigid, reconsider the situation, if that means a chance of us getting early into the exchange rate mechanism and securing stability for the future.

I believe that this will prove to be a remarkably successful Budget in difficult circumstances and that the Chancellor will prove to be one of the great Chancellors of our age.

Debate adjourned.—*[Mr. Sackville.]*

Debate to be resumed tomorrow.

Redbridge London Borough Council Bill

Order for Third Reading read.

7 pm

Mr. Neil Thorne (Ilford, South): I beg to move, That the Bill be now read the Third time.

This Bill is promoted by the council of the London borough of Redbridge. It would authorise the establishment of a market on a site near Ilford town centre. Following a long local inquiry, the council in 1980 adopted a local plan for the town centre.

In accordance with the proposals in that plan, the council has revitalised Ilford town centre by the construction of a relief road diverting the A118 round the town centre, providing service roads and the pedestrianisation of part of the High road. As a consequence, a pleasant environment has been created in Ilford town centre for workers, residents and shoppers.

That has led to considerable investment in the town centre, and the Prudential Corporation and the Norwich Union Insurance Group are currently constructing a £100 million retail development, known as the Exchange at Ilford. That will provide 51,000 sq m of new shopping floor space together with a 1,200-space car park.

The plan proposed the development of a site in Ilford town centre for a substantial shopping development, to be combined with an expanded and more attractive covered retail market as a vital feature of the improved shopping centre. Since the adoption of the plan, about 250 people have shown a desire to take stall holdings in the market.

The council believes that a market established on the proposed site, which it owns, in Ilford town centre would provide an additional and attractive facility for shoppers and would complement the Exchange at Ilford development. The council has the support in that matter of the Redbridge chamber of trade and commerce, the Ilford Traders Association, the Prudential Corporation and the Norwich Union Insurance Group. Planning permission will be sought separately for the establishment of the market if the Bill is successful.

The London borough of Havering has two markets at Romford, one on a Wednesday and one on a Friday, which I believe are protected by charter or lost modern grant within a distance of six and two thirds miles and that it would be in contravention of that protection to establish the proposed market at Ilford. Havering has a third market at Romford, operated by it in exercise of its powers under part III of the Food Act 1984. The Romford markets contain about 600 pitches on each of those days.

Havering council petitioned against the Bill, and the issues between the two councils were dealt with by an Opposed Bill Committee. Evidence was brought by the two parties and the Committee decided on a compromise by which the Bill was allowed to proceed, subject to certain amendments for the benefit of Havering borough council, including a special provision for compensation.

The Bill having reached this stage, it having been properly contested in an Opposed Bill Committee, and the House having allowed the measure to proceed thus far, I hope that hon. Members will tonight grant it a Third reading so that it may proceed on its way.

7.4 pm

Mr. Robin Squire (Hornchurch): To hon. Members who are not acquainted with Redbridge or Havering, the events which we are now discussing will appear to contrast with the preceding debate. Indeed, some hon. Members may find it difficult to relate the importance of this measure to the international importance, as it were, of the previous matters with which we were concerned.

Hon. Members whose constituencies come within the area of the Bill accept that we are dealing with extremely important matters, as I shall show. The Bill could also have a major impact on many other constituencies not specifically mentioned in the measure. Those constituencies, by clear and obvious linkage, would be affected by similar legislation, were it to be introduced.

I begin, not for the first time, by congratulating my hon. Friend the Member for Ilford, South (Mr. Thorne) on the way in which he has conducted the proceedings on the Bill. He knows that my opposition to it in no way affects my personal friendship with him. It is simply a question of each of us seeking to do our duty, as we see it, by our constituents.

I must also mention my hon. Friend the Member for Romford (Mr. Neubert), the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence Procurement, within whose constituency is situated Romford market, around which the resistance to the Bill coalesces. He is prevented, by his duties in government, from contributing to these proceedings, but he has been present on each occasion when we have debated the Bill.

We are at the final stage of a hard-fought battle over the measure. It may be worth at the outset detailing the main changes that have occurred compared with the version of the Bill that was originally deposited, because those changes highlight a central message that I am anxious to convey to the House. Most important among the changes has been the removal of the possibility, originally set out in the Bill as deposited, of having two markets unlimited as to size and certainly not tightly drawn as to location.

Havering welcomes the fact that the compensation provisions have been substantially rewritten, to the benefit of the existing Romford market. The transfer or disposal of market rights created by the Bill can now take place only with the consent in writing of Redbridge council.

I could detail other changes, but in fairness to the House and the wish that hon. Members must have to proceed, I shall limit myself to those three main ones, which are all significant and which set out clearly the fact that the opposition of Havering council has secured a transformation in the original Bill.

Mr. William O'Brien (Normanton): I understand that compensation is a matter for negotiation between the two boroughs. Is there any information about the way in which compensation money may be spent by Havering borough council? Will that money be regarded as revenue or capital, and could it be used, for example, to offset poll tax charges?

Mr. Squire: I had hoped that the hon. Gentleman would ask me a question that I could answer. I cannot answer, because, while I understand that the money would go to the London borough of Havering and could be spent as a revenue item, I cannot be sure of that and would not wish to mislead the House.

I am reminded, as the hon. Gentleman has mentioned compensation—which is a central part of the Bill—that hon. Members must bear in mind the fact that there is a world of difference between arriving at a figure of compensation with a measure passing through Parliament in the background, and negotiations taking place at arm's length, so to speak, between councils, with, in this case, Havering, which has existing rights, seeking new rights from the other council. The difference will be clear to hon. Members, and I need not spell it out further.

Mr. Martin Redmond (Don Valley): I understood from previous discussions on the Bill that the question of compensation had been agreed between the two authorities and that, in the first year, it would be "X Y or Z" amount, and in the second year some other amount. Am I correct in that assumption?

Mr. Squire: The hon. Member is right, in as much as the form of words suggested by the Committee was agreed to by the London borough of Havering. If the Bill had not existed and the borough of Redbridge had approached the borough of Havering—as has always been its right—to discuss reasonable compensation for Redbridge opening a market within the statutory distance of six and two thirds miles, it is likely that very different terms would have been agreed—if it were possible to agree any terms. I think that the hon. Member will agree that there is a world of difference between that and agreeing a form of words in Committee, which were suggested to the two parties by the Committee.

The key point about this legislation is that it emphasises the dangers inherent in private legislation, when one tries to take away the established rights of another body, unless the circumstances are unique. However, in this case they are not unique and can be applied in other areas, which leads me directly to the borough of Havering's central concern.

Since 1247, charter markets have enjoyed statutory protection in this country and they have survived with that protection through centuries of legislation—such as the Shop Acts—that has affected other areas of retail trade. The reforms have left the rights of charter markets untouched.

I am not just talking about Romford market. On Saturday, I was in Colchester. I was not part of the mob that ransacked the hall there, although I addressed a meeting in the damaged building one hour later. It is the first time that I have created such an impact before I have spoken rather than as a consequence of my words. In Colchester high street was a sign saying, "Welcome to Colchester, Britain's oldest open-air market," or words to that effect.

Markets are a matter of pride. They give people something to identify with in their community and they are a major selling point, popular with ratepayers and shoppers. They are a major commercial attraction. Charter markets are not just a matter for nostalgia. There are practical common sense reasons why the rights and duties imposed by this age-old legislation are important. If there is a reason to modify the existing rights, it should be done by Government legislation that will affect all such markets.

During an earlier stage of the Bill, it was suggested that the distance of six and two thirds miles is an anachronism —my hon. Friend the Member for Ilford, South

emphasised that in his brief speech. We were told that originally it was the distance that one person could reasonably walk in a day. These days, not many people walk six and two thirds miles—most people have wheels on their four corners. Therefore, there may be a need to review that. Surely there should be an overall change after an analysis by the Government or by Select Committee of all the drawbacks and benefits of such a change.

In 1891, a royal commission recommended the abolition of the rules for the protection of markets' rights. Since then, there have been a variety of Governments of differing political persuasions—I am talking about a time when we still had Liberal Governments—but not one has sought to implement the commission's recommendations. To the contrary, the Food Act 1984 specifically reserved the existing rights of markets against rival markets. If we ponder the reason, we may conclude that it was because this is a complex issue and because there was concern about whether compensation rights could be accurately and fairly calculated.

With more than 250 markets dotted around the country, this issue may have been brought to the attention of the House many times since the original report was produced, but apparently not in such a way as to convince any Government of the necessity of such legislation. To make the analogy perfect, it seems to me that, if angels fear to tread—although I hesitate to apply the word angel to any Government—we should be fearful in case we turn out to be fools rushing in.

Mr. Redmond: I think that the hon. Member is making a valid point. Because of the effect that the Bill will have, perhaps the Government should consider overall legislation. A Select Committee could study the matter in greater depth. We may be discussing one small insignificant market, but it has great importance to the borough. I am not sure that we should destroy something that has existed for centuries and has proved such a useful place for people to congregate and to do their work. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman could convince his hon. Friend the Member for Ilford, South (Mr. Thorne) who is sponsoring the Bill, to withdraw it at this late stage. I am sure that the House would appreciate that.

Mr. Squire: I share the sentiments behind the hon. Gentleman's remarks. Obviously I am not privy to discussions that might have taken place between my hon. Friend the Member for Ilford, South and my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State, the Member for Southampton, Itchen (Mr. Chope). I can only guess at them, but I hope that even at this late stage the Under-Secretary may feel able to contribute to the proceedings in a marginally more lengthy fashion than he has done on previous occasions.

To give some idea of the scope of the Bill, Ilford and Romford are major shopping centres which attract a substantial number of people. We are talking about a new market, which would have 80 stalls and would be open for six days a week—which is equivalent to 480 stalls. The market does not have to open six days a week, but the Bill allows it.

At an earlier stage in our consideration of the Bill, we discussed how many days it would be open, and it has been broadly agreed that it would be for six days. That will have a substantial impact on the market in Romford, which has 600 spaces—although, as we have said before, it has nearer 300 traders—and is open for three days a week. There will be two large markets. The new market will be smaller, but by any standards it will make a significant change in the existing situation.

I can assure hon. Members on both sides of the House that, despite changes to improve the Bill that I have mentioned, Havering council remains totally opposed to it. Some hon. Members may have received a note from the council this week. Unlike so many matters discussed in the Chamber or by local authorities, the council is not divided on party lines on this issue. The letter from the borough of Havering is signed by the leader of the council and the leader of the opposition. I know for certain that if the council had so chosen, it could have got the leaders of other groups within the council to sign the letter—for example, the ratepayers and the SLD. There is unanimity.

That is quite different from the position in the London borough of Redbridge. Technically, it is not covered by the Bill, but it is important to refer to Redbridge when we analyse the thinking behind the proposal and the relative strength of opinion in Redbridge and Havering. The London borough of Havering, which covers Romford, believes that the market is bad news. However, such an opinion could be dismissed by people saying, "You would say that, wouldn't you? You are arguing on behalf of rights that you hold and you are trying to defend them." There is nothing wrong in that; I am sure that others would do the same. However, in this Third Reading debate —the last time that it will be possible to put this on record —it is important to underline the views of the National Market Traders Federation.

Mr. Alan Meale (Mansfield): One of the main reasons why the council is opposed to the market relates to the standards that have been achieved in the market and the protection that that affords to consumers and ratepayers. The National Market Traders Federation believes that consumer protection, which it took many generations of market traders to achieve, will be diminished. The hon. Gentleman ought to consider whether the benefits of the present system should be preserved.

Mr. Squire: It is unquestionably true that in no small way the value of the market has been built up by means of the skill and care exercised by the existing market traders. There are complaints from time to time; it would be unusual if there were not. However, a high reputation has been built up over the years. It is jealously guarded as a sign of quality. The market traders want to preserve that high reputation. The hon. Gentleman has made a fair and reasonable point. He has underlined the fact that there is more to this than simply trying to hold on to what one has. Certain standards have been created. There is no guarantee that, in the new market, the same standards would necessarily apply.

Mr. Meale: The consumer standards that have been achieved, in co-operation with local authorities, have protected the consumer. If he has either a major or a minor complaint, he knows that it can be sorted out under the existing arrangements. A relaxation of the rules could change all that. Illegal Sunday markets afford no protection to consumers, who in general are the ratepayers in the area and need local authority protection.

Mr. Squire: The hon. Gentleman has made another good point. During a previous stage of the Bill's

[Mr. Squire]

consideration, my hon. Friend the Member for Ilford, South said that the Bill would not damage, let alone destroy, Romford market. A number of people in that market may not share his confidence. They are worried that, if there were a downturn in market trade as a result of the Bill, an inevitable consequence would be a drop in standards in Romford market, whatever happened in Ilford market.

Mr. O'Brien: If the promoters of the Bill believe that Romford market would lose trade, what is the position of small shopkeepers who fear that they could be affected by traders in Romford market? They are concerned about their future. Is their future being considered?

Mr. Squire: Is the hon. Gentleman speaking about the small traders in Romford or in Ilford?

Mr. O'Brien: In Romford.

Mr. Squire: The small traders in Romford wholeheartedly welcome the market. They believe that it adds to the attractions of Romford in general and that therefore it benefits them. I do not know what the small shopkeepers in Ilford think. A few small traders in Ilford may not want a market, but it would be wrong if I were to suggest what the small shopkeepers in Ilford might or might not think.

The views of the National Market Traders Federation are important. It would welcome an opportunity to increase its membership, just as a trade union official would welcome an opportunity to increase membership. He would take every opportunity to do so, unless the circumstances were so unusual that he would be justified in not doing so.

The National Market Traders Federation represents market traders throughout the country. It says, "We don't want it; we don't like it." It recognises the direct link between the Bill and any future legislation. It has pointed to some of the complications. Both British Rail and London Underground are rumoured to be interested in setting up Saturday and possibly Sunday markets. They would use as marketplaces car parks that during the week are available for commuters' cars. In isolation, that sounds perfectly reasonable, but one ought to think for a moment about the considerable impact of such a proposal.

A Bill could be introduced for the establishment of a market on each car park. The arguments that could be advanced against such a proposal could not be advanced if the Bill were passed. Exactly the same principle is involved. It would not be just local authorities that might seek to take trade from existing market traders. Other bodies would be provided with a similar opportunity: their motives might be neither more nor less worthy. I do not understand how one could support one and oppose the other, as the principle is the same.

Without stretching comparisons with British Rail and London Underground too far, British Coal, British Steel and Associated British Ports also have land which could be used for a similar purpose, and presumably could tackle the central defences of the market charter rights by dint of the Bill.

Mr. Vivian Bendall (Ilford, North): Is that not the whole reason for placing a Bill before the House?

Mr. Squire: I am not sure that I quite follow my hon. Friend. If he was implying that in each of those cases a Bill could be brought before the House, and, subject to detailed changes on compensation and everything else, would be passed because it seemed to be the natural thing to do, that would destroy market rights throughout the country. Many hon. Members on either side of the Chamber would hesitate before considering that to be good or the way to change those market rights, assuming that they needed changing.

Mr. Meale: It is not a question of Romford and Ilford alone: it affects any market anywhere in the country. If the Bill were enacted it would have a severe detrimental affect on the quality of markets around the country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): Order. I am sure that, in responding to that, the hon. Gentleman will remember that we are on Third Reading and we must deal only with what is in the Bill.

Mr. Squire: I recognise your comments, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I have sought to stick within the strictures that you have rightly laid down.

Mr. O'Brien: Let me draw the hon. Gentleman's attention to the Second Reading debate on 6 June 1989, when the hon. Member for Ilford, South (Mr. Thorne) said:

> "I hope that that will be the case in other parts of the country, too, in future."—[*Official Report*, 6 June 1989; Vol. 154, c. 81.]

He was referring to the development of markets in other parts of the country. Even on Second Reading, it was not clear that the Bill would ensure protection. The hon. Gentleman who was sponsoring the Bill stated categorically that he hoped that that would happen throughout the country in future. Therefore, there are dangers, and the hon. Member for Hornchurch (Mr. Squire) is right to draw them to our attention.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. On Second Reading of a Bill, it is in order to discuss the broad principle, which clearly has implications in other parts of the country. We are now on the Third Reading of the Bill. The debate on Third Reading is much more restricted and must relate to what is actually in the Bill.

Mr. Squire: Clause 3 deals specifically with the establishment of a market which previously would not have been possible without the approval of the House, if it gives its approval, and is central to the entire debate. I shall give my hon. Friend the Member for Ilford, North (Mr. Bendall) an example that he will recognise immediately. At present, black cabs are restricted in number and there is a value attached to having a black cab. Among many reasons, that protects the users of black cabs, as my hon. Friend, who is a good spokesman for that industry, knows very well. A similar principle is attached to market rights which have a value and which are being tackled piecemeal rather than by an overall reform of market rights.

Mr. Bendall: I am not going to get involved in a debate on black cabs, as we shall probably have a debate on them in the not-too-distant future. Anybody wanting to establish a market will have to bring legislation before the House if a local authority refused it on planning grounds. Therefore, the House would have the opportunity to say

yes or no to that Bill. Clearly, if such a proposal would interfere with too many markets close at hand, the House in its wisdom would reject it.

Mr. Squire: I am not quite sure that I have my hon. Friend's faith that a debate which might not be packed out would necessarily embrace the full wisdom of the Chamber. I prefer to rely upon statutes or laws that we pass with general rather than specific application.

Sir Nicholas Bonsor (Upminster): Does my hon. Friend not agree that it would be a fine irony if London Underground decided that it wanted to establish a market at Redbridge station, which I am sure would be a very suitable place for one? I am not sure that my hon. Friends who are sponsoring the Bill would be able to come back to the House, put their hands on their hearts and say that there was any good reason whatsoever for such an application to be refused.

Mr. Squire: My hon. Friend's point needs no comment from me.

I am sorry that we have strayed but a fraction. I shall sum up the genuine opposition and concern of those of us who seek to defend the existing rights. My best friends here —I may have one or two—would not expect me to defend a totally free and unfettered market. In practice, very few Conservative Members defend a totally free and unfettered market. They may think that they do, but there is usually reason to interject some restraint or protection. I do not have any embarrassment about saying that that is my view, and I apply it here.

If there is no broad need to modify existing rights, how do we justify piecemeal reform? I and others—in particular, my hon. Friend the Member for Upminster (Sir N. Bonsor)—have tried to point out that central lacuna. Members of Parliament unconnected with either borough have come to realise the wider impact of the Bill and to support our opposition to it. Quite simply, we are talking about the compulsory extinction of market rights that have been enjoyed for centuries. We are talking about potentially identical legislation in 285 other constituencies —the constituencies where there is at least one charter market with similar rights. That makes it a bigger issue, and the House would be ill advised to pass the Bill tonight. I ask hon. Members on both sides of the chamber to join me in voting against it.

7.37 pm

Mr. William O'Brien (Normanton): It has been outlined to us that the borough of Redbridge wishes to establish an open market in the township of Ilford. That is not the headline-catching business of the day, and I am sure that the media will be more interested in interviewing those who took part in the previous debate, but we are discussing an important issue that affects local government. It is based on what is happening, what will happen and what could happen in local government if the Bill is enacted in its present form.

The borough of Redbridge wishes to establish a market, and the borough of Havering has the right to a market in the township of Romford, decreed by royal proclamation in 1247 by Henry III, and has the protection of that long-established royal order that no other market can be established within six and two thirds miles of the market at Romford. That is basically the issue before the House. Hon. Members are being asked to annul that ancient order, thereby allowing the market in Ilford to proceed.

It is alleged that Redbridge borough council is being denied its statutory rights by the ancient law that applies to Romford. Will the sponsor outline the statutory powers that are being denied to Redbridge borough council? I have read the reports, followed the debates on the Bill and considered the evidence submitted to the Committee that considered it, but the statutory powers that are being denied to Redbridge need further clarification.

On Second Reading, the hon. Member for Ilford, South (Mr. Thorne) said that it is proposed that the market should be located within one mile of Ilford town centre, but there are further proposals that it should be established within one mile of Ilford town hall. Concern was expressed that the provisions to establish a market within one mile of Ilford town centre could apply to more than one market, but I understand that assurances have been given that only one market will be established. The hon. Gentleman should give further assurances and should answer hon. Members' questions before they take a final decision about the Bill. I therefore ask him what statutory powers are being denied and to state that no more than one market is proposed.

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for the line that he is taking, with which I entirely agree. Unless I have not read the Bill properly, it does not specify exactly where the market must be held, which could be significant. I know where the promoters plan to hold it, but nothing in the Bill states exactly where it should be held. The promoters must assure us that they will not subsequently move it closer to Romford market than is currently planned.

Mr. O'Brien: That is important to the people of Ilford, because the House is being asked to accept legislation establishing a market within a mile of Ilford town centre, or is it Ilford town hall? The sponsor should answer that question. Will he give the specific location of the market, which is an important issue that we should consider?

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): As we are trying to discover the location of the market, the Bill says, for what it is worth,

"The Council may establish a market of not more than 80 stalls on the land shown coloured pink".

Where is the pink-coloured land? Can the market be shifted around? It is on a piece of pink paper. I find it odd that those two Right-wing Tories are promoting a market that is on a piece of pink paper. My hon. Friend the Member for Normanton (Mr. O'Brien) rightly says that the Bill does not specify the location of the market.

Mr. O'Brien: I hope that we shall receive answers to my original question and to hon. Members' supplementary questions.

Mr. Redmond: It is important that the location of the market is clarified. If it was not clarified in Committee, it should be this evening, because it could have an impact on the area. The hon. Member for Ilford, South (Mr. Thorne) knows better than my hon. Friend the Member for Normanton (Mr. O'Brien) the exact location of the market. Hon. Members cannot pass the Bill without knowing where it will be.

Mr. O'Brien: My interpretation of the Bill is that the market will be located within a mile of Ilford town centre, but a further version has been given stating that it will be within a mile of the town hall. Perhaps the hon. Member for Ilford, South will clarify that.

Mr. Thorne: The Opposed Bill Committee considered the matter and approved the site marked in pink on the plan. At present, it is used for car parking. It adjoins council offices and is partly under a flyover across a railway line. As was explained in earlier debates, approval has been given for that site.

Mr. O'Brien: Is the site a mile from the town hall or a mile from the town centre? It is important that hon. Members know the exact location of the market because there is a division of opinion about where it will be established. Perhaps the hon. Member for Ilford, South will clear up that point.

Mr. Thorne: The new £100 million development by Norwich Union and Prudential Assurance is almost opposite the town hall, which most people accept is located in the town centre. The site is about 300 yd east of the town centre and the town hall.

Mr. O'Brien: That at least gives us some idea of the location of the market.

Earlier, the hon. Member for Ilford, South said that, if the House gives the Bill its Third Reading, the planning authority will have to consider planning approval for the market. Therefore, the location of the market must be on record, the planning authority will be aware of it and there will be no opportunity to move it.

Mr. Meale: Contrary to what my hon. Friend the Member for Normanton (Mr. O'Brien) has just said to the hon. Member for Ilford, South (Mr. Thorne), the matter is not clear, but is more complicated than it was before. I have here the statement on behalf of the promoters. It says that the last meeting concerned with planning Ilford town centre was held in 1980, following a long public local inquiry. From the statement, it seems that considerable changes have been adopted since 1980, even to the extent of pedestrianisation and a new bypass link road around the area. I do not know whether the people who attended the long public local inquiry, which was concerned with establishing such a planning opportunity, were aware of what could be done. I do not know whether the pink part of the plan has ever been agreed by the people in the locality.

Mr. O'Brien: I must make it clear to my hon. Friend that the statement to which he referred is the statement that we had when we discussed amendments to the Bill. There are many inaccuracies in that statement, especially on the number of markets that are recorded. I cannot judge or comment on the accuracy of the statement or on whether the people who attended the public hearings are aware of where the site will be. I thought that my question to the hon. Member for Ilford, South was satisfactory, but my hon. Friend the Member for Mansfield (Mr. Meale) has raised a further question, which I hope will be clarified before we move on from this subject. Perhaps the hon. Member for Ilford, South will clear up that point.

Mr. Thorne: The Opposed Bill Committee considered the plans. The pink colouring on the plan shows exactly where the site is to be. That plan has been signed as approved in front of the Chairman of the Committee, who is a Member of the House. Obviously, the outline planning application did not specify a particular site. The narrowing down of the site chosen was not clear in 1980, but it has now become clear because of the development undertaken by Norwich Union and Prudential Assurance, which, at that time, were not party to this enterprise. They appeared on the scene subsequently. It is partly as a result of their request that the street market is being incorporated.

Mr. O'Brien: I am grateful for that explanation. It is a pity that we do not have the plan on the Table. It would have been helpful for it to be available to hon. Members so that we could look at the issue in detail.

Mr. Skinner: Is that right?

Mr. O'Brien: We do not have the plan before us and I do not know whether there is a copy in the Chamber. If we had had that detail, it would have helped hon. Members' understanding.

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I seek your guidance in this matter. Surely when a document is specifically mentioned in a Bill that reaches a Third Reading debate, it should be on record or at least lodged in the Library of the House so that we have an opportunity to make the inspection that the hon. Member for Normanton (Mr. O'Brien) seeks.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: That is a matter for the promoters, and not for the Chair.

Mr O'Brien: That is why we have been requesting the information.

Mr. Gerald Bermingham (St. Helens, South): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. If it is a matter not for the Chair but for the promoters, will you tell the House how hon. Members who are not the sponsors and who are not associated or involved with the promoters are to know what we are talking about? It seems wholly illogical that the Chair can dissociate itself from a fundamental aspect of the Bill.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: That is a point of information. It is not for me to say whether the House knows what it is talking about.

Mr. O'Brien: I understand that there is no copy of the plan in the Library, although I should have to check that with the Library. It is of paramount importance for hon. Members who are not familiar with Ilford or with Redbridge borough that the plan should be made available so that we can study the location of the market.

My particular interest is that the Bill raises a local government issue. The broad principle involved is that we want to ensure that all the relevant issues are explained and dealt with before any decision is taken. Hon Members who are taking part in the debate do not have all the information before them. It is difficult to make a judgment on this issue on Third Reading.

Mr. Meale: I fully agree with my hon. Friend. I am worried now, especially as he has not yet had an answer from the hon. Member for Ilford, South (Mr. Thorne) about the value of the promoters' statement. My hon. Friend has said that the statement is fairly inaccurate. We do not have a copy of the plan and we do not know where the pink marks are. We have a statement that has been

found to be very inaccurate. Surely we cannot consider giving the Bill a Third Reading without any accurate information. Surely we cannot continue at all.

Mr. Skinner: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You have heard from several of my hon. Friends and other hon. Members that there is something missing and that the plan is not here. You have said that it is none of your business whether the plan is here or not. However, it seems that the Bill is inaccurate. Surely we need to look at the plan. There is only one way in which we can collectively look at the plan. There may be only one plan—who knows, there may be none. Let us assume that there is a plan and that the promoters have it. I reckon that it would be a good idea to adjourn the sitting so that we can examine the plan. That seems sensible, otherwise we shall be talking in riddles about the little pink pieces and all the rest of it. Let us adjourn. You will get your name in the history books, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I do not think that you have made such a decision before. You will be in "Erskine May" for ever.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The debate on Third Reading is quite in order and we should get on with it.

Mr. Bermingham: Further to that point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. You have said that the plan is not a matter for the Chair. However, we have not seen the plan and we do not know where the little pink area is. I know that the pink area is referred to in the Bill, but how do we know that the area is within the curtilage of the borough? It may be on the edge of the borough and it may have implications for other boroughs. The House cannot be assured that the piece of land is even within the borough of Ilford until we see the plan. My hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) has made a good point. It is best that we adjourn and consider the Bill another day.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Those are perfectly legitimate points to be made during the debate, but they are not points of order.

Mr. O'Brien: That does not change matters much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We are being asked to approve the Third Reading of a Bill and a market in Ilford whose exact location no one, apart from the Bill's promoters, knows. We have been told that the location is marked on a piece of paper and that it is 300 yd east of the town hall, but that could be 300 yd east of Westminster town hall as far as we are concerned. If we cannot obtain satisfaction, we should return to that matter.

Mr. Redmond: I note that the hon. Member for Sheffield, Hallam (Mr. Patnick) is in his place. I am not sure whether he should be here or in Sheffield. Perhaps he ought to go to Sheffield to try to determine who should be manager of Sheffield Wednesday.

I want to deal with the planning aspect of the Bill. If the market is to be located in a specific place, we must assume that outline planning permission has been sought, although clearly the application would come up for more detailed consideration later. If no outline planning permission has been sought, who is to say that the local planning authority will not veto the site? Unless there has been some discussion to determine whether the planning committee is likely to accept the location of the market on that site, the piece of land we are talking about is surely irrelevant. That has a major impact on the debate. Perhaps my hon. Friend could clarify that point.

Mr. O'Brien: The problem we face is that Redbridge borough is both the planning authority and the promoter of the Bill. Although we have heard that there is a plan with a location on it, I have not seen it and other Opposition Members have not seen it, although the planning authority is the same body as the promoter of the Bill. That is why I register my concern that we have not been able to look at the location of the site.

Mr. Meale: It appears that we are in a dilemma. Why should we take it for granted that the plan exists? As my hon. Friend the Member for Normanton has pointed out, a statement from the promoters has been found to be inaccurate. Everyone knows that that is inaccurate. Is it not possible that assertions about the plan are also inaccurate? Surely we need access to the plan before we can proceed with the Bill.

Mr. O'Brien: My hon. Friend makes a valid point. You have ruled, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this is a matter for the promoters and not for you. Perhaps I may put it to the promoters that they should place a copy of the plan on the Table before we proceed further with the Bill. That will give them the opportunity to discharge their responsibility —which you Sir, identified—to provide the necessary information. If they fail to provide it, how can they, or anyone else, say that we should support the Bill? It is important that we should have all the details before us.

Mr. Skinner: My hon. Friend has long experience of local government, as do one or two other hon. Members. Let us assume, drawing an analogy, that we have an application for a market in a local authority area. Along come the promoters of the plan. We say, "Can you show us where it will be?" What would happen in Yorkshire, Derbyshire, London or anywhere else if the chief executive of the council said, "I am awfully sorry. We don't know where it is going to be"? He would be a laughing stock. What is more, the local press would go to town and attack that local authority if it considered the project for a moment.

Yet here in Parliament, the promoters, having managed to dodge ordinary planning applications, come along and tell us that they do not know where the market is. If a Labour-controlled local authority had been involved, the plan would have been thrown out within seconds of its appearing on the desk. You, Mr. Deputy Speaker, have said, "Sorry, it has nothing to do with me." The promoters say, "We do not know where it is." Judging by their answers, we cannot tell whether they are on this earth or on Fuller's earth. They are supposed to be knowledgeable, but they tell us nothing. Yet the passage of the Bill continues. I think it is high time it was stopped. It is a charade; we should finish it.

Mr. O'Brien: My hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) asks a question that no one is prepared to answer. Matters do not improve when further questions are asked, but perhaps a messenger is bringing the plan now.

Mr. Bermingham: There is a plan with a pink square on it, which we cannot see because no one will show it to us. We have been told that, since that plan was drawn, the

[Mr. Bermingham]

Norwich Union has built a large building and another firm has built a large building nearby. There is no guarantee that they have not built on the pink piece of land because those buildings had not been built in 1980 when the public inquiry was held and people at the public inquiry had no way of knowing what would or would not be built. We now have a flyover as well.

How can we know that the bit of land still exists? My hon. Friend will bear it in mind that the traffic problems will have changed and that markets create traffic problems and give rise to access flow and goods delivery flow problems, policing problems and goodness knows what else. Does my hon. Friend believe that the promoters know what they are talking about?

Mr. O'Brien: The mystery continues. Perhaps the hon. Member for Ilford, South now has the information that we seek. If so, I am happy to give way to him.

Mr. Thorne: The hon. Member for Normanton (Mr. O'Brien) is making rather heavy weather of this. Clause 2 clearly states:

"In this Act—

'the Act of 1984' means the Food Act 1984;

'the borough' means the London Borough of Redbridge;

'the Council' means the Council of the borough;

'the signed plan' means the plan signed in triplicate by Mr. George Buckley the Chairman of the Committee of the House of Commons to whom the Bill for this Act was referred, one copy of which has been deposited at each of the following offices:—

(a) the office of the Clerk of the Parliaments, House of Lords;

(b) the Private Bill Office, House of Commons; and

(c) the office of the Director of Administration and Legal Services of the Council."

If hon. Members wish to see that plan, it can certainly be seen in the Private Bill Office. If they wish me to try to obtain the copy from the Private Bill Office, I shall try to do so. If, on the other hand, they want a sketch plan to show where the market is, I can show them that straight away. I can certainly help the hon. Member for Normanton, if that is what really concerns him. I have gone to considerable trouble in the past to explain exactly where the site was located. I think that the original debate was last June.

Mr. O'Brien: I am sorry that the hon. Gentleman thinks that we are making heavy weather of this. I consider planning by local authorities, which are the planning authorities, to be very important. I imagine that, if not in Ilford, in many other areas throughout the country and in many hon. Members' constituencies, planning matters are raised with hon. Members because of the conflict that arises when planning applications are submitted to the local planning authority.

If I want detailed information on this matter, it is because I consider planning issues—the location of sites for buildings, especially commercial buildings and markets —of paramount importance. The market in question may not be operated by the local authority. It could be operated by a private party, nominated by the local authority. If that were to happen, who knows what influence that third party could have on the location of the market? That is why I am insisting that we have more information about the location of the market.

The hon. Member for Ilford, South has told me where the plan is, but I must advise him that there is not one in the Library. Hon. Members who want to inspect the plan have to go to the Private Bill Office to do so. That is a change of our procedures in the House. I had always thought that any information that hon. Members required, relating to both private and Government Bills, had to be lodged in the Library. Indeed, Mr. Deputy Speaker, although you have suggested that there may be a copy of the plan in the Library, we have now been told that it is not in the Library. We have been told that it is in the Private Bill Office or in the offices of the borough of Redbridge. Perhaps we should adjourn to Redbridge to see the plan. It is important that the plan is made available to us.

Mr. Bendall: The Bill has been published in its present form since 23 November 1989, and there has been a plan in the Private Bill Office. Any hon. Member could have gone to the Private Bill Office at any time since last November to inspect the plan.

Mr. O'Brien: This matter has arisen because I read in the report that the market is to be located within one mile of the centre of the town of Ilford or within one mile of the town hall. The hon. Member for Ilford, South has clarified that point, but there has been some confusion about the actual location. We have been told that the market will be located 300 yd west of the town hall, but we have also been told that a further development might be involved. When I came to the House tonight, I thought that the location of the centre of the market was clear and understood. However, since being given answers to some of our questions, we find that the matter has become more complicated. That is why the location or ordnance plan should be made available.

Furthermore, as you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, have pointed out, if the promoters were sincere about providing information on this matter, all the details would have been laid on the Table. However, that is not the case, so we must register our strong objections about the fact that the information that is necessary for the promotion of the Bill has not been presented to us tonight.

Mr. Meale: My hon. Friend is right to be worried about this serious point. If we were to give the Bill its Third Reading tonight without seeing the plan or ascertaining where the pink spot actually is, we might be pre-empting a major planning decision in the borough. We must remember that, in 1980, that council held a long public inquiry. Perhaps things have changed and the pink spot actually lies on the Prudential or Norwich Union buildings. Unless we get this absolutely right, we might be pre-empting a planning decision.

As my hon. Friend knows, a developer could insist on the right to site the market wherever he likes simply because we do not know exactly where the pink spot is. That is ludicrous. We could pass something tonight that would mean that the local authority did not have a right to appeal against a decision of the Department of the Environment. That could cost it tens of thousands of pounds in appeal costs.

Mr. O'Brien: I share the serious concerns that have been expressed. I want our anxiety placed on the record.

We consider the fact that the information has not been available to the House to be a serious diversion from the important issues raised by the Bill.

Earlier, I asked the hon. Member for Ilford, South about the statutory powers that the borough of Redbridge is being denied. He has not attempted to answer that question, so I repeat it——

Mr. Redmond: Before my hon. Friend leaves the planning aspect, I must defend the Private Bill Office. We have recently had cause to take advice and guidance on several occasions from the staff of that Office, who have been excellent. Although I disagree with the way in which private business passes through this place, the Clerks in the Private Bill Office are most helpful.

As little was understood about them, many private Bills were passed virtually on the nod. However, perhaps we should now consider ensuring that plans and drawings are placed in the Library in future, so that hon. Members can study them at their leisure instead of taking up the time of the Clerks in the Private Bill Office. I repeat that I have always found the Clerks there most helpful in providing information.

If you were to follow the point of order that was raised earlier, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and adjourn the House to enable hon. Members to inspect the plan, I am sure that the Clerks would be happy to oblige.

Mr. O'Brien: I do not want to appear to be critical of the Private Bill Office. I am simply saying that that is not where such information should be lodged. It should be lodged in the Library as you suggested earlier, Mr. Deputy Speaker——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Perhaps I should make this clear. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman does not wish to drag the Chair into this matter. I said that in this case the production of documents and where they are lodged is a matter for the promoters, not for the Chair.

Mr. O'Brien: I accept that, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I want to move on, because we must consider other aspects and ask some questions before making a decision. When questions about who would run the market were asked earlier, we were told that the market might not be run by the local authority, that a third party, a private operator, might be given the franchise to run the market. Does that principle still apply? The local authority is on record as saying that when—or if—the Bill is passed, the planning application approved, and the market established it might not be run by the local authority. There is a strong feeling that a third party might run the market instead of the local authority. If a third party is to run the market, we must ask why the market will be located one mile from Ilford town centre. Is there something significant about the fact that that is near where the insurance companies are developing a large commercial area?

As the market is being fought for and its promotion by Redbridge borough is costing a lot of money—there is also the question of compensation—there is, therefore, general commercial involvement in the operation of the market. If the market is not to be operated by the borough but by a third party, I must ask the hon. Member for Ilford, South whether the principle of the seven day market also still applies.

Mr. Skinner: My hon. Friend is making a good point. Third-party ownership is becoming very prevalent. I am not for a moment suggesting that the Redbridge market can be compared to Harrods. We all know that Harrods was supposedly taken over by the Al-Fayeds, but some of us—at least on the Opposition side of the House—know that the real money came from the Sultan of Brunei, who happened to be a "friend" of the Thatcher family.

My hon. Friend has referred to the doubt as to whether the site is a mile from the town centre or a mile from the town hall. That is the kind of variable which will enable the third party to say, "Never mind the local authority—we are the boys who are moving in here." A lot of that goes on in the Tory party. It may be that there will be money in this for the Tory party—money from one of these local entrepreneurs making a killing before the Government are kicked out at the next election.

Mr. O'Brien: We must have some clarification of who will run the market. When the matter was discussed previously, the question of the council's having a third-party option was raised. The point was made that, if the council were to change politically, the decision could be reversed and the whole issue would be in the melting pot. Can the hon. Member for Ilford, South tell me whether that principle still applies? Does the local authority contemplate offering the franchise to the highest bidder? There is some doubt.

We want to be sure that markets are run properly. The hon. Member referred to markets which had been run badly and to communities which, as a result, had been let down. He said that stalls must be allocated fairly, that there should be no favouritism or nepotism. If there is to be a third party, what kind of vetting will there be? In view of the point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover, it is very important that this be established.

The majority of markets in boroughs and other towns are run by local authorities. Why is Redbridge council hesitant about running the market? I hope that the hon. Gentleman will be able to answer that question. On Second Reading he said:

"Well run markets are an encouragement."

If that is correct, why does not Redbridge council intend to run this market? On Second Reading, referring to the demand for a market in Redbridge—this is a very important point—the hon. Member said:

"I hope that this will be the case in other parts of the country, too, in future."

In other words, he hopes that if the Bill is passed it will be the pattern for future developments throughout the country.

What is being proposed is the abolition of ancient market rights. If that is the principle behind the Bill, I want to be very cautious about it. In several constituencies the ancient order is protected. If what the hon. Member for Ilford, South has said is correct, that protection would be removed. Having listened to his comments, I fear that that is one of the purposes of the Bill. I wonder what he meant when he said:

"I hope that this will be the case in other parts of the country, too, in future."

If there is any question of abolishing ancient market rights, the Bill involves something much wider than the boroughs of Redbridge and Havering.

I should like to know whether the Minister believes that the issue is much wider. As he and other hon. Members know, local authorities are the main providers of markets

[Mr. O'Brien]

in cities, towns and rural areas. We must be assured that there is not behind this Bill any purpose other than the Redbridge promotion. Hon. Members must be clear about the purpose of the Bill and about what its outcome is likely to be.

On 6 June, in answer to a question by my hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover, the hon. Member for Ilford, South said:

"As I said before, the chamber of trade and local shopkeepers have indicated that they are in favour. They find that an open-air market, especially one of modest size, encourages trade because it encourages people to come into the local area."

But we were told earlier tonight that this will be a covered market. In other words, there has been a change of plan already.

On 6 June the hon. Member for Ilford, South continued:

"we can expect shopkeepers in future to view open-air markets in a different light. I am certainly not saying that every single shopkeeper in Ilford is in favour, but I have not had my attention drawn to any who have indicated dissent, whereas I have confirmation from the chamber of trade and others that they are very much in favour. After all, it was the chamber of trade that set out to raise the petition, and it has now collected 6,500 signatures. That was its own idea. I believe, therefore, that the whole tempo is changing in that regard. I hope that this will be the case in other parts of the country, too, in the future."—[*Official Report*, 6 June 1989; Vol. 154, c. 81.]

The sting in the tail i the hope that this practice will be extended throughout the country in the future. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will clarify his remarks of 6 June. I suspect that the Bill has implications for markets in all local government areas.

The present Government have attacked local government. They are not local-government-friendly. Is this an extension of that attack? Is this a means of reducing local government influence, especially in respect of markets? I hope that the hon. Gentleman will be able to clarify the point.

The hon. Member for Upminster drew attention to the reference in the Bill to the Food Act 1984. As I asked earlier, if substantial compensation is to be paid will it be possible to use the funds to reduce the poll tax in the borough? If so, the principle could be applied throughout the country. Market areas could be sold with a view to using the proceeds to reduce the poll tax. If that is not the position, I ask the Minister to provide us with some assurances.

There are several issues before us which will have a far-reaching effect on the future of local government. For example, compensation will not be paid to the traders or stall holders who may suffer in the township of Romford. Instead, compensation will be paid to the local authority. It has been suggested that the authority will decide how the money will be spent. That shows that there is not just one view to be taken. We understand from the hon. Member for Upminster (Sir N. Bonsor) that the payment of compensation will be in lieu of the interruption of the lost modern grant. Even the hon. Gentleman could not explain that until he obtained an interpretation. It seems that other local authorities could lose their right to ancient markets for the payment of compensation. If compensation is paid, for what will it be used?

We are not following a precedent. We are not mirroring what has gone before. There is not a simple negotiation between one local authority and another. We are seeing the making of history, inasmuch as the Bill will lead to the royal writ issued in 1247 by Henry III being overturned by Parliament. That precedent can then be applied to any authority which has had similar protection.

Mr. Graham Allen (Nottingham, North): Is my hon. Friend aware of the numerous representations received from Nottingham city council about the ramifications of the Bill? Mansfield council has also expressed considerable reservations about the implications of the Bill for many other areas. Perhaps my hon. Friend will say something about those representations.

Mr. O'Brien: My hon. Friend has set the scene for a matter to which I intended to refer. In St. Stephen's hall, there is a wall full of coats of arms of ancient boroughs. All those boroughs are likely to be involved in legislation of the kind before us today. As I have said, we are not following a precedent.

The Bill will have an important effect on local government, in which I have considerable interest. I understand that Redbridge councillors are divided on the issue. Some Tory councillors are opposing the location of the market and the way in which it would be run. In other words, there is opposition to the privatisation of the market. I want to know more about that from the hon. Member for Ilford, South. It has been reported that the market is to be placed under a flyover, which raises safety and hygiene considerations. That is one of the many issues that I have raised and to which I hope that the hon. Member for Ilford, South will respond.

When we considered the Bill in Committee we were given an assurance that the market would not operate seven days a week. The Committee was told that the application for seven-day trading had been withdrawn. At a later stage, however, we were told that consideration is to be given to Sunday trading. That is my final question to the hon. Member for Ilford, South. Are we to have a seven-day market? If so, why has the borough gone back on its word, which was given when the Committee considered the Bill? I hope that we shall receive answers to all my questions before the debate comes to an end.

8.36 pm

Sir Nicholas Bonsor (Upminster): I spoke at some length on the Bill on Second Reading and I did so again when it was considered on Report. That being so, I do not wish to detain the House for long.

There has been enough to demonstrate that the Bill should not have proceeded to Third Reading in its present form. Before you entered the Chamber, Madam Deputy Speaker, we had a substantial discussion on whether plans had been lodged in the Library or the Private Bill Office and on the adequacy of those plans. I have been told that there are two plans in the Private Bill Office. That will be of relief to some Labour Members as it is of relief to me and, no doubt, to my hon. Friend the Member for Ilford, South (Mr. Thorne). There, unfortunately, the good news stops.

Mr. Skinner: Are the plans different?

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: I do not know whether they are different, but the scales are different. I am told that one of

the plans bears no scale, which means that it is difficult to determine the area that we are talking about. The second plan has a scale of 1 in to 50,000 in. It is so detailed and so huge that it is almost impossible to grasp the scale of the operation that we are considering. The information That has been prepared and produced to enable the House properly to consider the Bill on Third Reading is woefully inadequate. We were told by Mr. Deputy Speaker, rightly, that that is a matter for the promoters and not for the Chair, but it is a matter that the House must take into account. The promoters have grievously failed to keep us properly informed.

That is the thin edge of the wedge, because the Bill is a shambles from start to finish. I return to an issue that I raised at the beginning of the saga, when the Bill came to the House on Second Reading. I drew attention then to subsection (2), which states:

"It would be of public and local advantage to provide for the establishment of a market in the part of the borough known as Ilford notwithstanding the infringement of noncompliance thereby with any rule of law or enactment."

That is an appalling subsection to have in any Bill. I said on Second Reading that it is extremely bad that the private Bill procedure should allow the rights of a local authority or another party to be taken away.

If that is to be done, it should be by way of a Government-sponsored measure, with all the departmental paraphernalia behind it. Such a removal of rights should not be sneaked in under the hem of the House by the use of a procedure that does not provide the review to which a Government Bill would be subject. It is unfortunate that the attention of the House is not focused on the important issues that are raised by Bills that pass through the House under the private Bill procedure.

Following on from subsection (2), it is claimed as a matter of fact that it would be of public and local advantage to provide for the establishment of the market. I challenge my hon. Friend the Member for Ilford, South to demonstrate how it would be to the public advantage for Ilford to have a market that would be in competition with that which has been established in Romford for 750 years.

I have not been able to find—I am sure that my hon. Friend the Member for Ilford, South, who is now looking through his papers to assist me, will be able to help—in my Acts that I have looked at today the words "public advantage" interpreted in legal terms. Yet we are asked to accept blindly that this Bill is to the public advantage. The House should not contemplate pasing such a Bill without being informed what these words are supposed to mean. I am accustomed, as a former practicising lawyer, to the phrase, "in the public interest". In so far as public advantage and public interest are the same, the Bill must be alleging that it is, in the wide sense of the phrase, in the public interest that the Bill should be put on the statute book. My hon. Friend will be in the gravest of difficulties if he fails to establish that that is indeed the case.

As all hon. Members will know, in English law the preamble to the Bill is not part of the statute. Therefore, in the English courts, Havering will not be able to take the point against it that that phrase is meaningless and has not been established as an original and necessary part of the Bill. That is not the case under European legislation, where the preamble is part of the legislation and is interpreted by the courts as part of the Act.

The European convention on human rights states that no one should be deprived of his possessions except in the public interest and subject to the conditions provided for by law. I take no issue on the second half of that, because, if the House is so foolish as to allow the Bill to proceed to the statute book, clearly that will be satisfied and the provisions of the law will be provided for. But I challenge my hon. Friend to satisfy us that it is in the public interest that the Bill should proceed. I warn him that, if he fails to do so and if Redbridge should fail to do so later, it may well be that the European Court of Human rights and not the House will decide whether the Bill has any legal importance or should be ignored.

Mr. Harry Cohen (Leyton): The hon. Gentleman will appreciate that it was decided in Committee that 10 per cent. of the profits of the market should go to Romford as compensation. One must consider how that will be calculated. My understanding of markets is that it will be immensely difficult to decide what the profits are. I appreciate that the hon. Gentleman represents Romford's interests, and so is keen for all that money to go to Romford, but does he not agree that there might be a case for the 10 per cent. to be divided among the surrounding boroughs of the Ilford market, in which case my borough of Waltham Forest would get a share? Does he not think that that is a good idea?

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: The hon. Gentleman always comes up with some extremely interesting and stimulating thoughts whenever he intervenes in the House, but I cannot always agree with them. I can see absolutely no justification for Leyton receiving any of the compensation that my borough will receive.

However, the hon. Gentleman makes a good point when he refers to the difficulty of establishing the amount of compensation that should be paid. I am sure that my Friend the Member for Ilford, South will clarify that position, because I cannot see that the 10 per cent. can be assessed on a fair and proper basis as Romford's compensation for the loss of this right, even if I were to accept that 10 per cent. is the proper figure.

While I accept that Havering borough council has negotiated that figure and therefore, in so far as I represent its interests, I cannot quibble, speaking as an individual Member of Parliament I have to say that I am not sure that 10 per cent. represents anything like adequate compensation for taking away rights enjoyed for 750 years, in the way that the Bill seeks to establish. This seems to me to be a sneaky and underhand way of getting underneath and behind what the House has done on the broader issue.

Mr. Redmond: While it is true that the council will get 10 per cent. in compensation, it is not clear to me what the council intends to do with it. If the new market takes off and starts attracting business away from the old market, the surrounding shopkeepers will suffer from loss of trade. It might be appropriate to look into the future, to see whether they should be covered by some form of compensation. Given that the vast majority of traders live on the borderline between survival and failure, consideration should be given to compensation for the possible long-term effects.

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: I take the hon. Gentleman's point. Of course, I cannot speak for the council as to how it will use the money, and it would be wrong for me to do so. Just

[Sir Nicholas Bonsor]

as, when the council sells something voluntarily, it is not for me to tell it how it should use the proceeds, so it would not be proper to speculate at this stage on how the council might use the money. Anyway, there are council elections coming up, so whatever assurances I might give for the current Conservative-led council, I could not be 100 per cent. certain—99 per cent. perhaps, but not 100 per cent. —that the council that will run Havering after the elections will be of the same mind as the present council. But I have no doubt that whatever council is in power at the time will bear in mind the needs of those who are being deprived of trade because of the market.

The hon. Gentleman is also right to say that that is an inevitable consequence of allowing the Bill to proceed. I shall come back to that later, but, as it has been raised, I must say that I find it very strange that my hon. Friend the Member for Ilford, South attempted in previous debates to give the impression that this market will not harm the Romford market at all. Having a market that could be open six days a week six miles away is bound to hurt the Romford market.

So my first point is that the Bill is a shambles and is in a very poor form, that the preamble is a disgrace to draftsmanship and that the Bill should not have come back on Third Reading in a form that was heavily complained about on Second Reading, and having been altered not a jot.

But the principle is much wider than that. It was touched upon on several occasions earlier, so I need do no more than stress it. That this will set a precedent on which other markets will be threatened is, I think, unchallengeable. I asked my hon. Friend the Member for Ilford, South earlier how, if British Rail or the Underground decided that it wanted to put a market somewhere on its land in Redbridge, he could come back to the House and say that there was any good ground for challenging it. That applies to anybody else who might want to set up a market in Redbridge.

Unless there is a proper balance between the rights of traders to trade where they wish to trade and the rights of the councils and the operators of the markets to protect the traders who are trading in their area, clearly we shall go through a swing of supply and demand, whereby markets are put out of business because there is a surfeit, and then there are not enough markets, and neither the consumer nor the market trader can conceivably benefit from that.

My hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Worcestershire (Mr. Forth) the Under-Secretary of State for Industry and Consumer Affairs supports the proposal, and the Government have shown, certainly in principle, that they do not particularly like charter markets and would like to see more markets set up, and that is where the mistake is being made. As with any shopping area within a council's district, it is important that a balance of trade be maintained. It is no good having nothing but greengrocers all the way down the high street. That is why the council's position is defended by its having the right to refuse a change-of-user application for a shop currently used for a specific purpose.

Much the same applies in this case, but on a much grander scale. A 750-year-old established market is being threatened by a proposed new market within the same trading area. I am sure that my hon. Friend the Member for Ilford, South would not dispute that it is within the same area. Indeed, he could not do so, because that very fact formed part of the case put by Redbridge council. Its counsel said in evidence to the Committee:

"Fifty seven per cent. of people who are Ilford shoppers, that is people who are shopping in Ilford, go to Romford to shop in its market."

How can my hon. Friend claim that the proposed market will not hurt Romford market when 57 per cent. of those who shop in Ilford use the Romford market? If the proposed market opens, that 57 per cent. of shoppers will, understandably, switch their allegiance to the Ilford market.

I do not dispute that it is in the interests of those shoppers to have a market in Ilford, assuming that that market could match the standard that the Romford market has established—a rash assumption. Although the proposed market might be in the interests of the Ilford shoppers, at what cost—not only to my constituents and those who shop in Romford and do not live in Ilford, but to the traders at Romford? If the Bill is passed, it will have a deep and damaging effect on the trading area which includes Ilford and all the boroughs around it, including that represented by the hon. Member for Leyton (Mr. Cohen).

It is important that the House understands that we are talking not only about the interests of Havering and Ilford, but about a vast number of people, all of whom have cars and all of whom shop in Romford market to their great advantage. It is a market of supreme quality which operates in a way that could not be matched and it would be severely threatened by the new competition that would be introduced by Redbridge.

Mr. Cohen: The hon. Gentleman is making an interesting point, but I wish to clarify his views. If the proposed market were established, does he think that there would be over-provision of shopping facilities in that area of London, which would result in some of those markets and traders going broke and jobs being lost?

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: That is certainly my view. I do not doubt that a new market would hit traders who are currently trading profitably in Romford, and who could not obtain a stall in Ilford because there would be fewer of them. Their businesses would be eroded to a point where neither stalls in Romford nor competing stalls in Ilford could operate profitably. That would not be in anybody's interests.

I fear that Ilford market, with its 80 stalls, will open with a great fanfare of trumpets, trade for six days a week, then four days, then two, and then close because it will not be a profitable enterprise. It cannot survive on the 57 per cent. of Ilford shoppers who currently use Romford market. The Romford shoppers, who form a much larger number, will not go to Ilford. Unless there is a centre, as there is now, where everyone in the area goes to shop, neither market will survive in the long term, and certainly not if they are to provide the present quality.

That is why the charter market rights were originally granted. Many things change over the centuries, but the fundamentals of trade do not. The protective rights were given precisely because markets could not otherwise operate profitably. The king of the day realised that in order to have properly operating markets serving the people of the country and established at the right points

around the country, he had to grant protective rights so that those markets could not be undermined in the way that the House is likely to allow today.

Mr. Bendall: Can my hon. Friend explain why there are so many successful markets in close proximity to one another in east London? I have asked that question before.

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: There is sufficient demand in east London, but that is not the case in Romford or Ilford. The figures that I have given prove that. If the 57 per cent. of Ilford shoppers who currently come to Romford market cease to do so, that must damage Romford. If only 57 per cent. of Ilford shoppers shop at Ilford market, that will not be sufficient to sustain that market.

It may be that in a few years I shall be proved wrong. If the Bill is passed today, I hope that that will be so, but there has not been enough research into the matter. The House is being asked to do something that has never been done before, and it has not been given sufficient information to make such a major decision.

The only other occasion on which a market has had its rights undermined was in Bexley in 1977, and that was by mutual consent. There was no challenge from the market whose rights were being undermined. It withdrew its petition and—probably because of enormous compensation, although I do not know the facts—felt that it could live with the removal of its rights. However, that is entirely different from what we are being asked to agree to today. It is the difference between a voluntary marriage and a shotgun marriage. If the House knew the full facts, I am sure that it would not contemplate proceeding on the basis that the Bexley matter was resolved satisfactorily.

Another point which has come out of our debates is that the procedure for private Members' Bills must be reformed. It is unacceptable for one local council to make such a move against a well established market and proceed through the House with most hon. Members having no idea of the implications. My hon. Friends and I have attempted to alert people to that fact but, as with so many things, the British people tend to shrug it off until it actually hits them in the solar plexus.

If the Bill is passed, and if—as I suspect—another similar Bill is brought before the House, I gaurantee that there will be an outcry because the second time around people will be alert to the danger and will realise that it is not just a one-off application. I am afraid that most hon. Members do not understand the implications——

Mr. Skinner: There are not many hon. Members here.

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: Indeed, but there were even fewer on Report, when we were trying to make some sensible changes to the Bill, and fewer still on Second Reading, when we might have had a better opportunity to stop the Bill in its tracks.

Mr. Cohen: Will the hon. Gentleman speculate on the cost of this private Bill procedure to date, and on its likely cost when it is completed? Does he agree that that money would be better spent keeping down rent levels in Redbridge, which are currently rising by £15-plus per week? That is way above the national average.

Sir Nicholas Bonsor: Not only do I agree with the hon. Gentleman, but I find it hard to imagine any way in which money could have been worse spent. There has been enormous expense of time and trouble in the House, and the petitioners and everyone else involved have had to pay large sums because of the procedure that has been implemented. I hope that if we do not succeed in stopping the Bill from proceeding in this House, the job will be done in the other place, in which case even more money will have been expended and the whole thing will have been a thorough waste of parliamentary time and of a huge chunk of community charge payers' money.

The procedure whereby private Bills can go through the House in this way should be reviewed, but it would be uncharitable of me not to concede that some changes were made for the better when the Bill was in Committee, to four of which I draw the House's attention.

The first is that only the council can now establish the market. There was originally the threat that anyone could establish the market and the council would be unable to stop it; now at least the council can stop it, although I am not at all sure that there are adequate safeguards to prevent the council from assigning its rights and allowing the market to be improperly run by a third party at a later date. That is a worrying aspect, which should be considered at some stage—it may well have to be in the other place.

Secondly, the market can no longer be put anywhere. We examined that substantial worry at length earlier. The pink blob on the map, when we have deciphered the extent to which the scales can be read, will, I hope, show that at least the market can be established only within a fairly narrow area and cannot be moved later to a place that might cause more damage to local interests.

Thirdly, the compensation is better than it was, but the hon. Member for Leyton raised a good point about that, and there is no doubt that it will be extremely difficult to assess the proper figure, of which 10 per cent. will come to Havering council. Finally on the plus side, there can now be no disposal of those rights without the consent of Redbridge council.

It is essential to defeat the Bill. I hope that hon. Members on both sides of the House will join me in making sure that it proceeds no further.

Question put, That the Bill be now read the Third time:—

The House divided: Ayes 48, Noes 43.

Division No. 138] **[9.01 pm**

AYES

Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*	Irvine, Michael
Ashdown, Rt Hon Paddy	Jack, Michael
Beith, A. J.	Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Bendall, Vivian	Kilfedder, James
Boswell, Tim	King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Bright, Graham	Knox, David
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*	Mans, Keith
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*	Mitchell, Sir David
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*	Monro, Sir Hector
Chapman, Sydney	Paice, James
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*	Riddick, Graham
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*	Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*	Skeet, Sir Trevor
Dykes, Hugh	Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Fookes, Dame Janet	Stevens, Lewis
Forth, Eric	Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Franks, Cecil	Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Gorman, Mrs Teresa	Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*	Thorne, Neil
Harris, David	Thurnham, Peter
Haselhurst, Alan	Twinn, Dr Ian
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney	Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Holt, Richard	Waller, Gary

Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Dr. Mike

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Allan Stewart and
Mr. James Arbuthnot.

NOES

Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Atkins, Robert
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Battle, John
Callaghan, Jim
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Crowther, Stan
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Dixon, Don
Eastham, Ken
Flynn, Paul
Foster, Derek
Fraser, John
Gill, Christopher
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gregory, Conal
Hawkins, Christopher
Haynes, Frank
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Illsley, Eric
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McWilliam, John
Martlew, Eric
Meale, Alan
Neubert, Michael
O'Brien, William
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Redmond, Martin
Short, Clare
Squire, Robin
Widdecombe, Ann
Wise, Mrs Audrey

Tellers for the Noes:
Sir Nicholas Bonsor and
Mr. Dennis Skinner.

Question accordingly agreed to.
Bill read the Third time, and committed.

Penzance South Pier Extension Bill

Order for Second Reading read.

9.12 pm

Mr. David Harris (St. Ives): I beg to move, That the Bill be now read a Second time.

I hope that this will prove not to be a controversial measure. Its objects are set out in the explanatory statement, which has been made available to hon. Members, and the plans for the proposed works have been properly deposited according to the Standing Orders of the House applying to private business.

The Bill is sought by Penwith district council, which operates and owns Penzance harbour. The measure has two objectives. It was found some time ago that the structure of the south pier was in a poor state, and I regret to report that it has deteriorated further owing to the recent storms. It was thought that, when shoring up and improving the structure of the wall, it would make sense also to build works which could be used for a car park with 320 spaces.

The council decided to promote the Bill last year and to authorise its director of housing and public services to draw up detailed plans and proposals to bring forward this joint enterprise.

The estimated cost of the whole project is some £1,750,000. The director of housing and public services has consulted widely—with the Nature Conservancy Council, the Cornwall Trust for Nature Conservation, Cornwall county council's surveyor and with English Heritage.

Mr. Martin Redmond (Don Valley): I wonder whether the hon. Member can answer the following questions in his preamble to the Bill. Can the facilities be used for the import of coal? Why was it necessary to have so many Lords amendments to the Bill? Why is the director of housing involved when one would have expected the project to come under some other local authority committee?

Mr. Harris: To answer the hon. Gentleman's last point, the director of housing is also the director of public services. I suppose that he fulfils the role of what used to be, to use old-fashioned council terms, the borough surveyor when Penzance had a council of its own. He now fulfils joint roles. Penwith district council is extremely efficiently run and has combined a number of posts.

I had intended to mention coal later. The harbour works can in no way be used for the importation of coal, so I can reassure the hon. Member about that.

Mr. James Hill (Southampton, Test): Thank you, I can leave the Chamber now.

Mr. Harris: I urge my hon. Friend to hang around a little longer.

As I was explaining, the council has consulted widely and no petitions were presented. In reply to the intervention by the hon. Member for Don Valley (Mr. Redmond) about Lords amendments, I think, with respect, that he may be confusing this Bill with another Bill promoted by Penwith distist council which received Royal Assent a few weeks ago and to which there were a number of amendments in the other place. The Bill that we are discussing today has not yet been to another place. I hope I have reassured him about that.

No petitions have been lodged against the Bill, although I received one letter from a constituent, Mrs. Primrose May, who wrote to me on 29 January saying that she opposed the Bill. Mrs. May is an officer of the Penzance Waterfront Society. Unfortunately, her letter arrived on 30 January, which was the last date for presenting petitions against the Bill in this place. However, I wrote to Mrs. May explaining that she would have an opportunity to petition against the Bill in another place when the Bill goes there, as I hope that it will, and I have fully informed her of her rights.

The society that Mrs. May represents has been concerned about the council's plans to redevelop the harbour area. The Bill is not connected with those plans. As I explained earlier, it is primarily concerned with the safety of the pier and the provision of car parking spaces.

The hon. Members for Don Valley and for Denton and Reddish (Mr. Bennett) have tabled the motion

"That the Bill be read a Second time upon this day six months."

I hope that I have reassured the hon. Member for Don Valley that this project could not be used for the importation of coal. I believe that to be his primary concern.

Mr. Redmond: I am concerned about the importation of coal. Jobs in my constituency would be affected. The importation of coal would also affect the national interest; the country cannot afford large imports of fuel. After I became interested in two other private Bills, I noticed that a series of private Bills was going through this place on the nod. I am convinced that 95 per cent. of them ought to be the subject of local planning procedures. There are two aspects to the objection. I do not want the hon. Gentleman to misunderstand it.

Mr. Harris: I do not misunderstand the objection. I had intended to say that in addition to the hon. Gentleman's objection to certain Bills, I recognised that both he and other hon. Members are concerned about the private Bill procedure. The hon. Member for Denton and Reddish has drawn attention to its drawbacks. He knows that assurances have been given by the Lord President of the Council to review the private Bill procedure. Let me say, not as the Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Lord President but as the Member of Parliament for St. Ives, that I share many of the hon. Gentleman's concerns about the handling of private legislation.

Hon. Members may think that the private Bill procedure is a means of circumventing the normal planning procedures. I therefore draw their attention to the provisions in the Bill which make it crystal clear that the normal planning procedures will have to be gone through before the works can be carried out. There is a further safeguard—that before any works can be carried out the council must obtain the Secretary of State's approval. He will have the power to lay down all sorts of conditions. A planning application has been advertised in the last few days, or is on the point of being advertised, which will give local people, particularly Mrs. May and the members of her society, the opportunity to make representations about the Bill.

My objective is to try to ensure that the Bill is given a Second Reading. Those who object to it will then have an opportunity to object in the proper manner and, if they wish to exercise it, the opportunity to object to the planning application. With those safeguards, I ask the House to give the Bill a Second Reading.

9.24 pm

Mr. Martin Redmond (Don Valley): I wish to raise just one point for clarification. Why did the House of Lords seek to amend the Bill? I should be most grateful if the hon. Gentleman would intervene and clarify that point.

Mr. Harris: I have tried to explain to the hon. Gentleman that he is confusing this Bill, which has just started its procedure through the House, with a previous Bill published by Penwith district council—the Penzance Albert Pier Extension Bill. That Bill was amended in the House of Lords. This Bill has not yet gone to the other place. It has just started its procedure through this House and will go to the other place later. The hon. Gentleman is confused between the two Bills.

Mr. Redmond: It says here, "Penzance Albert Pier Extension Bill, Lords amendments."

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): Order. We are dealing with the Penzance South Pier Extension Bill. "South Pier Extension" are the operative words. Mr. Harris, you have the floor.

Mr. Harris: I hope that I can reassure the hon. Member for Don Valley that there are two Bills. One is now an Act. It has completed its passage through both Houses of Parliament and received Royal Assent about a fortnight ago. That is the Bill to which the hon. Gentleman is referring—the Penzance Albert Pier Extension Bill. This is the Penzance South Pier Extension Bill. There are two Bills and two piers and two quite different schemes. One was amended in the House of Lords, but the one that we are dealing with now has just started its proceedings through Parliament and has not yet reached the other place.

Mr. Redmond: I apologise. I asked the Vote Office for the Bills and was given them. I was not interested in the previous private Bill and I did not check it as I should have done. I humbly apologise.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a Second time, and committed.

Madam Deputy Speaker: There being no Member of the Committee of Selection present, the two motions on employment and foreign affairs are not moved.

BISF Houses (Nottingham)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Kenneth Carlisle.]*

9.26 pm

Mr. Graham Allen (Nottingham, North): While we are in the mood for apologies, this is the first time that I have spoken since the count at the end of the debate on Members' interests. I should like to apologise to you, Madam Deputy Speaker, for any discourtesy deemed to have taken place on that occasion.

An adjournment debate is extremely valuable for a Back-Bench Member. I have been fortunate enough to have raised a couple of Adjournment debates in my brief time in the House, and I have chosen subjects that I felt were important—a written constitution and the role that the House of Commons should play in our democracy. Tonight, fortunately, I have drawn the Adjournment debate again, and I have chosen a different topic, but one of great importance to many of my constituents and to constituents in a number of other places throughout the land.

A large number of people throughout the country live in steel-framed homes either as residents, having purchased those homes, or as council tenants. In my constituency, people were advised, encouraged and cajoled by the Conservative Government to buy the council houses in which they were existing tenants. For many, the knockdown prices under the right-to-buy legislation meant a windfall and a dream come true, which enabled them to buy their own homes.

For my constituents who bought those BISF houses, the promises have proved to be hollow. They are the victims of the Conservative Government's right-to-buy policy. They have bought a pig in a poke. Many wish to move but cannot do so. Even when willing buyers are found, they are not regularly being granted mortgages by local building societies because of widespread suspicion among people, including building societies, that the properties are defective.

That is the nub of the problem, about which the Government should clearly state their view. If the houses are defective, they should be put on the list of designated designs, thereby enabling the payment of grant to bring them up to scratch. If they are not defective, the Government have a moral duty to ensure that building societies are told in clear terms that they should lend on them so that they can be sold.

Currently, neither option is being put into effect. Thus, my constituents and thousands of others throughout Britain are trapped. They are prisoners in their homes, unable to move or to sell. They are caught with houses of which the widespread view is that they contain serious defects. I underline the fact that those people do not share the Conservative dream of home ownership. Indeed, for many of them it has become a nightmare from which they cannot wake and escape.

Far worse than that is the problem that those people are being denied any hope of changing their circumstances. That is largely due to the behaviour of the Government and—I make no apology for saying—of the Under-Secretary of State for the Environment. I believe that he has behaved appallingly, and I hope that tonight, having been dragged to the House by the award of this Adjournment debate, he will make his position quite clear. I shall substantiate my view, and if the Minister is magnanimous enough to change his mind, I shall be the first to praise him in Nottingham and elsewhere. If he does not do so, I promise him that this campaign will continue until he does justice by my constituents and people elsewhere.

Having encouraged people to buy their council homes, the Government have walked away from the problem . Their attitude is, "You bought, it's your fault, you take the blame and we shan't help." The Minister has refused to meet not merely me but other Members of Parliament and peers. *[Interruption.]* He is chuntering from a sedentary position, but if he disputes my comments, I shall gladly give way to him.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. Christopher Chope): Will the hon. Gentleman refer to the meetings that he had with the then Under-Secretary with responsibility for housing, who considered the subject exhaustively with him? I hope that he will do so quite soon and put the matter in context. It has been discussed frequently by him and my Department, and offers have been made. One of his colleagues accepted an invitation to visit the building research establishment, but he refused that invitation. He is now making wild allegations and trying to throw mud not only at the Government but at me. I hope that he will play fair this evening.

Mr. Allen: I will take no lectures from the Minister about playing fair. However, I shall put the record straight. I have made no wild allegations. I have made specific charges against the Minister and he has refuted none of them in his intervention. If he wishes to refute any charge, I shall gladly give way and he can then substantiate his accusation about "wild allegations".

The Minister's predecessor, the hon. Member for Rossendale and Darwen (Mr. Trippier), was most generous and magnanimous about giving his time to meet the people who are suffering the dire consequences of having bought these properties. He could not give the guarantees that I sought for those residents, but he took time out of his busy schedule when he paid a visit to Nottingham and when he saw me and some of the residents at his own Department. I thank him publicly for that, as I did at the time.

However, the current Minister has not had the courtesy to agree to such meetings, despite having come to Nottingham and despite me, several peers and residents having made offers to meet him at any time of his choosing. That offer still stands. If the Minister believes that I am making "wild allegations", I suggest that he looks at his English dictionary.

The Minister's decision not to meet those who have suffered the consequences of his policy has now, unfortunately, been supported or abetted in writing by the Prime Minister, who has excused her Minister from meeting these people. That does not reflect well on the Prime Minister, but I am not surprised that the Government are ashamed to meet many Members of this House and the other place and the residents, given their record on the issue. If I had done what the Government have done, I should be anxious to dodge direct talks with people who know the truth.

Even at this late stage I plead with the Minister—not with any great relish, but with whatever it takes. Once

again, whether it involves writing, attending meetings or appearing at his convenience—wherever he chooses and at whatever time he chooses—I, other hon. Members and peers who wish to meet him and all the residents offer to meet him. We ask the Minister please to meet us to hear what we have to say. The Minister need not give any undertaking to act after having met them, but we ask that he listens to the people who suffer because of the policies pursued by this Government and to their solutions on a way out of the problem. Those people feel that they have been sold a pup. It is the political and moral responsibility of the Government to do something about that. Thousands of people need assistance in this matter.

There is now a national campaign by residents of steel-framed houses. At one time, there were many small, isolated campaigns in every area where these properties had been built, but in the past year, as a result of the campaigning efforts of people such as Jane Locke, who has been the unpaid secretary of the campaign in my constituency, and as a result of her committee and its executive having pulled together at tremendous personal cost in terms of money and time, a national campaign to try to get some action to make the homes decent for the families has been established.

The campaign's most outrageous demand has been to be allowed to meet the Minister to put its point of view. We have been assisted ably—again, I must express my gratitude—by unpaid advice from professional people, such as surveyors, who have tried to help the campaign locally and nationally. We have also been assisted by the expert and helpful coverage given to the problem by the TV programme "Advice Shop". That was especially useful, because it helped people throughout the United Kingdom to realise that they were not alone. They had felt that they alone were getting a raw deal; suddenly they realised that many others were campaigning to try to get some justice done.

The Minister has said of BISF homes that they only need a lick of paint. Without wishing to criticise the Minister personally, I have to say that I feel that that was a most inappropriate comment given that people have been struggling for five years or more to try to get their problems solved. They know, and the Minister knows, that a lick of paint will not help if the cladding is falling off a house. That comment is an insult to those who have worked hard to rectify matters, often at great personal expense. It may have made the Minister feel good for a few passing moments but it did not help those who had to go back to BISF homes.

Apparently, the Minister sees fit to chuckle about it; he thinks that it is funny. I understand that in his own city the properties have been renovated at a cost of £20,000——

Mr. Frank Cook (Stockton, North): Each?

Mr. Allen: Yes, £20,000 each. Perhaps in the Minister's constituency that is the price of a lick of paint, but that is certainly not the case in Nottingham.

Perhaps, now that the problem has been solved on his own patch, the Minister can afford to smile from ear to ear, but I would ask him to face up to his wider national responsibilities in this case and to bear in mind all those throughout the country whose houses need more than a lick of paint and who would welcome the prospect of £20,000 being spent on their properties to bring them up to the standards that they deserve.

This issue is not local to the Minister's constituency or, indeed, to mine. A meeting held in the Palace was jam-packed with representatives of the campaign from Scotland, Wales, the midlands, the south, the north-east and the north-west. The meeting was addressed by my hon. Friends the Members for Pontypridd (Dr. Howells), for Barnsley, West and Penistone (Mr. McKay) and for Durham, North-West (Ms. Armstrong) and by my right hon. Friend the Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot). My right hon. Friend the Member for Doncaster, Central (Mr. Walker) also put in a brief appearance, despite his other duties in the House, as did my hon. Friend the Member for Dundee, East (Mr. McAllion).

Numerous other hon. Members, who wished to attend but could not, sent letters to say that they fully supported the campaign. Members of the other place—notably Lord Graham of Edmonton and Lord Dormand—also appeared, not to speak but to show their support, It is a widespread national campaign that will not go away. Will the Minister please look at the matter afresh, take cognisance of residents' views and meet those who attended the meeting, who seek to represent their constituents' views?

The Minister may say that the building societies are lending on the properties. In my constituency, only the Abbey National and the Halifax have lent on the properties and they have done so on a specific, one-off basis. They have lent money on the properties but not at market value. They have been prepared to lend on them only at knockdown prices—sometimes £20,000 less than the real market value of the properties. Building societies are not treating those properties as ordinary homes. Even if the Minister seeks to convince the House that these properties are not defective, building societies are talking with their money. They are saying, "We will not lend the full market value for these properties. We have enough suspicions to feel that these properties should be valued at far less than their market price—sometimes at £20,000 less."

I ask the Minister to bear in mind the Scottish Office report stating that there are inherent defects in such properties. This is not a recent development. That Scottish Office report was published in 1976. The Minister may try to convince us that the building research establishment is fully cognisant of what is happening in relation to these properties and that it feels that there are no defects. I ask it and him to explain the Scottish Office report and to accept that the properties, allegedly have a history of defects and problems.

That is why the Britannia building society has stated that it is "not a long-term security" for any loan. That is why the TSB has stated:

"We cannot grant a mortgage because of the construction" of the properties.

That is why, when the Bilborough residents, other people in my constituency and the national representatives visited the headquarters of the Woolwich Equitable building society, they were told that the Government were to blame for this because the right to buy was initiated by and rests with the Government. The Woolwich said that BISF homes should be on the housing defects lists under the Housing Defects Act 1984. Those views were expressed directly to the representatives of BISF home owners by a major building society.

What do the residents want? Do they want to be completely rehoused at public expense? Do they want

[Mr. Allen]

some sort of outrageously extravagant treatment? No. The most that they are asking for is that the Housing Defects Act should include their homes on the list of defective houses, on what is called the "designated list".

What effect would it have if those houses were included on the list? It would mean one of two things. First, it could mean that the council could repurchase those homes at 95 per cent. of the defect-free value, if it chose to do so. Of course, many councils would not choose that option, especially in the light of the cuts in expenditure on the housing revenue and housing investment programmes that the Government have instituted. The second option under the Act would be a 75 per cent. reinstatement grant, most of which, I understand, would be met by the Government and a percentage of which would be met by the council.

I am pleased that my hon. Friend the Member for Barnsley, West and Penistone has now joined us in the Chamber. He was one of the most vociferous of those attending the meeting to which I have referred, defending his constituents' interests. Several individuals, delegates and representatives came down to the meeting from his constituency and have been extremely active in maintaining the national organisation. I thank my hon. Friend for his continued interest in this matter.

I should like to refer to another matter that aggravates the problems of people who live in these steel-framed houses. In my constituency, those that are still owned by the council have been the subject of a number of repair programmes. People well into advanced age became home owners when they were offered apparently cheap houses, which they could resell or pass on to their children. A dream was held out to them: "Put something aside. Buy now, and you will be able to pass on a marvellous asset." Many people aged 70, 75, or even older, who bought their homes now find that the roof is inadequate, the cladding is falling off, and the structure is exposed and is being eaten by corrosion. Next door, they see council workmen renovating and repairing. Perhaps painters are providing what the Minister would describe as a lick of paint—perhaps even a £20,000 lick of paint, as in Southampton.

Suppose that the owners of such a house put an estate agent's sign in their garden. Somebody driving past sees on one side a sparkling, renovated, polished-up council home that looks brand new, and on the other side a shabby, shambling wreck that has no hope of attracting a mortgage? What would be the reaction of a prospective buyer? Clearly a very large number of people have bypassed these properties, have gone elsewhere. Even if someone offers to buy, there remains the question of securing a mortgage.

Almost without exception the parties involved in this very sad tale have done their level best to achieve a solution. I do not normally name civil servants, but I have to say that Mr. Godfrey Meynell has done his level best to secure justice for these people. The city of Nottingham council has also done its best to secure a just deal, and I hope that I have managed to make a small contribution to the campaign. Even the Minister's predecessor—the hon. Member for Rossendale and Darwen—did all he could at least to explain the Government's position to the people trapped in these homes. Had he managed to retain his post, we might have made more progress. The current Minister must accept much of the responsibility for the current inactivity.

I ask the Minister again to consider the problem afresh and to offer these people some hope. I will continue to raise the matter. It was raised during the debate on the Third Reading of the Housing Act 1988, and it has been raised in a number of other places. When the Minister's predecessor was involved, there was at least an attempt to understand the difficulty, rather than a gruff, stark refusal to consider any of the ways forward that are being offered by tenants and residents. The then Minister for Housing and Planning, in a letter of 11 July 1988—quite a long time ago, since which time we have seen a number of changes—said:

"I know that you have been in correspondence with Marion Roe"—

then a Minister—

"on this subject and that her last letter to you dealt very fully with the ways in which we are trying to ensure that surveyors and valuers have proper technical information on non-traditional houses on which to base their survey reports. Often, we find that where there is uncertainty a meeting with BRE experts and officials from the Department can help move things forward, so when the owners have supplied you with details of the lending institutions who appear to be taking this attitude, we shall certainly do all we can to help."

That was in response to my letter of 4 July.

In his brief intervention, the Minister mentioned that he had written to me and had offered a visit to the BRE. He omitted to mention—it is something of a habit of his to give half the story, and I feel that it is incumbent upon me to give the other half——

Mr. Kenneth Carlisle (Lords Commissioner to the Treasury): Why is that?

Mr. Allen: The Government Whip is muttering. I shall explain why I have to put my case in this way. For the past three or four years, I, as a parliamentary candidate and as a Member of this place, have sought to help my constituents, as all my right hon. and hon. Friends do. Unfortunately, in the past six months or so there has been a change of policy. There has been a change of heart on the Government Benches, and especially from the Minister.

The Chamber is the forum in which these issues should be aired. If the Minister were to seek to be helpful, courteous or generous, he would find an ample response from Opposition Members. It is no wish of mine to have to drag the Minister to the House to participate in an Adjournment debate, he having refused consistently to meet Members of this place and of the other place. An Adjournment debate is a Back-Bencher's last resort. I hope that those comments help to put the position into perspective.

It is no joy to me to have another Adjournment debate, to be talking about this matter again and to have a three-inch-thick file of correspondence from my constituents who are in BISF houses. I wish that the Minister would do the decent thing, meet my constituents in those houses and explain his position. Perhaps we could then make progress. Until we have a meeting, discussion and consultation, it will be difficult to make progress.

I hope that the other half of the Minister's story can now be told. When he wrote, he offered a meeting for myself with the building research establishment. My reply, which the Minister did not quote, was that I would be pleased to go to the BRE to examine its scientific basis for

saying that BISF houses were not defective, provided that I could be accompanied by one or more representatives of the residents of those houses. I do not intend to go to the BRE without the very people who asked me to take up the matter.

I hope that the Minister will acquiesce in my going to the BRE with, if it helps him, only one representative of the residents in the BISF properties. That is one person who has to live every day in such a property, one person who has studied the technical detail, one person whose house is falling around his ears, one who can cross-examine the expert at the BRE, whose representatives say that the properties are not defective.

On that basis, I tell the Minister that we could get into my car tonight to go to the BRE, if that would help. I shall not go without those who have raised the initial query. The full story should be told. That having been done, Members of this place might come to a slightly different judgment on the Minister's smear attempt earlier this evening.

There are many other areas where problems could be highlighted, and there are some simple things that could be done. First, there could be a review of the designated houses. Will the Minister consider the possibility of further designation where it can be proved that houses are defective? If that cannot be proved, it is incumbent upon the Government, they having encouraged people to buy these properties, to take strong steps to ensure that companies which offer mortgages do so on an even-handed and open basis where properties are not defective. It is an either/or situation and I feel that the Ministers should be able to come forward with one proposal or the other. I believe that either, while far from ideal, would satisfy many of the residents.

Mr. Allen McKay (Barnsley, West and Penistone): It should also be taken into consideration that the Department not only encouraged people to buy but originally encouraged councils to build.

Mr. Allen: My hon. Friend makes an excellent point and I feel that it is one on which he may wish to elaborate——

It being Ten o'clock, the Motion for the Adjournment of the House lapsed, without Question put.

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Fallon.]*

Mr. Allen: I was in the process of congratulating my hon. Friend the Member for Barnsley, West and Penistone (Mr. McKay) on his intervention. I feel that it is perhaps one that he may care to repeat when the Minister gets to his feet, in order to get some kind of sensible explanation from the Minister as to the current policy in respect of building council houses, because that is certainly the other part of the pincer in which people in my constituency, and I am sure in his, are being squeezed.

The Minister has not, in my view—I state it openly in the House—carried out his duties in a manner befitting his office. I ask him to reconsider his position—he may think that this is a laughing matter, but as we speak tonight there are thousands of people living in these places—in respect of meeting the people who are desperate for assistance because they have to live with these defects.

I finish on the point of what these defects mean to those people. Here is a brief list: corrosion on the main frames of these houses, obvious corrosion on the outside of these homes; roofs which are at the end of their natural life; and lower cladding on the steel frame houses much of which is falling. I am very pleased to see my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) present, because he and many of his Scottish colleagues with steel-framed homes in their constituencies have supported this campaign throughout the whole of Scotland—notably my hon. Friend the Member for Dundee, East, who came along and presented a very strong case on behalf of his constituents facing similar problems.

The defect list continues. There is a strong suspicion of a fire risk in these properties which it could cost thousands of pounds to eliminate. One estimate is that simply to eliminate the fire risk could cost up to £20,000. That is not necessarily my view as an individual; I claim no expertise in the surveying field. But certainly the Nationwide Anglia Building Society, before granting a mortgage, requested the following changes: the removal and replacement of a roof; fire stops between dwellings; the replacement of corroded steel frames and bolts and a number of other steel parts; the replacement of flues and cowlings where corroded; a vapour barrier to prevent further corrosion. That was all before consideration of the offer of a mortgage.

The Minister cannot have it both ways. That is a clear list of the major defects from which some of these properties are alleged to suffer. I ask the Minister not to take my word for it, but to meet with the residents from my constituency in Bilborough and elsewhere throughout the country, and/or to meet Members for constituencies that I have named this evening and peers from the other place who have sought to represent the interests of those in their areas, and to hear from them at first hand.

It may be a lost cause, but I appeal to the Minister, finally, to listen to those people and to do so with an open mind. If he agrees to do that, he may begin to earn the respect of a wider audience than he currently has.

10.4 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. Christopher Chope): I am afraid that we have been treated to a rather intemperate speech from the hon. Member for Nottingham, North (Mr. Allen), which has extended to almost 40 minutes. I hope that, in the time remaining, I can do something to redress the balance. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will reflect carefully on whether his comments will help or hinder the position of home owners on the Bilborough estate.

I listened carefully to what the hon. Gentleman said, but I must say that he has rasied no new points. He referred to the work on this issue carried out by my hon. Friend the Member for Rossendale and Darwen (Mr. Trippier), who was then the responsible Minister and is now the Minister for the Environment and Countryside. I share the hon. Gentleman's appreciation of my hon. Friend's work.

However, I am concerned that the hon. Gentleman does not appear to be prepared to accept either the findings of the building research establishment or the fact that my hon. Friend secured a splendid undertaking from the Abbey National and the Halifax building societies, confirming that their national lending policies made no distinction between BISF houses and those of traditional construction. The hon. Gentleman made some allegations about those building societies, so I must tell the House that

[Mr. Christopher Chope]

they are prepared to lend on such houses on normal terms. To suggest otherwise can only be counter-productive and make those houses less marketable.

I wish to set out the wider background to the issue, and to place the concerns of this particular estate within the overall context of non-traditional housing in the United Kingdom. There are just over a million dwellings of non-traditional construction built to named systems. The majority of them are houses, built after the second world war in response to the overwhelming need for new homes and the desperate shortage of traditional building materials and skilled craftsmen. When built, those houses set new standards of space and layout. Some of them, like the BISF, incorporated novel features such as central heating and improved insulation. At the time they were built, they were novel features. As a result, they have generally proved popular with tenants, who appreciate their generous space standards and often sizeable gardens. They have exercised their right to buy in fairly large numbers.

However, in the early 1980s the building research establishment discovered serious problems with a number of prefabricated reinforced concrete houses designed before 1960. Those problems related to changes in the chemical composition of the concrete, and although in most cases there was no immediate risk of structural failure, it meant that the useful life of those houses was now known to be significantly shorter than when they had been valued for sale under the right to buy.

As a result, owners who had bought in good faith experienced a substantial loss in value, and in 1984 the Government, with all-party support, brought in the housing defects legislation to ensure that they could be assisted, either by reinstatement work, or by repurchase. The hon. Gentleman may be interested to know that I had the privilege of serving on the Standing Committee that considered that Bill. I took a great interest in the issue, because a number of my constituents occupy such houses.

Although those houses represented less than a fifth of the total non-traditional stock, lending institutions understandably reacted at the time with considerable caution to mortgage applications for any non-traditional house. Their surveyors were, by and large, unfamiliar with the systems of construction employed and with methods of inspection and assessment that would allow them to consider them on their individual merits.

The Department asked the BRE to conduct a comprehensive study of all types of non-traditional dwelling, in order to provide authoritative advice to owners and building professionals on methods of construction and on good practice in inspection, asessment, maintenance, repair and improvement. That study is now drawing to a close. The BRE has looked at all the major types, representing some 90 per cent. of non-traditional houses in the country, and has concluded that, overall, their performance in use is likely to be much the same as that of brick-built houses of the same age.

Of course there are exceptions, but such isolated types, with serious inherent defects which could not have been known at the time they were sold, have all long since been designated under the housing defects legislation. With other types, we expect owners to make proper provision for repair, maintenance and improvement, just as they would for houses of more traditional construction.

The legislation was never intended as an escape route from the normal responsibilities of home ownership. Where owners have genuine problems in coping with the cost of essential repairs, and are unable to finance them through bank loans, say, or re-mortgage, the new house renovation grant scheme should help, but we see no need for special treatment simply because a house does not happen to be made of brick.

Mr. Allen McKay *rose*——

Mr. Chope: I will give way in a moment, but not just now.

It is in this context that we need to look at the situation of owners of BISF houses like those on the Bilborough estate. These houses are now over 40 years old. In common with other, traditional, houses built at that time, their heating, insulation, kitchen and bathroom standards are lower than we would expect in houses built today. They need regular maintenance and renewal like any other houses, and their roofs, in particular, are coming to the end of their useful life.

However, the valuations at which they were sold would have taken into account all these factors, which were readily apparent on survey; and in general across the country we find that these houses have found their level in the open private sector market without much difficulty. Indeed, I understand that the chairman of the Bilborough Owners Association, Jane Locke, far from buying under the right to buy, bought her own house in just this way, presumably with the benefit of a survey. She bought that house in the open private market.

Like other non-traditional houses elsewhere, BISF houses in Nottingham were affected for a time by uncertainties in the market. The city council did its best to help by stripping down half a dozen of its own properties to show that they had no structural problems; and in 1987 the building research establishment published a comprehensive report which showed that the majority of BISF houses were structurally sound, and that, where repairs were needed—chiefly in areas of high exposure near the coast—these could be carried out in a relatively straightforward and cost-effective manner. On the basis of their findings, we saw then, and see now, absolutely no reason to designate under the housing defects legislation.

I fear that it is the report from the building research establishment which the hon. Member for Nottingham, North and some of his constituents are still not prepared to accept, yet it is the report of experts on this issue. I hope that in due course it will be accepted, even perhaps by the hon. Gentleman.

By the end of 1988, it seemed clear that market confidence was returning, and it was therefore with some surprise that my hon. Friend the Member for Rossendale and Darwen learned from the hon. Member for Nottingham, North that there were apparently still difficulties with mortgageability on the Bilborough estate. He undertook to sound out the major lending institutions, and in May of last year he was able to announce to the House that the Halifax and the Abbey National had confirmed that they continued to lend on BISF houses in

Nottingham, as elsewhere, on normal terms, and to re-mortgage where repairs and improvements were needed.

However, they had also pointed out that market sentiment could be badly affected by inaccurate statements about health and safety made in the media and elsewhere —a concern that the hon. Gentleman then, at least, seemed to share; to judge from his letter to my hon. Friend dated 19 December 1988, in which he deplored loose talk about "defects" and "designation". It is, unfortunately, a fact that the Bilborough owners association has seen fit to circulate a stream of highly misleading material, suggesting that BSIF houses are fire traps, an allegation repeated tonight by the hon. Member for Nottingham, North, that the existing asbestos-cement roofs are a health hazard, and that prospective purchasers would be ill advised to buy. I cannot stress too strongly that there is not a shred of evidence to support these claims, and that it is foolhardy in the extreme for owners who wish their houses to achieve a proper market value to talk down their properties in this way. For any hon. Member to aid and abet that is also irresponsible.

Mr. Allen: Will the Minister specify where I have sought to label these houses fire traps? Is he not really falling into his trap of talking down these properties by using such extreme language? I have not referred to these houses as fire traps, and it is rather ill advised of the Minister to come up with such language. Does he not realise that we should all be trying to seek a solution to this problem?

Mr. Chope: I welcome the hon. Gentleman's amazing change of mood, and I am glad that he now sees the need to be responsible about the matter. The record will show exactly what he said in his speech about the fire hazards associated with such houses.

Mr. Allen: We do not need the record. I will tell the Minister again what I said, as obviously he was not listening—or he was having a joke with one of the Whips, as he did several times during my speech. I said that, before considering a mortgage on a given property, the Nationwide Anglia building society had requested that a firebreak be put into the property, at great expense. That is different from saying that all the houses are fire traps. They are not, and should not be so portrayed.

Mr. Chope: I am glad that the hon. Gentleman accepts that. One of the difficulties has been that a fire had taken place in one of the houses on the estate. People suggested that it was because of the structure of the building. The hon. Gentleman will know that a detailed report was carried out by Howard Ward Associates for Nottingham city council, which concluded that there was no structural problem with the house. It said:

"We see no structural reason why the property should not be considered as suitable security for mortgage purposes. There are no above-average structural and fire insurance risks in the property. The steel frame in fact provides better protection against superstructure damage in the event of foundation movement and subsidence damage risk may therefore be lower than average. There are no reasons to suspect that the structural condition of the property is other than typical of that found in the BISF houses elsewhere."

That report is apparently not accepted by everyone on the estate. That is a pity, as it has only resulted in the houses having a lower value in the marketplace than they would otherwise have had.

Mr. Allen McKay *rose*——

Mr. Chope: I must continue, as it is the hon. Member for Nottingham, North's Adjournment debate, but if there is time at the end, I will give way to the hon. Gentleman.

One of the allegations is that owners face substantial repair bills—the hon. Gentleman said that they amounted to some £20,000. That is nonsense. Any unimproved house over 40 years old, whatever its construction, could well need substantial expenditure to bring it completely up to modern performance standards. But Professor Hollis, who surveyed one of the Bilborough houses on behalf of the owners, has confirmed to the Department that no structural repairs were found to be necessary—apart from those needed to cope with injudicious alterations carried out by the owner—and that he would expect to see essential renewal and maintenance work to any house of that age cost no more than £7,000. That, of course, is exactly what Nottingham city council has found in work to its own houses on the estate.

Indeed, after my hon. Friend's announcement, one of the major clearing banks approached the Department expressing some concern that the question of designation under the housing defects legislation had even been raised. Like other lending institutions, the banks treat mortgage applications for steel-framed houses like the BISF on their merits, just like traditional houses, and can see no justification whatsoever for suggestions that they are defective.

That is the position today. BISF houses generally command a fair price in the market. At Bilborough, major lending institutions stand ready to advance mortgages. The estate is an attractive one, and the city council is showing its confidence in the houses by an improvement programme to its property in which it is replacing roofs, windows and guttering. It has offered owners the opportunity to join in with the once-for-all chance to catch up on past maintenance at a specially low price of just over £6,000.

The hon. Gentleman referred to the contrast between a house that had been improved by Nottingham city council and one that had not. If the owner of a house adjoining one owned by Nottingham city council wishes to participate in the scheme, participation comes at the relatively modest price of just over £6,000. A number of owners have already expressed interest in that offer. For those owners with low incomes a further opportunity exists: if their houses require it and their means warrant it, they could qualify for grant-aided repairs under the new system of house renovation grants.

Owners generally need to avoid problems of their own making. They must care for their properties and take the opportunities when they arise to enhance them and not to run them down. The city council, the lending institutions and my Department all take a positive view of these houses. Only a small and vociferous group of owners, for reasons best known to themselves, apparently wish to encourage blight. If they think that by doing so they can attract large sums of taxpayers' money, they are severely mistaken. I hope that, as a result of this debate, they will think carefully about the consequences of their actions.

I have invited the hon. Gentleman on more than one occasion to organise a visit of parliamentarians to the building research establishment, where they would have

[Mr. Chope]

the opportunity to talk to the technical experts who carried out research on BISF houses and on whose advice the Government's policy is based.

I am surprised that the hon. Gentleman is not prepared to take up that invitation. His hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, West (Mr. Battle) went on such a visit and found it helpful. He did not find it necessary to take anybody with him from the estate. He went there and used his own judgment as an intelligent Member of the House. The hon. Member for Nottingham, North is perfectly capable of assessing the expert advice that he would receive if he went to the BRE.

I fear—I speculate on this point—that the hon. Gentleman is frightened that, when he goes to the BRE, he too will be convinced of the case that the BRE has made and that the onus will then be on him, as the hon. Member for the constituency involved, to pass that judgment on to some owners who have resolutely resolved not to accept the BRE advice under any circumstances. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will, like his hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, West, take up the offer to visit the BRE.

Mr. Allen: Why is the Minister afraid of his officials at the BRE meeting residents of the Bilborough estate, with or without my presence, to discuss their differing views on the technical problems of these homes?

Mr. Chope: I am not afraid of anything. The BRE is an independent technical establishment and time is very much at a premium, and if the hon. Gentleman visits the BRE he will appreciate that. When he is making his visit, he can, if he is not satisfied or wants additional information—bearing in mind that the report of the BRE has been published and is available to tenants—glean it from the BRE.

He can discuss with the officials there whether they would be minded to discuss, and see any merit in discussing, matters further with some of the tenants. I do not rule out what might happen if he visits the BRE and discusses this matter with the officials there, because I do no know what new points he will try to raise, but at this stage it would be better for him to accept the invitation that has been offered to visit the BRE, as his hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, West did, and to discuss with the experts the report which they produced.

Mr. Allen: I am anxious to get this absolutely clear for the record. Is the Minister once again precluding me from going to the BRE accompanied by a representative of the people who are suffering this problem?

Mr. Chope: I am saying that the invitation for him to visit the BRE is for him to go as a parliamentarian with any other parliamentary colleagues he wishes to take with him, but that the invitation does not extend to ordinary members of the public. As I said, if he goes to the BRE, he can no doubt discuss with the experts there the relative reasons why it may or may not be desirable for other people to be brought forward on a subsequent occasion. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will take up that offer. His hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, West did not seek to put conditions on his visit to the BRE.

Most hon. Members—indeed, most members of the general public—have a high regard for the work of the BRE and would be glad of the opportunity to go there and discuss the technical side of the matter with the experts. I am sorry that the hon. Gentleman has so far turned down that offer. I am sure that in due course he will respond to it because, if he does not do so, I do not see how he could communicate to his constituents the discussions that he would have been able to have with the BRE.

Mr. Allen: Since the Under-Secretary seems to be coming to the end of his remarks, will he consider the suggestion that I made earlier—that he should meet hon. Members who have such problems in their constituencies—both Members of this House and of the other place? Would the Minister, at his own convenience, whenever he chooses, meet those people?

Mr. Chope: The answer to that has been clearly set out in the letters that I have written to the hon. Gentleman and that my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has written. Obviously, if new issues were raised, Ministers are prepared to have meetings to discuss them. However, nothing that the hon. Gentleman has said tonight, or in his correspondence, suggests that he has any new points to raise. He merely wishes to go over old ground—over matters which he discussed with my predecessor. There is no point in my having meetings to go over ground that was explored a short time ago with a former Under-Secretary of State for the Environment.

Mr. Allen McKay: I do not think that any hon. Member here tonight has said that the houses we are discussing are fire hazards because they catch fire more quickly than any other house. However, it is a fact that fire spreads more quickly in such houses, and that is the reason that architects have advised that a fire stop should be put into the apex of the house to ensure that fire does not spread from one side to another.

The Under-Secretary concentrated in his speech on the structural defects of such houses. I do not know whether he has seen any of the houses which are in the worst condition. It is no fault of the tenant through lack of maintenance. It is sheer lack of finance that has caused the condition. They bought something, but they did not realise that it would be a considerable drain on their finances.

In 1971, architects in my constituency, in consultation with the Department of the Environment, realising that they were throwing good money after bad, stripped down a number of these houses and bricked them through instead of cladding them on the inside. Cladding can cause grave problems and does not foster good housekeeping, and the best people can get depressed living in such conditions.

I believe that the Government must consider what help they can give. Perhaps a partnership between the local authority, central Government, the householder and if necessary the building society would be a possibility. Unless we do something, the problem will remain with us.

Mr. Chope: The hon. Gentleman mentioned a fire stop. That is also covered in the report by Howard Ward Associates. They said:

"with regard to the combustability of the property and the risk to occupants this does not appear to be significantly different from that found in traditionally built modern houses and, bearing in mind the effectiveness of the firestop, is undoubtedly better than in many other properties where party walls frequently do not extend into the roof voids."

Therefore, those independent experts, who were producing a report for Nottingham City council, found that there was no need for people to become alarmed about fire stops.

I hope that the past will be put behind residents who live on the estate, and that they will see that there is a good future for them, for their houses and for the marketability of their houses if they accept the findings of the building research establishment, and perhaps take advantage of the offers made by Nottingham city council. That council has behaved very responsibly in this matter at all times. I hope that the problem can be resolved happily for everyone, including the hon. Member for Nottingham, North. I hope that he will be more content in future.

I do not see any point in having meetings to discuss old ground unless the hon. Gentleman is prepared to discuss the matter with the BRE first. As a gesture of good will, if he goes to discuss the subject with the BRE and has points arising from that meeting that he wishes to discuss with me, I shall happily meet him.

10.29 pm

Mr. Allen: I would like to conclude the last minute of the debate by saying how disappointed I am that, despite the gesture made by the Under-Secretary in the last sentence of his speech, he has rejected a meeting with hon. Members from this House and from the other place. I would gladly attend the BRE accompanied by someone who has suffered from this problem but, unfortunately, that visit has also been rejected by the Under-Secretary. In other debates, I might say that I would raise this matter in the Adjournment, but we are on the Adjournment and unfortunately we will have no satisfaction until there is a new Government.

The motion having been made at Ten o'clock and the debate having continued for half an hour, MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER *adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to the Standing Order.*

Adjourned at half past Ten o'clock.

House of Commons

Wednesday 21 March 1990

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PRIVATE BUSINESS

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL BILL *[Lords]*
Considered; to be read the Third time.

Oral Answers to Questions

ENVIRONMENT

Contaminated Land

1. **Mr. Stern:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any plans to compel local authorities to compile a register of contaminated land.

The Minister for the Environment and Countryside (Mr. David Trippier): I expect shortly to receive a departmental working party report on the feasibility of establishing registers of contaminated land. My assessment of that report will include consideration of whether such registers should be voluntary or compulsory.

Mr. Stern: Will my hon. Friend join me in welcoming the recent report on contaminated land from the Select Committee on the Environment? It has strong application in my constituency, because it calls for a compulsory register of potentially contaminated land, such as at Avonmouth in my constituency. Does my hon. Friend agree that a register will create an opportunity to evaluate such land, and in so doing remove a barrier to its development, which potentially is one of the golden opportunities in Bristol?

Mr. Trippier: I welcome the Select Committee's report, to which my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State hopes to respond shortly. We are anxious to be as positive as possible in our response. In my evidence to the Select Committee, I said that it is essential that all contaminated land should be easily identified. A local register held at district council level would be very helpful.

Dr. Kim Howells: The Minister will be aware that there is a register of contaminated land in Wales, but the problem is that local authorities do not have the money to do anything with the information that they have collected. Much money will be needed just for methane drainage schemes and for the removal of contaminated top soil. Will the Government offer local authorities grants to enable them to do that work?

Mr. Trippier: One of the most successful grant mechanisms in Wales, as in England, is the derelict land grant. For every £1 of taxpayers' money that we have spent, about seven times as much has been attracted from the private sector. There is an increase in the public expenditure survey line of the Department of the Environment, but I should have to find out what has happened with the Welsh Office. I commend that scheme to the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Butler: My hon. Friend may be aware that Arpley Meadows, a landfill site in my constituency, takes low-level radioactive waste. Does he believe that such sites should be compulsorily registered?

Mr. Trippier: Such sites certainly should be registered, and that will be part of our response to the Environment Select Committee's report. I can give my hon. Friend the comfort that we have raised the standards to deal with such waste in the Environmental Protection Bill.

Ms. Walley: Does the Minister agree that it would have been far better if the full reports of the departmental working party had been given during the Committee stage of the Environmental Protection Bill? Does he further agree that that would have enabled us firmly to enshrine in legislation a measure similar to the register in Wales? On Report, once the Minister has consulted local authority associations, does he intend to provide a clear duty for local authorities to compile a register? Will he give them the resources, take account of the problems associated with blight and ensure that the money to render contaminated sites harmless is incorporated in the Bill on Report?

Mr. Trippier: The principal reason why we could not bring those measures before the Committee considering the Environmental Protection Bill was covered by the hon. Lady in her question. It would be less than courteous if we did not consult local authority associations, which believe —I think that the hon. Lady agrees—that registers should be made compulsory. It would be foolish, and certainly discourteous, if I were to make an announcement from the Dispatch Box without properly responding to the Select Committee's report. I certainly should not rule out the possibility of legislation.

Council Rents

2. **Ms. Armstrong:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what proposals he has developed to keep council rents at an affordable level.

The Minister for Housing and Planning (Mr. Michael Spicer): It is for local authorities to determine the rents that they set. The Government are providing £3 billion of taxpayers' money to subsidise housing revenue accounts, from which around 60 per cent. of council tenants receive rent rebates, and rents generally can be kept within the reach of lower-paid tenants.

Ms. Armstrong: Does the Minister recognise the reality of council house rent rises this year? As with the poll tax, the Government have totally miscalculated the range of rent rises. For groups whose income is just above rebate levels, the penalty of the rent rises and the poll tax is totally beyond their means.

Mr. Spicer: We have not totally miscalculated the rent rises. Most authorities have kept within or below our guidelines. We estimate that the average difference

between our guidelines and actual rent increases is about 3 per cent. Council house rents throughout the country remain well below market rents.

Mr. McCrindle: Does it remain Government policy to seek a relationship between council house rents and the average value of property in the vicinity? If so, does my hon. Friend believe that, in some ways, that might be getting things the wrong way round? Sometimes the most acute housing difficulties are experienced by people living in areas where the average value of property is high.

Mr. Spicer: We certainly want the pattern of rents to reflect the pattern of property values and market rents more than it does now. Vast amounts of public money go into subsidising rents throughout the country.

Mr. Beggs: Does the Minister agree that it is inevitable that housing rents will continue to rise? Does he further agree that more tenants should consider purchasing their own property?

Mr. Spicer: The hon. Gentleman makes a good point. One million households have done precisely that under the right-to-buy scheme. I certainly want as many tenants to buy their properties as feel able to do so, for all the reasons implicit in the hon. Gentleman's questions.

Mr. Robert G. Hughes: Does my hon. Friend agree that the level of rents is an important factor in the amount of money that an authority will have available to carry out repairs, so it is not surprising that many Labour local authorities that have deliberately kept rents low for political reasons have had little to spend on repairs?

Mr. Spicer: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. Authorities can keep to our guidelines, knowing that the costs of borrowing and of rent rebates have been taken fully into account and that an allowance has been made for an 8 per cent. increase in maintenance programmes. Authorities that have not carried out maintenance programmes will certainly not have done their tenants a good service.

Mr. Soley: The guidelines are pure fantasy, and the Minister knows it. The authorities that cannot meet them are primarily Conservative councils. What specifically will the Minister say to the London boroughs of Redbridge and Merton, to Bournemouth and to Canterbury, all of which are Conservative councils and all of which are imposing top rate rent increases? There will be an average rent increase of more than £15 a week in Redbridge. A bill for a £15 a week increase will arrive on the doormat at the same time as the poll tax bill. How is a family of four supposed to live? Are they living on fresh air or on a feast of Tory broken promises?

Mr. Spicer: I repeat that the guidelines are not figments of our imagination. They take full account of the borrowing costs of local authorities, of rent rebates and also of an 8 per cent. increase in maintenance costs. If an authority decides to go above our guidelines, it is perfectly free to do so. An authority may decide to do so for the best of reasons—to accelerate a maintenance programme or add to balances. That is a matter for the local authorities, and that is called local democracy.

Mr. David Nicholson: I am sure that my hon. Friend will agree that those living in good quality council houses —not flats—with gardens should pay a slightly more realistic rent, especially as, after yesterday's Budget, housing benefit will be more extensively available. Does my hon. Friend accept the point made earlier—that it is important that local authorities should be able to use the extra revenue to meet the pronounced need of those in my constituency and elsewhere who cannot yet obtain council housing?

Mr. Spicer: My hon. Friend makes an important point. Benefits are available for, on average, 60 per cent. of council tenants and some of them are among the most generous in the western world. They go up to 100 per cent., so my hon. Friend is absolutely right.

If some local authorities decide to spend more on maintenance programmes in their area, that is a matter for them. The fact remains that, contrary to what the Opposition say, average rents throughout the country are well below market rents.

Urban Development Corporations

3. **Mr. Fatchett:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the total amount of money spent by the Government through urban development corporations since 1981-82; how many houses for rent have been provided by each of the urban development councils during that period; and if he will make a statement.

The Minister for Local Government and Inner Cities (Mr. David Hunt): Urban development corporations have proved to be an excellent investment of taxpayers' money: £820 million has secured £7 billion worth of private sector investment, the creation of 26,000 new jobs and the reclamation of 2,700 acres of derelict land. Up to last year more than 2,000 homes for rent had been completed in UDC areas and several further schemes are under way or proposed.

Mr. Fatchett: May I congratulate the Minister on his forthcoming appointment and ask him whether he will deny that it is simply a manoeuvre to avoid having to deal with the chairman of Leeds urban development corporation, who is clearly an embarrassment to Leeds UDC and the Government? It is clear that development in UDC areas often involves an emphasis on big and grandiose schemes at the cost of small and local business, and there is plenty of evidence that that is already happening in Leeds. Does the Minister agree that the UDC should have a priority to provide for local business and also to provide for local people to live in the inner-city areas, in housing that they can afford—either by low-cost purchase or by rental? Are not the schemes envisaged by the UDCs pushing such people out and depriving them of housing opportunities in inner-city areas?

Mr. Hunt: UDCs have a statutory remit to encourage people to live and work in their areas. Some 2,500 homes for rent are being built or are proposed in UDC areas in England and Wales at present. Instead of criticising his local development corporation and its chairman, the hon. Gentleman should concentrate—as many Opposition Members and many of my hon. Friends do—on supporting development corporations and their chairmen in the excellent work that they do.

Mr. Batiste: I hope that my hon. Friend will disregard the continual and irresponsible attacks that the hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) makes on Leeds

urban development corporation. Does my hon. Friend recognise that one of the difficulties in the rented accommodation sector in Leeds—especially in constituencies such as mine, comprised of towns and villages on the periphery of the city—is that the council will not afford any priority to housing local people in areas where they have been brought up? If it did so, more housing would be available in rural communities around Leeds.

Mr. Hunt: I could not agree more with my hon. Friend. We must ensure that, in our inner-city policy, we concentrate on giving people greater opportunities for jobs, better community facilities, a better environment in which to work and live and better homes. That is what the development corporations are doing and I only wish that they received more co-operation and help from local authorities.

Mr. Loyden: In spite of what the Minister has said, he must be aware that in the main the responsibility still lies with local authorities that have to meet the needs of the people who are compelled to seek housing for rent. Is he aware that because of the Government's policies, the urban renewal programme in Liverpool is in danger of not being completed? I am sure that he is aware that that city has had tremendous housing problems throughout the post-war period. Does he accept that the Government must do something to allow local authorities to continue their building programmes?

Mr. Hunt: I hope that the hon. Gentleman will find time in his busy day today to attend the conference at the Barbican, which is being organised by Business Opportunities on Merseyside and which will be addressed this afternoon by both myself and the leader of Liverpool city council. If the hon. Gentleman were to do so, he would hear a much more positive message than the one that he it trying to put across. There is a positive partnership in Liverpool to improve the quality of life for the people there. The hon. Gentleman should praise and recognise that instead of belittling it.

Vacant Land

4. **Mr. Bevan:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many acres of vacant, dormant, underutilised and derelict land is currently in Government ownership; how much has been disposed of since the land register was set up; and when he estimates the remaining areas will disposed of.

Mr. Michael Spicer: By 30 September 1989 some 5,600 acres had been disposed of and 1,400 brought into use. At that date, some 7,200 acres were on the register. Their future will depend on a variety of circumstances related to individual sites, including marketability.

Mr. Bevan: If, like me, my hon. Friend is dissatisfied with the speed of disposal of land on the register, and if he believes that the lack of purchasers shows a lack of interest in such property, will he take measures at once to speed disposals and to transfer suitably located parcels of land at low, nil or negative values to housing associations or to building societies, to create stocks of low-value, low-rent homes for those in housing need, and to encourage a property-occupying and saving society?

Mr. Spicer: I very much agree with my hon. Friend that we should make use of derelict land for purposes other than keeping it derelict. I also agree that much more can be done to make such land more marketable. We are giving the matter urgent attention at the moment and I listened carefully to what my hon. Friend said.

Mr. Hardy: Is the Minister aware that in my constituency and in surrounding constituencies, many people would agree that they do not wish to see the land remain derelict? However, is he also aware that in the past few years hundreds of acres of land have become derelict in that area and that until the Government bring forward an intelligent and far-sighted view of derelict land grants, there is no prospect of the desperately needed improvements being made in that area?

Mr. Spicer: The Government have greatly increased derelict land grants, which now amount to £71 million per year. We have nothing to be ashamed of in that. In fact, the grants have been put to extremely good use. The question is whether anything can be done over and above simply throwing money at the problem. We must consider other ways of trying to make such land marketable.

Mr. Steen: Is the Minister aware that there are now about 500,000 acres of vacant, dormant, derelict and underutilised land in both public and private ownership and that 60,000 acres of public vacant land have been added to the register since 1981? Does he agree that a private initiative is now required to market that land and to ensure that the people who hold the land at the moment —the public authorities—have a share in the asset value as it increases?

Mr. Spicer: I am very much aware of the fact that my hon. Friend the Member for South Hams (Mr. Steen) has taken a great interest in this matter for many years and has written a learned treatise on it. I am studying his writings, which relate to his question, very carefully.

Mr. O'Brien: Is not it clear that the hon. Member for Birmingham, Yardley (Mr. Bevan) was requesting the Minister to give the Government's policies on derelict land, particularly land in Government ownership, but that those policies were not forthcoming? Is not it also clear that the £71 million derelict land grant is insufficient to meet the needs expressed by hon. Members on both sides of the House? When will the Minister allow a debate in the House on derelict land? Let us have some policy directives so that people in local government and outside it who must deal with derelict land know exactly what will happen.

Mr. Spicer: Personally, I should be more than happy for there to be a debate on derelict land, but that is not in my gift. I am sure that those responsible for such matters will listen to the hon. Gentleman. The question is whether it is just a matter of throwing more money at the problem, in addition to the £71 million available. If the land can be made marketable, such additional expenditure would be a waste of public money. We are carefully considering whether we can do more to make such land marketable, to enable it to pass into the hands of those who would turn it into something that would not necessarily require public moneys. We are considering the matter urgently and I should welcome a debate on it.

Local Government Finance

5. **Mr. Madel:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he is yet able to say whether he will community charge-cap Bedfordshire county council for the financial year 1990-91; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Hunt: We are now looking at the budget information that we have received from local authorities. Until we have reached our decisions, I hope that my hon. Friend will understand that I cannot speculate whether Bedfordshire county council or any other local authority would be capped in 1990-91.

Mr. Madel: I also congratulate my hon. Friend on his forthcoming elevation. Before he crosses the River Dee to take up his Welsh duties, may I draw his attention to the fact that the Audit Commission has strongly criticised the Labour-Liberal Bedfordshire county council for over-spending? Despite that, the county council is increasing spending next year by 14 per cent. which will cause an unacceptably high community charge. As the community charge is designed to increase accountability, will my hon. Friend consider changing the electoral system whereby one third of county councillors would come up for election every year? That would not only make the county council more accountable, but would give us in Bedfordshire the chance to remove Labour and Liberal county councillors who have caused this huge community charge.

Mr. Hunt: First, I thank my hon. Friend for this kind remarks.

Bedfordshire has done very well from the settlement, and the external support for Bedfordshire authorities, taken together, is 15·8 per cent. higher than in 1989-90. Yet, as my hon. Friend rightly points out, the county council seems to have decided to increase its income by approximately twice the rate of inflation. That is a serious matter and it is worth reflecting that, perhaps the county council would not be doing that if it has to face its electorate this year.

Mr. Gould: I add my congratulations to the Minister on his promotion. How long does he estimate that it will take charge-capped authorities to prepare and issue revised bills? What calculation has he made of how much that will add to the already excessive cost of collecting the poll tax? What help does he propose to offer in respect of the cash flow problems that such authorities will undoubtedly face? Does he have any concept of the impossible burden that he is imposing on local authority treasurers, Tory as well as Labour, who are already hard-pressed, through his refusal to specify what his charge-cap criteria will be?

Mr. Hunt: I thank the hon. Gentleman for his kind remarks and look forward to explaining in Wales, as I have in England and still will for a further two months, the way in which the community charge is a much fairer and simpler system, which makes local authorities more accountable.

Capping was a matter for Parliament to decide and it decided to give the power to charge-cap to the Secretary of State. Once we have considered all the budget information available we shall take our decisions and announce them to the House. Until then it would be wrong to speculate about the timing or operation of any capping scheme that we might operate. We have made it clear, however, that we shall cap authorities that have chosen to budget excessively.

Mr. Bright: Does my hon. Friend agree that it is complete nonsense for people in Bedfordshire to compare this year's community charge with last year's rates? Under the spendthrift Labour-Liberal authority that we have in Bedfordshire—[HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, Hear!"]—those people would have felt a considerable impact if the rating system had remained. That factor should be considered; at present, we are not comparing like with like.

Mr. Hunt: I agree with my hon. Friend, and the response from the House demonstrates how true his words are. Had the rates system continued, for Bedfordshire authority to have raised the same amount of income from its local people, there would have had to have been a substantial increase in domestic rates. If Bedfordshire council was run by the efficient Conservative administration in Luton, the community charge would be much lower.

6. **Mr. Clay:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the average poll tax for England in 1990-91.

The Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. Chris Patten): On the information available to me, I estimate that the average community charge in England is £363.

Mr. Clay: Will the Secretary of State admit that his estimates of the poll tax were probably made up on the spare page of a fairytale book? Does he accept that councils of all political persuasions have been forced to fix the poll tax on average 30 per cent. above his phoney guesstimates? As he and the Government cynically misled the British people about the levels of poll tax, what right has he or any of his colleagues to deliver sanctimonious lectures to the millions of people in this country who are determined to resist this evil tax?

Mr. Patten: The principal reason for the level of community charge in the coming year is that local authorities' gross revenue expenditure will be £5 billion higher next year than this year. On those figures, domestic rates would have increased by about 33 per cent. The only lecture that I will give is that people should obey the law and pursue democratic argument through the ballot box. I hope that that is the lecture that Opposition spokesmen will give to the hon. Gentleman who, as I understand it, advocates that his constituents and other people should not pay the community charge.

Mr. Squire: Will my hon. Friend confirm that his Department is producing a schedule setting out what the charge would have been for each local authority had the rating system remained? Will he further confirm that that schedule will distinguish between authorities that suffered a substantial reduction in real terms in Government support and those that shamelessly increased their expenditure, to stratospheric levels in some places?

Mr. Patten: We shall certainly attempt to give the sort of information for which my hon. Friend has asked. In due course the House will wish to know what the consequences for domestic rates would have been in individual authorities given some of the spending levels that have been set. The community charge—or domestic rates if we

still had them—will be higher in areas controlled by Labour councils. For example, the average charges in Labour-controlled London boroughs are £167 higher than in Conservative boroughs.

Mr. McKelvey: Will the Secretary of State compare the average charges in England with those of the Labour authorities that control most of Scotland? Will he give the amounts that might be reclaimed in rebates and state whether they take into consideration the changes made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer yesterday? Does the Secretary of State believe, as I and most other Scots do, that the changes should apply retrospectively to Scotland? Does he further understand——

Mr. Speaker: Order. One question please.

Mr. McKelvey: —that despite the transitional payments, which are part of the poll tax and were announced at the Conservative party conference, not one person in Scotland has benefited from the supposed changes?

Mr. Patten: The responsibilities of my Department are extensive, but do not go as far as the bounds of the hon. Gentleman's question. He will have noticed that the research on Scotland shows that people in low-income households pay a smaller proportion of their income on the community charge than they paid on domestic rates. I take it that part of the hon. Member's question was addresed to the generosity of the local authority grant settlement in Scotland.

Mr. Tracey: My right hon. Friend will join me in congratulating the Chancellor on his welcome announcement on community charge relief. Will he assure the House and our constituents that the new reliefs will be paid before the bills have to be met this year, following the changes made by the Chancellor?

Mr. Patten: All local authorities will want to do everything that they can to ensure that people get the relief they deserve as rapidly as possible.

The Department of Social Security will be talking to local authorities to ensure that relief is paid as expeditiously as possible. As my hon. Friend said, yesterday's statement by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor was widely welcomed and shows that we have listened to some of the constructive criticisms.

Mr. Pike: For once, will the Secretary of State stop knocking local authorities for overspending and recognise that local authorities such as Lancashire and many others are trying to meet the needs of the people who elected them? If poll tax-capping is introduced, will he accept responsibility for the services that are cut and at some stage will he say what he will do to help people who cannot pay the poll tax?

Mr. Patten: What is of most concern is not whether I am knocking local authorities but whether local authorities are knocking community charge payers—and all too many of them are. I am extremely pleased that the community charge benefits are more generous than those available under domestic rates.

Mr. Mans: Does my right hon. Friend agree that the wide range of community charge levels reflects the wide range of council manning levels and shows that some at least are overmanned and inefficient—Lancashire, for one? Will he take an early opportunity to publish a list of manning levels of local authorities so that community charge payers can see whether they are getting value for money?

Mr. Patten: An inevitable and welcome consequence of the introduction of the community charge is that more local voters are becoming interested in value for money in local government. The sort of figures for which my hon. Friend has called will be of considerable interest to many local charge payers.

Mr. Blunkett: Does the Secretary of State accept that although Opposition Members warmly welcome the statement of the Chancellor yesterday, we are very concerned that the Treasury and the Department of the Environment seem not to understand that, while lifting the capital disregard for entitlement to rebate on poll tax and to housing benefit, they have failed to alter the taper? In consequence, people who have capital investments or savings of over £10,000 a year, despite the lifting of the ceiling to £16,000, will not be entitled under present rules to either housing benefit or poll tax rebate. Will he state this afternoon that the Government are prepared to change the rules, which involve £1 of income being counted for every £250 of capital savings held over £3,000, so that people are entitled to benefit? Does he accept that, in making a complete mess of this—as they have of everything else—the Government have misled people into believing themselves entitled to help that they will not get?

Mr. Patten: The hon. Gentleman is not well informed on that question. I hope that he will recognise that the taper is already more generous than it was previously. That is why many more people will benefit under the new system than did under the previous system.

Architects

7. **Mr. Summerson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many architects are employed by his Department; and at what cost.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. Christopher Chope): Thirty-six architects are employed by my central Department and 375 in the Property Services Agency at salary costs of £1 million and £9·2 million respectively.

Mr. Summerson: Is my hon. Friend satisfied with the work of those architects in designing buildings to be erected on vacant and derelict publicly owned land? Would not it be better to dispose of the land and to let private sector architects get on with the job?

Mr. Chope: I agree with my hon. Friend that architects have an important role in bringing derelict land back into use and that it is desirable to have as many architects as possible in the private sector. That is why I am delighted that of the 375 employed in the PSA, 372 will go with PSA Services into the private sector in 1992.

Mr. Eastham: Is the Minister satisfied with the quality and standards of architecture and is there enough flair in the business of architectural design? If not, could that be because of the straitjacket of Government cost yardsticks?

Mr. Chope: We have a reasonably high standard of architecture, and in recent years many architects employed

in the PSA have won design awards. We get about 23 design awards in the PSA every year. I should be happy to put in the Library a list of awards won during the past 12 months.

Mr. Barry Field: When considering specialist staffing in his Department, can my hon. Friend tell the House what justification there is for the royal parks police who regularly turn up in their specialised police vehicles, two or three——

Mr. Speaker: Order. Are they also architects?

Mr. Chope: I am not aware that the royal parks police employ any architects.

Walkers

8. **Mr. Andrew F. Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what discussions he has had about improving access for walkers and climbers to mountain and moorland in England and Wales.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. David Heathcoat-Amory): We have had useful discussions about such matters with a wide range of organisations. In particular, we have discussed with the Countryside Commission its policy for improving access to the countryside. Subject to parliamentary approval, its grant in aid will increase next year by 13 per cent. Part of that is in support of its work on access and rights of way.

Mr. Bennett: I thank the Minister for his reply. May I remind him that about 10 million people enjoy walking in the countryside as a recreation and that the number is steadily increasing? What steps will the Government take over the next 12 months to ensure greater access?

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: We have a superb network of rights of way—about 140,000 miles in all. It is primarily the duty of the highways authorities to keep them clear of obstructions and to record them on maps which are made available to the public. Those highways authorities can also negotiate additional rights of way where appropriate.

Sir Michael Shaw: Is my hon. Friend aware that proper access must never be confused with indiscriminate access to moorland? Are not control of the moorlands and their proper management absolutely necessary for the continuance of a fine tradition in our countryside?

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: I agree with my hon. Friend. Our aim is to give maximum access to the public, consistent with proper management of the land and the needs of nature conservation. The rights of way network is often the best way of giving that access while avoiding confrontation and conflict with those who work in the countryside.

Environmental Labelling

10. **Ms. Quin:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the negotiations within the European Community to set up an environment friendly labelling system.

Mr. Chris Patten: Following agreement at the Environment Council meeting last September, official level discussions with the European Commission will take place later this month to develop proposals for a Community wide scheme of positive environmental labelling for consumer products.

Ms. Quin: As progress on this matter in the European Community may turn out to be slow, will the Secretary of State commit himself to introducing such a scheme in this country if there has not been agreement by the EC within a specific time limit, for example the end of this year?

Mr. Patten: As the hon. Lady will know, we have taken the lead on this initiative in the European Community. The Commission has assured us that it will be possible to introduce proposals reasonably soon. I should like to see them in place, or at least agreed, by the end of this year. If we do not make the progress that we should like, we shall have to go ahead with a national scheme. The objective is to have in place national schemes which are compatible across the Community so that we are prepared for the single market in 1992.

World Cup (Security)

11. **Mr. Pendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps his Department will take to ensure that security arrangements for British soccer fans at the World Cup are adequate and comprehensive.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. Colin Moynihan): We are providing assistance to the Italian authorities in respect of safety and security measures in connection with England's participation in the World Cup. My Department chairs an interdepartmental working party of officials, which also includes representatives from the police and the football authorities, to co-ordinate United Kingdom measures on preparation for the tournament.

Mr. Pendry: That is all very well, but will the Minister confirm that there will be exchanges between the Italian and English police authorities, that the intelligence that has been gathered by police spotters will be used in any operations, and that he will take action on alcohol restrictions of the kind that were so successful during the England-Holland match in Dusseldorf? Finally, does he believe——

Mr. Speaker: No. One question please, although I think that the hon. Gentleman has had two.

Mr. Moynihan: In fact, Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. Gentleman asked three questions, all of them important. Police spotters and closed-circuit television have proved invaluable in our determined efforts to reduce football hooliganism at domestic games, at the European championships and at international friendlies. The information gathered by, and expertise of, the spotters and the national football intelligence unit will be on offer to the Italian authorities. The hon. Gentleman will appreciate that I cannot comment on the detail of police operations.

The hon. Gentleman's supplementary question related to the exchange of police. That is already under way. As he will be aware, about 50 carabinieri are at present in England—*[Interruption.]*—not, as some newspapers suggest, learning English as understood by football supporters. Their visit is devoted primarily to the policing of football.

To answer the hon. Gentleman's third supplementary question, on the vital issue of alcohol restrictions, I assure him that I shall be discussing that matter in detail during my forthcoming visit to Sardinia.

Mr. Jack: Is my hon. Friend aware that many England soccer fans in Lancashire may be unable to travel to see the World Cup as a result of the excessive community charge demands of Lancashire county council? They could have travelled had the Conservative proposals—for a community charge of £60 per head less—been adopted.

Mr. Moynihan: I am only too well aware of the position expressed by my hon. Friend.

Mr. Menzies Campbell: Does the Minister appreciate that security at home is just as important as security abroad? Does he further appreciate how welcome was yesterday's announcement by the Chancellor of the Exchequer? Is he aware that many other sports—rugby league and rugby football, for example—will be affected by the Taylor committee recommendations and will he undertake to discuss with his right hon. Friend ways in which those sports may be assisted to make the changes which the Taylor recommendations necessarily involve?

Mr. Moynihan: The whole House will wish to join me in welcoming that announcement, which reflects the Government's concern to ensure that vital improvements to football grounds are made. I am certain that the football authorities will now take urgent steps to provide for the safety and comfort of their spectators by implementing as quickly as possible Lord Justice Taylor's recommendations. All-seater stadia are, as the Football Association and the main question recognise, a prerequisite to a successful and safe World Cup bid.

Mr. Batiste: Does my right hon. Friend agree that the improved facilities that will be provided in English football grounds as a result of yesterday's announcement by the Chancellor may make it possible for this country to host a future World Cup?

Mr. Moynihan: I agree with my hon. Friend. Yesterday's announcement will be warmly welcomed as being significant for sport. As the Football Association recognised in representations to the Secretary of State and myself, all-seater stadia are a pre-requisite. They are essential now for any country wishing to host the World Cup, and the twin aims—of ensuring the safety of spectators and of making sure that we have a sufficient number of all-seater stadia to host the World Cup—are doubly welcome.

Mr. Denis Howell: May I, from the Opposition Benches, endorse our appreciation of the Chancellor's action yesterday which the Minister will recall we advocated in the debate in January, after negotiations with the pools promoters? Will the Minister be more active in relation to the potential explosion of violence in Italy? Will he comment on the reports that the thugs of Holland and of this country are already arranging their own fixtures for a celebratory punch-up? That would be disastrous.

Is it true that the police have only nine names on their computer to use in relation to part II of the Football Spectators Act 1989? Will we be able to stop only nine of these evil crooks going abroad and causing trouble? What will the Minister do to make sure that the hundreds of people who misbehaved last year are not allowed to leave these shores for the World Cup?

Mr. Moynihan: We hope that part II of the Football Spectators Act will be in place by the end of April. The right hon. Gentleman is right that it is vital that it should be in place before the World Cup and that everything possible should be done to assist the Italian Government and authorities in minimising trouble during the World Cup and in deterring the hooligan factor. Five major interdepartmental meetings have been held in the past year; I have been to Rome and I shall shortly be going there again and to Sardinia. We shall be offering every possible assistance, through the Home Office, the Foreign Office and my Department. If the right hon. Gentleman has any additional ideas, we shall look at them closely.

I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for his initial comments. That we have taken careful note of the representations that he and the hon. Member for Stalybridge and Hyde (Mr. Pendry) have been making for many years was evidenced by the measures announced by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer yesterday.

Local Government Finance

12. **Mr. Winnick:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what are the latest representations he has received over the implementation of the poll tax.

Mr. David Hunt: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and I continue to receive representations on a wide range of issues concerning the community charge.

Mr. Winnick: Can the Minister give any explanation why, despite the sustained Government propaganda, the poll tax is so widely hated throughout Britain, including Mid-Staffordshire? I know that the Minister is not yet a member of the Cabinet, but why do not the members of the Cabinet stand up to the Prime Minister in the same way as Tory councillors have done by rightly resigning the Tory whip in many parts of the country in opposition to this notorious measure?

Mr. Hunt: Before the hon. Gentleman gets carried away about alleged unfairness, does he think it fair that people living in Conservative wards in the Walsall area, regardless of how they vote and regardless of their circumstances, should have only £298 per head spent on them by the council—the Government's assumed community charge for Walsall—while people in Labour areas have £425 per head spent on them under the Labour council's community charge? That is the policy of the hard Left on the council which the ruling Labour group accepted on 5 March. Its policy is to look after its own areas and blow the rest. That is unfair, it is a scandal and the hon. Gentleman should condemn it.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Several tens of thousands of people in my constituency will receive rebates and transitional relief. Is my hon. Friend sure that everybody who is entitled to those reliefs will get them?

Mr. Hunt: We must do everything possible to ensure that they do. Earlier this afternoon the hon. Member for Sheffield, Brightside (Mr. Blunkett) said that people with savings of more than £10,000 would not be entitled to a

rebate; that is incorrect. Equally incorrect was his previous statement that people would not be entitled to transitional relief, or would lose their right to transitional relief, where a council was spending higher than the Government's assessment. If we joined in putting across the positive message to 10 million people that they are entitled to rebate, with the additions of yesterday, and to 7·5 million people that they are entitled to transitional relief, we would all be doing much better by the British people.

Mr. Gould: How many representations has the Minister received from Tory local authorites across England and Wales which have combined to produce poll tax bills an average of 31 per cent. above Government projections? That is within a whisker of the national figure of 35 per cent. Can he guarantee that there will be no further protest resignations by Tory councillors to add to the 18 in West Oxfordshire, and the nine who resigned yesterday in Humberside?

Mr. Hunt: I have received a number of protests and representations from Tory areas about the extent to which they must pay into the safety net to protect losing areas, which in the main are Labour areas. The hon. Gentleman should look again at the calculations. If he took the safety net contributions out of the comparison, he would find that the average community charge in Labour areas was considerably above that in Conservative areas.

Mr. Moss: Did my hon. Friend see yesterday's newspaper articles revealing that in Labour-controlled Islington the community charge would be £68 less per head if the council did not dish out money to fringe groups? Does my hon. Friend agree that the best way to get the community charge down is to get rid of Labour councils?

Mr. Hunt: I could not agree more. I hope that, as the pain of accountability hits Labour councils, they will begin to listen to their ratepayers and their future community charge payers. As for the newspaper article, I look forward to *The Sun* shining on the truth of Labour irresponsibility in the days to come.

Housing, Liverpool

13. **Mr. Wareing:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will visit Liverpool to study its housing problems with a view to reviewing its housing investment programme.

Mr. Chope: I have no plans to review Liverpool's main housing investment programme allocation for the coming year which is to be increased by 73·2 per cent. compared with this year.

Mr. Wareing: If the Minister came to Liverpool he would realise how horribly below the necessary level the Government's housing investment programme is. The people of Liverpool believe that they are being discriminated against on narrow ideological grounds. Liverpool has more than its share of Boswell and Boot defective houses, and that is not the people's or the council's fault. More than 700 people who bought their houses at the Government's behest now cannot sell them. When will the Government do something about that, and live up to what Liverpool people, who bought their houses under the Government's diktat, expect from them?

Mr. Chope: The Government have been incredibly generous to Liverpool with taxpayers' money. Next year's HIP allocation for Liverpool is the third highest in the country, at more than £33 million. On top of that, next year the housing revenue account subsidy for Liverpool amounts to about £68 million, which is more than £1,000 per dwelling.

Mr. Hind: If my hon. Friend visits Liverpool, as the hon. Member for Liverpool, West Derby (Mr. Wareing) suggests, perhaps he would travel on to west Lancashire——

Mr. Speaker: Order. Not today, please.

Mr. Hind: —where he will note that the misbehaviour of Liverpool city council over the years, in overtaxing its tenants and its industry has resulted in many of its current problems, such as loss of grant. Does my hon. Friend agree that the real truth is that Liverpool city council has landed Liverpool in the mess that it is in today?

Mr. Chope: I agree with my hon. Friend. In many respects, Liverpool has been the author of its own misfortune. That is especially true with defective housing. Whereas most councils have dealt with 60 to 65 per cent. of their defective houses, Liverpool has got around to dealing with only 5 to 10 per cent. That is why the hon. Member for Liverpool, West Derby (Mr. Wareing) has a problem in his constituency.

Homelessness

14. **Miss Hoey:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has developed any new proposals to alleviate homelessness.

17. **Mr. Fearn:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any plans to bring forward proposals to reduce the number of homeless people in England and Wales.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I shall very shortly be announcing allocations for 1990-91 of the two-year programme of additional resources to meet the problem of homelessness in London and the south-east. These will total £112 million for local authorities and should result in more than 5,000 additional lettings next year.

Miss Hoey: I thank the Minister for his reply and urge him to make his announcement very quickly. Is he aware of the special needs resulting from homelessness in the Waterloo area, particularly in the bull ring? Does he know that the money to be made available for the borough of Lambeth will not make it possible to deal with that special problem? Will he recognise that fact by coming up with a new project for the area with which the London borough could help? As he is a new Minister, will he share a walkabout with me some evening in the next fortnight so that he may see the area for himself?

Mr. Spicer: Much as I would enjoy accompanying the hon. Lady round the bull ring, it would be a little superfluous as I have already been there to look at the problems. I agree with the hon. Lady that people living rough in the area present a special problem. The question, which we are addressing very urgently, is what can be done about it without encouraging people to leave home. People

leaving home early and split marriages are major causes of rooflessness. The allocations that I have announced today will, of course, help.

Mr. Fearn: Does the Minister agree that the extra amounts allocated for hostels and for counselling are far too small?

Mr. Spicer: There are 50,000 hostel places in this country—21,000 of them in London alone. The question is whether the throughput is fast enough. One reason behind what I said today is that we want to provide more fixed abodes. We want to provide housing to which people currently in hostels may go. That is precisely why we have targeted this extremely generous amount of money as we have.

National Health Service Hospitals (Opting Out)

3.31 pm

Mr. Martin Redmond (Don Valley): I beg to move,

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to provide that a referendum shall be held in a health authority area on any proposal that a hospital in that area should opt out of the National Health Service.

The Government are steering through Parliament a Bill that will bring fundamental change to the National Health Service in Britain—a Bill for which they have no mandate. Not least of the changes is that hospitals—indeed, whole health authorities—will be allowed, even encouraged, to opt out of local NHS control and assume self-governing status. This is an example of the Government's blind commitment to the market and to competition, regardless of how unsuitable or inapplicable the free market in health care may be.

I call on the House to support my proposal for a referendum to be held in all areas where there have been expressions of interest in opting out. If the result should be against opting out, the wishes of the local community and staff should be heeded, and expressions of interest withdrawn.

Hon. and right hon. Members will be aware already of the grave misgivings of the medical profession about the changes and about the consequences that they will have for national health care provision in Britain. These misgivings, among the medical and nursing professions, among Health Service ancillary staff and among patients and the general public have manifested themselves as outright opposition to the Government's proposals for opting out.

Opposition has been expressed by members of local health authorities. Indeed, in my part of the world—Don Valley—health authority members have voted against expressions in favour of opting out from managers at Doncaster royal infirmary and Mexborough Montagu hospital. Despite this, the unit managers insist on going ahead with their plans. They have no plans to ask the people of Doncaster or NHS staff what they think.

Plans for opting out are not opposed just by health authority members. Doncaster metropolitan borough council commissioned a MORI poll of the town to test public opinion. I have the results here. On the question of opting out, 68 per cent. were strongly opposed, and only 4 per cent. showed strong support. It is worthy of note that opposition was strongest among the users of the local hospitals, among the less well-off and among the elderly. They know, as Opposition Members know, that they will be the ones who lose as a result of this headlong rush into commercialised health care.

I do not wish to give the impression that Doncaster is isolated in its opposition. That would be far from true. We have ample evidence from around the country that there is strong opposition to the plans for the future of the National Health Service, in particular to the opt-out proposals. I use advisedly the phrase "the future of the National Health Service". Some would argue that, in the face of the National Health Service and Community Care Bill, the very future of the National Health Service, free at the point of need and funded from general taxation, is questionable.

Unlike the Labour Government of 1945, who brought the NHS into being and who had a mandate from the electorate to do so, this Government have no mandate for the introduction of opted-out hospitals. Nowhere in the Conservative party's election manifesto were these changes mentioned. Nowhere have the Government tested public opinion. Nowhere have we seen overwhelming support for their proposals. What we have seen is concerted opposition to opting out from all sectors of the community and from all sectors of National Health Service staff, with the notable exception of the unit and district general managers who are on short-term, performance-related contracts.

Even among the latter group there have been instances where managers have abided by the wishes of their local health authority members and ceased work on the preparations for opting out. Throughout the country, the views of health authority members, community health councils, staff, patients and the public are being ignored —not by accident or omission but by deliberate policy.

The Secretary of State for Health apparently believes that those who oppose the Government's plans are mistaken. If he thinks that he can dismiss the views of medical staff, patients and the public, and if he thinks that he can continue to denigrate their views and opinions, it is he who is mistaken. There is strong and widespread opposition to the Government's opt-out plans. I have evidence of ballots of staff and local communities who time and again have rejected the introduction of competition into health care provision.

I shall identify just a few examples. In North Tyneside, where the whole health authority expressed an interest in opting out, 97 per cent. were against; in Reddish, 81 per cent. were against; in York district hospital, 91 per cent. were against; in Plymouth health authority, 75 per cent. of the consultants were against. I could go on. The House knows, and the Minister knows, that there are many such examples.

It is interesting for the House to note that, out of a staff of 3,500 balloted in North Tyneside, 2,500 returned their ballot papers. Even if all those unreturned ballot papers were counted as votes in favour of opting out, the result would still show a majority against. Even using the Government's own peculiar criteria for ballots, as demonstrated by the housing action trust ballots, the result is still the same—opposition.

I know that the Secretary of State and his supporters will dismiss the ballot results as meaningless. It has been said that the question asked determines the answer. I challenge the Secretary of State to frame a question that will not elicit an overwhelming majority against the opt-out proposals. I strongly support the statements made in Committee by my hon. Friend the Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman) that the questions are not biased and that public opinion is against the Bill.

The Government maintain that the proposed changes to the fabric of the National Health Service will increase patient choice. We hear a great deal about choice. Working papers on the National Health Service and Community Care Bill point that there should be consultation before any self-governing trust is formed. This consultation will, however, be limited.

I urge hon. Members to support my proposals for local referendums. Some would say that they are modest. I know that several local authorities have called for a national referendum on the Government's proposals. The idea is not new, nor is it unusual. We have had a

referendum in this country before, and it is common in other European countries to hold a referendum on a specific issue.

The Government have stated that they are committed to the development of decision making in the National Health Service. They want to make hospitals more responsive to local needs. Surely the logical step would be to elicit the views of those most directly involved—the staff, the patients and the community. I urge hon. Members of all parties to support my proposals for local referendums to allow British people to choose whether their local hospitals should be allowed to become self-governing trusts, to decide about competition in health care and opting out of local health authority control and to withdraw expressions of interest when the people have said quite clearly, "We are not interested in opting out." I move my Bill for the sake of democracy.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Martin Redmond, Mr. Michael Welsh, Mr. George J. Buckley, Mr. Don Dixon, Mr. Harry Ewing, Mrs. Alice Mahon, Mr. Peter Hardy, Mr. Tom Cox, Mr. Ray Powell, Ms. Dawn Primarolo, Mr. Alan Meale and Mr. Eric Illsley.

National Health Service Hospitals (Opting Out)

Mr. Martin Redmond accordingly presented a Bill to provide that a referendum shall be held in a health authority area on any proposal that a hospital in that area should opt out of the National Health Service: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 20 April and to be printed. [Bill 107.]

Mr. Barry Porter (Wirral, South): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I wish to raise an issue arising directly out of Question Time when the hon. Member for Newham, North West (Mr. Banks) was bobbing up and down like a cork on a rough sea. I wish to make a serious point about the rights and opportunities of Back Benchers. The hon. Gentleman is knowledgeable about the matters which were being raised during environment questions and it was unfortunate that he was forced to issue an epithet which offended the susceptibilities and sensibilities of some of my hon. Friends and which was not repeatable in polite society.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I hope that the hon. Gentleman is not being too sensitive. I did not hear that epithet. I am sure that the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) is most concerned about the hon. Gentleman's protection of him.

Mr. Porter: I am not complaining about the use of the epithet. Back Benchers who take the trouble to come to this place and attempt to ask questions, and certainly an hon. Gentleman who, although he offers views which are often unwelcome and wrong, does so in a light-hearted and cheerful manner, should be called more often.

Mr. Speaker: I do not know what hon. Members say behind their hands when they are unable to be called at Question Time, but the House knows that I am constantly being urged to speed up Question Time. I did allow a rather longer time today on the community charge, or poll tax as I believe it is now called—*[Interruption.]* Order. I hear it described in that way on both the BBC and in the Chamber. But, with the best will in the world, I cannot call every hon. Member who wishes to get in, including the hon. Gentleman.

Orders of the Day

WAYS AND MEANS

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on Question [20 March].

AMENDMENT OF THE LAW

Motion made, and Question proposed,

That it is expedient to amend the law with respect to the National Debt and the public revenue and to make further provision in connection with finance; but this Resolution does not extend to the making of any amendment with respect to value added tax so as to provide—

(a) for zero-rating or exempting any supply;
(b) for refunding any amount of tax;
(c) for varying the rate of that tax otherwise than in relation to all supplies and importations; or
(d) for relief other than relief applying to goods of whatever description or services of whatever description.—*[Mr. Major.]*

Question again proposed.

Budget Resolutions and Economic Situation

[Relevant documents: European Community Document No. 9487/89 on the Annual Economic Report 1989-90 and the un-numbered Explanatory Memorandum submitted by HM Treasury on 31st January 1990 on the final version of the Report as adopted by the Council.]

Mr. Speaker: In view of the great number of right hon. and hon. Members who wish to participate in the debate, I propose to put a 10-minute limit on speeches between 6 and 8 o'clock this evening.

3.43 pm

Mr. John Smith (Monklands, East): I congratulate the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the pleasant and competent way in which he introduced his first Budget. I am sure that he was very glad to get it over. On the substance of his proposals and their relevance to Britain's economic predicament, I fear that I cannot be so congratulatory—not that the formal proposals in the Budget will detain us too long in the debates of which today's is the precursor.

Many of the non-controversial proposals in the Budget will attract little, if any, hostility from any quarter. The move to independent taxation was signalled in previous Budgets, even if it is now at the point of implementation. There is widespread approval for the introduction of independent taxation of men and women, even if there will be serious debate about some of the details, such as whether the new married couple's allowance should be capable of being distributed between spouses rather than being given automatically in the first instance to the man.

Useful changes in the administration of VAT and corporation tax have been proposed. The assistance that will be forthcoming to football grounds will be welcomed as clubs face up to implementing the Taylor report against the background of a sharp increase in rates under the uniform business rate.

The Government will, I hope, acknowledge the important part played by the Opposition, and by my right hon. Friends the Members for Birmingham, Small Heath (Mr. Howell) and for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley), in debates on the Taylor report, in securing the assistance offered. Sports other than football, such as cricket, rugby union, rugby league and athletics, will also have to face the cost of improvements, and they clearly have a strong case for receiving equivalent assistance.

In principle, incentives to saving are welcome. It remains to be seen how much the new savings plan will attract new rather than diverted saving, but there is nothing wrong with fiscal incentive for saving. As a means of controlling demand, it makes much more sense than prohibitively high interest rates—"usuriously" high interest rates, as the Chancellor described them the last time they were 15 per cent. in 1981, when he was a Back Bencher.

Savings have dropped so much in the past decade that incentives are undoubtedly required. Many families in Britain, as they struggle with mortgage repayments, the poll tax and high prices at every hand, will feel that chance would be a fine thing. They have a hard enough task to make ends meet, let alone find £150 a month for a savings scheme.

Nor will the Chancellor find any objection to abolishing the foolish tax on workplace nurseries which was introduced by the right hon. Member for Blaby (Mr. Lawson) in 1985. I shall not detain the House with an examination of the other measures, because the Chancellor took time to explain them yesterday.

Mr. Nigel Lawson (Blaby): On a point of fact, I should like to assure the right hon. and learned Gentleman that at no time did I introduce a tax on workplace nurseries. The tax on workplace nurseries arose out of the tax on benefits in kind, which has been on the statute book for many years under Labour and Conservative Governments. It took positive action by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor to remove it in this year's Budget.

Mr. Smith: The right hon. Gentleman protests too much. It is quite clear that action was taken in 1985. It may have been based on previous legislative possibilities, but action was clearly taken. What is undoubtedly clear is that Budget after Budget passed but the right hon. Gentleman refused to do anything about it. However, I am glad that he is a participant in these debates again, and I hope that he will rise to his feet to give his views on some of the current problems, for which he bears a heavy responsibility.

I shall not detain the House by examining in detail the other measures, because the Chancellor properly took time to explain them yesterday. I noticed that in his television broadcast last night, he dealt with them in a few sentences. He was probably right to do so, because they do not amount to very much. One gets the impression that, over the past few months, Treasury officials have been combing the files and searching the shelves for administrative changes that could be usefully offered to a Chancellor who needed to fill out his Budget speech.

I shall refer later in my speech to the raising of the savings limit for housing benefit and poll tax rebate, because it raises significant issues, not least in relation to Scotland.

There are significant omissions from the Budget. The Government's so-called concern for the environment found little expression in it. Indeed, the word "environment" was never uttered by the Chancellor. Perhaps I should not place too much stress on that, as the words "medium-term financial strategy" were not uttered

either, although I discovered from the Red Book that it remains a crucial part of the Government's economic strategy—so crucial that the Chancellor forgot all about it when he addressed the House.

Before the Budget, we proposed changes in value added tax, corporation tax and vehicle excise duty, which would have assisted the promotion of environmentally friendly products and acted as a deterrent to the use of harmful products. I hope that it will not be long before the growing, genuine environmental concerns throughout the nation find some positive fiscal expression.

There was no reference in the Budget to child benefit. Before Conservative Members complain that this is a social security measure, let me remind them that child benefit was a combination of the old family allowance and the child's tax allowance. Had it remained a tax allowance, it would have been uprated in the Budget, like any of the other allowances. Once again, the Conservatives have breached what was thought to be an all-party agreement to update child benefit regularly. It should have been increased to at least £8·60, the amount if it had been uprated in line with inflation since 1987. It would have been highly appropriate if the Chancellor had signalled an intention to return to an honourable course of dealing, from which the Government have so significantly departed.

The Chancellor, at the start of his speech, described his objectives as "to bring inflation down" and to enable Britain to seize the economic opportunities of the 1990s. I am happy to accept these as important economic objectives, but the right hon. Gentleman's Budget is at best irrelevant, and at worst harmful, to both.

This Government have said more about inflation than any other Government in history. At the last election, many hon. Members were rash enough to assure their electors that the problem had been solved. Not that long ago, the Prime Minister talked absurdly in the House about moving towards zero inflation. Extensive talk, bountiful promises—miserable action. Let us get one thing clear about inflation in modern Britain: it is not, as the Government would have us believe, some satanic force which invades us like a mediaeval plague about which little can be done except to toil manfully to mitigate a scourge for which no one can really be held responsible.

Does inflation, for example, come from abroad? Can we, like the Government—who always try to blame others—blame the nasty foreigners for our problems? There was a hint of that in the Chancellor's remark in his Budget speech that inflation was

"a problem common to all nations".—[*Official Report*, 20 March 1990; Vol. 169, c. 1010.]

which was qualified by the words "to a degree."

In the circumstances, that was a wise qualification. It is extremely difficult for the Government to mount the argument that inflation has been imported into Britain when Britain is at the top of the European inflation league. Or inflation is at 7·7 per cent. and, as we know, is heading for 9 per cent. The G7 average is 3·7 per cent.; the EC average, 4·6 per cent.; Italy, 5·7 per cent.; Canada, 5·3 per cent.; the United States, 4·3 per cent.; France, 3·4 per cent.; West Germany, 2·6 per cent.; and Japan 1·3 per cent. So we cannot blame the nasty foreigners. The 1980s have been a decade in which the movement of commodity prices has been unprecedentedly favourable for the management of domestic inflation.

After 11 years of Conservative government, are we to blame the last Labour Government? The Government might try—they are willing to try almost anything—but I do not think that one will find that one very convincing. The truth is that Britain's inflation is made at home, and the authors are on the Government's Front Bench, with the odd one on the Conservative Back Benches. The explosion of demand, caused by the credit free-for-all and the tax cuts for the rich, far exceeded the capacity of our weakened industrial sector to supply, so we got sharply rising inflation and a plunging deficit in the balance of payments. What have the Government done about that? They constantly push up prices. Despite all the talk about "bearing down" on inflation, the Government keep scoring inflationary own goals.

Mr. Tim Smith (Beaconsfield): There is something that I do not understand about the right hon. and learned Gentleman's criticism. He talks about a credit free-for-all, yet two years ago, when the Government admittedly reduced interest rates, he tabled a motion calling for even lower interest rates. What is his policy?

Mr. Smith: We regularly criticise the Government for the total deregulation of financial services. The hon. Gentleman is correct to say that, in the wake of the stock market crash, I agreed with the action that the Government and the then Chancellor, the right hon. Member for Blaby (Mr. Lawson), took in lowering interest rates, and I think that I was right to do so. Many other countries did the same, and it was a wise course to adopt and to advocate. What I certainly did not propose or support was the total credit free-for-all that was happening prior to that, and the Opposition strenuously and vigorously opposed the irresponsible tax cuts in the Budget of 1988, as the hon. Gentleman knows.

Despite all the talk about inflation—no Government have talked more about it—this Government have repeatedly scored inflationary own goals. It is the Government who are to blame for increased prices in public transport, electricity and water, for increased prescription charges and for the large rise in council rents that has yet to come.

It is the Government who have chosen the usuriously high interest rate level of 15 per cent. as their exclusive means of attack. Look at the consequences of that on the mortgage rate and one sees the inflationary result. Take a typical family with a new mortgage of £40,000. In June 1988, the monthly repayment was £267; today the monthly repayment is £420—an extra £153 each month. No wonder wage claims go up as people struggle to make ends meet in the face of such new imposts.

Now a new twist has been added to the problems of millions of people and a new boost has been added to inflation, and that is the poll tax. Now that the bills are coming in, people in England and Wales are discovering this year, as the people of Scotland discovered last year, what the poll tax means for the ordinary family budget. As the Chancellor conceded yesterday, poll tax levels are about one third higher than domestic rates. In fact, a massive extra £3 billion is to be raised this year. That is the equivalent of adding 2p to the standard rate of income tax. No wonder the Secretary of State for the Environment told us that it would have

"a devastating impact on the retail prices index".

[Mr. Smith]

Last year, the average household in England and Wales paid £500 in rates. The poll tax bills arriving from 1 April will be on average 33 per cent. higher than that, at £667 —an increase of £167.

The double effect of mortgage increases and the poll tax is hitting ordinary families hard. Of course, much of the argument has rightly been about the unfairness of the poll tax. It is the most unfair tax in the world; no doubt that is why no other country has adopted it or even thought about adopting it. But it is crucial too, to understand its inflationary impact. The poll tax alone has added more than 1 per cent. to the retail prices index.

Mr. David Nicholson (Taunton): The right hon. and learned Gentleman talks about burdens on working families. Will he give a commitment that the Labour party would not favour replacing domestic rates or the community charge with a local income tax, which would bear down exclusively on working families?

Mr. Smith: As the hon. Member for Taunton (Mr. Nicholson) knows, the Labour party has proposed a local government tax based upon the occupation of property. That is the proper way to proceed. It is common among most other countries in western Europe and it is the typical form of local taxation in the European Community.

I note that the hon. Gentleman did not take the opportunity to seek to claim credit for the poll tax. Very few Conservative Members will wish credit for having taken part in devising and implementing the poll tax to be recorded in their political curriculum vitae. I do not notice Conservative Members jostling with each other to take credit for it. No one has asked for it to be called the Baker tax, the Ridley tax, the Rifkind tax, the Howard tax or the Patten tax; indeed, there has been a distinct lack of enthusiasm from that last quarter. If one is to be fair, a proper description of it might be the Thatcher tax. After all, the Prime Minister has pursued it ruthlessly. She has trampled on opposition, on wiser counsels and even on wiser councillors to secure its implementation, come hell or high water.

However, before we rush to judgment about what the poll tax should properly be called, we should recall the shrewd observations of the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine)—[HON. MEMBERS: "Where is he?"] Well, these days he is probably out working hard for the Conservative party in the country. He is indefatigable in his support for the Government and for the present leader of the Conservative party. I do not know whether the right hon. Lady really understood that, when her right hon. Friend said that he would take no part in any subsequent election for the leadership, he meant that he would not even turn up to vote for her.

We have to be extremely careful about what the right hon. Member for Henley says. When taking part in discussions on the passing of the poll tax for England and Wales, he told us that it would be called the "Tory tax". I know that these days the right hon. Gentleman could be described as having "a complexity of motives", and one has to be careful when working out exactly what he means, but he was right in the sense that the poll tax is a unique encapsulation of rampant unfairness and explosive inflation. Nothing more deserves to be called a "Tory tax".

So much of the Budget has been affected by the poll tax. It bulks large in the Chancellor's assessment of inflationary factors in the economy. It pops up again in the changes that were made in the capital rules for eligibility for housing benefit and poll tax rebate. The Chancellor presented the raising of those limits as if it was the result of some careful consideration and reflection between himself and the Secretary of State for Social Services. It was nothing of the kind. It was a panic reaction to the wave of anger that is running from one end of the country to the other. No doubt it was also a reaction to urgent messages that are coming from places not far from Mid-Staffordshire.

When the Opposition argued vehemently that the capital limit of £8,000 was far too low, we got little shrift from the Government, but circumstances alter cases, and particularly, by-election circumstances particularly alter cases. Of course we welcome the relaxation of an unjust rule against which we campaigned, but I remind the House that the reduction in potential benefit for all those with capital of more than £3,000 remains in place. I fear that many of those who believed that they might benefit from the doubling of the capital limit may be disappointed by the extent of any relief that they can obtain.

If the Government are genuine in their concern about the hardship that is being caused, especially to elderly people, why has that concern manifested itself only now, not a year ago when the Government pushed through the poll tax legislation in Scotland and when even the right hon. Member for Henley supported that legislation, like many Conservative Members who were happy about the introduction of the poll tax, provided that it had nothing to do with their own constituents and their own electoral opportunities? We know that spineless Ministers in the Scottish Office did nothing about it. They were not bothered by Tory councillors resigning. If many Tory councillors resign in Scotland, there will not be any left at all. Scottish Tories are so adrift from what is happening in their own country and from the circumstances of life there that they sought nothing by way of alleviation of that rule and, as a result, nothing was done.

The Government now have to explain what they are going to do about the injustice of the poll tax which has been inflicted over a substantial part of the kingdom without any relief being offered for the year of suffering that has just gone by. Why did the Government do that? The answer is not complex or difficult. As was clear from the Chancellor's demeanour yesterday, I do not think that it was a calculated plot against the interests of the people of Scotland. It was much simpler than that. Once again, the Government forgot that Scotland existed. When the Chief Secretary to the Treasury replies, I ask him to outline the Government's proposals to remedy that injustice, which many Opposition Members find totally intolerable.

Therefore, high interest rates, mortgage rises and the poll tax are the reasons why the Government have failed to combat their own home-grown inflation. I have a simple message for them: "Stop causing inflation if you want to bring it down".

Mr. Alex Salmond (Banff and Buchan): I endorse everything that the right hon. and learned Gentleman has said about the capital limits concession announced yesterday. Given that I understand that it will take four years to repeal the poll tax before a capital value tax can be introduced by a Labour Government, will he give a

guarantee that he will find a way to introduce backdating to alleviate the great injustice done to many people in Scotland last year?

Mr. Smith: The hon. Gentleman's assumption that it will take us as long as four years to sweep away the poll tax and to replace it with something better is absurd. That may be his estimation of how long it will take, but it is not ours. A Labour Government will always take care to ensure that people are treated fairly throughout the whole of this United Kingdom from one end to the other. It is the Government's own fault in introducing legislation in one part of the country which they were not prepared to introduce in another part, which has given rise to this very problem.

Mr. John Townend (Bridlington): If the Government are so unfair to Scotland and do not think about it, can the right hon. and learned Gentleman explain why public expenditure per head is much higher in Scotland than in England and much higher than it is in the north of England, which has problems far greater than those of Scotland?

Mr. Smith: The hon. Gentleman is riding one of his usual hobbyhorses. Expenditure levels in Scotland are assessed at their present rate, no doubt, because the case has been properly made for the expenditure to be set at that level. If that is not so, the Chancellor of the Exchequer should tell us as he has just sanctioned a lot of the public expenditure proposals in the Autumn Statement. I note that the right hon. Gentleman points to his right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary—I hope that he does not think that he is any better at explaining these things than he is. No doubt the Chief Secretary can deal with that interesting inquiry from his hon. Friend the Member for Bridlington (Mr. Townend). I have one word of advice for the Chief Secretary: he should keep his hon. Friend south of the border, because the Tories are in enough trouble already without sending him north to ask such questions against the background of Scottish political opinion.

The second of the Chancellor's objectives is to promote economic success in the 1990s, and that shows how supremely irrelevant the Budget is to Britain's real situation. What is our economic situation today? What economic policy should be adopted for the 1990s? The Chancellor was forced to admit that all was not well. For this year, overall growth will be just 1 per cent., inflation will remain depressingly high, interest rates will be kept up and the trade deficit will still be heavily in the red this year, next year and the year after. Fixed investment—an alarming statistic in the small print of the Red Book—is set to fall this year by 1·25 per cent. and by three quarters of 1 per cent. in 1991. That is a significant downward revision even from the Autumn Statement of November 1989.

In an ominous remark in his speech, the Chancellor observed that the

"downturn may become quite sharp."—[*Official Report*, 20 March 1990; Vol. 169, c. 1012.]

Quite a change from the Budget of 1988, from those happy, heady days when the right hon. Member for Blaby was assuring us that we were undergoing an economic miracle comparable to that previously enjoyed by West Germany and still enjoyed by Japan. The present Chancellor could not but join the act as well and, during consideration of the Finance Bill in 1988, he told us:

"During the 1960s we praised and envied the German economic miracle. In the 1980s the position has been precisely reversed."—[*Official Report*, 26 April, 1988; Vol. 132, c. 214.]

Let us look at the facts and statistics of Britain's present situation. At the beginning of the decade, the trade deficit with West Germany was less than £1 billion; it is now heading for £10 billion. In the context of the European Community and the wider world, Britain's true predicament is exposed.

I have already said that the United Kingdom is top of the inflation league. The sad and depressing fact is that we are also at the top of the trade deficit league and at the bottom of the growth league. We have a much higher trade deficit than any other EC country. The G7 and EC averages are in surplus. The other EC countries which are in deficit have a much smaller deficit than we have. In the growth league, although the United Kingdom achieved 2·5 per cent. growth in 1989, the G7 average was 3·5 per cent. and the EC average was 3·6 per cent.

What is worse is that, for 1990 and 1991, the OECD predicts higher growth for all the other leading countries, in both the European Community and G7. There is no room for complacency for an economy and country that are top of the inflation league, top of the trade deficit league and bottom of the economic growth league. Things have gone wrong, and they need to be put right.

Sir Peter Tapsell (East Lindsey): How can the right hon. and learned Gentleman account for the undoubted fact that international financial opinion is far more worried by the possibility of another Labour Government than by any of the statistics that he has just quoted?

Mr. Smith: I do not know to whom the hon. Gentleman speaks when he is abroad, and it may well be to people who share his political opinions, but on any objective basis —I find, increasingly, that people are objective about such matters—there is no foundation for his proposition. It might occur to the hon. Gentleman that the strains and stresses that sterling is under today—he knows perfectly well that sterling is under strain—have everything to do with yesterday's Budget and the present economic fundamentals of this country. I hope that hon. Members will not try to steer genuine political debate into the sort of scarifying cul-de-sac that the hon. Gentleman wishes us to enter. It is up to the Government to run sensible economic policies in this country, and their failure to do so causes pressure on the currency, whether from home or abroad.

The core of the problem, and what has, above all, gone wrong in the past decade, have been the neglect of the manufacturing sector. Investment in the 1980s has been hopelessly inadequate to secure the new technology and extensive development of skills that should have occurred during this decade. That is why we need a crucial change of policy and the adoption of a strategy for industrial recovery. The move towards a competitive and productive economy, which alone can secure our success, has yet to occur in this country. To achieve it will be the vital task for the 1990s.

We must adopt a framework of policies which permits interest rates to come down and stay down. That is why the Labour party advocates that the Government should begin negotiations to join the exchange rate mechanism of the European monetary system. Stable exchange rates would give British companies the confidence that they need to invest, and joining the European monetary system

[Mr. Smith]

would help to lower interest rates and reduce inflation. What the Chancellor said on the subject yesterday, was, to put it mildly, distinctly unhelpful.

In addition, the Government should reverse the cuts they have made in public expenditure programmes, training, support for industry and regional development. It is quite absurd that, at this crucial time in the development of our economy, public expenditure cuts should be made in those sectors.

Mr. A. J. Beith (Berwick-upon-Tweed): I agree strongly with the commitment that the right hon. and learned Gentleman has made to early membership of the European monetary system, but will he say how inflation can be kept down while interest rates are brought down under this regime?

Mr. Tristan Garel-Jones (Treasurer of Her Majesty's Household): Do not answer that question.

Mr. Smith: I shall not follow the advice of the hon. Gentleman, and I shall answer the question.

The hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Mr. Beith) knows perfectly well that the advantage of being in the exchange rate mechanism is that we shall have stability of the exchange rate. That is the prize that we gain and the objective that we secure if we join—*[Interruption.]* If the Financial Secretary of the Treasury wants to ask me questions, will he kindly get to his feet and do so?

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Peter Lilley): The exchange rate mechanism of the EMS is a commitment to keep the exchange rate stable, not a magic potion that achieves that end painlessly.

Mr. Smith: The hon. Gentleman is adept at expressing the obvious. When we enter it, as I hope we will, we shall accept certain disciplines. We have the obligation to maintain the exchange rate within a certain band. Monetary policy is relevant to that. It does not mean that monetary policy must be dedicated exclusively to that single objective—there are domestic concerns too, but it becomes a principal concern of policy.

Before the Financial Secretary to the Treasury makes any more grimaces, I should remind him that he was a member of the Government who were busy shadowing the deutschmark. I do not know if he is so keen on maintaining and defending that policy now—it appears to have had a mixed reception, or at least a mixed recollection, among right hon. and hon. Members of the Government Benches—but the prize that we can gain from joining is exchange rate stability, the confidence that flows from it and the capacity to operate the economy at significantly lower interest rates, which will help generate the investment, particularly in the industrial sector, that the country needs so much.

The public expenditure component is also important. There must be Government support and involvement, particularly in education and training, which have been so grossly neglected in the past decade, principally because of the Government's desire to eschew responsibility for it. The right hon. Member for Blaby used to say time and again that training was a matter for companies—but training is too important to be left exclusively to companies. It gives people opportunities and it adds to our economic strength; it enlarges personal opportunity and increases the wealth of the community.

There also ought to be—this is relevant both to our present situation and to the Budget debates—fiscal incentives for investment in new technology, particularly in manufacturing. I hope that the Government will give careful consideration to that as we proceed with the Budget debates.

I have, therefore, recommended a European initiative, a public sector expenditure commitment and a fiscal strategy to help us make sure that investment, particularly in manufacturing, is increased and maintained at the levels necessary if we are to be successful in the 1990s; but I select training as the matter that needs particular attention.

I notice that, although the Government talk a lot about training now, and although they have set up the training and enterprise councils, quite a number of people are expressing concern about the cuts that have been made. *The Guardian* of 17 March said:

> "Mr. Christopher Johnson, chief executive of Wedgwood and a director of the Staffordshire training council, said Staffordshire's budget had been reduced from £50 million to £35 million. He said, 'We cannot survive without better training standards. When we set out last year we had high hopes, but now the Government keeps on changing the goal posts.'"

That is the view of the Government's own appointee in the Government's own system, operating the Government's own policy. He appears to have lost confidence in their commitment to education and training. Yet this is the area that stands out above all others because, in the modern economy, it is the development of skills that counts more than anything. Our competitors in Europe know that perfectly well; our competitors in newly industrialised countries know it. That is why they have a massive commitment to education and training. They know it and they act upon it, but this do-nothing Government seem incapable of assessing the nature of the challenge, let alone of devising a strategy to meet it in the 1990s.

Britain will not make the crucial move to a genuinely productive and confidently competitive economy until the Government understand and accept their own responsibility to lead a partnership between themselves and industry to achieve these goals. Once again, in their irrelevant Budget, the Government have shirked their crucial responsibility to initiate economic policies which permit our industry and our people to compete on equal terms in the new European market. For Britain to have a real future in the 1990s, it needs above all one crucial change—a change of Government.

4.19 pm

The Chief Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Norman Lamont): We have heard a speech from the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith) which, as always, had its entertaining moments. We know from him that he sees it as his function to entertain. In a newspaper interview the other day he said that unless he entertained, he could not hold the attention of his colleagues. They should be warned that he has a low opinion of the attention span of most of his colleagues. We can certainly say of his speech that it was almost up to his usual level of entertainment and certainly up to his consistent level of content.

The Budget is right for our economic circumstances. It is cautious, prudent, firm and neutral, but accompanied by a tight monetary policy that the Government are determined to maintain until inflation is markedly reduced. To those who say that the Budget has not been tight enough, we point to the large fiscal surplus which is unequalled by any country, except Japan. The background to the Budget has been an economy which has shown extraordinary resilience. It is wholly misleading of the right hon. and learned Gentleman to say that in one year Britain will be bottom of the growth league when we have been grappling with the problem of too high growth. He should know that, even when we take account of the lower rate of growth predicted by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his Budget statement, in the 1980s Britain will have grown faster than France or Germany. That could not have been said in the 1960s or the 1970s, so he was misrepresenting the position.

Our economy needs to slow down after the extraordinary growth of recent years. Clearly, the process has begun, but it needs to slow down further. It is not too much to ask British business or the British people to accept a period of pause after a period of such rapid and extraordinary growth for so many years.

Mr. Nigel Griffiths (Edinburgh, South): Although the Government are forcing British industry and the British public to slow down, are not Germany, France and Japan, our competitors, speeding up, flooding this country with imports and meeting markets that we cannot meet because of the damage that the Minister and his party have done to industry?

Mr. Lamont: If the hon. Gentleman had been listening, he would have heard me explain that for a whole decade we have been out-performing our competitors in growth. The fact that we shall have one year of slower growth in no way denies that achievement.

The tax measures are broadly neutral. It is a remarkable testimony to the Government's tax-cutting record that this Budget is the first since 1981 to reduce neither income tax nor national insurance contributions. My right hon. Friend avoided the temptation of fiscal finetuning. Many people will agree that merely to increase taxes by £1 billion, £2 billion or £3 billion in an economy of over £500 billion would be marginal and make no difference.

It must be obvious to everyone that the present increase in inflation has its origins in monetary policy. It is partly the result of interest rates being cut too much in 1987 in response to the stock market crash. At that time the right hon. and learned Gentleman urged us not only to cut them further, but to give a fiscal stimulus to the economy to increase public spending. Part of the problem has been caused by the British people's confident outlook for the future.

The boom of the past few years has owed absolutely nothing to any fiscal stimulus from the Government. Government spending has increased only slowly over this period and it is a convenient fiction, which the right hon. and learned Gentleman wishes to nurture, that the 1988 Budget cut taxes massively. Many argue that the 1988 Budget, which generated a larger than expected surplus and increased revenues, could be described as increasing taxes and creating a budget surplus of a kind that we had not seen for many decades.

The growth in demand in this country has been the response of United Kingdom firms and individuals to financial deregulation. The private sector, both companies and individuals, has borrowed heavily and moved into financial deficit on a scale not seen for years. This rapid growth in private sector spending has been essentially an expression of confidence about the economy and its prospects.

Companies went into deficit to finance an investment boom. In 1987 and 1988 investment grew by 23 per cent., its fastest-ever growth in a two-year period and twice as fast as consumption. So it has not been just a consumer boom. It has been too much growth across the whole economy. That has been an expression of confidence, because firms do not invest if they do not have confidence in the future.

Clearly, this remarkable growth in demand has been a monetary one. That is why the response should also be a monetary one, of higher interest rates. This is not so much a question of one-club golf as of not attempting to play golf with a cricket bat or to play cricket with a golf club. We would not get far against the West Indies' bowling if we dangled a No. 2 iron in front of our wicket. Against that background, the response of the Government has been entirely appropriate.

The right hon. and learned Gentleman suggested that the reliance on interest rates is obscure dogma not followed by other countries. He seems to forget that a few years ago the United States had to put up interest rates to over 20 per cent. to cope with a temporary surge in inflation. Australia currently has them at over 17 per cent.

Interest rates are, of course, a means to an end. The right hon. and learned Gentleman seems to regard them as an end in themselves. At times, our interest rates may have been higher than those of some other countries, but that has not—despite the fact that we have used interest rates consistently to control the economy—prevented us from having a faster rate of growth than the rest of the EC. It has not prevented us from having a better performance on investment and productivity than the rest of the EC. Our reliance on interest rates has not prevented us in the past few years from having a far higher rate of employment growth than the rest of the EC.

The right hon. and learned Gentleman returned to the question of credit controls. He seems to be in two minds about that, but there is no lawyer who cannot argue two sides of a question simultaneously. In his interviews on radio and television, he sometimes expresses reservations about them. He and the Leader of the Opposition use a curious phrase. They say, in effect, "We recognise that credit controls cannot be hermetically sealed." The right hon. and learned Gentleman has used the curious phrase "hermetically sealed" three times and the Leader of the Opposition four times. I do not know whether they have been memorising a brief, or whether it is pride of ownership. They seem to be saying that they recognise that, in the end, credit controls will break down; but they hope that they will work for a little while.

I see little attraction in following a policy which one recognises from the word go is doomed eventually to break down. Credit controls were abandoned in this country before the City of London had become as international and as deregulated as it is today. It would be far more difficult to make them work today. We cannot have credit controls without the reimposition of exchange controls. Perhaps that is what the right hon. and learned Gentleman

[Mr. Lamont]

has in mind. Of course, he would not tell us or the markets, but without the reimposition of exchange controls, they would not work.

Opposition Members have said that it would not be easy for the average consumer or shopper to open a bank account in an offshore bank. That may be so, but that is not the point and it is not necessary. It is easy for a store, finance house, retailer, wholesaler or manufacturer to borrow from abroad and to extend credit domestically. The right hon. and learned Gentleman is wrong to advocate credit controls, and he knows it.

The right hon. and learned Gentleman welcomed some of our savings measures, and there has been a warm welcome in the country for the many imaginative and far-reaching proposals in the Budget to help us to raise our savings ratio. There has been a fall in our savings ratio, as there has been in a number of countries, including the United States, Germany and Japan. One reason for that fall is the increase in borrowing which reflects the spread of home ownership. To some extent, the perceived fall in the savings ratio is merely the spread of home ownership through increased mortgage borrowing. But we need to increase our savings ratio, and that is what the Budget measures are designed to achieve.

Mr. Peter L. Pike (Burnley): The Government may want to help savers, but why do they not recognise that many people in Britain cannot afford to save? In my constituency and in many other parts of the country millions of people will not be able to pay their poll taxes, their increased rents and their mortgage payments, let alone save, so the Government's measures will be no use to them at all.

Mr. Lamont: The hon. Gentleman is close to saying that there is no point encouraging anybody to save because nobody can afford to save. The whole point of the new tax-exempt special savings account is that it is designed not for the stock exchange investor or the wealthier person, but for the person who wants to save modest amounts. The tax-exempt special savings account will help the individual with a small capital sum—for example, the person approaching retirement—and it will enable the younger saver to accumulate capital, even if he is earning only a modest amount and can regularly put aside only a small sum. I am sure that the 34 million people who put money into banks or building societies will find the tax advantages of this new facility very attractive.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): The point is that measures to encourage savings cannot be hermetically sealed. In other words, they will affect some people, but not everybody. The British people want to know how on earth the Government can continue a policy that is based on high interest rates but, when anybody puts forward an alternative, such as credit controls or exchange controls, the Government cast it to one side. The Government's policy is based on a 15 per cent. interest rate which has lasted nigh on 12 months, looks like lasting another 12 months and might be 18 per cent. before the end of the year, yet will bring down the balance of payments deficit by only £5 billion. That policy is leading to chaos. The wheels have dropped off it.

Mr. Lamont: The hon. Gentleman is a bit off his trolley. High interest rates have brought down inflation in the past, and they will do so again.

Another measure that is designed to encourage savings and which I think will be warmly welcomed is the abolition of stamp duty. As my right hon. Friend the Chancellor explained, the stock exchange will move to a new paperless system of transactions, and even the most ingenious would find it difficult to levy stamp duty on non-existent documents. We hope that the abolition of stamp duty will improve the City of London's competitiveness and give a further boost to wider share ownership. I am sure that my hon. Friends were extremely encouraged that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor was able to announce yet another increase of 2 million in Britain's share owners—no less than one in four of the adult population—following the flotation of the Abbey National.

By abolishing the composite rate tax, the Budget has also removed what many people—including the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Mr. Beith)—have regarded as a long-standing injustice. In the past, the composite rate tax has applied even to those people with incomes below taxable level. That may have been tolerated in the past, but the introduction of independent taxation threw into relief the injustice that would be done to many married women, especially those with small savings incomes. Therefore, its abolition will surely be widely welcomed.

I had hoped that the Labour party would give a warmer welcome to some of the measures, but it has never been the party of the saver. It seems to have the odd idea—both in its policy and by its past action—that saving can be encouraged by the curious notion that deferred consumption should be more heavily taxed than present consumption. That was the thinking behind the investment income surcharge. We all know how badly savers did when the Labour party was in government. It bequeathed to us an economy in which pensioners were robbed of a large part of their savings; real interest rates were low and often negative; and those who put money in a building society in 1974 would have seen the real value of their savings fall by 20 per cent. by 1979. It was a cruel injustice, and one that we must never let happen again.

Mr. John Smith: If the Conservative party is such a party for the saver, why has the savings ratio dropped so alarmingly during the past decade?

Mr. Lamont: The right hon. and learned Gentleman's attention span is obviously the same as that which he ascribed to his colleagues. I have explained at considerable and, no doubt, rather tedious length that the rise in mortgage borrowing has much to do with the fall in the savings ratio.

Perhaps the right hon. and learned Gentleman does not really understand what the savings ratio is. Perhaps he will tell us about his policy for savings. The other day he warmly endorsed a Fabian Society report urging a future Labour Government to reintroduce an investment income surcharge for those under pension age, by charging national insurance contributions on savings incomes; to tax the income and capital gains of pension funds; to charge—this is really bizarre—national insurance contributions on capital gains; and to end retirement relief for small business men. That is not a very convincing way to

encourage savings. It may or may not be Labour party policy, but it is curious that it should be given even the most modest encouragement or endorsement.

Mr. Norman Tebbit (Chingford): Sitting where I do, I have a slight advantage over my right hon. Friend. I distinctly heard the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith)—who speaks for the Opposition as shadow Chancellor—say that those proposals were not Labour party policy. Will my right hon. Friend give the right hon. and learned Gentleman the opportunity to say now, clearly and distinctly, that no Labour Government of which he might be a member would introduce such policies?

Mr. Lamont: I gave the right hon. and learned Gentleman that opportunity, but—as always when he is asked to answer a question—he merely asked another question.

Another proposal that has been widely welcomed has been the change in the capital limits that apply to income-related benefits, including community charge relief.

Mr. Dick Douglas (Dunfermline, West): As the Minister knows, the Budget is a matter for the Government as a whole. We in Scotland are interested to know what part the Secretary of State for Scotland played in agreeing that the cut-off would be at £16,000 for England and Wales, but with no retrospective action for Scotland. Did the Secretary of State for Scotland learn of that in Cabinet and, if so, what was his posture?

Mr. Lamont: Obviously, that point was considered carefully. It would not be practical to implement the change retrospectively in Scotland, as it would create all sorts of administrative problems and anomalies, and could be done only on the crudest basis. People's incomes, savings and even place of abode may have changed considerably. It would be extraordinarily difficult to introduce such a change retrospectively.

But there is another argument against retrospection. The capital limits apply not just to community charge benefit but to housing benefit and income support. The rebate that applied to the community charge in Scotland last year applied also to ratepayers in England. If a change were to be retrospective, it would be extremely difficult to justify not making further changes for ratepayers in England as well.

Mr. Alick Buchanan-Smith (Kincardine and Deeside): Will my right hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Lamont: I will give way once to my right hon. Friend. However, as there will be a chance to debate this point later, I do not wish to go much further on it.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: I accept that retrospection would involve the problems that my right hon. Friend mentioned, but does he realise that the community charge has brought far more people within the net of local government taxation and that many people, particularly elderly people with savings, have seen the level of their local government taxation rise far above the rate of inflation? In practical terms, therefore, there is an anomaly, an unfairness, which is felt by Conservative Members as well as Opposition Members. If my right hon. Friend cannot do something retrospectively, is there not some other concession that might be considered with a view to compensating for this unfairness?

Mr. Lamont: I note what my right hon. Friend has said, as, I am sure, will my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland. I have explained the problems, which I believe are overwhelming. I do not think that we can make the concession, although I understand the concern of my right hon. Friend. But there will be a chance to debate the matter later.

Mr. John Smith: I should like to make what I think may be a practical suggestion. I understand that, because of the late arrival of transitional allowances, no payments have been made in Scotland for the current financial year, which has only three weeks to go. In any event, rebates will have to be recalculated. Would it be possible, in that process, to take into consideration changes relating to the previous year, so that account might be taken of the suffering endured during that year?

Mr. Lamont: One problem is that it is not possible to split community charge benefit from housing benefit. That cannot be done if we introduce the scheme this year, as we want to do. Of course I will study what the right hon. and learned Gentleman has said, but my position and the Government's position remains as it has been stated. That is all that I will say on this subject at the moment.

Mr. Tony Worthington (Clydebank and Milngavie): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This is quite outrageous. We are supposed to be having a debate, but this is not a debate. The Minister totally refuses to answer the reasonable points made by Opposition Members.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): Whether the Minister gives way is a matter for him.

Mr. Salmond: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Bearing in mind the fact that the Government have already agreed to backdate the transitional payments, which are equally, if not more, complex, is not the Minister in danger of misleading the House in arguing that these payments cannot be backdated?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: That is not a point of order; it is a matter for debate.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I will take points of order if they are genuine, but the ones that have been made so far have been points for debate.

Mr. John Battle (Leeds, West): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We are in difficulty when a representative of the Treasury addresses the House on social security matters without the Secretary of State for Social Security being here to confirm what he is saying. It seems to me that there is a real danger——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. These are perfectly legitimate matters for debate, but not points of order for the Chair.

Mrs. Maria Fyfe (Glasgow, Maryhill): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As has been said by other hon. Members, the Minister is misleading the House. It is

[Mrs. Maria Fyfe]

perfectly possible to calculate housing benefit and poll tax rebate. Local authorities in Scotland have been doing it for the past year. It involves no difficulty at all.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. It is clear that these are not points of order. We should get on with the debate.

Mr. Nigel Griffiths (Edinburgh, South): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: If it is a genuine point of order, I shall take it.

Mr. Griffiths: It is genuine, Mr. Deputy Speaker. By what mechanism would it be in order for the Secretary of State for Scotland to come to this House and explain whether he is going to fight for the backdating of this benefit? Thousands of senior citizens and other people in Scotland have been penalised over the past year because of the unfair way in which the tax has been applied.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It is not for the Chair to advise the hon. Gentleman on tactics.

Mr. Lamont: The analysis of the British economy by the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East is wholly flawed. The right hon. and learned Gentleman seems to have an infinite capacity for grabbing the wrong end of any stick that happens to be around. He believes that our economy is beset by long-term structural problems, with a weak supply side, demoralised businesses, and a work force crying out for Government intervention. One thing is clear: these are not the problems of the British economy.

The right hon. and learned Gentleman's analysis is wrong, so, inevitably, his prescription is wrong. Our problems are precisely the opposite of those that he described. Our supply performance has been strong, and confidence is high. As I said earlier, the growth of the economy has been too strong. Even taking account of the slower growth that we expect in the coming year, the United Kingdom will have recorded higher growth since 1980 than either France or Germany. That is a demonstration that the British economy has transformed itself and is doing better than ever.

The right hon. and learned Gentleman referred to manufacturing. From 1980 to 1989, the output of United Kingdom manufacturing industry grew faster than that of either France or Germany. The right hon. and learned Gentleman is looking at the wrong problems and is therefore putting forward the wrong solutions. But the Opposition's solutions are always the same: more public spending on training, research and development, and education. The reality is that many of these matters are being tackled by Government and by business. Already, employers are spending £20 billion a year on training. On top of this, Government expenditure is about £2·5 billion a year. Companies spend £5 billion a year on research and development. Indeed, they increased their spending by 46 per cent. between 1983 and 1988. The evidence that the supply side of our economy is strong is clear. The right hon. and learned Gentleman's analysis is wrong.

The right hon. and learned Gentleman made no mention of the measures in this Budget to help smaller businesses. We know that the Labour party, with its corporatist approach, is interested only in large businesses —it cannot focus on small businesses. The fact that 300,000 out of 350,000 businesses in this country pay the small rate of corporation tax means that the changes in my right hon. Friend's Budget will help many parts of British manufacturing and other industry.

This Budget will be judged by what it does for inflation. The Government have brought inflation down from the disastrous levels that it had reached under the Labour Government, of which the right hon. and learned Gentleman was a member. The battle against inflation has to be fought year after year, but it is not one that the right hon. and learned Gentleman has ever shown any willingness to fight. In an interview with *The Daily Telegraph* recently, he said that getting inflation down was not his top priority; it was just one of several priorities. To the Government, it is more important than that: inflation remains our top priority.

The right hon. and learned Gentleman is also wrong in his comments about the current account. The current account deficit is a symptom of our excess demand, not of weak supply side performance. If that were not true, we should not have the extraordinary resilience in British exports that has been shown in recent months. As demand has slowed, exports have rebounded strongly. In 1989, the volume of manufactured goods exports rose by 11·5 per cent., the highest recorded rise since 1973.

The truth is that our problems now are modest compared with those that the country faced in the past, and modest compared with the problems when the right hon. and learned Gentleman's party was in office. He would have given a lot to have had some of our present problems when he was in office: too much growth, too much investment, and inflation under 8 per cent. In one of the right hon. and learned Gentleman's speeches, he congratulated the Labour Government on having got inflation down to under 8 per cent. For us, inflation at its present level is a setback, not a matter for self-congratulation.

Our economy is certainly strong. The right hon. and learned Gentleman's analysis is not correct. However, the real question is whether the policy is succeeding in slowing down the economy enough. At this point sometimes the good news can become the bad news and the bad news the good. Is it good news or bad news that employment growth was slowed? Is it good news or bad news that last year growth reached almost 3 per cent.? Mr. Samuel Brittan, commenting on the recent retail sales figures, said:

"A nation whose main economic problem is the shops are too full of goods which people can afford to buy is hardly experiencing a tragedy."

Our citizens have experienced very sharp increases in living standards, and in recent years a period of extraordinary growth. Sometimes when I listen to Opposition Members I get the impression that they do not realise what the purpose of economics and economic policy is. The purpose is not to achieve a particular level of investment; it is to increase living standards. In that respect, the Government have been conspicuously successful.

It is curious that not just the previous Labour Government but every Labour Government have found that goal wholly elusive. Since the second world war there have been 17 years of Labour Government and 27 years of Conservative Government. In the 17 years of Labour Government, living standards rose by 14 per cent. In the 27 years of Conservative Government, living standards

rose by 78 per cent. Can one suggest that that is a coincidence? The reason is clear: all Labour Governments make the same mistake. This time, however, we are told that it will be different. Quite how it will be different remains obscure because the right hon. and learned Gentleman will not tell us.

The right hon. and learned Gentleman is the leading Scotsman in his party but, when asked what he would do, he always repeats the excuse of the Irishman: "I would not start from here." When asked what he would do in his first Budget, if he became Chancellor of the Exchequer, he says, "It is too early to say." This is the man who said in an interview in *The Daily Telegraph*:

"I have a passion for detail. In detail you find the answers to difficult problems."

If the right hon. and learned Gentleman is so interested in detail as the answer to problems, perhaps he will answer a few of the questions that journalists and broadcasters have been unable to get him to answer about Labour's tax policy. The other day, poor Mr. Giles Keating of Credit Suisse Boston incurred the wrath of the right hon. and learned Gentleman for asking him some questions about Labour's tax policy. Because he would not answer them, Mr. Keating came to his own conclusions, which were that, as a result of the right hon. and learned Gentleman's policies, many couples without children but below average earnings would be worse off, that those earning only one and a half to two and a half times average earnings could, over time, find themselves paying up to another £4,000 a year in tax and that marginal tax rates would go up from 25 to 50 per cent. What would be the result of this great redistribution? Everybody earning below £18,000 a year would get another £100 a year.

The right hon. and learned Gentleman says that he believes in fair taxation. To some of us, it seems like the same old incorrigible spite that we have always had from the Labour party. We know that we shall not get any answers from the right hon. and learned Gentleman, because the Labour party is dominated by public relations. It has made a god out of public relations. Quite how dominated by the public relations industry the Labour party is was made clear in a book published recently—"Labour Rebuilt", written by political correspondents of *The Guardian* and *The Independent*.

The book details the use made of a shady group of consultants, known as "the agency," and the use of image-making services as a substitute for policy. Details are given in the book of how Front-Bench Opposition spokesmen have been given advice on how to dress. On page 59 we are told of the analysis given to the hon. Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman). She was asked how she wanted to look. She replied, "Like a confident, assertive, self-possessed woman capable of running things." She was then told, we read, to go and buy a dark suit with shoulder pads—which she did the next day.

I do not know whether the right hon. and learned Gentleman has made use of that service. We read in the book that the service is used more by men than women but that the men do not talk about it. However, it is clear that the right hon. and learned Gentleman has been given his instructions by the image makers. They are, "Brush your hair, brush your shoes and, above all, don't say anything."

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Will not those who are watching proceedings today feel that what is happening is a disgrace to the House of Commons? This is supposed to be a speech on the Budget but we are getting nonsense from a Minister.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: That is not a point of order for me.

Mrs. Fyfe: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it a point of order?

Mrs. Fyfe: That will be for you to judge, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am worried in case the Minister falls foul of the Prime Minister when he talks about image-making.

Mr. Lamont: No amount of advice on public relations is a substitute for policy. No policies have been put forward by the right hon. and learned Gentleman. Asked on television last night what he would do about inflation, what did he say? He said that he would not put up taxes but that he also wanted to bring down interest rates. If that is the way to deal with inflation, we know that the only result of a Labour Government would be runaway inflation.

My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer did not dodge the problems in his speech. He put forward the solution to them. He also emphasised that our problems today should not obscure the real gains that our economy has made in recent years. They include improved productivity, high investment, strong profitability, an end to the decline in our share of world trade, effective control of public spending, improved industrial relations, a fast rise in employment and the lowest national debt relative to gross domestic product since the first world war. The over-rapid growth of the past few years requires a pause. It began last year and will continue this year. However, once the excess demand has been removed, the economy will once again resume its upward trend, with a lower inflation rate.

Pain there may be, but gain there will also be. By this time next year, the prospects will be distinctly brighter. I commend the Budget to the House.

4.58 pm

Mr. A. J. Beith (Berwick-upon-Tweed): If the test yesterday had been the presentational qualities of the first television Chancellor of the Exchequer in presenting his first television Budget, he would have come away with full marks. But there was a great deal more at stake: not only his own political future but that of his Government and, in particular, that of his Prime Minister—and, moreover, the ability of the country's economy to weather the next 12 months and the ability of many families to cope over the next 12 months with the enormous pressures on them. I do not believe that the Chancellor passed those tests.

The Budget will have been greeted with the same great disappointment in many households as it has clearly been greeted in the City and in sections of the press which are normally sympathetic to the Government. If the Chancellor read through the editorials of some of the major national newspapers this morning, he will have read some pretty disappointing news.

Mortgage payers and poll tax payers will feel that sense of disappointment most acutely, as will the markets to which we look for confidence in the economy and in our currency. The Chancellor has shown that he understands the psychology of his own Back Benchers and his own party. The delight and joy on Conservative Back Benches

[Mr. A. J. Beith]

when he reached the end of the Budget was a demonstration that he knew what they needed and he gave them just a little dose of it. But he has not shown the understanding of the psychology of markets that one would have expected from a Chancellor with banking experience, and he will have to reflect on the absence of that delirium from the City today.

The fatal weakness of the Budget's strategy is not primarily of the Chancellor's making. It is the Prime Minister's determination that we will not join the exchange rate mechanism of the European monetary system so long as she has the capacity to stop us. That is at the heart of the Budget strategy; and the repetition by the Chancellor yesterday of the same old formula about how long we will have to wait before we enter the exchange rate mechanism did nothing to satisfy voices in so many quarters that are now calling for our entry into the EMS.

Alongside that was the Chancellor's total failure to face the need for a tight fiscal strategy which would require increases in taxation. In that respect, the Chancellor shares the attitude of those on the Opposition Front Bench. They, too, have not said very much about it and still shown no signs of doing so. They still seem to believe that we can have lower interest rates, a lower exchange rate deficit and lower taxation all at the same time. There seems to be an inability to face the fact that a strict fiscal policy would be particularly needed if we were in the European monetary system. But if we were, it is generally agreed that we could achieve lower interest rates which would help all those mortgage payers who are suffering so badly at the moment and would give a badly needed fillip to industrial investment. But if we are to do so we need a much stronger fiscal policy.

It is not sufficient for the Government to draw attention to the size of the Budget surplus. It is only half the Budget surplus that they forecast, and it will not meet the problem that will be created by the demand in the economy.

The Chancellor's speech yesterday gave no sign of a clear and secure policy to deal with inflation. Despite the assertion that inflation would be the judge and jury, the zero inflation for which the Prime Minister aims and the falling inflation which the Chancellor promised only six months ago, there is still uncertainty over monetary policy. It is not quite clear to me from what the Chancellor said yesterday or from the Red Book whether there is any serious monitoring of broad monetary targets. There are certainly none of the tough taxation policies which I have mentioned.

One of the things that the Chancellor could usefully do is to creep into the residence next door one evening when the Prime Minister is not looking fish out of her wastepaper basket the proposal from the right hon. Member for Blaby (Mr. Lawson) for a more independent central bank and place it back on the Prime Minister's desk with a little note saying, "Please read this again." There may be much merit in having a more autonomous judge of our monetary policy and an institutionalised battle against inflation. We will get that under European monetary union, but why not have it in the meantime by giving the Bank of England greater independence?

Judgments about these aspects of the Budget are being made in this place and in the City, but judgments about different aspects of it are being made in ordinary homes. The biggest taxation change to have affected many people in Britain for many years is the poll tax. It is a quite dramatic and terrifying change. The Chancellor has done something to alleviate the burden. He has removed a capital limitation which will benefit many pensioners who have savings. That is to be welcomed, but I regret that he has not dealt with the problems faced by people in Scotland who had to bear the full brunt of the poll tax a year earlier. He will have to look at that issue again; it will not go away, and will continue to be raised. He will have to do something to provide justice for people in Scotland.

The Chancellor must also recognise that he has not done anything for the large majority of poll tax payers who are disqualified from any relief, not by any capital or savings, as they do not have any, but by their incomes even though their incomes are very low. In the past few days, I have attended some very large poll tax meetings in my constituency attended by some very angry people. In the village of Widdrington Station, the meeting was attended by a quarter of the population. I have received a mass of correspondence particularly from people in the Castle Morpeth borough in my constituency, where the poll tax is particularly high. One part of the borough is relatively poor and another part is relatively rich. Therefore, under the Government's safety net scheme, poor people in that area are paying into the safety net to help people who are better-off in other areas.

I have come across case after case of people who are paying hundreds of pounds a year more in poll tax than they paid in rates. One couple whose income is just over the limit—the man works as a joiner earning £136·89 a week—and whose rates were £255 a year will have to pay poll tax, after all reliefs, of £672 a year. Where can those people find another £400 a year on an income of £136·89 a week? They have no savings. There are millions of people in that position. If the Chancellor intended to do anything about the poll tax for most people, he would have had to provide some extra Exchequer relief for the safety net system for this year and then cleared the way for a sensible income-based tax for next year. Even now, at this late stage, as he has been prepared to make changes to the capital limits, he should have been making changes affecting the majority of people suffering from the impact of poll tax, particularly those who have faced huge increases.

Mr. Ronnie Campbell (Blyth Valley): Did the hon. Gentleman advise those people not to pay the poll tax, or will they have to pay it?

Mr. Beith: What they told me was that they could not afford to pay the poll tax. Unlike some Labour Members, I am not prepared to back a campaign of non-payment of the poll tax. I am not prepared to put in the firing line pensioners who can least afford and least cope with court summonses. I do not believe that many Labour Members are prepared to do that either.

Mr. Eric Martlew (Carlisle): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Beith: No. I have just given way and I am answering my near neighbour, the hon. Member for Blyth Valley (Mr. Campbell). I listened to the Labour chairman of the Northumberland county council finance committee saying that he was not prepared to back a campaign of

non-payment. He can see what the impact would be on the finances of the county council as it tried to provide social services.

The Chancellor must realise that many of those people cannot pay and they will be issued with summonses not because they are engaged in any political demonstration, but because they do not have the money out of their income to pay such a high tax.

The Chancellor made an interesting point about credit. He said that the banks ought to stop the high-pressure advertising of credit. I welcome that, but I suggested it two years ago as one of the ways of trying to limit the credit boom without indulging in ineffective and unfair credit controls. Why was that not said when the Chancellor was Chief Secretary to the Treasury, at the height of the Lawson boom? That would have been a more useful time to make that comment, as that was when most of the credit advertising was pouring through people's letter boxes.

I welcome what the Chancellor said about savings. The measures that he has introduced are very useful. I particularly welcome, having argued for it last year, the abolition of the composite rate of taxation on building society and bank interest. It is a manifest injustice that pensioners and other non-taxpayers should have tax taken from them to which they are not liable and which they cannot reclaim.

I am very pleased that the Chancellor decided to change that. If he had made that decision a year ago and not resisted my new clause to last year's Finance Bill, he could have done the preparatory work last year and we would not be in the current position that for one year it will be in the interests of many married women, for example, to open offshore accounts in banks and building societies in Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man. The Chancellor clearly does not want that to happen on a large scale, because he has told banks not to advertise that facility. Nevertheless, I welcome the decision that he has taken, which his predecessor failed to take.

I welcome the concession on pools duty, which will benefit football clubs at a time when they very much need it, not least as the stand and terrace covering at Berwick Rangers football ground has had to be removed because it was unsafe. I hope that the Football Trust will contribute to the provision of good, safe and comfortable facilities at that ground before too long.

For a Government who claim to have green credentials, there was an enormous green gap in the Budget. There was little in it apart from the measure on company cars. The Chancellor increased excise duty on petrol, but that partly compensated for not increasing vehicle excise duty. Why did he not take the opportunity to introduce a range of vehicle excise duties that penalise large high-consumption cars? Why did he not seek a tax means to discourage the high consumption of fuel?

Why did not the Chancellor make progress on taxes on pollution? He may say that he wanted to wait for the White Paper from the Secretary of State for the Environment, but why was there not at least a commitment in his speech to such taxation measures in principle? He could have offered incentives for waste recycling, and given the indication that was so lacking in the Autumn Statement that there will be be sufficient investment in the railways to ensure the access to the Channel tunnel and to ports that industry will need to compete successfully in Europe after 1992.

As my comments will show, and as other hon. Members have said, there are good and useful small measures in the Budget, but they do not add up to a Budget to deal with the problems facing the country. I do not like to say this about the Chancellor, who still has considerable capital of respect and friendship in the House which he so far has not dissipated, and I hope he will not do so, but he appears to have fallen completely under the control of an increasingly isolated and irrational Prime Minister. The major weakenesses of his Budget strategy are her refusal to enter the European monetary system and her anxiety about the effects of a stronger taxation policy on the immediate political popularity of her Government—and there is not much of that at the moment.

The Chancellor is obviously pleased that he managed to resist the Prime Minister on one change that everyone knows or assumes she wanted him to make—to raise the £30,000 threshold on mortgage interest relief. That is a very small triumph to set against continued defeat on the exchange rate mechanism and the continued primacy of politics over economics in the decisions that he has taken.

The Budget may have pleased Conservative Back Benchers, but it has not addressed the problems that the Chancellor will have to face in the next 12 months. In just under a year's time, when I believe he will still be Chancellor, he will be trying to set an election-winning Budget. Messages will come from her next door—perhaps it will be him next door by then—saying "For heaven's sake put together a Budget that can recover the lost ground." The Chancellor will be saying to himself, "I wish that a year ago I had taken a tough line with the problems that now make an election-winning Budget impossible."

5.13 pm

Sir Ian Gilmour (Chesham and Amersham): I am not sure from the comments of the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Mr. Beith) whether it is his party's policy that we should enter the exchange rate mechanism straight away, but I agree with the Government's view that the current rate of inflation would make that unwise, if not impossible.

Like the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed, I welcome many measures in the Budget, which I hope will prove historic for savers, and I applaud the proposals of my right hon. Friend the Chancellor to make it so, particularly the ending of the composite rate of tax. Like everyone else, I welcome the concession on workplace nurseries, and like almost everyone else I welcome the concession for football. I only wish that the reduction in entertainment tax had been doubled, which would have cost little but would have made a substantial difference. Above all, like everyone else, with the exception perhaps of the Scots, among whom I number myself, I welcome the capital limits concession for pensioners on the poll tax, income support and housing benefit. I congratulate my right hon. Friend the Chancellor on those measures.

I am rather less exultant about what appears to be my right hon. Friend the Chancellor's political and economic strategy. As my right hon. Friend said today and on the wireless, this is undoubtedly the toughest Budget since 1981, but it is a long way from being a tough Budget. It is broadly neutral, and I should have thought that, politically, it would have been far better to have a tough Budget this year and got most of the pain out of the way, rather than having it running on, at a slightly lower level of intensity, to uncomfortably close to the next election.

[Sir Ian Gilmour]

My chief worry about my right hon. Friend the Chancellor's economic strategy is his apparently cavalier attitude, which was rather shared by my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary today, to the balance of payments. Last year's horrendous deficit of more than £20 billion is due to fall this year to a mere £15 billion. As there will be practically no growth this year, that is fully credible. In the first half of 1991, it is due to fall to £6 billion, but because of the pick-up in growth it will presumably increase quite sharply and will probably be about £15 billion in 1991. That is a most alarming prospect. The problem will not go away or improve merely by being ignored. Its full gravity has not been properly appreciated in public discussion.

Some people say that the deregulation of international monetary movements has abolished the balance of payments as a problem, but I do not believe that that is true. Some Third-world and European countries have demonstrated that it is not true and have experienced tremendous difficulties with their balance of payments.

In Britain, we have seen several times the unsettling effect on the pound that even one month's bad balance of payments figures can have, and with a £15 billion deficit projected, it is unlikely that we shall avoid bad figures every month in the next two years. Another story has been circulating that we shall be bailed out by invisible earnings. I have never believed that, because the increase in insurance and tourism would have to be unimaginably large; anyway, invisibles have now gone negative.

The balance of invisibles may be worse than it appears in the official figures. Page 43 of the Red Book says:

"The difficulties in measuring certain capital flows—reflected in the large balancing item in the overseas account—and with the valuation of direct investments mean that estimates of net overseas assets are subject to a wide margin of error."

There have been statistical discrepancies in the balance of payments figures amounting to over £50 billion since 1984. That missing money must be somewhere, and we hope that it is going in the right direction, but if a significant portion of it were to take the form of unrecorded liabilities to foreigners, there would be unrecorded flows of interest out of the country. According to some estimates, the flow of property income could be £7 billion higher than the official figures show. I should be grateful if the Financial Secretary would comment on that interpretation of the residual error, as it is a matter of enormous importance.

The conventional wisdom has always been that the effect of North sea oil on sterling contributed to the blitz on manufacturing capacity at the beginning of the 1980s, but it enabled us to build up at least £100 billion of foreign assets overseas. It would be a considerable blow if that conventional wisdom was proved wrong and a high percentage of those assets had been spent on the consumer boom. If that had happened, we would have been deprived of the cushion that North sea oil provided and the need to correct the balance of payments problems quickly would be even greater, because we would run the risk of becoming a debtor nation. I look forward to hearing my hon. Friend on the subject.

The balance of payments position is all the more serious because—if I may differ from my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary—it is not just the result of recent fast growth. It was deteriorating appreciably before our period of fast growth, and I think that my right hon. Friend will concede that that is true. In other words, there is a major weakness in the British economy. The fundamental cause of our deficit is the slow growth in manufacturing production between 1974 and 1989. Between 1974 and 1979, manufacturing production declined—a point for the Labour party to bear in mind when it makes much, rightly, of the importance of manufacturing industry.

Between 1973 and 1989, manufacturing output in France increased by 19·5 per cent.; in Germany, by 21·1 per cent.; in Italy, by 37·6 per cent.; in Canada, by 46·8 per cent.; in the United States, by 55 per cent.; and in Japan by 69·9 per cent. In the United Kingdom it has increased by 8·9 per cent., which is a derisory increase compared with those of our chief competitors. Over the past 10 years, our manufacturing output has increased by 1 per cent. per year and our imports in manufactured goods have more than doubled. That is the cause of our balance of payments problem. If my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary will forgive me, it is not likely to be cured by one year of pause. The problem is deep-seated.

This dire position surely calls for the Government to do everything possible to help manufacturing industry. Unfortunately, they have not done so. Their sole weapon in fighting inflation—high interest rates—obviously damages manufacturing industry. Despite the eloquence of my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary, I still believe that it is a considerable mistake to rely solely on interest rates. They have slowed consumption a little, but their impact has not been large enough. We know that they hit borrowers but help savers. Many building societies have eight times as many savers as borrowers, so there is one obvious defect in using that weapon solely. The effect of high interest rates has proved uncertain in its magnitude and their incidence has been arbitrary and unjust. High interest rates have already had a destructive effect on industrial investment and therefore on our future ability to compete on the world market.

The Government would have been far wiser to raise income tax levels. They should have done so long before yesterday. I believe that the Government should also have used credit controls. The Red Book states that there is a trend against their use in other countries, but nevertheless it shows that other countries still use them. According to Mr. Alex Brummer in *The Guardian* today, the Bundesbank has issued a paper saying that reserve requirements

"help control liquidity in the money markets as well as automatically acting as a brake on the creation of money."

In controlling inflation, what is good enough for the Bundesbank should be good enough for the Bank of England and the Treasury. But my right hon. Friend the Chancellor has decided to continue with high interest rates alone, and I hope that he is right. His Budget is humane and caring, but he has taken a huge gamble on the balance of payments and inflation. I hope that he wins it.

5.24 pm

Mr. Bill Michie (Sheffield, Heeley): Like many Opposition Members, I am disappointed by the Budget and its implications, or perhaps in many cases its lack of implications. It will not help the people whom we have proudly represented for many years. The Budget says little about what will happen to the infrastructure and about whether we will build a new manufacturing base. It says nothing about the caring services—hospitals and housing—and their dilemmas.

I often ask myself what the Government consider to be the "nation". Is the nation basically this great global thing, consisting of an economic package, the balance of payments, invisible earnings and all the rest which lead the Government proudly to say that the nation is better off? If so, why is there a deficit in the balance of payments and why have invisible earnings become invisible? The Government cannot be talking about that nation. They must be talking about the other one, in which I believe —the people.

Are the people better off? I do not see that they are better off in my constituency or in those of many of my hon. Friends. The infrastructure is falling apart. The caring services—whether voluntary or local government —are screaming out for help and for recognition of the problems. Hospitals are closing and waiting lists are increasing. We tried in the past to reduce the housing waiting list from two years, but it is now between 10 and 15 years.

What is this prosperous nation that we are supposed to have? Where is the magic figure? It is not in the balance of payments or the invisible earnings and it certainly does not exist for the ordinary population in terms of their environment, the caring services, housing and family life. The pressures are continually growing. I deal with many social services matters in my constituency and I know that it is almost impossible for social workers to help the ever-growing number of needy people. The Budget gives not a glimmer of hope that some provision will be made for them later in the financial year.

We receive many letters from parents and the groups that represent the mentally ill and the mentally handicapped and cannot get the necessary services because of public spending restrictions. Hospital services cannot provide the necessary beds and space, so the authorities try to move people into the community. Social services departments cannot deal with the expense and staffing implications. Throughout the country, and certainly in my constituency, people who would normally be cared for either in an institution or by a social services or area health authority are sleeping rough in our city centre streets and parks. Is that what we call a prosperous nation? Is that the great success story of monetarism, about which the Conservative Government have been talking for years?

My right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith) was right to say that the omissions in the Budget are the most worrying features of all—no uprating of child benefit, no promises to provide massive investment in the environment and no increased expenditure to help those who care for the many people who are disabled, ill or in need. Inflation will remain high, as will interest rates, rents and electricity, gas and transport prices.

The poll tax has affected most of our constituencies. Like any other council in any city, Sheffield city council was misled over the poll tax. The calculations have caused havoc and will continue to do so. The city council states:

"The long-term loss of income from grant and business rates will be almost £60 million per year after the Safety net grant is withdrawn. This is equivalent to £160 per year extra on the Poll Tax bill in Sheffield.

Even in the first year of the new system the Safety Net grant leaves the City Council £13 million worse off in cash terms compared with the last year of the old system. The average household bill will need to increase by around £70 just to cover the loss of income to the City Council.

The Government has not accepted the representations that the City Council has made over the problems of using out of date information from the Poll Tax Register. This is likely to cost the City Council around £4 million in grant and business rate income in 1990/91."

All the representations that have been made on care, housing and hospitals have been ignored. The Budget comes at a high cost to our constituents but does not repay them with high wages or with job opportunities. There is no future because, as the Chancellor said, there is a downturn and growth will be slow. The Budget will help people buying and selling shares, but it will be of no help at all to our constituents trying to buy or sell homes. It offers no hope to industry, which has been neglected for years and looks as though it will continue to be neglected. That affects my constituents in Sheffield, which has been devastated by industrial decline over many years.

We still lack training. The Government have bragged about training, but have not invested in it as they should have done. I recall the Prime Minister saying many years ago, "You can't spend what you haven't got." What we did have 10 years ago was a massive North sea oil asset, but the Government have spent it and have produced nothing for the nation in return. They have spent everything and invested nothing in the future prosperity of the nation.

Many of our firms, private and public, have tried to help in training, and agencies were set up. But many schemes have failed and many more will fail in the future. The other day I received a letter from South Yorkshire Constellation Ltd.—part of our probation service—which has done a magnificent job in getting a dynamic manager to set up youth training schemes for people in trouble, or in particular need or under threat. Most of the schemes seem to be falling apart, not because of the incompetence of the organisation but because of the Government's lack of enthusiasm and their failure to provide adequate finance.

Let me read one small part of that letter:

"There are three other Youth Training Schemes in the city . . . offering training for youngsters with special training needs and we asked them to co-ordinate discussions regarding some rationalisation, as we knew at least one other was in financial difficulty. The Training Agency took a 'hands off' view and decided to allow market forces to operate to see who collapsed first. The consequence was that we were the first to collapse."

We have heard the phrases "market forces" and "hands-off policy" before because that is precisely the policy that the Government have adopted since they came to power, and certainly over the past six years.

The nation has been badly let down by the Government. They claim to be responsible, but the opposite is the case. But at least there is one consolation: the people of the nation now know.

5.32 pm

Mr. Alan Haselhurst (Saffron Walden): I add my congratulations to those of other right hon. and hon. Members to my right hon. Friend the Chancellor for the way in which he presented his Budget to the House. The Budget was likeable in tone and it will be appreciated quite widely for a good part of its content.

In this age of particular sensitivity about Members' interests, perhaps I should tell the House that I have a number of connections with industry—notably in the chemical and electronics industries. It is possible that some of my observations will stem from the experience that I have gained with those industries, although it could be

[Mr. Alan Haselhurst]

said, perhaps more simply, that they will be based on what has been said by industrialists in general and by the CBI in its advice to hon. Members and to the Government.

The background to the Budget is one of high interest rates, high inflation, a large balance of payments deficit, the widespread unpopularity of the Government and much confusion about exactly what the economic and financial statistics tell us about what is going on in the economy. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor was therefore faced with a particularly daunting task in preparing his Budget this year.

It is hard to tell how industry is performing. Clearly, some companies and sectors are doing extremely well and are exporting an increasingly large proportion of their output, while others are now in difficulties. In the retail sector, too, there are some signs of depression in the high street, but oher sectors seem to be bearing up remarkably well.

There was a danger that, if the Chancellor's judgment was not exactly right, Britain could lurch into recession —something which my right hon. Friend wisely sought to prevent. He had two tasks—in the short term, to bolster confidence at home and abroad in his ability to get a grip on inflation and bear down upon the balance of payments deficit and, in the longer term, to strengthen the economy and make it more proof against sudden loss of favour in the markets.

On the home front, there is absolutely no doubt in the mind of any hon. Member that the Government's anti-inflation policy is hurting many people. People feel pessimistic about the prospects. Their incomes are under severe pressure; there can be no doubt about that. Obviously people would like the load to be eased, but I agree with my right hon. Friend that a quick fix is not the way to achieve that, especially if it would mean the speedy restoration of limits within a matter of months.

People want to feel that, as we seek to bear down on inflation, our collective burden is being fairly shared. There is unease that some sections of the community are losing badly at present. I therefore welcome my right hon. Friend's announcement that he is to change the capital rules for social security benefits and community charge rebates. That is extremely good news. I also welcome the fact that my right hon. Friend felt able to achieve the full indexation of personal tax allowances this year.

There is also a suspicion that too much reliance is being placed on interest rates. I concede that it is quite clear that a large proportion of domestic credit is tied up with land and property purchase and, that being the case, I see little alternative to a fairly heavy reliance on interest rates. I am glad, though, that the Chancellor has been prepared to look again at credit controls and has undertaken to monitor the situation.

I found it interesting that, on Budget day, I should receive through the post from a well-known credit card company the invitation to spend 16·5 per cent. more should I wish to do so. I must emphasise that that is not an invitation to which I shall be responding speedily, but I am sure that it went out to many other people, too.

It is a question of psychology. Such increases may not add up to a great percentage in terms of the overall national scene but people get a blurred message when they receive invitations to spend more, and that may impede what the Chancellor is trying to do. My right hon. Friend's measures on saving and giving are timely and show greater breadth in his approach to defeating inflation.

The public are impatient about the pace of improvement in public services. These days, a typical letter of discontent is likely to mention the failure to pay public servants sufficient money, the failure to get on with introducing more measures to protect the environment and the failure to invest in the infrastructure. People also bemoan the fact that insufficient sums are spent on health and education. Those are just some of the matters that typically come up in letters from our constituents.

Those sentiments would certainly find an echo in the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition, yesterday and probably at other times. The right hon. Gentleman spoke of an under-invested and debt-ridden economy. He should certainly be listened to seriously, because he can draw on years of Socialist experience of running such an economy. What is the right hon. Gentleman's answer now? It was summed up in the word "partnership". There is no substance to that. It is a user-friendly word, but I cannot help thinking that we could substitute the phrases, "social contract", "national plan" or "technological revolution". We have heard it all before.

No one seems to understand—least of all the Opposition—that there are limits to growth. Yet all our experience—certainly that of the Opposition—should make us wary about having over-ambitious expectations about growth. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor has been appropriately modest. He estimates that growth will be 1 per cent. this year and 2·75 per cent. next year. That still means an average growth over five years of about 3 per cent., or perhaps slightly more. That is a remarkable record for the British economy in the post-war years. From a growth rate that has any reasonable chance——

Mr. Martlew: Does the hon. Gentleman agree that a growth rate of 1 per cent. next year will increase unemployment in this country?

Mr. Haselhurst: Its effect on unemployment remains to be seen. A number of complex factors are at work, but if the figures that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor gave yesterday are fulfilled, the overall average increase will still mean growth of 3 per cent. per annum. The hon. Gentleman should envy that, rather than disparage it.

If we have a growth rate that is attainable in the first place, and then sustainable, from what can realistically be achieved we shall not be able to generate resources to meet all the demands placed on us at present. We cannot get rid of all the shortcomings in provisions for health, education and the environment within the likely level of growth that could be achieved by any happy combination of policies. However, the Leader of the Opposition seems to imply that that would be possible if a Labour Government were substituted for the Conservative Government. If we are to have sensible discussions of these matters, one of our tasks must be to bring the debate about what needs to be done within reasonable and practicable bounds.

Those are matters for domestic politics. Further afield, my right hon. Friend the Chancellor has to satisfy world opinion that he has a firm grip on inflation. Perhaps he also has to persuade world opinion that the Conservatives can win the next election, because the alternative seems to worry the markets.

The question is, therefore, has my right hon. Friend done enough in his Budget this year? A tax take of £430 million and a projected growth rate of 1 per cent. is surely indicative of a degree of rigour. I debate with my right hon. Friend the Member for Chesham and Amersham (Sir. I. Gilmour) whether a symbolic 1p or more on the standard rate of income tax would have made a great contribution towards easing the burden of interest rates. More than anything else, that might have risked tipping the economy into recession. The right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen) was probably more nearly right when he said yesterday that the Budget will take a few weeks to settle in before a fair judgment can be made about whether the Chancellor has struck a reasonable balance.

I agree with my right hon. Friend the Member for Chesham and Amersham that in the longer term we need to strengthen our industrial base. Unit labour costs in manufacturing industry are deteriorating in comparison with those in Germany and France. The annual rate of change in Great Britain is 4·8 per cent., it is 2·2 per cent. in Germany and 0·6 per cent. in France. That spells bad news for the British economy and for our ability to increase our share of world markets. Therefore, we must improve investment still further. Although I do not deride what has been achieved in recent years, and while our private sector investment as a percentage of GDP is comparable with that in France and Germany, we still have a lot of catching up to do.

I welcome the Chancellor's measures to help small and medium-sized companies. However, he might have done a little more for larger companies. As a percentage of GDP, corporate tax revenue in the United Kingdom has increased from 2 to 3·5 per cent. over the five years 1983 to 1988, which is 50 per cent. higher than in France or Germany.

If we are to improve our industrial base, we must also do more for training. Therefore, I welcome my right hon. Friend's measures on that. It is a bizarre thought that, with the prospect of a turn in the trend of unemployment, we have too few skills in parts of our economy. Although there will be no shortage of jobs in my constituency or in many other parts of the country in the foreseeable future, there is a question whether those jobs can be filled by people who have the skills to take advantage of them.

In the longer term, we need the symbolic—but more than symbolic-gesture of joining the exchange rate mechanism of the European monetary system. It is not just whether taking that step would be good for the British economy, because as a country we are now in danger of being left behind in the moves that our European partners will undoubtedly make towards fuller economic monetary union. British business men understand that and the British public probably sense it.

We are even in the happy position that the Labour Opposition—the lame European ducks of the 1980s—are now in favour of ever-closer European union in the 1990s. However, I suspect that, when the Government take Britain into the exchange rate mechanism, the Opposition will find weasel words to say that the terms are not exactly right. We should replace doubt with determination. We should cease the constant refining of words and conditions. No clearer signal could be given to overseas opinion or to our own industry that we have our priorities right than if we were to set out a firm timetable for entry.

Overall, my right hon. Friend the Chancellor is maintaining the broad course for recovery, but with some welcome adjustments. My right hon. Friend's Budget could be dubbed a "save and prosper" Budget. I hope that that is how it turns out. I believe that the Budget offers hope that we can pull out of our present difficulties. I trust that my right hon. Friend's judgment and instincts will be borne out by events.

5.47 pm

Mr. Tony Worthington (Clydebank and Milngavie): Anyone who wanted to know why the Tory party has done badly in Scotland would have found the answer encapsulated in a single moment yesterday when the Chancellor came to the high point of his Budget. He was giving away goodies, but was confronted not with silence or applause—not that applause is allowed in here—but with uproar from the Opposition because of Scotland. I was sitting opposite the Chancellor, who was totally bemused about the reason for that uproar.

Like all my hon. Friends, I am absolutely convinced that the right hon. Gentleman had not even thought about the Scottish dimension. He had not realised that it is appalling that when one group of people, who have not yet paid a penny in poll tax, protest about what it will mean to them, they are listened to, whereas another group of people, who have been paying the poll tax for a year, are not listened to. The right hon. Gentleman had not thought about the political consequences of that.

The Government must find a way of bringing equity into the system. There is a way to do so, because wherever there is the will, there is always a way. I applaud the relief that was given yesterday, but the Government always seem to be listening to only some people. They are listening to people who have savings. They do not listen to those with no savings. They have not listened to the people of Scotland who have paid the poll tax for the past year.

We must ask about the role of the Secretary of State for Scotland in all this. On Monday, in the Scottish Grand Committee, the Secretary of State told us that the poll tax had been accepted in Scotland and was working well. If hon. Members on either side of the House believe that, and believe that the poll tax problems will disappear, they should forget those thoughts at once. The problems surrounding that tax will rumble on and on. The Government must listen. They must realise that they have backed a loser and that there can be no justice while the tax exists.

Yesterday's announcement show why the Government's standing in Scotland will worsen beyond its present low ebb. The Prime Minister came to Scotland and in a memorable interview referred to, "We in Scotland," but yesterday's announcement shows how false those words were. It is clear that the Government have not even thought about the consequences of the poll tax in Scotland.

The Government's action has been unprincipled not only in their neglect of Scotland in terms of the relief given yesterday, but in the implementation of the poll tax. The most striking thing that I read in the past few weeks was a statement by the Tory chairman of Berkshire county council which gives the lie to what the Government are saying about Labour councils. He said that, if he had been given as much money by the Government as Westminster council has, he would have been able to charge a nil poll

[Mr. Tony Worthington]

tax and to give £200 to every citizen in Berkshire. That is the truth behind the way in which the poll tax has been set and the money distributed.

Mr. Paul Boateng (Brent, South): A damning indictment.

Mr. Worthington: My hon. Friend is right.

We should ask the National Audit Office and the Public Accounts Committee whether they can detect any principle behind the way in which the poll tax money is being distributed. There is no justice in the system and, once again, the figures are being fiddled to help the Government's friends.

I was interested by what the hon. Member for Saffron Walden (Mr. Haselhurst) said about training and its importance, but I am at a loss to see how yesterday's announcement will be of any significant assistance. Someone will receive tax relief on giving a donation to his local technical and enterprise council or, in the case of Scotland, the local enterprise council. Why he should seek to do that rather than invest in training in his own company I do not know.

The Government have cut expenditure on training. This year in Scotland, comparing like with like, nearly £30 million has been cut from the training budget of the training agencies. Despite that, one can read glossy Government documents saying that the worse time to cut training is in times of hardship. In those documents the Government urge private manufacturing industry not to take a short-term attitude to training. What do the Government do, however, when faced with difficulties? They cut training.

It is interesting to note the excuse given for that by the Minister responsible for training in Scotland. He told us that the Government have cut expenditure on training in Scotland because of the diminishing client group and the fall in the number of long-term unemployed and young people. We were told that during our deliberations on the Enterprise and New Towns (Scotland) Bill. The same Minister, however, has boasted that there are more people in employment than ever before. Surely that means that the client group is enhanced and that more people need to be trained, some of whom may not yet be in the work force.

The report on training by the Confederation of British Industry says that we need to take a completely different attitude towards it and to make a quantum leap in terms of training and its quality. It states that the quality of training is manifestly inadequate and that the youth training scheme is still in an embryonic state and needs to be developed. How have the Government responded to the demand for training? They have introduced the employment training scheme. How can one argue that that scheme matches up to and meets the challenges thrown at us by the German, Scandinavian and Japanese training schemes? The motivation behind our scheme is, essentially, to lower unemployment, to reduce wages and to reduce the contribution of local authorities and trade unions to training.

My right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith) has made it absolutely clear that, if we are ever to compete effectively in the world, we must tackle skill shortages. In Scotland we have significant unemployment. The city of Glasgow still has male unemployment of 20 per cent., but the city also suffers from skill shortages. The House will appreciate that it is rather difficult to achieve a situation in which firms cannot fill jobs in that city, while male unemployment is still running at 20 per cent.

The CBI in Scotland has said that skill shortages there are chronic, particularly in engineering. Engineering employers have also revealed how serious the shortage of engineers is at all levels. They are reported as saying:

"The recruitment shortages of 1989 are evidence that spare capacity is not available".

Those difficulties are also experienced in information technology. Indeed, there are innumerable areas in which we are experiencing skill shortages, but industry has not picked up the need to rectify that problem.

In Scotland, as elsewhere, the private sector has been told that the Government want it to take over the training system, but that sector, above all others, has been guilty of not training. We are now told to place our trust in those who have failed us, and that is not good enough. There must be a partnership between private industry and the public sector, and it cannot be left to the private sector alone.

I was pleased to hear what previous hon. Members said about our manufacturing industry. Am I the only one who felt a sense of shame when I heard the Chancellor bragging about a surplus of manufactured television sets? We have that surplus because the Japanese have come in and rescued us. I am ashamed, because we used to have a television manufacturing industry, but now the Japanese, for their own reasons, have come in and are providing us with that surplus.

In common with all hon. Members I visit factories, and it is interesting to consider from where the raw materials come. The answer is striking. Recently I visited a British kitchen manufacturer based in the south-east. As I went round the factory I asked where some run-of-the-mill components—certainly not exotic products—came from. I asked from where the blockboard came and was told, from Belgium or Sweden. When I asked why, I was told that Britain does not produce it to the required standard. I asked where the finishes for certain kitchen products came from, and was told Italy. No machine tools used in the manufacture of these products came from Britain. I wondered where the taps came from and found that four out of every five taps in this country are imported. I said to myself that I should be pleased because here is a kitchen manufacturer who is trying to recover the ground that was lost to the Germans and the Italians. However, I wonder if such manufacturers are worsening the balance of payments deficit because what they import is greater than anything that they export. They are not exporting, but simply trying to work in this country.

I wonder whether the Government have yet realised the problem. Why is it that throughout this century—I accept that this is true of Labour as well as Tory Governments—whenever there is growth, it has to stop? It stops because when the British people get more money in their pockets they do not buy British goods but exhibit a preference for foreign goods. We cannot compensate for those sales by what we sell overseas. I do not understand how, simply by slowing things down for a while, we shall deal with that problem, unless we deal with the problem of the manufacturing base.

The Financial Secretary has been promoted this year; I wonder whether he has learnt his lesson from last year. He used to scoff at manufacturing industry and say that we should not exaggerate it.

Mr. Lilley: Can the hon. Gentleman give any reference in *Hansard* showing when I did so?

Mr. Worthington: I cannot do so instantly, but I can turn to the equivalent debate last year.

Mr. Lilley: In that case, will the hon. Gentleman withdraw the remark?

Mr. Worthington: No, I shall not withdraw the remark, because I remember that in equivalent debates the Opposition, year after year, have said that manufacturing industry was neglected. The Financial Secretary asked why the Opposition were obsessed with manufacturing industry, and put all the emphasis on service industries and the financial sector. The Government must realise that we shall achieve exports and get rid of the financial deficit only by dealing with the problems of manufacturing industry.

In the past, the Financial Secretary seemed to align himself with the right hon. Member for Blaby (Mr. Lawson)——

Mr. Lilley: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Is it possible for an hon. Member to continue a complete fabrication when he has admitted that he has no reference to back up anything he says? The hon. Gentleman has not even volunteered to go off and find anything to back up his argument.

Mr. Speaker: Every hon. Member must take responsibility for what he or she says in this place, provided that it is in order. I have no knowledge of whether what the hon. Gentleman said is inaccurate. I imagine it must be accurate or he would not say it.

Mr. Lilley: Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. That is a slur on me. I have assured the hon. Gentleman and you, Mr. Speaker, that I have never said any such thing. If you would like to join the hon. Gentleman——

Mr. Speaker: I apologise to the Financial Secretary. He knows that I came into the Chamber two minutes ago and have not heard the arguments.

Mr. Worthington: I had not noticed you entering the Chamber, Mr. Speaker. I assure you that, as always, I am behaving responsibly.

In the past, the Financial Secretary seemed to align himself with the previous Chancellor of the Exchequer, who certainly said that the deficit—the excess of imports over exports—about which we are so desperately worried, should not worry us as it would be self-rectifying. It would be interesting to know the present attitude of the Financial Secretary and his senior colleagues to the trade deficit. Has it now become a major problem, or does it remain a hiccup? How can we rectify this deficit unless we start seriously paying attention to the needs of manufacturing industry, particularly research and development and training?

6.5 pm

Mr. Nicholas Budgen (Wolverhampton, South-West): The hon. Member for Clydebank and Milngavie (Mr. Worthington) and my right hon. Friend the Member for Chesham and Amersham (Sir I. Gilmour) are agreed on one point—the balance of trade deficit is important. I have the misfortune to disagree with both of them. On that point at least, I agree with my right hon. Friend the Member for Blaby (Mr. Lawson) that the balance of trade deficit will, in the end, be self-correcting.

In the short time available I wish to make two points. First, I offer strong support to the Chancellor of the Exchequer for having avoided what would have been a substantial mistake. Without doubt, great pressure was exerted on him to make greater concessions, by way of tax relief, to those who borrow on mortgage against housing. It was urged that the £30,000 limit should have been raised to £41,000, or even £60,000.

It was good that the Chancellor of the Exchequer resisted that pressure. [HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear!"] I am heartened by the way in which my hon. Friends show their approval of that remark. There are others in the Conservative party who, misguidely, wish the relief to be extended. If it were, it would simply mean that house prices generally would be driven up and more potential first-time buyers would be priced out of the market. The people who benefited would be those owning development land and, to a lesser extent, builders and those associated with the building industry. I said "to a lesser extent" because it is by no means certain that high land prices alway act to the advantage of builders. That is the case only when they have a large land bank. The Chancellor behaved most responsibly in resisting that pressure.

Secondly, I shall refer to the Chancellor's overwhelming duty to restrain inflation. He is not entirely to blame for the position in which the country now finds itself. Between 1986 and 1988 the previous Chancellor of the Exchequer grossly over-expanded the economy and allowed the money supply to get out of control. Now, inflation may rise to 9 per cent. and in every aspect of the nation's affairs we can see the disadvantage of an unexpectedly high inflation rate.

There has been some discussion in the debate about the effect of the community charge. One reason for the extra-large community charges—only one of the reasons —is that the inflation rate is much higher than the Government anticipated when they set out the guidelines for the community charge. Such problems occur in every sphere of the nation's economic activities. This is the one opportunity that the Chancellor has to halt inflation——

Mr. Ronnie Campbell: Before the election.

Mr. Budgen: Yes, the one opportunity that this Chancellor has to do so before the election. Everyone knows that he uses two main weapons: monetary policy —in shorthand, interest rates—and fiscal policy—in shorthand, taxes.

It is all very well to say that it is possible to squeeze inflation out of the system by monetary policy alone—I remember acutely the row when interest rates went up to 15 per cent. I can only assert that I do not think that it would be politically possible to raise interest rates much above the present 15 per cent. The political row that would ensue if, for the sake of argument, interest rates were banged up by another 1 or 2 per cent. at the present time would be enormous.

If I am right in saying that, then it was necessary in the Budget to raise taxation somewhat. Here I marginally disagree with my right hon. Friend the Member for Chesham and Amersham. He is in favour of an increase in

[Mr. Budgen]

the standard rate; I think that it would have been perfectly adequate not to index the personal allowances. What was necessary, however, was to show some fiscal tightening. Here I disagree with the approach of the Chancellor, who said that he did not wish, on the one hand, to underdo it, but nor did he wish, on the other, to overdo it and run the risk of tipping over into recession. Our society enjoys and encourages inflation. It is rubbish to say that inflation is unpopular. The present Government were very popular indeed when they created inflation between 1986 and 1988. What the British people dislike is the check upon inflation, not its creation.

What we require now is to run the risk of overdoing it—the risk of underdoing it scarcely ever exists in our society. We should have taken the risk of perhaps raising a bit too much taxation. The result of being unprepared to take the risk of overdoing it is that the last chance before the election may well have been missed. The Chancellor's estimate of inflation in 1991 is that it may be 5 per cent. I hope that he is right, but it must be said that Treasury estimates of future inflation have nearly always proved to be under-estimates. Even if the Chancellor is right, one thing is clear: there is no room for a pre-election boom and reflation based upon a 5 per cent. rate of inflation.

6.12 pm

Mr. Robert Litherland (Manchester, Central): I am pleased that the emphasis in the debate has been placed on manufacturing industry, because, once again, the Budget has miserably failed to tackle the reason for our floundering economy. The Chancellor, like his predecessors, has missed the opportunity to revitalise our manufacturing and industrial base, which has eroded rapidly in the past 10 years in a collapse that has affected some regions more than others.

For proof, we have only to see the vast tracts of industrial wasteland in the north of England, especially in the north-west, where we have witnessed the evaporation of large labour-intensive manufacturing firms, household names, now gone for ever and with them the hopes of many people still adrift in the sea of unemployment. Job losses in this area from the collapse of manufacturing industry such as light and heavy engineering, textiles and chemicals have been almost double those in the south-east. In spite of the Government's cosmetic statistics, my constituency, where most of the heavy manufacturing and industrial firms were situated, still has 30 per cent. male unemployment.

The concept of replacing manufacturing industry with service industry is a fallacy. The unemployed recognise far better than the Chancellor that once a manufacturing base disappears it never comes back. It is a myth that the country can sustain a buoyant economy on the back of the service sector—deterioration to an underdeveloped economy is unavoidable without a strong manufacturing base. The service industries in my constituency that once provided the requirements of the manufacturers have now become obsolete because there are no longer firms who need their services.

These jobs have to be replaced with less essential, low-paid, part-time jobs such as hotel work, fast food shops and employment in pubs and bars. All these try to fill a void, but they fail to solve the problem. The service industry has failed to offset manufacturing job losses. The Greater Manchester low pay unit has recently produced a report that emphasises that service industries are not a panacea for all the economic ills in our area. Miss Gabrielle Cox, the author of the report and the unit's project co-ordinator, said:

"Our whole economy in this region is under threat. Over the past decade there has been a massive reduction in the number of employed. Higher paid production and construction jobs have fallen by 30 per cent. Opportunities in service jobs have increased by 5 per cent., but often these are very lowly paid. We cannot rely on tourism to revive our local economy. That is not a viable tactic for survival. This region must be more than a museum of our glorious industrial past. What we need is an industrial future. There is an urgent need for significant investment in new industries and technologies."

The Budget has once again failed to tackle the long-term problems of the economy—no new measures to regenerate manufacturing industry and no real capital investment.

I will say this, however: in all the Budgets that I have experienced since I became a Member in 1979, the biggest beneficiaries have always been the wealthy, with gains from tax concessions on their investments, on stock exchange deals or on their inheritance. The losers are always the poor and unemployed. Tax changes to these people are meaningless. They are the people who have meagre incomes and little prospect of employment.

It adds insult to injury when the very services that these people need—services that are essential to the needy, the public services—have been drastically cut. This exposes another myth. Chancellors always insist that to provide public services, taxpayers have to dig deep in their pockets. What Chancellors always fail to mention is that, in order to provide the massive tax handouts to the rich, public expenditure on essential services for the poor has to be cut. As public sector services have declined, so, once again, the deprived in our society have been hit the hardest. If one ever has to switch from public spending to private pockets, someone gets hurt—and in every instance it is someone who can least afford the burden.

Mr. Michael Jack (Fylde) *rose*——

Mr. Litherland: I am sorry, but my time is limited and others want to speak.

The Budget does nothing for the poor. It makes a mockery of individuals and families who struggle day by day to exist, the elderly, the homeless and families who have the spectre of the poll tax looming. If it is said that we cannot spend what we cannot afford, it is equally true that these people cannot save what they have not got. Those people also suffered during the so-called 1988 economic miracle.

To call this the savers' Budget is insulting to the majority of my constituents, because saving always assumes that people have money to spare. So far is that from reality that many must borrow to make ends meet. The loan sharks thrive in inner-city areas. The Budget is without hope and without vision, and once again it appeases the wealthy in society. If, after 11 years in government, this is the best that the Government can do, they are an abject failure. The sooner we boot them out and replace them with a Labour Government, the better.

6.20 pm

Mr. Andrew MacKay (Berkshire, East): I commend my right hon. Friend's Budget, particularly because it is such a good Budget for savers.

I was disappointed when the hon. Member for Clydebank and Milngavie (Mr. Worthington) said that through the community charge rebates the Government were helping only those with plenty of savings and not the genuinely poor. He completely fails to understand that pensioners with no other income are already receiving substantial rebates up to a maximum of 80 per cent. Those who are suffering or are likely to suffer because of the community charge are those who have saved a nest egg and are not eligible for a rebate. There has been a major disincentive to save which has aggravated many people. That needs to be re-emphasised because it was not sufficiently picked up by the newspapers following yesterday's Budget statement.

My main concern is for people who have never earned much money, but who have been thrifty and each week or month saved a little so that they have a nest egg of about £8,000 or £12,000 for a couple, for their old age. Throughout their working lives they may have lived next door to a couple who have chosen a different route and spent the money that they earned. Some would describe such a couple as feckless.

Mr. Martlew: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. MacKay: No, we have only 10 minutes for our speeches.

For those who have saved, it is adding insult to injury to see their neighbours getting an 80 per cent. rebate on housing benefit, council rents and community charge. They can ill afford to pay the full community charge and find difficulty paying the full rent. The Chancellor of the Exchequer is to be commended for doubling the savings limit from £8,000 to £16,000.

People who live together and are not married will not now be disadvantaged. All hon. Members will have come across this further anomaly. A husband and wife who have saved a little more that £8,000 may live next door to another elderly couple, perhaps a widow and widower who are brother and sister, who, obviously, are not married and are not eligible for a rebate on their community charge. That was patently unfair. My right hon. Friend has erred on the generous side by raising the individual savings limit to £16,000. I imagine that he did so because if he raised it to £8,000 per individual, a millionaire pensioner could move all his savings from his wife, who would than receive an 80 per cent. rebate on the community charge. That would be disgraceful—some would describe it as obscene—and it certainly was not intended.

I am worried about a further group and I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will take note for the future. Counties such as Berkshire have suffered from an unrealistic standard spending assessment which I hope can be corrected, although we may have to debate that another time. I am worried for my constituents who earn just above the level at which they would receive family credit or income support and who have wives who look after the children and therefore cannot work. Incidentally, any young mother in the Thames valley who wants to work will be able to find a job because we have negative unemployment and because of the help that my right hon. Friend has provided by scrapping the benefit in kind tax on workplace nurseries.

The families that I have referred to will find it extremely difficult to pay the community charge. Those couples need help in the form of rebates, similar to that which pensioners have received. I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will bear that in mind when he considers further changes in rebates.

My hon. Friend may ask how I would pay for that and I have a suggestion. It is unwise to ask the Treasury for extra money without explaining where it will come from. I must be somewhat critical of my right hon. Friend the Chancellor because the increased duty of 10p on 20 cigarettes is insufficient. If we are serious about preventive medicine and health care, we should provide major disincentives to smoking. I should have liked a 20p increase on cigarettes. I suspect that there is only one reason why the Chancellor did not do that and that is because it would have had a remarkable effect on the RPI and therefore on inflation.

As all hon. Members strongly oppose encouraging young people to start smoking and support preventive medicine, perhaps we can agree across across the Floor of the House that the best way to reduce the long-term cost to the NHS is to take tobacco and cigarettes out of the RPI. Incidentally, I should also like to see mortgage repayments taken out of the RPI, but Labour Members —*[Interruption.]*—as the hon. Member for Blyth Valley (Mr. Campbell) characteristically points out, would yell "Sham" and "Fix". I would not necessarily expect all-party support on that. I hope that if my hon. Friend the Minister were assured of all-party support to remove the cost of cigarettes and tobacco from the RPI, he would undertake to consider it seriously. It would be in the interests of health care and would make a great deal of sense.

The provision on workplace nurseries will help my constituents, but I should like to nudge my right hon. Friend to go a little further next year. I have already pointed out that the lack of benefit-in-kind charges on workplace nurseries will be of great help to many young mothers who wish to return to work and to employers who have skills shortages, especially those in the Thames valley, but let us be absolutely honest about this: there are not many workplace nurseries in my constituency, and I can see hon. Members on both sides nodding in agreement. There are few.

I hope that the concession in the Budget will increase the number of workplace nurseries, but I fear that it will increase them only among large employers. I imagine that large firms in my constituency who complain that they cannot find people for vital jobs will invest in one, but small firms cannot. If we are realistic, we must concede that the great majority of employees will not find a job in a firm with a workplace nursery. Instead, they will pay for the child to be cared for, either in an ordinary nursery or by a child minder.

If we are serious about giving an even break to young mothers who want to return to work—the Chancellor was right to say that we should not be in favour or against mothers going back to work; in a free society, it is for them to decide, but we must end barriers that prevent them from returning to work—if we are serious about improving skill shortages and if we are serious about finding people to

[Mr. MacKay]

take up jobs where there are vacancies that cannot be filled from the existing work force, as is happening now in the Thames valley, we must do more.

A good start has been made. As the next step, mothers should be given tax relief or partial relief on the expenses that they incur in placing their children in nurseries or paying child minders.

Mrs. Fyfe *rose*——

Mr. MacKay: I am running out of time, so I cannot give way.

It is clear that workplace nurseries cannot be established at every place of work. I commend the Budget, which is sound. I hope that the next Budget will take into account my mild criticisms and will cater for all the requests that I have made.

6.30 pm

Mr. William Ross (Londonderry, East): I watched the Chancellor's performance yesterday with some fascination. He was brilliant and he is to be congratulated on his performance. I am sorry that he is not in his place to hear me say that. On the other hand, perhaps it is as well that he is not, because it was a brilliant performance in trying to make a silk purse out of a sow's ear.

The situation in the economy is grim. The Chancellor was dealt a poor hand and, although he handled it superbly and sold his and the Government's case to the country well, the underlying problems will remain for some time. To give credit where credit is due, he tried to place the few goodies that he had to distribute with those in the greatest need. On behalf of the Ulster Unionist party, I welcome the help for charities, inheritance and capital gains tax indexation, the disappearance of composite tax, the introduction of tax-exempt special savings accounts and the changes in VAT.

The tax allowances for blind people are especially to be welcomed, and I hope that, having dealt in that way with that group of the disabled, the Government will go further and consider other disablements. I hope that they will look with particular care at the needs of blind students, because the special equipment that they require imposes extra costs on them. They have fewer job prospects at the end of their training and education and they will experience considerable difficulty over the student loans scheme. That issue must be examined with care and in detail.

We on this Bench welcome the social security changes. I listened with interest today to the hullabaloo that arose during the speech of the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith), who claimed that the Government had forgotten Scotland. Those who accuse the Chancellor of that seem to forget about the one part of the kingdom where rates are still the norm for local government finance. In Northern Ireland there is no poll tax, or community charge, or whatever it may be called. We have not yet had spelled out to us what the effect of that change will be on the ratepayers of Northern Ireland. I hope that before the end of the debate we shall be given a clear understanding of that.

I was glad to see independent tax for women finally coming into operation, although that change was prophesied last year. That procedure has been followed in a number of other goodies this year; we were told that they would be coming next year or, in the case of TAURUS, at some future time, perhaps never. As I do not invest much in the stock exchange, never having had that sort of money, it will not affect me. Indeed, that goodie will not feature much in the eyes of the general public.

I welcome the Government's commitment to the further repayment of central Government debt, and I particularly welcome the fact that there has been no wild rush to European monetary union, because on this Bench we have not shifted much in our opposition to the Common Market and all its works. As for the desire of the farmers' union to enter EMU, let us remember that that union advised farmers to vote for entry into the Common Market years ago. I thought that that decision was wrong then, it was proved later to be wrong, and the farmers' union did not get all the benefits for the farming community that were sought. I have no doubt that the union is wrong again now. We cannot hide away from the blasting winter gales that the economy of this country faces, either in EMU or anywhere else. We must get out there, manufacture, sell and earn our own living in the world.

I object to the petrol and diesel tax increase. Hon. Members will not be surprised to hear that, because I represent a largely rural community where a car is a necessity and not a luxury. Nor does the tobacco tax increase meet with general approval on this Bench, since many jobs in Northern Ireland depend on the tobacco industry.

I regret that further help has not been announced for investment by manufacturing industry. The hon. Members for Manchester, Central (Mr. Litherland) and for Clydebank and Milngavie (Mr. Worthington) dealt with that issue at length. We need manufacturing industry. The hon. Member for Clydebank and Milngavie described what was in effect an assembly line rather than a manufacturing line in the sense that so much of the basic and high-value materials used were imported. We should be trying to manufacture more of those items at home, for the basis of this country's wealth is manufacturing industry.

More help should be given to inventors, many of whom are individuals rather than organisations. They have problems in financing their inventions through to the market place. They have difficulty with patent costs, achieving production, money flow, obtaining grants, and so on. Their difficulties in Northern Ireland are especially great because of the effects of terrorism. I hope that the Government will take further interest in that matter.

The Chancellor did not have many goodies to distribute. One could say that he had a few Polo mints to dispense. An outstanding characteristic of Polo mints is that they have a hole in the middle. Much of the Budget is like that, because it is designed to paper over some cracks.

I was concerned whenever the Chancellor spoke about a strong pound. I was wondering what that was and came to the conclusion that it was a pound that would retain its value against the currencies of the other major industrial economies with which we are in competition. The pound would not need support from the Bank of England—it needed it today—and could float successfully, and I am left wondering what has happened to the whole concept of a floating pound. Is the pound at present floating?

There are many other matters to which I wish I had time to refer. The Chancellor has been described as a one-club man in that it is said that he has only interest

rates to use. There are other things that he could use, such as income tax rates and action on public expenditure. Does he believe that the minimal steps that he has taken will be sufficient to correct the problems of the economy? Is it his perception that private expenditure is going down fast and far enough to bring down inflation? Why has he ignored public expenditure if he really wants to squeeze out inflation?

While we hear much about local government spending, no attempt has been made to decrease central Government spending, which, we were told on 15 November, would rise from £168 billion this year to £203 billion in 1992-93, a small increase of £35 billion. That increase, of nearly 21 per cent., concerned me at the time and my concern has not lessened in the intervening weeks.

The last time that the Government started to squeeze out inflation, in 1981, they allowed inflation to run at roughly 5 per cent. for years in order to cushion those who had bought ahead of themselves in the expectation that inflation would roar ahead. I wonder whether there is the same carry-on today. If so, I strongly advise the Government against it. Inflation is an evil hydra which needs to be crushed out of existence and kept out of existence. That will not be achieved simply, easily or painlessly.

The Chancellor's judgment may well have been coloured by electoral prospects. If his judgment is right and inflation comes down, victory will flow from the measures that he announced yesterday. If he is wrong, he will curse the day that he did not follow more closely the example that Brazil set him only the day before.

6.40 pm

Mr. Robert Boscawen (Somerton and Frome): No one will disagree with the hon. Member for Londonderry, East (Mr. Ross) that inflation is a monster and must be crushed out of existence. I whole-heartedly agree, and I am delighted that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor put that objective at the head of his opening remarks in his Budget yesterday when he said that he would use every method to bear down on inflation.

As is usual these days, and has been for as long as I can remember, when we have had a Budget the financial pundits race to their microphones to give long-term guesstimates of what the Budget will do, and one guess proves as indifferent as another But it is usually many months before we see the results of the measures announced by the Chancellor.

I can say unreservedly that the Chancellor's performance in the presentation of his Budget yesterday was exceptionally skilled. He had few cards to play, but he appeared to play them effectively. Few Chancellors in recent years have had such a poor hand before coming to the Dispatch Box. I am grateful for the talents that my right hon. Friend displayed.

I am amazed how many commentators have been calling for an easier time, particularly on interest rates. They have called for interest rates to come down and for the Chancellor to take risks with inflation so as to ease the pressures on family budgets, on medium and small firms and on farmers, of whom I have many in my constituency. Farmers have been among the first to call for the easing of pressure on interest rates.

Many people seem to have forgotten how the effect of inflation soon turns up in high unemployment. Thank goodness, my constituency has low unemployment—about 4 per cent. The hon. Member for Clydebank and Milngavie (Mr. Worthington) said that, sadly, in some places in his constituency it was 20 per cent. Such differences in unemployment have been the most persistent long-term problem during my adult life. There may be rising inflation in one area and unacceptably high unemployment in another.

No Government, certainly since the war and before the war—it was worse before the war—have been able to overcome the discrepancies in Britain's labour markets. Easing up on inflation in the more prosperous areas will do nothing but harm to areas such the one that as the hon. Gentleman represents. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor has no alternative but to persist in bearing down heavily on inflation in the quickest and most direct way by raising the price of money.

In most of Britain there has been great improvement in unemployment, and that is welcome. Above all, we must keep it that way. Having a job to go to, a career to follow and a lifetime in a particular calling is the most important benefit that young people can ask for and that we can give them. The short-term effect of interest rates on mortgages, family incomes, and so on, can be lived with, but if we let inflation get out of hand, the unemployment that would follow would do immense harm to the Government and even more harm to our young people.

It is also of great importance that my right hon. Friend tackled the problem of savings in the Budget. There are no prizes for anyone who guesses why savings have been virtually completely squeezed out from people's normal habits. There were the huge inflation rates of the 1970s, the ludicrous tax-and-tax-again policies on savings of the Labour Government, and the ridiculous measures that were taken against savings for administrative reasons, such as the composite rate tax, which should have gone long ago. My right hon. Friend was right to try his best once again to encourage the ethos of saving in Britain. Saving is so much better than taxation. I hope that the Opposition will put behind them all the ideas about those who saved too much being parasites on society.

My right hon. Friend has made some excellent suggestions for overcoming some of the anti-saving devices of the past, and he has done a great service to the small saver with his new scheme for saving relatively small sums of money provided that the savings are held for 10 years. I hope that his new-found friend TESSA will be a popular girl. I have already mentioned the composite rate, and the ending of that is good news for those whose incomes are too low to pay tax.

Too many people come to my surgeries and say that when they were young it was impossible to save. That was true in many cases. This year my right hon. Friend has made a good start in trying to revert that trend, as his predecessor did with his personal pension plan. I see my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary to the Treasury in his place. He should ensure that the rats in the Inland Revenue do not get at the new schemes in the same way as they did to the personal equity plan scheme which they made so difficult and so complicated that it was hardly taken up to begin with. They are getting it better now, but will my right hon. Friend do what he can to ensure that the rats do not get at it and the good intentions are not lost? I hope that people will say that the 1990s were a good time to save and so to acquire the sense of independence that adds so much to the character of any society.

[Mr. Robert Boscawen]

I commend the Chancellor's Budget to the House, and I give it my full support.

6.50 pm

Mr. Ronnie Campbell (Blyth Valley): This Budget seems to be that of a Government in their death throes. There was nothing for anyone, other than those with a few pounds to save. There must be one in a thousand who are not paying poll tax, or who are paying high interest charges and have any savings left.

The Chancellor made it plain that he intended to raise interest rates this year, if need be by 2 per cent. That is an indictment in itself. Obviously, by the end of the year, the interest rate will be about 2 per cent. higher than it is now.

Let me say to my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith) that a Labour Government will inherit that problem and have to put it right. The Government are making such a mess of things that it will be one big black hole by the time the Labour party gets into power. The Conservatives will lose the by-election on Thursday, and they will lose the next general election. There is no way that the Government can regain the initiative, and a Budget like this will not help.

As a result of the Budget, more people will be means-tested. Some 5,000 will be drawn back into income support; 1·2 million will be brought into housing benefit; 85,000 people will be brought into tax who did not pay it before. The Government try to say that they are taking people out of taxation, but this Budget brings them in. The Government constantly say that they are the party that does away with taxes, or reduces income tax. However, since 1979 the tax burden has shifted from income tax to national insurance, value added tax and indirect taxation. People are being hoodwinked: the taxes that they were paying under the last Labour Government were no different from those that they are paying under this Government. The only difference is that they are not included in direct taxation.

Those earning £157 per week are now on the low-pay threshold. Some Conservative Members might think that that is a lot of money; they might be lucky enough to get it in their tax rebate. However, some families earn that amount in a week. People on that wage will lose £10 a week. In the north-east of England, there are many people on low wages, and £157 is considered to be a low wage.

Poverty has been continually growing in this country since the Government took office in 1979: 9·4 million more people are now believed to be living on or below the poverty line, and 2·25 million of them are children. There was no charity or giveaway for the people on low wages and income support in the last Budget or the one before that—the "giveaway Budget." Since coming to power, the Government have done absolutely nothing for the poor. The official poverty line has increased by 55 per cent. which is another indictment of the Government. Since 1979, some 100,000 families have lost their homes; mortgage payments have risen; and repossessions have increased by 800 per cent. Yesterday the Chancellor said that interest charges will increase even more, which will mean that even more people will lose their homes.

Before I left my office for London on Monday, I saw two families with housing difficulties—they could not afford their mortgage payments. I could do little for them, apart from telling them that they must present themselves as a homeless family. It is another indictment of the Goverment that so many people must lose their homes.

In January, a parliamentary question asked how many people would benefit if capital loans were abolished. The DHSS said that it would affect only 166,500 people, but the Chancellor suggested that 225,000 people would gain. I do not know who is right, the DHSS or the Chancellor. Perhaps someone can answer that question later. Even if the Chancellor is right, and the figure is 225,000, only 0·8 per cent will gain. We could abolish it altogether and, according to the estimates, it would cost only £136 million.

It would have been better for the Chancellor to throw the capital loans out altogether, thereby saving on administration, and so give the local authorities at least a chance. The local authorities have had a hell of a job to get the poll tax and the rebates off the ground. Everybody believes that he is entitled to a rebate. What is not realised is that, even with a rebate, everybody will have to pay at least 20 per cent. of the poll tax.

What does this Budget do for pensioners who do not have loads of money? For those who do have loads of money, there are some fancy savings schemes, but what about the others? We hear constantly about what a good Government we have. Some people would try to make us believe that things have been wonderful since 1979. But in that 10-year period the income of pensioners has been cut. The Government have removed the earnings link and, as a result, single people have lost £12 a week and married couples £19 a week. In this way the Government have saved £4 billion——

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): Order. The hon. Gentleman has had his 10 minutes.

Mr. Campbell: I will now wind up.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. I am afraid that, as the hon. Gentleman has had his 10 minutes, I cannot allow him to wind up. Sorry—another time.

7 pm

Mr. John Townend (Bridlington): I think that most people agree that the Chancellor, in presenting his first Budget, faced a daunting task. I congratulate my right hon. Friend not only on his presentation of the Budget in the House but on his excellent performance on television last night.

With the retail prices index still rising—albeit as a result of technical factors rather than the underlying rate of inflation—my right hon. Friend clearly had little room for manoeuvre this year. The Budget judgment this year is critical for the Government. I believe that, if the Chancellor has got it wrong, we can say goodbye to the next general election. He had to satisfy the market by continuing a tight fiscal stance—possibly even tighter than before—but he had to avoid being too tough, as that would have pushed the economy into severe recession. As a result of being boxed in, he was faced with the prospect of presenting a very boring and dull first Budget. I am delighted that that has not happened. We have had an innovative Budget with some imaginative ideas.

In particular, the Chancellor, at long last, has tackled the United Kingdom's major problem—the decline of thrift. As to the overall judgment, the Chancellor has opted for a marginally tighter fiscal stance, taking out just under £0·5 billion extra in taxation this year. Clearly this

will not put us into a recession. Only time will tell whether it is sufficient, but I think that, on balance, my right hon. Friend has got it right. The initial reaction of the markets today and last night was that the Budget should have been tougher, but markets often react rather nervously after a Budget, and I am afraid that a number of the financial scribblers have been trying to talk down the market and the pound.

This week we shall get another set of balance of payments figures and another set of retail sales figures. I feel that, after last month's blip, these will be more favourable, and, as a result, the pound could rally. However, it would be foolish not to appreciate that the next few months will be critical. If we can get to the autumn without having to raise interest rates again, we will be through to clear water. Inflation will start to come down, and the Budget will be seen as a triumph for the Chancellor.

I want to turn now to the effect of the Budget on small businesses. In Committee on the last Finance Bill, my hon. Friend the Member for Dover (Mr. Shaw) and I pressed the Treasury Ministers to increase from £500,000 to £750,000 the limit on the amount that BES trading companies may raise. We are absolutely delighted that the Chancellor has done so this year. We hope that during the passage of this year's Finance Bill he will accede to our other two suggestions regarding BES schemes, by reducing the limit from five years to three years and by allowing salaries for investor directors.

We welcome the changes in VAT regulations, which will enable businesses to reclaim VAT on bad debts much earlier. We welcome also the increase in the VAT threshold and the simplification of the rules for traders. The fact that VAT registration will now be based on a simple rule—the previous year's turnover—will mean that small businesses may register later and make some cash savings.

In the case of corporation tax, the increase of £50,000 in the limit for the small companies rate will be welcomed by medium-sized businesses but will not help small businesses that make a profit of less than £150,000. I strongly urge the Government to consider allowing the first £5,000 to £10,000 profit of small companies paying the small rate of corporation tax to be tax-free so long as the profit is retained in the company. This would be of very great help to young companies, which are often desperate for capital once they have become established and start to expand.

There is another concession that I should like the Government to consider giving to small businesses. It concerns inheritance tax. I think that the principle has been accepted that it is of no benefit to the country that successful small businesses should have to be sold in order to pay inheritance tax. Even if such businesses do not have to be sold, substantial sums of capital have to be provided to pay inheritance tax when the entrepreneur dies. I know that it is now easier to give shares away, but that is not always practicable. Indeed, sometimes people die out of turn. My suggestion is that inheritance tax on the shares in a private company should be rolled over until those shares are sold or until the company goes public.

As many right hon. and hon. Members have said, one of the problems in our economy in recent years has been the propensity of the British to save less and to spend more than the people of other industrialised countries. One of the reasons for this is the previous economic success of this Government. People have been more prosperous and have felt more secure under this Government, and therefore have not felt it necessary to save. They thought that they could spend their money as they earned it. It is vital that that trend be reversed. A Budget for savers was absolutely essential, and that is what we have got. In this respect, the Chancellor has performed brilliantly by encouraging new savings and by removing impediments to saving.

The tax-exempt special savings account—TESSA—is particularly welcome. This is a simple, unsophisticated brother—or sister—to PEP. PEP encourages investors. The increase of 25 per cent. in the annual limit is welcome, but PEP does nothing at all for the saver who does not want to take any risks. TESSA fills the gap, and that is very important. It is very simple. It will be easily understood by everybody, and will be readily available to every saver in the land. I believe that, over the years, it will have an enormous effect on efforts to bring thrift back into fashion.

The Chancellor has dealt with a number of impediments to saving. I welcome the abolition of the composite tax rate, which was long overdue. This not only is a bonus to savers on low income but removes a clear injustice. In my own mind, I could never justify low-income savers not liable to tax having to pay tax merely for administrative convenience. This change will help many pensioners and married women in my constituency.

The abolition of stamp duty on securities not only removes an unnecessary investment cost but will improve the competitive position of the City of London and give it a tremendous boost to become the securities centre of Europe.

One of the greatest impediments to saving has always been the belief that, if one saves for one's old age, one will lose all the benefits that are available to those who have been less prudent. With the introduction of the community charge, this problem has been brought home to all hon. Members. Like many of my colleagues, I have been pressing the Government to increase the £8,000 capital limit per couple to £8,000 per person, making it £16,000 for the couple. I am delighted that, although the Chancellor has not accepted that suggestion, he has doubled the limit for a couple to £16,000, thus achieving basically the same result. That shows that we have in No. 11 a Chancellor of the Exchequer who listens to Members of Parliament.

However, I ask him to take no notice of the Scots. The concession should not be retrospective. It applies to housing benefit as well as to the community charge. To be retrospective, it would have to cover England, Wales and Scotland. The administrative problems would be enormous. It would set a dangerous precedent. Retrospective tax changes, whether they increase or reduce taxation, can be dangerous.

I agree with the Chancellor that credit controls are impracticable. However, many people are upset with the banks and other financial institutions for having thrust credit on people. Many of them cannot afford it. It is especially objectionable when circulars arrive for 16 or 17-year-olds. I am delighted that the Chancellor said that from now on he will use his influence, and that he will get the Bank of England to use its influence. Influence can work.

The Chancellor has made a brilliant start. It was a Budget for women, savers, small businesses, the blind and football. I support it whole-heartedly.

7.10 pm

Mr. Eric Martlew (Carlisle): I should like to put the Budget in the context of the real world—not the world of the stockbroker who is delighted that stamp duty has been removed from share dealings, or the world of the multi-millionaire who, on a whim, may give £5 million to charity. I want to put it in the context of the people who come to see me in my surgery every week. They are worried about the bills that drop through their letter boxes—the increasing size of the electricity, water and gas bills, and now the poll tax. Then there is the letter from the building society. In the last two years they have had seven, or perhaps eight, such letters. My authority is Labour controlled. The poll tax will be £365. If the Conservatives had been in control, it would have been £350. The amount would not have been all that much different, but if the Conservatives were in control there would be some nasty cuts.

In a typical family, the husband works full-time. He is a skilled worker. His wife works part-time. They have two children and they live in a semi-detached house. They left the Labour party in 1979 and voted Conservative and they have returned the Conservatives to power ever since. If they had come to me last Saturday, I should have said, "Don't worry; the Chancellor will help you next week. He will solve the economic problems and give you the help you need. That's why you voted Conservative last time. He's supposed to help people like you."

If they come to see me next weekend, what shall I say to them? Will I say, "You're lucky, as top rate taxpayers; your tax rate has not been increased"? A typical family earning £16,000 a year is never likely to pay the top rate of income tax. Will I tell them that they are lucky not to have a company car and that therefore they will not have to pay the extra 20 per cent? Will I say to them, "With independent taxation you will have two capital gains tax exemptions of £5,000 each, so you can sell one of your valuable assets and realise a tax-free profit of £10,000"? But their only asset which is worth over £10,000 is their home, which they may have to sell because of increased mortgage repayments. But in any case their house is exempt from capital gains tax. So they will not be very happy if I tell them that.

I could say to them, "Why don't you look on the bright side? Think of all the benefits you will get as a saver. You'll be able to open your own TESSA account. You'll be able to invest £150 a month for five years and the interest will be tax-free." I can imagine the reply: "For the last two years we've been unable to save anything. In fact, we've had to take out a second mortgage to make ends meet." It would be useless to tell them that they can increase the amount that they invest in a personal equity plan from £4,800 to £6,000 a year. I know what they would say about that.

I could say, "The answer to all your problems is that the composite rate tax on savings has been abolished," but I am sure that that would not help them. I could say to them, "The Chancellor abolished stamp duty on share dealings, didn't he? That will help you." They would say, "Yes, we used to have some shares in British Gas but we had to sell them six months ago to pay the gas bill." I could also say, "You'll get tax relief on workplace nurseries." Their answer would be, "That's all very fine, but there are no workplace nurseries." Mrs. Typical is not too keen on workplace nurseries. They are an extension of the tied cottage principle—once in, one cannot get out. The only employers with workplace nurseries are banks. Few of my constituents work in banks.

The only Budget change that the typical family can see that will help them relates to charities. The husband is thinking of having his children registered as charities so that they can go begging round stately homes and board rooms for money.

The typical family will suffer as a result of the Budget. Duty on cigarettes and petrol is to be increased. That will increase inflation. The Chancellor has predicted a 1 per cent. growth in the economy. That will mean unemployment. Mr. Typical could soon be out of a job because of the Budget. If we accept that industrial productivity must grow by at least 4 per cent., growth at only 1 per cent. means that three out of every 100 employees will be made redundant next year. This is a Budget for unemployment.

My constituents are typical of many others throughout the country, from Finchley to Mid-Staffordshire. The Budget has been billed as a Budget for savers. It will do little to encourage spenders to become savers. It will only benefit existing savers. Disposable income will be eroded by high interest rates, inflation will continue, the rich will become richer, and the poor will pay for it.

To anyone who has been prepared to listen to him, the Chancellor has said, "Don't panic." It reminded me of a television series: we have a shell-shocked Chancellor in a "Dad's Army" Government. The sooner they surrender the better it will be for Britain.

7.17 pm

Mr. Julian Critchley (Aldershot): To speak in the House of Commons, even on a subject as important as the Budget, between 7 and 8 o'clock is like appearing on Sky Television. Sooner or later, one has the nasty feeling that one is all alone.

I do not wish to exaggerate. We are lucky enough to have a distinguished junior Minister, somnolent but assiduous, in his place—and a young man in the Whips Office who is paid to attend and who has upon his knee a chart on which he writes down his opinion as to the speakers on this side of the House. Phrases such as "sound" or "very satisfactory" are the ones that come to mind. Even the political correspondents are drinking their proprietors' champagne. Only the Wykehamists in the Treasury, whose task it is to sustain our masters in argument, are prepared to stay on. I can only say that, as a Back Bencher of very long standing, I can remember the time when my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister was a brunette. I can also remember when Lord St. John Stevas was a Protestant.

It is an awkward time for a loyal Tory Back Bencher to be on his feet, sandwiched between the harshest Budget since 1981—remember the halcyon days of 1981?—and the Mid-Staffordshire by-election tomorrow. It is a position of some discomfort, so I shall tread with great care.

After 11 glorious years, we are looking at the next election and there are three possible scenarios. First, it could be rather like 1970, when we snatched victory from the jaws of defeat and were returned with a reduced majority—clearly that is the aim and ambition of all Conservatives. The second option is another 1964 when the Labour party sneaked back with a majority of three, and sometimes six, votes. We must remember that in 1964 the Conservative Government enjoyed the same majority

as we do today. The third alternative, which hardly bears thinking about, is a repeat of 1945, which could conceivably happen after a period of 11, 12 or 13 years. Clearly Conservatives must aim for a repeat of 1970.

I watched yesterday's Budget upstairs in my office on a very small black-and-white television set made in Japan. I thought that, perhaps because of the cameras, everyone was marvellously well behaved. It was a bit like being at divine service, until towards the end the Scots became rather agitated. But I am told that in Scotland they do that sort of thing in divine service; they are encouraged to participate in a way that does not happen south of the border.

I wonder whether my right hon. Friend the Chancellor, who made a good impression, might not have fallen between two stools—one being that the aim and objective of Government policy ought to be to overcome inflation and thus maintain the exchange rate, and the other being to restore the morale of Conservative Members. I noticed that, after his performance yesterday, there was a spring in our step and more bottles were opened last night at dinner than for some time.

However, there is a contradiction between those two objectives. Clearly one must hope that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor has achieved both, but the prospect for 1990-91 is not a cheerful one, with a 1 per cent. increase in growth, interest rates at 15 per cent. and wage rates at 9·5 per cent. or more which must mean an increase in unemployment. If inflation is still at its current rate this time next year, we shall be denied an election-winning Budget. How many Governments in the past, of all political complexions, have relied on the cyclical manipulation of the economy to achieve the return of their own political party?

It dawns on me that people are most prosperous in the year before an election. As elections take place only every five years, if we were to reduce the time between them and hold them every three years, surely we would be able to enjoy wider prosperity.

In the three and a half minutes that I have left to speak, I shall revert to the morale of the Conservative party. I voted against the poll tax. That gives me little comfort and my constituents no consolation whatsoever, so I resist the temptation of saying, "I told you so." I am not against obliging the working class to pay for local government, but there should have been a more sensitive relationship between a person's ability to pay and the size of the tax.

Between now and next year, my right hon. Friends the Secretary of State for the Environment and the Chancellor must get together to oblige the Prime Minister to inject into local government spending an additional £4 billion, so that next year the poll tax is brought down to more manageable levels. They must make the Prime Minister an offer that she cannot refuse. Unless that demand is met, I see very gloomy prospects for the Conservative party being returned to office.

Finally, the Tory party is threatened with a running leadership campaign. We have a superfluity of contenders, one of whom, if he is ever elected to Downing street, has promised to make me the last governor of the Falkland Islands. Might it not be wiser if the Tory party, meeting upstairs in Committee Room 14 on a Thursday evening —the longest running show on earth—instead of altering the rules of election for our leadership, as was threatend by my hon. Friend the Member for Shipley (Sir M. Fox) on "The World at One", reverted to the magic circle, so that our next leader eventually emerges from a smoke-filled room at Pratt's or Whites and has the blessing of Lord Whitelaw himself?

7.26 pm

Mrs. Maria Fyfe (Glasgow, Maryhill): Follow that!

I shall not congratulate the Government on abolishing the tax on workplace nurseries. They should never have imposed it in the first place. My sympathies are with the women who have forked out several hundred pounds every year in tax for the past five or six years. Perhaps the Government will consider reimbursing them now that they have acknowledged that it was wrong to collect it in the first place. My sympathies are also with the thousands of women and men who could not use workplace nurseries because taxation had made it impossible for their employers to run them. Many people in Britain find it impossible to have the child care facilities that they need.

As recently as 7 March, the Under-Secretary of State for Employment, the hon. Member for Teignbridge (Mr. Nicholls) was still denying that it would be possible to abolish the tax on workplace nurseries, so it appears that the Government should try to get their act together. Although it is a small advance, it will be useful only to a tiny minority of women.

Abolishing the tax on workplace nurseries will cost that Government only about £1·5 million in revenue. The cost of providing comprehensive child care facilities would be about £2 billion. That is the yardstick against which the Government's neglect of child care can be measured. The figure that they are willing to spend comes nowhere near what is needed.

Separate taxation for women has been proclaimed as a great advance. Of course the idea of separate assessment is welcome, but many women must have assumed that that meant that they would be taxed equally. However, in reality if Harry meets Sally and they get married, tax independence does not mean tax equality. If, for example, a husband and wife each earn £15,000 he will pay £2,558·75 in tax, while she will pay £2,998·75 in tax, so he will take home £430 more. Why could not the Chancellor allow married couples to divide the allowance between them? Does he believe in equality? It seems incredible that he did not undertake that small step, which would have cost precious little. Another attack on women's rights is the phasing out of child benefit.

Separate assessment of taxpayers is welcome, but for the life of me I cannot understand why the Government cannot apply the same principle to the poll tax. We have heard much about TESSA, but one particular poll tax phenomenon could be called JASPER—joint assessment of pensions eliminate rebates.

I quote the example of a couple in my constituency; the husband is severely mentally impaired and is exempted from paying the poll tax, but his wife must pay it in full because their joint incomes are taken into account in her assessment. She receives a state pension of £29 a week and a works pension of £43 a month. Her husband receives a state pension of £46 a week and a works pension of £115 a month. In assessing her liability for poll tax, the state has decided that those four small pensions should be joined and that therefore she must pay the poll tax in full, whereas if she had been a taxpayer she would have been in a different position. It is a severe injustice that she should

[Mrs. Maria Fyfe]

have to pay a full poll tax from so low an income. I hope that one day the Government will address themselves to that problem.

The Chancellor has had 24 hours to reflect on the problem of retrospection for pensioners in Scotland. So far, we have heard that it is irrelevant because pensioners paid rates in England, that is not too easy to do and is far too much trouble and that attention should not be paid to the excitable Scots. If Conservative Members think that Scots are excitable, they have seen nothing yet. There has been a massive reaction to this in Scotland, and it is a further example of how the Chancellor has failed to think about the problem, as was obvious when the question was asked yesterday.

That was irritating enough, but more irritating was the fact that it did not matter to the massed ranks on the Conservative Benches. They voted for the poll tax in Scotland a year before they did so for England and Wales. Once again, they were presented with sheer thoughtlessness by the Chancellor, but again they did not care tuppence. That fact is noted and resented in Scotland. If the Conservative party wants to hang on to its 10 seats in Scotland, it clearly has much to learn. Perhaps the Prime Minister should pay more attention to what she hears when she visits Scotland, instead of trying to play Lady Muck.

Another pensioner couple in my constituency are both on disability pension. The wife receives an industrial injury pension. Their total weekly income is only £130, but they are not eligible for poll tax rebates, whereas previously they were eligible for 100 per cent. rate rebates. We are always hearing about how those in poverty will receive poll tax rebates, but it does not seem to have dawned on Conservative Members that under the old rating system couples living in such impoverished circumstances rightly paid nothing in local taxes.

That couple, whose income is £130 a week, have no savings. Industrial injury benefit is supposed to be non-contributory and non-taxable, but it is counted for poll tax purposes. Such injustices are causing much resentment in Scotland. Hon. Members who voted for the poll tax in England and Wales will soon see the results of that in their surgeries when their constituents raise such problems with them. If they think that they will sail through and coast to another election victory, they have another think coming.

7.34 pm

Miss Emma Nicholson (Torridge and Devon, West): My right hon. Friend the Chancellor offered us a minimalist Budget, which rests for its effectiveness on others' actions—a real Conservative effort which I commend to the House.

Let us consider the way that the Budget feeds covenants and voluntary giving. It is an excellent progression, because covenants have gone down from seven years to four years and we await new Inland Revenue guidance to simplify charitable giving, which must be welcome because it will enable charities to plan ahead. It is all very well relying on emergency appeals showing a giver-friendly photograph of a starving child, but most charitable efforts rest on long-term work. I offer the House the example of the sponsorship of children's education, which rests on covenanting and has been going on since 1921. Many millions of children worldwide have been educated as a result of British donations and the covenanting system. The new easement of covenanting is very welcome.

An even better present is the big gift campaign for charities, which so far has been confined to the United States of America. That will make a difference to the incomes of volunteer organisations. I only wish that it were being introduced sooner than 1 October so that my local church, the steeple of which fell through the roof and will cost thousands of pounds to repair, could regain the tax from my first gift.

There are 37,500 charities and, as my right hon. Friend the Chancellor said, social causes, the arts and other charitable efforts will benefit from the new tax system. A healthy and growing volunteer sector is a good indicator of the health of the economy and of the community. I fear that often it is not so popular with some Labour Members because it rests on individual initiative, but it epitomises the community spirit. I have experience of that from earlier days.

The immense difficulty with charitable giving is broadening the base of donors. It is saddening to realise that only about 4 million households give to charity. Churchgoers are top of the pops, and the generosity of Jewish community members is greater than anyone else's. Generally, an orthodox donor will give to 25 different charities regularly throughout the year. The big gift tax relief announced by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor will give much scope to broaden the base of support.

Which volunteer carries out the work that is financed by individual donors? The classic volunteer in the United Kingdom—our old friend the married woman—is in shrinking supply. I share the concerns expressed by other hon. Members about married women but want to concentrate on the income and capital of the married woman and the married couple's allowance under the new independent taxation system.

Without wishing to appear ungrateful, I believe that the married couple's allowance is an unfair anomaly that should be scrapped. It gives higher net pay to a married man than to a married woman in equivalent circumstances. What justification is there for that? Even if a married couple wish to share the MCA, which is similar to the monetary compensation amounts in farming terms, they cannot do so unless the husband's income is too small to benefit, in which case it may be set against the wife's income. Why not give couples a free choice and then phase it out, distributing the takings equally? What is the point of identifying a woman as the lesser partner in a marriage? After all, real freedom is economic freedom, and one cannot compete equally in economic terms unless one is equal in terms of human dignity.

The tax system should be family-friendly. The most vulnerable member of society is the child, whose care and nurture is mostly undertaken by the mother, and her financial health is crucial to the child's stability and growth. From that base, we should move rapidly towards independent assessment of married women's income for income tax purposes. That should be matched now by independent assessment for rebate for the community charge. Although I welcome the Chancellor's doubling of the capital limit, a wife's capital should be assessed separately and the ceiling should be double that of a single person. I would impose a ceiling to avoid creating a new unfairness and giving big gifts to the 11 per cent. of women

who do not work, who have no small children, sick people or elderly people at home and who are married to wealthy men.

I welcome the beginning of a vision of affordable quality child care. It will help working women immensely. I welcome the lifting of taxation on access to child care nurseries at workplaces. I hope that it will herald a move toward nursery places for all children in the United Kingdom. Most mothers do not want to take their children to work. Most mothers would prefer quality child care near home. At some point, this will have fiscal consequences for future Budgets.

7.40 pm

Mr. Graham Allen (Nottingham, North): The object at fault was probably not the Budget but the job description. The Chancellor was clearly told how far he could go and told that the main planks of economic policy rested not with him but through the door that is never opened between No. 10 and No. 11 Downing street. He was told that he could tinker around the edges if he felt like it, which is what he did. As far as job description went, he did a reasonable job, but it is irrelevant to the main problems confronting the economy.

On Friday, I went to the Nottinghamshire CBI to find out what it thought the problems were, although one may think that that was not necessarily a favourable audience for my political point of view. The chairman of the CBI asked a number of his colleagues in the audience—senior directors, managing directors, and executives—to state what they thought the problems were. The person from the textile training association said that the main problem was the lack of training and the increasing closures in the area. A person involved in a medium-sized engineering plant said that the main problems were basically skill shortages. He was unable to get the quality of people that he needed, especially with the Japanese company, Toyota, moving in just over the border in Derbyshire and sucking in skilled workers from local companies.

Another senior CBI member mentioned labour shortages. A person involved in heavy construction in the brick industry reported that the demand for bricks was down 50 per cent. and that he was running his plant at half capacity. Many of the problems that he encountered were due to interest rates. Someone from another engineering plant talked about the poaching of people who had gone through apprenticeships and then gone down the road to another company which was not prepared to train people but, because of the money thereby saved, could offer a marginally higher income. A local bank manager pointed out that lending had levelled out.

Not one of the problems identified at that meeting was tackled by the Chancellor in the Budget. The Budget was irrelevant to the main problems of this country—irrelevant to the highest trade deficit in the G7 countries, to the highest inflation rate compared with our industrial competitors and to the highest interest rates in Europe. It was totally pointless and worthless in terms of the major direction of economic policy.

Taxation is another matter that has not been dealt with in sufficient depth in this debate. A myth about taxation has developed under this Conservative Administration. It has been useful for the Government to reduce the level of income tax and to pretend that the taxation burden has fallen, but that is a myth. Because of the resources at their command, they have had the mastery to shuffle and reshuffle taxation. They have changed the pack without changing the basis and level of taxation. In terms of corporate and individual taxation, taxation is as near as dammit to the 1979 level.

One specific tax to which I should refer before going much further is the poll tax. We have heard of the need to counter the actions of spendthrift councils, but it is worth pointing out that local goverment spending in England and Wales rose by only 15 per cent. in real terms over the 10 years from 1979—less than the 25 per cent. growth in national income and a small increase by previous standards. The Sunday before last, an article by William Keegan in *The Observer* referred to non-domestic rates growing by 59 per cent. and domestic rates by 83 per cent. and explained why. The article stated:

> "They were not only financing the (relatively slow) growth of local government spending; they were also filling the gap created by a fall of 18 per cent. (in real terms) in central Government grants to local authorities. In the current 1989-90 financial year domestic and non-domestic rates have together been financing 56 per cent. of local government current expenditure, against 38 per cent. 10 years ago".

The proportion financed by central Government grants has fallen from 49 per cent. to 52 per cent. The Government have deliberately shifted the burden of total taxation towards the local ratepayer or the local poll tax payer. The extra burden on the rates has been equivalent to 3·5p in the pound on the rate of income tax, taken out of the 8p in the pound alleged reduction in the basic rate of income tax.

Labour Members must continue to expose that sleight of hand, despite the central position given in people's minds to income tax. We must examine the income tax structure and reform it drastically. We need to legislate to do away with the effects of fiscal drag and to have an honest, clear debate each year on real taxation levels. The allowances and all the other factors associated with tax should be linked and increased automatically—perhaps in line with growth in the economy.

If we wanted to reduce or increase taxation, there would be an honest debate on the level. Matters would be clearer if the tax system were structured into not two bands but many bands from zero to the top rate of tax, whether it is 50 or 60 per cent., in a series of 1 per cent. increases. In that way, income tax would be removed from its central place in the equation of our national spending.

We need to restore our central objective in the economy. It must be a clear redefinition of our desire to invest more of our national wealth in our national well-being, forgetting our obsession with indicators and returning to the real economy. Our major and most successful competitors—Japan and Germany—pursued domestic growth and a reinvigorated domestic economy. We must do nothing less. There is a growing alliance in favour of that objective, which takes in the trade unions, the CBI and all the opposition parties. With that alliance in favour of manufacturing—an alliance for the real economy—we shall begin to crack some of our major problems.

We shall also need—I am sure that my hon. Friends the Members for Brent, South (Mr. Boateng) and for Newcastle upon Tyne, East (Mr. Brown) will think this increasingly—to make an impact on the massive flows of hot money round the globe. We now have nearly $1 trillion floating round looking for a home. Now that interest rates in Japan are likely to increase, it is likely that much of that

[Mr. Graham Allen]

money will no longer go to subsidise our economy and that of the United States. We are staying alive on short-term foreign capital. We need to tackle that major problem and to reinvest in, and reinvigorate, our own economy. That will not be done by this Government; it will have to be done by a Labour Government.

7.50 pm

Mr. Michael Jack (Fylde): On Saturday evening I had the pleasure of watching my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer being probed by a young lady on "Jim'll Fix It" on the subject of her pocket money. She asked a lot of searching questions and I now know where the principles of the Budget came from. She talked about thrift, budgeting and the care of one's money. Having examined the proposals in this, the first televised Budget, I think that this is a case of John having fixed it. I congratulate my right hon. Friend on having found a way of giving so much to so many when he had so few resources to deal with.

The most important thing that my right hon. Friend did in the Budget was to rekindle the savings habit. That is especially important for children. Budgets are as much about short-term economic activity as about laying the foundations for the future. Having said that, I asked my right hon. Friend to consider the role of the national savings movement in the new world of saving. Many will look to national savings as the ultimate safe haven for their money. Savings may still be clouded by the taint of the Barlow Clowes affair.

My hon. Friend the Financial Secretary will know that in my own constituency, and in the adjoining constituency of Blackpool, South, many thousands of workers do vital jobs in the savings movement. National savings sometimes provides the Treasury with much-needed smoothing finance to enable the Government to pay their bills. I ask my hon. Friend the Financial Secretary to look again at the range of products and the rates of return, in spite of the announcements made in the Budget, and to ensure that the national savings movement can play a full part in the new world of savings.

In particular, I ask my hon. Friend to view premium savings bonds sympathetically. Last year, for reasons of administration and cost, Treasury Ministers raised to £100 the limit on entry to this very good savings scheme. I ask my hon. Friend to consider lowering the figure to £50. If he cannot do that, I ask him at least to consider introducing a savings stamps scheme to enable people to save to enter premium savings bonds as they represent an attractive form of savings for the unsophisticated, and as many of my constituents make their living by administering them I would be much reassured if my hon. Friend the Financial Secretary agreed to do that.

The Budget is good for pensioners' savings. Many pensioners have saved throughout their lifetime, and at last the Government have answered the plea of many of us that they should stop penalising thrift. I congratulate my right hon. Friend the Chancellor on that.

I have referred to children and to savings. I also have a query about my right hon. Friend's excellent announcement on nursery places and the exemption from tax. What happens if a company that does not have a workplace nursery issues vouchers to employees? Will they be included in the schemes that my right hon. Friend announced? Will such vouchers be encashable, for example, against pre-school playgroup activities? Many people find pre-school playgroups an adequate source of child care, and I feel that my right hon. Friend may come under pressure to grant such a concession. We seek clarification on that point.

I also have a question about children and value added tax. I have two sons, both of whom seem to be growing at an alarming rate. My wife tells me that already my 10-year-old is moving into adult-size clothing and shoes. It was in the early 1970s that the size of children's clothing was first established for the purposes of the VAT regime. Will Ministers look again at the sizes of children's clothes because the information available from the retail trade and other sources suggests that children are wearing larger sizes for their age than they were when the regulations were first framed? If the Budget has anything to do with children, Treasury Ministers should reconsider that. At a time when my right hon. Friend the Chancellor—perhaps for good reasons—has had to freeze child benefit, he could help children and their mothers greatly by changing the regulations in respect of the sizes exempt from VAT.

I express some disappointment that the sum total of the environmental content of the Budget was to widen the differential between leaded and unleaded petrol. In my constituency, energy saving is an important industry in its own right. We have a company that has pioneered many techniques in the contract energy field. Surprisingly, the company accounts of Emstar—a subsidiary of Shell which is not in my constituency but which is dedicated to energy-saving techniques—show that that company has recorded a loss. The sales of energy-saving equipment are also declining.

Such investment may well be affected by world energy prices, which have fallen in real terms, and may be marginalised by current high rates of interest. I accept that those high rates are vital if we are to fight inflation, but I believe that the wider environmental issues—for example, dealing with the greenhouse effect—cannot be left entirely to the operation of market forces. I therefore ask my hon. Friend the Financial Secretary to consider changing the capital allowances for those expenditures that save energy and contribute to the reduction of the greenhouse effect, and thus to help environmental investment.

Let me deal with the question of investment in industry. I am sad that the hon. Member for Manchester, Central, (Mr. Litherland) is not in his place. I am fed up with Opposition Members denigrating investment in the north-west of England. To talk about Manchester as he did is to undermine the investment that has taken place in Salford Quays, in Trafford Park, in Preston, in my own constituency and throughout the north-west. We have had massive investment in aerospace. We have had investment in traction plants such as GEC Alstone in Preston. We have had £14·5 million-worth of investment in Foxe's Biscuits in my own constituency. I see my hon. Friend the Minister for Roads and Traffic in his place. In his constituency of South Ribble, too, investment has taken place in aerospace. Those investments were made not with failure in mind but with success in mind.

If the Chancellor has achieved one thing in the Budget, it is that, by underlining his target of 5 per cent inflation by 1991, he has given confidence to those who are investing in the economy. Our present difficulties will have a satisfactory resolution. Now is not the time to stop

investing; now is the time to invest, to take advantage of a more competitive currency and of the export opportunities and to help Britain—particularly the north-west—to continue the economic growth that my examples have underlined.

I was delighted that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor took time in his Budget speech to highlight the growth in local government expenditure. The hon. Member for Nottingham, North (Mr. Allen) should compare the national pay and prices index with local government expenditure on pay and prices. He would find a picture very different from the one that he painted for the House this evening. Many local authorities have been profligate over the past few years, encouraged by the inadequacies of the grant-related expenditure system. One advantage of the community charge is that it will help them to curb their expenditure by bringing discipline in that area.

Finally, I congratulate my right hon. Friend the Chancellor on the changes that he made in the capital allowances relevant for help with the community charge. His measure will enable more people to gain income support and to be passported to other benefits, such as free prescriptions, vouchers for glasses and free dental care. That will be of great value to the elderly. However, much as I applaud the increase of the capital allowance to £16,000 for community charge benefit eligibility, I ask him to listen sympathetically to the Secretary of State for the Environment, because there are other ways in which the rebate scheme will require modification and they will cost money.

Above all, the Budget has underlined our commitment to fighting inflation. It shows that that can be achieved. I congratulate my right hon. Friend the Chancellor on his efforts.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The Standing Order that limits speeches to 10 minutes has now been lifted.

8 pm

Mr. Thomas McAvoy (Glasgow, Rutherglen): Thank you for that, Madam Deputy Speaker.

After listening to the hon. Member for Fylde (Mr. Jack) and having ascertained that his majority is not all that big, I look forward to seeing his photograph flashed across the television at the next general election with the words "Labour gain" above it—*[Interruption.]* I am advised that the hon. Gentleman's majority is 18,000. Perhaps we should ask him on Friday morning about Mid-Staffordshire's previous majority and about whether he expects his seat also to be a Labour gain.

The problem with speaking after four and half hours of debate is that many of my hon. Friends have scored off subject after subject, leaving me with only a few subjects on which to speak. I shall concentrate on only two areas that have not been mentioned previously, but first I reiterate the point about interest rates.

Hoover has a factory in my constituency. Indeed, I used to work there. About 50 years ago that factory employed 5,800 people, but in October or November last year, the company announced that it had only 1,000 workers. In that announcement, the company specifically mentioned interest rates as the direct cause of the latest round of cuts and redundancies. Hoover is an important manufacturer in this country, with a plant in Wales as well as a factory in Scotland. It has been affected by the high interest rates, which have directly caused a fall in sales, which has resulted in a downward spiral of employment in my constituency and in Wales. High interest rates also contribute in bringing imports into the country.

If we look to the Government to deal with that problem and to reduce interest rates, we are looking in vain. There was nothing in the Chancellor's speech yesterday to help with that problem. Indeed, at the risk of upsetting the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, who gets upset if he is mentioned, I did not hear anything from him today to suggest that there is any hope that the Government will give any consideration to the plight of manufacturing industry. In the past 11 years, the Government have run down manufacturing industry and seem to have a guilty conscience. Perhaps that is what seemed to upset the Chief Secretary earlier when he responded so immoderately to the speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Clydebank and Milngavie (Mr. Worthington).

Although Conservative Members will not like this, I remind the House of the way in which the Government have treated Scotland as a nation since 1979. It is interesting that the hon. Member for Londonderry, East (Mr. Ross) noted that nothing has been said from the Dispatch Box about how any of the Budget changes will affect Northern Ireland. That is typical of the Government's approach. The Government are simply election-minded. They consider those who vote for them; those who do not vote for them do not count. That is a disgraceful attitude from a party that has trumpeted for years that it is the party of empire and of nation.

Let us consider the way in which the Government have treated Scotland and the attitude shown by yesterday's poll tax announcement. I do not agree with the conspiracy approach that suggests that the Government deliberately snubbed Scotland and planned to be vindictive towards it, although that seems a usual enough course for them to follow. My hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Maryhill (Mrs. Fyfe) put her finger on it when she said that the Government did not realise what they were doing—they neither appreciated nor cared. Although there are still 10 Conservative Members representing Scottish seats, we in Scotland do not count.

That attitude causes strains and tensions within the United Kingdom. When even a moderate person such as the hon. Member for Gordon (Mr. Bruce), reacting to yesterday's announcement, said that it called into question the Act of Union between England and Scotland, surely that flags before the Government the fact that they are creating tensions within the United Kingdom that no Government, of any party, should cause.

My party has not advocated disruption or non-payment of the poll tax, although we recognise the right of individual conscience. However, the Government do not seem to realise—the Chancellor certainly did not seem to realise this yesterday—that yesterday's announcement will contribute to a heightened atmosphere of injustice and insult in Scotland and a feeling that the Government here are alien and do not have a sovereign right to govern in Scotland. I do not normally support that point of view, but I warn the Government that the Chancellor's reaction yesterday will result in a social movement in Scotland which, in turn, will result in opposition to the Act of Union.

The Tory party takes the view—we rightly hear it from the Chair—that this is a United Kingdom Parliament. As a Member of Parliament and a former councillor, I take

[Mr. Thomas McAvoy]

the view that I was elected on a certain political platform and I expect to live up to it. I also take the view that, once elected, I represent all my electorate on matters of social justice. If anybody comes to me with a problem, it is my job and my duty to ensure that I represent that person, irrespective of party. In the best traditions of the Labour movement, I have always been told that I should represent all my electorate on matters of social justice.

Although we welcome yesterday's announcement about capital allowances and the poll tax, because any relief for anybody is welcome, there is no doubt that that measure was achieved only because of the backlash from English and Welsh Conservative Back Benchers who have been pressured by their constituencies.

We hear many confessions from Conservative Members who say, "I voted against the poll tax," but time after time when we look back at their individual records, we see that they voted for the poll tax for Scotland. That is hypocrisy. They may have voted against the poll tax for England and Wales, but they trooped through the Lobbies to impose it on Scotland. Therefore, I do not take kindly to crocodile tears from Conservative Members about the backlash in England and Wales.

As the transitional payments in Scotland have not yet been paid, perhaps they could be backdated. It is reasonable that the £16,000 capital allowance increase should be applied retrospectively to Scotland. We have heard weak points about why that cannot be done. However, we keep hearing from the Prime Minister that if the political will exists, something can be achieved. It is clear that there is no political will to do that for Scotland. That is a social injustice and a disgrace. That demonstrates once again the folly of the tax being introduced initially in only part of the kingdom and introduced in England and Wales as a second stage.

Although I do not normally attack or criticise hon. Members who are not present, I must comment on the absence of Scottish nationalist Members from the debate. Yesterday, they sought to follow my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) who, uncharacteristically, rose to intervene in the Budget debate to try to gain an assurance for Scotland. I do not see why Scottish National party Members cannot sit in the Chamber for four and a half hours, as I have, to try to get five or 10 minutes in which to make Scotland's case. They are not here when there is any work to be done or any applications to be made on behalf of Scotland.

Only a Labour Government can bring social justice to the United Kingdom. In the past 10 years the Government have breached the convention that means that, once a Government are elected, they represent all the people. I remember the Government of Harold Macmillan. I never felt that I was living under a Government who oppressed me or who were vindictive towards me. I did not agree with that Government, but, as a British citizen, I never felt that the Government of my country were treating me as an alien. However, that is how people now feel in Scotland.

The Secretary of State for Scotland did not see fit to show his face in the Chamber yesterday and, as far as I am aware, he has still not chosen to appear in the Chamber. On Monday, when I attended the Scottish Grand Committee, I referred to the Secretary of State as toom tabard. That is a Scottish term that goes back to the Edwardian wars when mediaeval England was trying to make Scotland a vassal state. The Scottish people were so contemptuous of the then Scottish king that they nicknamed him toom tabard, which meant that the suit of armour was empty and that the man who represented Scotland was empty. The Secretary of State for Scotland is exactly the same.

According to press reports, the right hon. and learned Gentleman sat through the Cabinet meeting, heard the Budget, but did not see fit to stick up for Scotland when it came to backdating the capital tax allowance. Where was the voice of Scotland? That man is supposed to represent all the Scottish people at the Cabinet table, but he did not speak up for them. He has abdicated his responsibilities and he should resign. According to press reports he followed the Budget speech from his office in Whitehall —and no wonder. He knew full well what the reaction and resentment of Scottish Labour Members, as well as his right hon. Friend the Member for Kincardine and Deeside (Mr. Buchanan-Smith), would be to the announcement.

It is interesting to contrast the allegedly powerful position in Cabinet of the Secretary of State for Wales with that of the Secretary of State for Scotland. We can speculate as to why the Secretary of State for Scotland remained silent at the Cabinet table. Perhaps it was due to lack of courage or lack of weight, as he knows that he is not really considered "one of us" by the Prime Minister. Perhaps he was scared to speak up, pure and simple, because he knew what the reaction of the Prime Minister would be. Whatever the reason, he was a toom tabard and he is not fit to hold office. He should resign.

When the announcement about the capital allowance was made yesterday, I watched the reaction of the Secretary of State for Wales. He took great delight at sneering, denigrating and laughing at the anger and resentment expressed by Scottish Labour Members. That was the reaction of a so-called "wet" who is supposed to speak for all the bleeding hearts on the Back Benches of the Tory Party. Yesterday he demonstrated the vindictiveness of a true Conservative of the present mould by his reaction to the anger of Labour Members.

My right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition has described the Budget as a "bits and pieces Budget" and I agree with him. If anyone on the Conservative Benches thinks that our anger yesterday was fabricated and that it did not amount to anything, they are in for a shock. That anger will be maintained. At present there are 10 Tory seats left in Scotland. Before yesterday I would have said that the Tories would hold on to four or five of them, but, after yesterday, they are heading for a complete whitewash.

8.13 pm

Mr. Graham Riddick (Colne Valley): It is always interesting to follow a Scottish Labour Member, and it is always somewhat amusing to Conservative Members to note the continual squabble between the Labour party and the Scottish National party.

The hon. Member for Glasgow, Rutherglen (Mr. McAvoy) referred to Conservative Members voting in favour of the community charge for Scotland. I did not vote for its introduction in Scotland as I was not in the House at that time.

Scottish Labour Members have some cause to feel slightly aggrieved that the Chancellor made the concession

on capital limits yesterday and that that concession was not made this time last year. Let us be brutally honest about why that did not happen. The Chancellor made that concession because a sufficient number of English and Welsh Members of Parliament urged him to make it. He took their request on board and conceded to the pressure.

The problem for Scotland is that the Scottish people failed to vote in sufficient Tory Members to carry enough weight within the Conservative party. If there were more Scottish Tory Members, the views of Scotland would be heard more loudly. That is a purely personal view, but I believe that there is a strong element of truth in it. If there were more Scottish Tory Members, Scotland would have more influence with the Conservative Government. I hope that the Scottish people will take that on board as a lesson to be learnt. They should send more Conservatives to this House so that Scotland has more influence on this Conservative Government.

I add my congratulations to my right hon. Friend the Chancellor on the relaxed, confident style of his Budget. His room for manoeuvre was, of course, limited. It was a neutral to toughish Budget, which made it crystal clear that the defeat of inflation was the Government's No. 1 objective. Within the confines of the current economic scenario my right hon. Friend was able to provide real help to savers, charities, small businesses, blind people, working mothers, and, last but by no means least, football fans. This Budget has pitched the Conservatives firmly into the middle ground of British politics.

Some analysts have suggested that the Budget should have been tougher. I do not believe that the Budget could possibly be described as soft when its net effect is to take some £500 million out of the economy. To have made a significant impact on the wider economy the Chancellor needed to take billions of pounds—perhaps as much as £10 billion—out of the economy. To raise taxes along those lines, however, would have been indefensible on fiscal and moral grounds at a time when we have a budget surplus. If monetary policy was to be tightened—I believe it is tight enough now—interest rates would have to rise once more. I sincerely hope that that does not happen.

Some people, particularly Labour Members, have suggested that the explosion of credit that occurred in the past two years was caused by the reduction in taxes announced in the 1988 Budget. That Budget put some £4·5 billion into the economy. I contend that it was the unnecessarily steep reduction in interest rates in the first six months of 1988, which put some £44 billion into the economy, which caused the problem. The sum of £4·5 billion pales into insignificance when compared with £44 billion. It was loose monetary policy, not loose fiscal policy, which led to the current problem of inflation. With interest rates at their current high level, no one could possibly claim that we are following a loose money policy.

I applaud the straightforward approach adopted by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor. He had to raise some money, and he did so by openly raising excise duties and not by craftily extending the net of capital gains tax or extending the composite rate tax to personal bank accounts—quite the reverse. My right hon. Friend now intends to abolish one of the most sneaky and immoral taxes, the composite rate tax, which is paid by millions of non-taxpayers who see building societies and banks as safe havens for their savings. They probably know no other form of savings vehicle and many of them probably do not realise that the income from those savings is taxed. I commend my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer for that brave and thoroughly correct decision.

On behalf of salesmen, sales managers, district nurses and thousands of others who could not do their jobs without company cars, I thank my right hon. Friend for not hammering company car drivers. The 20 per cent. increase in company car taxation is quite enough, but certainly nothing like as bad as many people predicted. I speak from personal experience, because before I came to the House I was a sales manager at the sharp end of industry. I travelled many thousands of miles in my company car, and there is no way that I could have carried out my job without that vehicle. I used to resent the fact that company car tax was being increased when I had absolutely no choice in the matter because I had to have a company car. I know many people who drive 20,000 30,000 or 40,000 miles a year in pursuit of their careers. The Government should be careful before hitting such people. By all means, they should hit hard directors who do little mileage in their company cars and for whom they are a perk.

I shall touch on one other aspect of the Budget relating to cars. I commend my right hon. Friend the Chancellor's decision not to raise vehicle excise duty, but to raise the excise duty on petrol, DERV and unleaded petrol by more than the inflation rate. That provides an element of choice, whereas if the vehicle licence is raised by £10 or £20, regardless of the mileage done in the car, drivers have to pay that extra amount. If the extra cost is put on petrol, the more mileage is done, the more is paid in excise duty, and that is only fair.

I thank my right hon. Friend the Chancellor for significantly relaxing the savings rules relating to community charge rebate. With many colleagues including my hon. Friend the Member for High Peak (Mr. Hawkins), I have been pushing the Government to increase the savings limit of £8,000 above which a married couple do not qualify for rebate. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor doubled the limit to £16,000 not only for married couples but also for single people. Therefore, ironically, the anomaly still exists. There could well be a case for saying that, for a married couple, the savings limit should be raised to £24,000 and should be £16,000 for a single person.

The new higher savings limit is most definitely a step in the right direction. However, much more will have to be done to alleviate the introduction of the community charge. For any tax to work, there has to be general public acceptance of it. One does not have to be a brilliant political strategist or analyst to acknowledge that the community charge does not enjoy such public acceptance at present. When I talk to my constituents and meet members of the public, I find that people accept that everyone should make a contribution to local services. The community charge ensures that that happens and will certainly, in future, make local councils more accountable to their electors.

However, public acceptance does not exist at present because the community charge levels are simply too high. We know that the major reason for that is that many councils, mainly Labour councils, have taken the opportunity of the changeover to the new system of local government finance to jack up their budgets and spending. It is immoral for councils to take advantage of many thousands of ordinary people by increasing their budgets

[Mr. Graham Riddick]

and thereby levying unnecessarily high community charges. However, that is happening, and the Government have a responsibility to try to alleviate the problems associated with high community charge bills.

The Government must make two moves. First, they must disregard savings when calculating whether someone qualifies for community charge rebate. Qualification for rebate should depend entirely on income. That will ensure that the disincentive to save no longer exists and those on low to modest incomes will be properly helped.

In response to a parliamentary question which I tabled about 10 days ago, the Department of Social Security estimated that such a move would cost the Exchequer between £250 million and £300 million per annum. In the mysterious and discouraging way of departmental answers, that one ignored the income from savings, so the figure would actually have been substantially lower. Some people say that such a move would benefit rich people, who could then qualify for rebate. I do not believe that that will happen. There is clearly a relationship between the amount of savings people have and the income they receive from them. If someone has £30,000, £40,000 or £50,000 of savings, the income from them will take him or her above the income threshold below which he or she qualifies for rebate. Therefore, to help many people on modest incomes, particularly pensioners, we must examine the possibility of doing away with the savings limit altogether.

The second move will cost the Exchequer a great deal more. Public acceptance of the community charge will come when the bills arrive later this month only if community charge levels are significantly lower than those proposed. We shall have to use any money available for tax cuts next year to reduce this tax, the community charge. We shall have to use more Government money to reduce the community charge level. Whatever pretext we use, be it taking a portion of education spending, the police or the fire service away from local authority control or simply increasing the revenue support grant, the Government will have to act.

A good starting point would be to provide the same level of Government grant in England and Scotland as is enjoyed in Wales. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales has boasted in the House that community charge bills in the Principality will be £100 per person lower than they will be in England. That will do for me for starters. In a debate on 18 December 1989—about three months ago—my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales boasted that people would be paying £100 less in Wales than in Scotland and England. He also said that 85 per cent. of local government expenditure in Wales is met by the business community and the Government. I believe that the figure in England and Scotland is about 75 per cent. We shall have to come in line with Wales.

I congratulate my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer on an interesting and imaginative Budget and on making the most of the few resources available to him. I fear that his most difficult task lies ahead. I hope that he will be able to alleviate most of the problems that many constituents are suffering due to the introduction of the community charge.

8.29 pm

Mr. William O'Brien (Normanton): I am very disappointed that the hon. Member for Colne Valley (Mr. Riddick), a Member from west Yorkshire, an area that I too represent, could talk about company cars and about giving up local influence in education, the police force or the fire service but found no reason to refer to the problems of industry in west Yorkshire, particularly the textile industry. Neither the Chancellor nor the Financial Secretary has mentioned this at any time, yet west Yorkshire has significant problems. The hon. Member for Colne Valley must have constituents who work in textiles, so I am disappointed that he talked about company cars but could think of nothing to say about local industry.

The hon. Member also gave us some reasons why the Treasury should reconsider the poll tax next year—but he voted for the introduction of the poll tax at the very beginning. How hypocritical can people be? The hon. Member for Colne Valley goes through the Lobby supporting the introduction of the poll tax, yet when the wrath of the people is felt he and others shy away and now want to introduce alternatives to ease the burden. Why did not the hon. Member join Labour Members in opposing the poll tax in the very beginning? The hon. Member for Colne Valley should have thought of this when Opposition Members were warning of the likely results of the poll tax.

Nor has the hon. Member for Colne Valley found anything to say about housing in west Yorkshire. In his constituency, as in mine, there is a shortage of rented accommodation. Throughout west Yorkshire there is a shortage of affordable housing. Yet the hon. Member appeared to see no reason to refer to the problem in his speech tonight.

The hon. Member for Colne Valley referred to our Scottish colleagues. He said that more people should vote Tory in Scotland so as to have better representation. The same principle applies in west Yorkshire, only there we need more people to vote Labour so that a Labour Member could properly represent the constituents of the hon. Member for Colne Valley. If the principle applies to Scotland, it must also apply to west Yorkshire.

Mr. Riddick: The hon. Member for Normanton (Mr. O'Brien) clearly has nothing to say of his own; he is just waffling on, trying to waste some of the time available before 9 o'clock. His attack on me is smutty, wholly unnecessary and wholly out of place. As regards the community charge, I voted against my Government on a three-line whip: I voted for the Mates amendment which would have improved the community charge markedly in relating it to people's ability to pay. Although we did not win that vote, I did my bit.

Mr. Martlew: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Is the hon. Member in order to speak in this way?

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): Order. It would be helpful if the hon. Member for Colne Valley would conclude his intervention.

Mr. Riddick: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am surprised that the hon. Member for Carlisle (Mr. Martlew) does not believe that I should have an opportunity to reply to a wholly scurrilous attack. May I make two brief points before I sit down? Inflation is the biggest concern facing industry in my constituency. Unemployment has come down by 50 per cent. in the past two years.

Mr. O'Brien: Was the hon. Member for Colne Valley trying to extend his speech? My points must have been relevant or he would not have risen to the bait as he did. He told the House that he voted for the poll tax. He cannot have voted against it because he told us that he had voted for the Mates amendment. The amendment was still in favour of a poll tax although trying to find a different formula. Yet tonight the hon. Member says that changes should be made.

My point was that if it was right for the hon. Gentleman to address his remarks to my Scottish colleagues as he did, he cannot object to my addressing remarks in a similar vein to him.

Mr. Lilley: Will the hon. Member for Normanton (Mr. O'Brien) confirm to his constituents that he will have the courage, should the unlikely time ever come when there is a Labour Government, to vote against a three-line Whip on a Bill to impose a roof tax on those constituents?

Mr. O'Brien: Under this system there is a roof tax because the standard rate of tax is on property, not on the individual. The Financial Secretary should realise that when the Government say that no property tax is attached to the system that they are introducing they are again misleading people. The standard rate of poll tax is nothing more than a property tax.

Earlier I said that the hon. Member for Colne Valley had made no reference to housing or to the high interest charges on mortgage repayments that people in west Yorkshire must face. The Chancellor informed the House yesterday that interest rates would remain high for some time. He could give no assurance that they would be reduced either in the near future or at some later stage. All that he said was that interest charges would have to remain high for as long as was necessary and that he would decide when it was necessary to reduce them.

This is cold comfort for businesses and for people with mortgages. Using high interest rates to control expenditure and reduce inflation hurts not only those who run businesses, particularly small operators, but the middle-aged or elderly people who have mortgages. It also hurts younger people who are starting to buy their own homes. They too have to face high mortgage charges plus high interest rates.

There is no comfort whatsoever in what the Chancellor said yesterday and what the Chief Secretary has said today for people who are trying to meet their commitments in buying their homes. They must dread the thought of interest charges being increased again. The Chancellor made it clear that in the coming months it may be necessary to raise interest rates again. Tory Members have shown that they are worried that there may be further increases in mortgage charges. What comfort is that for people who have a mortgage and have to meet the extra increase each month?

Young couples with gaunt looks on their faces attend my advice meetings, asking what they can do to obtain council houses because they can no longer afford to pay the increased mortgage payments. They thought that the increases could last three or four months, or perhaps six months at the outside, but they have been going on for so long with no hope of a reduction that it is impossible to meet the repayments. They hope that the local authority will give them council houses.

Because of the Government's policy, council dwellings that used to be available for rent no longer exist. In addition, local authorities have no opportunity to replace the houses that they have lost from the rented sector. Conservative Members are reconciled to the fact that further increases in mortgage charges are inevitable. If that is the case, business people and home buyers, particularly in my constituency and generally throughout the country, must be horrified that the Chancellor has given no hope of a reduction in interest rates but has mentioned the possibility of an increase in mortgage charges.

After 11 years of Tory rule, we have record interest rates, the highest mortgage charges, the longest waiting lists for rented accommodation, including council houses, the highest number of homeless people and the lowest number of houses for rent in the past 30 years, yet the Chancellor does nothing whatever about it. That is Tory Britain of the 1990s.

I join Tory Back-Bench Members who have the courage to say what they think is wrong with the economy. They ask the Chancellor to reconsider how the Government are tackling inflation. Not only interest rates should be used to control inflation; taxation should be considered. Even the hon. Member for Colne Valley, who is no longer in his place, said that the Government should consider taxation as a further means of solving our economic problems. The Government should not rely completely on high interest rates to get the Tory party out of the mess that it has created.

Many constituents have made representations to me that since the Tories came to power prescription charges have increased by over 1,000 per cent. In 1979 the charge was 20p whereas now it is £3.05. That is Tory Britain in the 1990s. That is the direction in which the Government are leading the country.

I could have challenged the hon. Member for Colne Valley about the way in which Yorkshire water authority is charging for water services. It has doubled the standing charge. The Prime Minister's reason for a change in the rating system now applies to water charges. Often at the Dispatch Box she has defended that dear old lady living alone yet paying the same rates as a family of four adults living next door. She made it clear how unfair that was. That same dear old lady is paying the same standing charge for her water services as the family of four adults next door. What justice is there in that? Yet Ministers do not comment on that injustice.

Let us analyse the unit costs. That dear old lady is paying much more per gallon of water than the four adults next door. What justice is there in that? Yet neither the Chancellor nor the Chief Secretary to the Treasury mentioned that unfairness.

Council house rents are being increased in line with Government policy. Under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 local authorities must increase rents until they reach what is termed market rent level. What does the Budget provide to ensure that market rents are fair and reasonable? We often hear the Secretary of State for the Environment say that it is Government policy to encourage affordable rents so that people on low incomes, particularly those in rural areas, can meet the charge for rented accommodation. Yet the Budget provides no help for people who will face massive rent increases.

A great deal has been said about the poll tax and the increase in the savings ceiling to £16,000. It is hoped that that will bring more people into the rebate scheme.

[Mr. O'Brien]

However, it is the basis of the rebate scheme that is at fault. Whether or not a person has savings of £16,000 or less, if his income is less than £46 a week, he will qualify for a rebate. A widow in receipt of state pension plus a small occupational pension, in her own right or that of her husband, could lose under the rebate scheme because she has an income of £46 or £47 a week. It is little comfort to people constantly to hear about the rebate scheme when many of them will not qualify. In any event, as a result of the taper, more people will lose out.

Under the existing rating system, people whose property is not coupled to the main sewer can qualify for a rate reduction because they are not receiving that service. Also, because they have a cesspool and must bear a charge for its being emptied and the sewage being treated by the water authority, they can qualify for a reduction in their gross rateable value and hence pay less rates. But they must pay the same poll tax as those whose property is attached to the main sewer. In addition to paying the same, they must continue to pay for the cesspool to be emptied and for the sewage to be treated by the water authority. How inhuman and unjust that is. It means that people are not only not receiving a service but must pay twice for the privilege of being in that position. That is Toryism in the 1990s.

The same can be said of properties that are not on a made-up road. Under the present rating system, the occupiers can apply for a reduction in gross rateable value because they are not receiving the service of a properly made-up road. Under the Government's poll tax system, they must pay the same as people who live on a made-up road. Indeed, they will be charged extra if the local authority decides to make the road serviceable.

Mr. Malcolm Moss (Cambridgeshire, North-East): As I have listened to the hon. Gentleman I have become angrier and angrier because what he is saying is just not true. Will he name one local authority in Britain that is not responsible for water services?

Mr. O'Brien: The hon. Gentleman is not aware of the facts of life. If a property is not coupled to the main sewer, the water authority informs the occupier that an order must be obtained from the local authority for the necessary work to be done, as the local authority must make a contribution to the cost of that work. I am happy to educate the hon. Gentleman. The practice that I have described was introduced by a Conservative Administration. If the hon. Gentleman agrees, as he must, that it is an injustice, I trust that he will join Opposition Members in the Lobby on Monday and vote against the anomalies that we are exposing.

I was recently a member of a Standing Committee which considered a statutory instrument concerned with the amount of money being made available to the Housing Corporation so that housing associations may finance the building of additional rented accommodation throughout the country. As we looked into the matter, we discovered that less was being made available in 1990 than in 1985. In 1985, £3,500 million was made available to the Housing Corporation. In 1990 the sum had fallen to £3,300 million. In other words, the Government are ignoring the need to provide homes for the people at a time when we have record homelessnes, with huge numbers of people looking for rented accommodation. The Government in general, and the Chancellor in particular, are doing nothing to ameliorate that.

Tory councillors all over the country are leaving their party because of the problems they face over the poll tax. In Beverley, 10 Tory councillors resigned; in Cornwall, a number of Tories quit the party because of the poll tax; in West Devon, 19 Conservative councillors left the party for the same reason; and I draw the attention of the House to early-day motion No. 743, which says that Boothstown Conservative club members have decided to opt out of the Tory party and have taken down the portrait of the Prime Minister, their president, because of the poll tax provisions.

Conservative Members must accept that so hated is the poll tax that even their supporters in local government are leaving the party in droves. Whatever happened when the Labour party was in office, the party was strong. Today the Tory party is weak. Conservative Members who are sincere in wishing to represent their electors will make sure that the Budget provisions which injure their constituents are not allowed to go through. Accordingly, next Monday they should vote with my hon. Friends and me against those provisions.

8.56 pm

Mr. Alan Meale (Mansfield): I am surprised to have this opportunity to speak in the debate. About an hour ago I was in the Lobby and was told that, if I came into the Chamber, I might be called to speak.

In the Tea Room, the Library and elsewhere in the Palace of Westminster I have been listening to hon. Members of all parties discussing the Budget. I have heard it described as a poor Budget, as a bad first performance by the Chancellor, as a juggler's Budget—not surprising, in view of the activities of his parents—and as a cigarette card Budget, meaning that it would be of interest to smokers but of no interest to non-smokers.

The most apt description is that it is a sad Budget, because it is a Budget of lost opportunities. It contains only short-term solutions to the problems facing the nation. It deals purely with the electoral strategies of a Government in severe danger of defeat at any election that they face, whether in Mid-Staffordshire tomorrow, a local election or an election in a Conservative club in Yorkshire or Oxfordshire. Everything that is happening at present seems to be bad for the Conservative party.

The Budget gives little hope to the people of the nation, particularly those who need a lot of help as a result of the Government's strategies over the past 10 or 11 years. It will be remembered as much for what it did not do as for what it attempted to do. The parliamentary agenda provides a day in which a Budget must be set. The Budget tries to spend nothing and tackle nothing so that it can get away with doing nothing at a time when the Government are in severe trouble.

I hope that all those Conservative Members who truly disagree with what is happening will go into the Lobby with us on Monday. I know that they talk to their party members and their constituents on the high streets and market squares in their constituencies.

The Budget offers the unemployed nothing. The stark reality of the Budget is that it makes no attempt to discuss the needs of the millions of people who are unemployed. Instead, it says that economic growth has gone out of the

window for the next few years. In the foreseeable future the economy will be in a worse state than it is now. Even some Conservative Members, admit that; some of them may be more daring than others on such things as economic strategies or the poll tax. They trip the light fantastic and vote against the Government, although usually on an amendment, and they go missing for the vote on the main Question. They have crossed the Floor into our Lobby, but they stay around for only a short time.

The Chancellor and his Back Benchers have been offering a great hope to the people of Britain that next year will be the big give year. Between £16 billion and £17 billion will be thrown about by the Government before the election. However, they have missed a real opportunity this year to do something for the millions of electors who are pensioners and who, for the past 11 years, have had a bad deal from the Government. *[Interruption.]*

It is no good the Minister smiling and telling us to look at what the Government are doing for the pensioners—the investment plans that are available to them and the raising of the threshold from £8,000 to £16,000 for relief on housing benefit and so on. I am talking about the millions of pensioners who have not got £8,000 or £16,000 and who rely on state benefit to get by day after day. A 0·37 p tax increase would have enabled the Chancellor to give every pensioner and severely disabled pensioner in Britain a free television licence. That is a small amount of money.

Mr. Moss: Is the hon. Gentleman telling the House that that is what the Labour party will do if they are elected?

Mr. Allen McKay (Barnsley, West and Penistone): Yes.

Mr. Meale: That question has been answered for me. We are committed to increasing pensions and we shall give winter allowances before the winter sets in. Pensioners are a major part of our strategy, as are the National Health Service and the unemployed.

The Government talk about helping pensioners, but they are not willing to increase taxes by 0·37 p to give pensioners and disabled people a free television licence. I welcome the increase from £8,000 to £16,000. That is better than nothing, but that will affect only a few people. The vast majority of pensioners, particularly those who rely on the basic state pension, will still have to pay at least 20 per cent. of the poll tax. There is nothing in the Budget to give them hope. The Chancellor should have remembered that, in this great nation of ours, the fathers and grandfathers of the adults of today took part in two world wars, but they are on the lowest pensions in Europe. That is disgraceful; financially, we treat our pensioners worse than any other European country. Why did the Chancellor not take the opportunity to do something for our pensioners?

Another major group that the Chancellor missed were the homeless. We have discussed their problems week after week in the Chamber. We toss around ideas occasionally about what is being done in the inner-city areas for the homeless. I must say to Conservative Members that, at the moment, that is very little. Much has been said before the Budget and since about what the Government should do for building societies to help those with mortgage problems. They should act, but that should not be the only major thrust of a Budget. One million or so people are supposed to be registered as homeless in Britain—that figure has been quoted by many organisations.

Instead of considering building societies, why did not the Chancellor go to his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment and say that he would create more money for the market to help with the problem of homelessness by allowing local authorities to spend the millions of pounds that they have acquired through the sale of council houses—but which they are not allowed to use—to build council houses again? If the Government want to sling around a few hundred million pounds or £1 billion—about £2 million to each district authority—50,000 council houses could be built, which would take at least 100,000 people off the homeless list immediately.

There are many things wrong with this Budget. It is not only a poor Budget, but a Budget of missed opportunity. It is a juggler's Budget—the Budget of the son of a juggler—and nothing useful will come out of it. All that will happen is that some of the juggling balls that the Chancellor chucked into the air will be remembered in the next 12 months when many of them hit the ground. The people will remember the lost opportunity of this Budget. I am sure that at the next general election, in a year or less, they will prove that they remember by removing the Government from office.

Mr. Riddick: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I believe that the hon. Member for Normanton (Mr. O'Brien) criticised me for leaving the Chamber after about 10 minutes of his speech. I do not know whether there is a convention that says that I should have stayed for the entire speech; if so, I apologise. However, the hon. Member for Normanton did not stay for more than 10 seconds of the speech of his hon. Friend the Member for Mansfield (Mr. Meale). That is gross hyprocrisy.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I am sure that, on reflection, the hon. Member for Colne Valley (Mr. Riddick) will wish to withdraw his last remark and rephrase it.

Mr. Riddick: Is that unparliamentary, Mr. Deputy Speaker? If so, I say instead that it was a clear case of double standards.

Mr. Meale: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Of course I will take points of order, but a phrase has been withdrawn. The House always accepts that, and I hope that the matter will not be pursued.

Mr. Allen McKay: It will not be pursued, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but if the hon. Member for Colne Valley (Mr. Riddick) had asked me why my hon. Friend the Member for Normanton (Mr. O'Brien) had left, I would have told him.

9.9 pm

Mr. Paul Boateng (Brent, South): I begin by adding my congratulations to those of my right hon. and hon. Friends to the Chancellor for the manner in which he presented his Budget. His presentation was pleasant. It was in marked contrast to, indeed free from, the bullying and bombast that characterised the presentations of his predecessor. The problem was that his speech was free of much else, too: free of any content capable of effectively altering the current dismal state of the economy; free of anything that addressed the issue of interest rates or inflation, which is nudging 9 per cent. and will soon be 10 per cent; free of

[Mr. Paul Boateng]

anything that sought to deal with the current crisis of an all-time low level of manufacturing investment; free also of anything that sought adequately to tackle what the right hon. Member for Chesham and Amersham (Sir I. Gilmour) described as the horrendous deficit that currently afflicts our balance of payments.

The political circumstances in which this debate takes place, and in which the Budget was delivered, demanded a Budget for Back Benchers. That is precisely what we got. The City analysts cried out for a Budget for the City. They did not get that. The nation cried out, in its need, for a Budget for the country. That was not forthcoming. There was no relief for home owners, no relief for those who, day in day out, have to face the reality of high interest rates. There was no relief for those in manufacturing industry who seek at this time the means, the wherewithal, to promote the investment that they know is so vital if we are to be competitive in the international marketplace. They found little, if anything, of comfort to them. There was no immediate prospect of a fall in the rate of inflation. This was not a Budget for the country.

It was to a very large extent a damnable budget. I see that the Financial Secretary to the Treasury is a little perturbed by my use of the word "damnable". I use it advisedly. The Chancellor was in this dilemma: he was damned if he did, he was damned if he did not, and he was damned if he knew what to do. That shone through his Budget. The consequences are to be seen in this evening's newspapers. Opposition Members take no joy in this headline:

"Budget Blues Savage the £
Defiant Major"—

defiant already, after less than 48 hours—

"insists: It was tough enough".

As I have said, we take no joy in that headline. We do, however, take considerable interest in what the chief economist of Union Discount, Mr. Nicholas Parsons, has to say.

The Chief Secretary ought to pay a little attention to what people in the City say. Not long ago he and his colleagues were telling us that the market was the depository of all wisdom. Do hon. Members remember that? Do they remember Ministers coming to this House and, day in day out, thrusting down our throats that we ought to listen more to the market? Well, let them now listen to the market. Let them listen to what the market says about the Chancellor's Budget:

"He hopes inflation will come down but he hasn't got a plan."

That, I fear, says it all—he is damned if he knows what to do.

Throughout the past decade the Government have made obeisance before two altars: the altar of dogma—I see that that brings a look of recognition into the eye of the Chief Secretary—and the altar of expediency. I see that that brings a look of recognition into the eye of the Financial Secretary. Over the years, he has had to learn about expediency. He will have to learn still more about expediency before the next 24 months are out.

We must not be too hard on the Government. There has been some progress and we must celebrate it: the hard passage from making a fetish of monetarism to a fixation on interest rates. One only has to look at the Red Book to chart that progress. It makes fascinating bedtime reading, which I commend to both hon. Members and the nation. This year, interestingly, it begins with a little homily about the medium-term financial strategy and it seeks to explain to those poor souls who are mystified by the subject the significance and importance of monetarism.

It is worth looking at the individual letters and words in the Red Book and at what the Chancellor of the Exchequer had to say. Let us use the one to lead us on to the other. The Chancellor's words are interesting and worthy of note. To those of us who pay attention to these matters they suggest a distinct shift. The Chancellor said yesterday:

"although monetary policy remains the key"—

note the word "key"—

"to controlling inflation, it is not realistic to suppose that we can take decisions solely by reference to the way any one particular measure of money is growing. In"—

wait for it—

"a more sophisticated world, we must apply judgment and take into account the evidence about monetary conditions that may be available."

Is it not wonderful how, during the past 24 months, the world has suddenly become more sophisticated? I wonder whether it has anything to do with the Chancellor's brief sojourn in the Foreign Office? Suddenly he has discovered that the world is a more sophisticated place than he thought it was when he was Chief Secretary. He went on:

"I have looked afresh at the role of monetary targets. Having done so, I am clear that it is sensible to retain a target for narrow money, and that this is best measured by the familiar aggregate M0. Since this is essentially notes and coin,"—[*Official Report*, 20 March 1990; Vol. 169, c. 1013.]—

blah, blah—we have heard it all before.

The significance of that passage becomes all too clear when it is related to the Red Book, where one can see that a number of hands have been at work. The Chief Secretary had a bit of a nerve to chastise us with the words of Mr. Samuel Brittan. He always makes a good read, and occasionally one agrees with one or two of the things that he says. Before the Chief Secretary quotes Mr. Brittan to us, perhaps he should read a little more carefully what he has to say about the Chancellor's speech and the Red Book.

He defines two sets of hands at work in writing that homily. Mr. Brittan has done rather a good job. First, he finds the hand of someone who he describes as "Author A" who gives

"a straightforward textbook account of the virtues of monetary policy, arising from the ability to move interest rates quickly in either direction in response to"

the needs of the time. He then finds the hand of "Author B" who "reads much more like" the Chancellor "and even more his next-door neighbour".

So there are now three sets of hands at work, two of them indistinguishable, one from the other, and the other some wretched Treasury mandarin given the hapless task of stating an authorised line.

Mr. Brittan goes on to point out a problem that Ministers face:

"Ministers are happy to explain why they cannot reduce interest rates very soon. But they shy away from the prospect that they may have to move them upwards."

Mr. Budgen: Hear hear.

Mr. Boateng: I hear the hon. Member for Wolverhampton, South (Mr. Budgen) say, "Hear, hear." His voice is always welcome in these debates and I shall refer briefly to what he had to say. I know that the Chief Secretary dreads to hear the familiar voice of the hon.

Gentleman. He leads what I would describe as the disaffected monetarist tendency of the Conservative party. He can be found at every committee meeting and, no doubt, at every Back-Bench meeting, grumbling away at the laxity of successive Chancellors. Who can blame him? He must be living an absolute nightmare as one of the last few remaining committed monetarists to be found anywhere, let alone on the Conservative Back Benches. There are certainly none to be found on the Government Front Bench, where, if any existed, they have long since been silenced, although Ministers continue to pay the ritual obeisance to the gods of montarism.

It must be heartbreaking for the hon. Member for Wolverhampton, South-West to be obliged to endure the Chancellor's speech, but he was very gracious and it is fair to him to say that he partially pardons the Chancellor for the excesses of the period when he was Chief Secretary. The Chief Secretary and the Financial Secretary are in a real dilemma from which they will not find an easy escape.

Mr. Julian Brazier (Canterbury): The hon. Gentleman started with a most interesting hellfire homily and is now steadily working through in some detail one or two of the minutiae of Mr. Brittain's and other views of Government policy. Is he planning at any time in his speech to touch on Labour economic policy, as the House is anxious to hear about that?

Mr. Boateng: I am glad to find such eager anticipation on the part of the hon. Gentleman for what will be the heart of my speech. So let us get to it now.

Let us move from the ju-ju economics of the monetary system—the Chancellor knows as much about ju-ju as I do—to another difficulty for the Government, which causes us no difficulty—our entry into the exchange rate mechanism. [HON. MEMBERS: "Ah."] That is welcomed by Conservative Members, but not so much by some Ministers. The Chancellor's hands are tied on our entry into the ERM, but it causes us no problem because we believe that, following negotiations to preserve Britain's best interests, it is vital to preserve and to develop——

Mr. Moss: When?

Mr. Boateng: As soon as possible after the election of a Labour Government, so anything between 18 to 24 months. I know that that will be of some comfort—*[Interruption.]* I said "after appropriate negotiations". [HON. MEMBERS: "Ah."] That is no secret. We believe in negotiating for Britain, in sticking up for British manufacturing and in creating a climate to promote investment in manufacturing industry to provide the stability that will be vital. The Chancellor failed to tackle that in his Budget.

Mr. Riddick: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Boateng: No, not at the moment. I am coming to the heart of Labour party policy.

We do not believe that entry into the ERM is an easy panacea, a magic potion or an elixir. We see it as part and parcel of the context in which we shall carry out our economic policy, which will be based on recognition of the importance of training and of research and development. The Budget has tinkered with training in such a way as to produce a bribe to make employers co-operate with a training scheme that is not satisfactory and is grossly underfunded. We do not believe that that is the way forward.

We believe that we should place emphasis on training and on research and development. Our industrial policy will create a firm and sound infrastructure for British industry, which will be vital if we are to go forward and to reverse the disastrous decline in British industry in recent years. The right hon. Member for Chesham and Amersham gave the figures earlier, and they were an indictment. Manufacturing output in France increased by 19·5 per cent. between 1973 and 1989, by 21 per cent. in Germany, but by 8·9 per cent. in Britain. We believe that we can and will do better under our industrial policy, which was outlined by our chief economic spokesman, my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith).

Even the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) recognises the importance of an industrial policy. Conservative Members should begin to recognise its importance, too, or they will find themselves in much difficulty.

Mr. Riddick: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Boateng: Not at the moment.

It is important to recognise the pool of skills and the commitment to enterprise among women workers. The Budget contained grossly unsatisfactory measures for women. That was clearly shown by the useful and important speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Maryhill (Mrs. Fyfe). If the Government want to help women, they must do something about a system in which only 1 per cent. of our children have the opportunity of education for the under-fives. We fall behind our competitors in France and Germany with nursery provision. We should be spending the money on that.

Miss Ann Widdecombe (Maidstone): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Boateng: The hon. Lady has not been here at all during this debate and I do not intend to give way to her now. She will know the importance of ensuring that child benefit is available to mothers whether they work or not.

If the Government cared about alleviating poverty, closing the employment gap and tackling the issues that make women and children disadvantaged, they would upgrade child benefit. They have consistently failed to do so. The Government could pay for that and restore cuts in research and development and training out of the £800 million that the abolition of stamp duty on share trading has cost the Exchequer. The Government did not introduce environmental measures which are essential to sustainable economic growth. We must care for our climate and create the context in which it is possible for the nation to grow and for the industrial sector to expand without disadvantage to the environment.

There should have been proposals in the Budget for negotiations with our EEC partners on a more satisfactory use of VAT as a mechanism. We should have heard about capital allowances for clean technology, but we heard nothing. We heard nothing about capital allowances, for which the Trades Union Congress and the Confederation of British Industry have called, to assist manufacturing industry. The Budget was not about sustaining and developing the economy. It was not geared to those ends.

[Mr. Boateng]

That is our vision of the economy. It empowers and enables the worker, the consumer and the industrialist to build up our economy. That is the way forward. We are not talking about something that is opposed to enterprise. Our vision of enterprise Socialism puts enterprise at the forefront. We believe that it is important to grow, that we must increase the size of the cake and that we must welcome a system in which the economy grows and in which there is enterprise and initiative, because that is the way to improve the lot of all.

I realise that that is heresy to the Government. They find it difficult to grasp, but they find the needs of these times difficult to grasp. The Budget misses every opportunity. It is not a Budget for the times or the nation. We will give the nation just such a budget, and soon.

9.33 pm

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Peter Lilley): We warmly welcome the hon. Member for Brent, South (Mr. Boateng). We enjoyed his speech, which I believe was his first contribution in winding up in a Budget debate. That is not to say that we do not miss the billed performance of the hon. Member for Islington, South and Finsbury (Mr. Smith), who we understood would wind up the debate for the Opposition. We understand why he has not done so. He would have been reluctant to defend the budget of his constituency in Islington——

Mr. Boateng: The hon. Gentleman has the wrong speech.

Mr. Lilley: It is not. The hon. Member for Islington, South and Finsbury would have been reluctant to defend a budget that, we are told, involves £68 of poll tax for every citizen of Islington, which was spent on a list of 300 dole-outs.

I was asked to raise this matter by an inhabitant of Islington whom, being Irish, is particularly insulted that Irishmen are to get a grant of £100,000 and Irishwomen a grant of £45,000. I also want to inquire about the Anglo-Akanthou Aid Society, which is to receive £46,788. Who are the Akanthou, we ask ourselves?

Mr. Chris Smith (Islington, South and Finsbury): Perhaps the Financial Secretary would like to reflect on the fact that every organisation listed in the article in *The Sun* from which he is quoting is funded by the London borough of Islington under partnership arrangements, in which 75 per cent. of the funding comes from the Department of the Environment. They are agreed and approved by the Department and presumably by the Treasury.

Mr. Lilley: Nevertheless, the total of £8 million still represents a huge increase in the average poll tax of every citizen in Islington. The hon. Gentleman is clearly ashamed and would dissociate himself from the large sums being squandered in his borough in this deplorable manner.

I shall respond to a number of the queries that were raised during the debate before going on to the main measures that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor introduced in his Budget. The hon. Member for Londonderry, East (Mr. Ross) asked whether the capital disregard measures announced in the Budget would apply in Northern Ireland and to Northern Ireland ratepayers. I can assure him that they will.

The hon. Member for Blyth Valley (Mr. Campbell) asked why the latest figures for those affected by the community charge differ from those that he has received in reply to an earlier question. The answer is that the level of overspending—as illustrated by the London borough of Islington—has increased considerably since the earlier estimates were made. As a result, larger sums are being made available to those who benefit and more people come within the range of potential benefits—*[Interruption.]* Opposition Members are clearly extremely nervous of associating themselves with Islington borough council, and I can well understand it. Not one of those items of expenditure did they seek to justify. *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. The House should settle down.

Mr. Lilley: I come now to the main measures in the Budget. They must be seen against the background of two major measures announced in previous Budgets that will come into full effect only in the current year. The first is the national insurance contributions reform, which was announced in the last Budget but which came into force only last October. This will be the first full year in which people will benefit from it. It removes an insurmountable hurdle of steps in the progress of national insurance contributions which effectively amounted to a tax of more than 100 per cent. at certain steps of the income progression of those earning less than £115 a week. For 15 million people earning more than £115 a week, it represented an increase of £3·20 net extra in their pay packets, which all have been enjoying since then. More than three quarters of those 15 million people—who Opposition Members appear to treat with disdain—earn less than the average male earnings in this country.

The second of the tax measures that had already been announced was the introduction of independent taxation. That gives complete privacy and independence to women for the first time since income tax was introduced by William Pitt the younger two centuries ago. The introduction of independent taxation costs a lot, but that is a measure of the injustice which the old income tax system perpetrated on women, and which past Labour Governments were willing to tolerate.

About 3·75 million people will benefit from the extra money, of whom 70 per cent. have incomes of less than £10,000 a year. About a third of the gainers are elderly and will gain an average of £350 each. About four out of five of the taxpaying elderly will benefit from independent taxation, not to mention all those with savings whose level of income, from savings and otherwise, is below the threshold.

My hon. Friend the Member for Torridge and Devon, West (Miss Nicholson) and the hon. Member for Glasgow, Maryhill (Mrs. Fyfe) asked whether the married couples allowance could be made divisible between husbands and wives. My right hon. Friend and I have looked carefully at that. My right hon. Friend concluded that, although it might be desirable in principle—all of us can see the attraction of the principle—it would be impossible to introduce it without delaying the introduction of independent taxation for a further two years.

Even if we were to give everybody the option to choose how the married couples allowance should be divided

between husband and wife, millions more households would have to fill in tax forms. If there was a disagreement between a husband and wife about how it would be divided, the Revenue would have to sort out intractable problems. Obviously it would have been unfair if the allowance were rigidly divided between the two without any opportunity for them to transfer it between them. At present the husband can transfer it to the wife.

Therefore, although I understand the attractions of the measure that has been urged upon me by the two hon. Ladies, that measure is not administratively possible and it would not have been worth delaying for two years the extremely desirable introduction of independent taxation.

The savings element of the benefits of independent taxation naturally draws attention to the operation of composite rate tax. It highlights the injustice that composite rate tax has long perpetrated on small savers and low-income savers whose incomes are below the normal tax threshold but whose savings were taxed and who could not reclaim that tax. That has been going on in some form or another since the 19th century, although the composite rate of tax was put on the statute book by Stafford Cripps after the war.

Composite rate tax had many virtues. It was an efficient, cheap and simple system with just one disadvantage—it was unjust. Therefore, we decided to do away with it, as my right hon. Friend the Chancellor announced yesterday. That measure will benefit 14 million savers, of whom 5 million are women, 4 million are pensioners, 2·5 million are other adults and 2·5 million are children.

One reason that composite rate tax has not been abolished before is that its abolition is costly and administratively difficult. Administrative problems will be created in implementing the new system. However, after rightly pointing out those problems to us, the Inland Revenue has responded with immense vigour to the challenge that our decision to abolish CRT has given it. I want to pay tribute to the Inland Revenue and to those who work there for the vigour, imagination and energy that they are putting into forcing this measure through as rapidly as we intend so that the provisions can begin on 1 April next year.

The hon. Member for Beith—*[Interruption.]* I am sorry, I mean the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Mr. Beith), who is not as eponymous as I made him sound —asked whether we could abolish CRT earlier and simultaneously with the introduction of independent taxation. The introduction of independent taxation was a major and immense task. Abolishing composite rate tax will also be an immense task. It would not have been possible to do both simultaneously. To do the two in series as rapidly as we are is an achievement of which the Inland Revenue can well be proud.

Likewise I pay tribute to the Inland Revenue on developing the tax-exempt special savings account—TESSA. A number of my hon. Friends have already paid tribute to the simplicity and flexibility of the proposal. In the past the Inland Revenue has often been accused of burdening good ideas with complex rules, but if hon. Members look closely at TESSA they will find that that is not the case. She is a simple, straightforward soul, and she will be attractive to savers and institutions, which I believe will make such accounts widely available.

A battery of other measures to benefit savings have been introduced. They have been praised by my hon. Friends the Members for Somerton and Frome (Mr. Boscawen) and for Bridlington (Mr. Townend). My hon. Friend the Member for Fylde (Mr. Jack) also welcomed those measures and asked me to emphasise the continuing role of the Department for National Savings. That was highlighted in my right hon. Friend's Budget speech by his decision to raise the rate of interest on a number of national savings products. My hon. Friend will be aware of the excellent job performed by employees of the Department for National Savings in his constituency and in a number of other constituencies, for which we are grateful.

The Government believe that savings are immensely important for individuals and for the nation. Opposition Members pay lip service to investment, but every pound of investment ultimately needs a pound of savings to finance it. Investment as a proportion of our national income is already running at a record level, but we need to maintain through the 1990s a high level of savings to finance that continuing high level of investment. That is why we have taken the measures to promote and encourage a culture of savings and thrift.

Because of the measures that my right hon. Friend announced, he has been dubbed by the press as the small savers' friend. That is indeed true. The Labour party, by its attitude, exemplifies the fact that it has always been, and always will be, the enemy of savers. It is their enemy because inflation destroys savings and the Labour party has always let inflation rip. The policy objectives described by various Opposition Members today suggest that they would let inflation rip once again. The Labour party is a party of spending, not saving, and it is excessive spending that generates inflation.

The Labour party used to operate the investment income surcharge—a tax on what Opposition Members derided as unearned income. However, we have recognised that income as income from savings. The Labour party, to its eternal shame, allowed that tax to run up to 98 per cent. —and it voted against its abolition.

A number of myths have been raised in the debate, one by the hon. Member for Clydebank and Milngavie (Mr. Worthington). He suggested that this country no longer makes manufactured goods and that we import disproportionately more than we produce. The level of import penetration in this country is not out of line with that in other major countries. It is rising in this country, but it is also rising in other major countries because international trade is rising internationally. As that happens, it is inevitable that countries spend more on other people's goods because other people are spending more on theirs.

I look around my constituency and note the products that we manufacture of which I am proud. We manufacture aircraft, testing equipment and hi-fi recording equipment, largely for sale to Japan for use by the recording industry, not private individuals. We manufacture street cleaning and other environmental equipment, all of which is exported in large amounts, but none of it, of course, purchased in the shops. Those sales enable us, through the foreign exchange that they earn, to purchase goods in the shops. The hon. Gentleman should not be disappointed as he failed to see the things that we produce in the shops.

Mr. Worthington: Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Lilley: I shall happily give way to the hon. Gentleman to give him an opportunity to withdraw the slurs that he cast earlier.

Mr. Worthington: I certainly shall not withdraw the slur; I may well add one or two. I shall quote from what the Minister said last year about the balance of payments, and ask whether it is still the Government's position. Last year he referred to meeting the foreign financial press corps who grilled him about every aspect of British economic policy.

"They concentrated on inflation and every aspect of the Budget; only at the very end of the evening did one person mention the balance of payments and balance of trade. They have their priorities right, and the Opposition should learn from them."—[*Official Report*, 16 March 1989; Vol. 149, c. 627]

Is that still the Government's attitude towards the importance of the balance of payments?

Mr. Lilley: Of course it is, and I withdraw not a word. Earlier the hon. Gentleman said that I had denigrated manufacturing industry and said that it was not important. He said that I attached far more importance to the service industries. I have never said any such thing. I asked him to find any reference to them and I asked one of my hon. Friends to look through the speech last year to which the hon. Gentleman referred. There is no such statement. He also looked through all the speeches in the Finance Bill Standing Committee, and there is no reference to me speaking about manufacturing during those debates. I was not involved in manufacturing because I was talking about other issues. If the hon. Gentleman wishes to provide the House with a text, he is quite welcome to do so, and I shall naturally accept it. I have always thought that the hon. Gentleman was a reasonably honest individual.

Mr. Worthington *rose*——

Mr. Lilley: I shall give way if the hon. Gentleman wishes.

Mr. Worthington: The goods that can be exported——

Mr. Lilley *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Financial Secretary has given way.

Mr. Worthington: The Government have paid inadequate attention over the years to manufacturing industry, whose products can be exported. Goods and services, particularly financial services, cannot be exported in the same way. The Minister says that the balance of payments is not important. That is a direct statement that manufacturing industry is not important.

Mr. Lilley: That is absolute twaddle. I have always said that, as far as the balance of payments reflects an inflationary, excessive demand in this country, inflation being the priority and the balance of payments being the symptom of it, it is important. I am sorry that the hon. Gentleman did not choose to withdraw or substantiate his earlier slurs. I know that he was for a period an inmate of a borstal. I am sorry that he learned more from its inhabitants than he was able to teach them.

Mr. Worthington: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Lilley: I shall not give way. No point of order arises from what I said.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am afraid that I have to decide that.

Mr. Worthington: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. That is a slur. For four years I was a member of staff of a borstal, not an inmate. I hope that the Minister will withdraw his remark.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps the Minister will put a different interpretation on what he said.

Mr. Lilley: When you, Mr. Speaker, are even-handed in your search for the truth on this matter, perhaps I will.

Mr. Speaker: Order. What does the Minister mean by that?

Mr. Lilley: Earlier today you, Mr. Speaker, said that you were sure that any allegation mady by the hon. Member for Clydebank and Milngavie was right. Now you are asking me to withdraw a perfectly fair, knockabout statement——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am not having that from the Minister, who knows that I had then been in the Chair for two minutes, and I apologised to him because I had not heard the arguments that had gone before. He cannot sustain that argument. Furthermore, I am now asking him to rephrase what he said. There is a difference between being an inmate and being on the staff.

Mr. Lilley: Of course, in that case I shall say that the hon. Member for Clydebank and Milngavie was on the staff of a borstal and, as I said, during his period there he clearly learned more from his fellow inhabitants of the institution than he was able to teach them. *[Interruption.]*

It is clear from every contribution made from the Opposition Benches—I am glad about this, although Opposition Members are getting a little rowdy now—that they welcome every measure in the Budget since they have not criticised any of them. They clearly recognise the skill of my right hon. Friend in framing his Budget.

They have been less forthcoming about what they would do. They have made it pretty clear that they would like to see higher spending on a range of different items. They want a Budget for spenders, not for savers. But when they are asked which of their promises amount to firm commitment, they become rather shifty and evasive; and when they are asked how they would finance their spending pledges, they shut up like clams.

I risk a rebuke from Opposition Members because I know that they have dissociated themselves from their comrade, Mr. Scargill, but I cannot help feeling that they are adopting a policy similar to what might be called Scargill economics: they will not say where the money is coming from or where it is going to, they deny that they would ever touch a penny of their members' or, in this case, ordinary citizens' cash, but at the same time they promise to dish it out discreetly to their friends. It seems as if Scargill economics has become the new orthodoxy of the Labour movement.

Unfortunately, like their friend, the Opposition have a few friends who have grassed, so we know a number of elements of their package. They would, for example, put the top rate of tax back to 50p in the pound, which would hit some 1·7 million taxpayers. They would abolish the earnings limit on national insurance contributions, effectively putting a 9p in the pound tax on earnings over £17,000, which would hit 3·8 million taxpayers. They

would phase out the married couples allowance, which would hit some 12 million households. They would restore the investment income surcharge, or something like it, on savings, which would hit at least 20 million savers. Finally, they would impose a roof tax, rising every year with the value of one's home and effectively incorporating a local income tax, which would hit the best part of 15 million households.

I want to make it quite clear that there is some overlap in those numbers. One should not just add them up and assume that all those people would be hit. A number would be hit several times by several of the taxes and some would be hit by all five taxes that Labour proposes. Yet those taxes alone would not raise enough to finance a fraction of what has been implicitly promised today.

As Opposition Members will not tell us how they will raise taxes from the rest of the population to finance that extra spending, so we must look back at their record. I am reluctant to do so, but if they will not tell us we must deduce what they will do from what they have done. I look back at the 1976 White Paper on public expenditure, when the right hon. Member for Leeds, East (Mr. Healey) spelled out the position very clearly:

"The ratio of public expenditure to gross domestic product has risen from 50 per cent. to 60 per cent. . . . The tax burden has also greatly increased. In 1975-76 a married man on average earnings is paying about a quarter of his earnings in income tax, compared with a tenth in 1960-61. At two-thirds average earnings, he is paying about a fifth compared with less than a twentieth. Tax thresholds have fallen sharply in relation to average earnings"—

this is under a Labour Government—

"and people are being drawn into tax at income levels which are below social security benefit levels. The increase in the tax burden has fallen heavily on low wage earners. Those earning less than the average contribute over a quarter of the income tax yield. This cannot be made good simply by increasing the burden at the top: if no taxpayer were left with more than £5,000 per annum after tax"—

in present-day money that is £15,600—

"this would increase the yield by only about 6 per cent."

In other words, as the right hon. Member for Leeds, East found then, and as any future Labour Chancellor, if ever there were one, would find, their programme could be financed only by taxing people down to levels below the level of social security benefit. That is why Labour Members are so quiet, shifty and evasive when it comes to answering questions about their tax policies.

The right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith) has had plenty of opportunities to spell out his tax proposals, but he has remained quiet. The measures will not succeed, as they proposed, in solving their problems, so they have to do worse elsewhere. Labour Members want us to forget their record. They are worse than the Bourbons——

It being Ten o'clock, the debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed tomorrow.

PROCEDURE

Ordered,

That Mr. Nicholas Bennett be discharged from the Procedure Committee and Mr. Paul Channon be added to the Committee.—*[Mr. Dorrell.]*

EMPLOYMENT

Ordered,

That Mr. William Cash be discharged from the Employment Committee, and Emma Nicholson be added to the Committee.—*[Mr. Ray Powell, on behalf of the Committee of Selection.]*

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ordered,

That Mr. Ian Taylor be discharged from the Foreign Affairs Committee, and Mr. Nigel Forman be added to the Committee.—*[Mr. Ray Powell, on behalf of the Committee of Selection.]*

PETITIONS

Humberstone (Development)

10 pm

Mr. Keith Vaz (Leicester, East): I wish to present a petition on behalf of Dr. Margaret Scott of 8 Vicarage lane, Humberstone, Chris Mauglan of 4 Vicarage lane, Humberstone and Dr. Roger James of 25 Stanley drive, Humberstone and 350 other local residents who are protesting about the proposed Jelson's development in Humberstone village. The city council refused planning permission before the development, but the developers, by their actions, destroyed the wildlife of the land and bulldozed it. The petition states:

Wherefore, your Petitioners pray that your Honourable House encourage the Secretary of State for Environment to uphold the decision of the Leicester City Council which in December refused Jelson's building proposal. And your Petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

To lie upon the Table.

Eye Test Charges

Mr. Vaz: I wish to present a petition on behalf of 105 residents of Leicester who are deeply concerned by the introduction of eye test charges and they correctly say that people are being forced to go without treatment because of these charges. The petition has a sad history because it was collected by Mr. Edwards an optician, who lived at 67 Marston road, Leicester, but who has died since the petition was given to me.

The petition states:

Wherefore, your Petitioners pray that your Honourable House encourage the Secretary of State for Health to abolish these charges immediately so that ordinary people may have the proper treatment they deserve.

To lie upon the Table.

Christian Broadcasting

Mr. Vaz: I wish to present a petition on behalf of Mrs. Mills of 6 Hoylake close, Leicester and 60 other residents, who are members of Evington chapel, High street, Evington, who wish to keep broadcasting channels open for existing levels of Christian broadcasting. They call on the Secretary of State for Home Affairs to ensure that there is sufficient means by which Christian broadcasting is retained within our broadcasting service.

To lie upon the Table.

Dogs

Mr. Vaz: My final petition is on behalf of Mrs. Igmar Dobson of 11 Stanley drive, Humberstone, Leicester and 4,000 local residents. They request new legislation to make dog owners responsible for training dogs, to introduce a dog registration scheme and to ensure that there is full control of dogs in public places.

I declare an interest as the president of the Leicester and South Leicestershire branch of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. I feel that these measures are extremely important.

To lie upon the Table.

Human Embryos

Mr. Andrew Hargreaves (Birmingham, Hall Green): I beg to ask leave to present a petition on behalf of Mr. Keith A. Davies of 50 Eastham road, Billesley, Birmingham B13 and some 487 of my constituents, being all parishioners of Our Lady of Lourdes church, Yardley Wood, Birmingham, on the subject of the protection of the human embryo, on which I here venture no opinion either in agreement or dissent:

Wherefore your Petitioners pray that the House of Commons will take immediate steps to enact legislation which *(a)* forbids any procedure that involves purchase and sale of human embryos, the discarding or freezing of human embryos, their use as sources of transplant tissue or as subjects for research or experiment (unless this is done solely for the benefit of the embryo concerned); and *(b)* forbids all forms of trans-species fertilization. And your Petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

To lie upon the Table.

Coastal Defences

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Fallon.]*

10.6 pm

Mr. Jonathan Sayeed (Bristol, East): I do not know the financial cost of what happened in Towyn, north Wales, on 27 February, although the human cost and misery were clear for all to see. But I do know that restoring the town will cost hundreds of times more than the remedial work on the sea wall would have cost.

That single storm, despite the fact that the winds were not that severe, brought havoc throughout the coastal areas of the west. In Cornwall, Devon, Weston-super-Mare, Wales and further north, it taught us that a combination of wind, tide, rising sea levels and decaying sea defences will wreak such destruction that the money saved by doing next to nothing will rank as infinitesimal compared with the cost of the damage caused.

Under constant attack from the effects of wind, wave and tide, our coastline is being eroded and urgent action is necessary to avoid the loss of land, property and life. Yet since the storms of 1953 and the subsequent construction of sea defences on the east coast, there has been little major coastal protection work. Even those east coast defences are nearing the end of their useful life and require extensive repair or replacement. Sea wall construction costs on average £5 million a kilometre. About £150 million will have to be spent in the Anglian region alone over the next 10 years just to maintain the current level of protection, with £450 million being the estimate for the United Kingdom over the same period.

Yet even that is an underestimate, as the little evidence that is available clearly shows that the effect of rising sea levels and changing weather patterns threaten larger areas of our coast with increased destruction. But no one knows how much or how soon or at what cost.

Sea levels are variously predicted to rise between 0·2 m and 1·65 m by the middle of the next century, and storm patterns are expected to change for the worse. The latest assessment of predicted sea level rise now varies between 25 cm and 40 cm. No one can tell with certainty what will be the consequences. The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food has produced a map that clearly shows that about 750,000 hectares, of which some 200,000 is prime agricultural land, are below the 5 m ordnance datum. In other words, that area could at any time be inundated at present possible storm water levels. If one makes a modest estimate of the average value of the land, buildings and contents at £100,000 a hectare, the value of the property currently under threat, even without sea level rises and climate change, is £75 billion.

It is true that Durham university is investigating the impact of sea level rise, but the study is directed towards the methodology of establishing the impact rather than assessing the cost, although the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food has a research project at the university of East Anglia entitled "the economic appraisal of the consequences of climate-induced sea-level rise", that is at an early stage and there have been several suggestions that it is inadequately funded.

Even when coastal protection and building works are undertaken, they are too often undertaken in an unco-ordinated and haphazard manner, and in consequence their operation frequently increases the risk to an adjoining area.

The responsibility for the protection of the coastline is divided among 240 different authorities. Coastal work such as groynes, piers and harbour entrances are frequently carried out by individual authorities without due consideration being given to the effect on the coastal regime of an adjacent authority. Consequently, it often causes severe accretion or erosion problems by interfering with the movement of beach material.

My hon. Friend the Minister will no doubt tell me, and he will be correct to do so, that action has been taken to ease the position through the establishment of 10 regional coastal groups involving 72 authorities. But co-ordination of coastal construction and coastal protection on a national basis is essential if effective protection is to be achieved. My hon. Friend will know that few coastal authorities talk to one another about common problems, and the newly formed regional coastal groups have not even met.

We need a single body to co-ordinate the monitoring of water, wave, beach and sea bed levels to provide the support for research and design methods, and hence the forms of construction. The same body should advise on national priorities and approve local proposals. As the National Rivers Authority is already responsible for the general supervision of sea defences, it would seem reasonable that its remit should be extended and its funding increased to cover the whole coastline.

With the Coast Protection Act 1949, the Land Drainage Act 1976, the Crown Lands Act 1866, the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, the Sea-Fisheries Regulation Act 1966, the Control of Pollution Act 1974, the Prevention of Oil Pollution Act 1971, the Dumping at Sea Act 1974, the Customs and Excise Act 1952, the Highways Act 1959, and the numerous private Bills and railways Acts all affecting the coastal zone, there is a clear need to establish legislation to provide a coherent and comprehensive policy for dealing with interests there.

It is also essential that funding is provided and research co-ordinated to develop appropriate design and construction methods. Too little data are available to predict reliably the future effects of wind, tide and sea levels on existing sea defences. But we can already be clear that the rise in sea levels coupled with more severe storm conditions will result in the need to spend between £5 billion and £8 billion to deal with the increasing threat.

East Anglia appears to be in immediate danger, but many parts of the south and west coasts need urgent attention. However, we do not know where to start. Apart from the Anglian sea defence management study, hardly any monitoring is taking place. But research is essential if we are to do what is necessary in the time we have and at the most effective cost. Research into the inshore wave climate, the combined probability of high wave and water levels, the co-ordination of wave data acquisition, research into beach stability and provision of instrumentation to obtain field data and the collection and collation of those data to verify the predictions of mathematical models of sediment transport, wave refraction and diffraction should be taking place now. Research is essential in the full-scale monitoring of the coastal structure, and we must interlink field and laboratory experiments to investigate the physics of sediment transport.

[Mr. Jonathan Sayeed]

We have 4,026 km of coastline, but only 23 per cent. is protected by concrete walls or steel sheet piling; 12 per cent. is protected by the soft-edge solution—essentially grass banks—leaving 65 per cent. in its natural state. As conditions become more severe, a greater length of coastline will require protection against flooding and damage. However, as coastal protection work is a long-term activity, there is an overwhelming need to take action now—on a national basis—to prepare for essential construction work. It is true that we cannot provide protection against all exceptional storms. It is not economic to do so, and the environmental impact of doing so would be horrendous. Nevertheless, there is much research and construction that we need to do now.

Cynics may say that there are no votes in spending on coastal protection, and that therefore one should do as little as possible. I am sure that my hon. Friend the Minister would agree that, although there may not be many votes to be gained by doing something, there are a great deal to be lost by doing nothing.

In conclusion, I offer my hon. Friend an acronym to remind him of what is necessary. The acronym is CRAC: we need co-ordination, research and urgent action, and we definitely need the cash.

10.16 pm

Mr. Barry Field (Isle of Wight): I am obliged to my hon. Friend the Member for Bristol, East (Mr. Sayeed) for raising this important matter, and for so generously giving me a few moments of his precious Adjournment debate.

My hon. Friend and I share love of the sea. Since I entered the House, he has been most generous with his help and advice and he has shown this evening that his knowledge of maritime matters is extensive. However, it is not quite true that there are no field data, as my own back garden runs down to the harbour in Cowes. Twice this year we have had the sea well up the garden, and there were surfboarders in Cowes high street as a result of exceptionally high tides this year. I can confirm that we have some field data.

Sea defences are important, and nowhere more so than on an island such as the Isle of Wight. On our Solent and Channel shores, our coastline has taken an appalling battering this winter. Medina borough council estimates that its costs will be in excess of £100,000 for damage between Seaview and Puckpool and at Gurnard. South Wight borough council, which is responsible for over two thirds of the island's coastline, has already served notice on the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food of the need for sea defence work at Monks Bay and Steephil Cove. At Monks Bay a large section of the cliff has now fallen away and the total cost is likely to be about £100,000.

Does my hon. Friend the Minister agree that it is an extraordinary anomaly that councils that receive 70 per cent. of the capital costs grant-aided receive nothing for maintenance. Many of our coastal defences fall into disrepair and are ravaged by the mighty ocean, so that the local authorities must then rebuild them with more grant aid. The Minister should acknowledge the whole crazy system and, like the boy and the dyke, poke his finger into the nonsensical bureaucracy and stop the financial haemorrhage by grant-aiding maintenance work as well as capital grant aid.

10.19 pm

The Parliamentary-Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Mr. David Maclean): I thank my hon. Friend the Member for Bristol, East (Mr. Sayeed) for the interest he has shown in this subject, which has been on all our minds so recently, and for giving me the opportunity to reassure him on the issues that are of concern to him and other hon. Members and to convey to the House my Department's responsibility and the present arrangements concerning coastal defence works.

Recent exceptional weather conditions, resulting in both flooding and storm damage, have attracted public interest to flood and coastal defences. I start by expressing the Government's deepest sympathy to those who have been affected by this dreadful flooding.

We all saw and applauded the way in which the National Rivers Authority and local authorities responded to the effects of a series of extraordinary storms in December, January and February. Local authorites and the regional organisations of the NRA are close to the scene of the flooding events, and, for this reason, are able to act quickly in an emergency. They know the area. They know the defences, for they and their predecessors have replaced, improved and maintained them over many years, and it is right that they should do so.

While the Government keenly recognise the national significance of ensuring the upkeep of our coastal defences by contributing grant—at rates up to 75 per cent. from next year—towards the cost of these works, the defences are also local defences. The problems of flooding and erosion are also local. It is the local people who have to live with these defences at the bottom of their gardens, on the beaches or promenades in their towns, or in front of their houses, and who have to cope with the awful consequences of flooding; therefore, it is right that the solutions to these problems should have a strong local input. The present arrangements allow this to happen.

Of course, as trustees of public funds, the Government must ensure that the works proposed for our coastline, and inland, represent a sound investment if they are to attract grant. For this reason, our team of project engineers works closely with the authorities concerned—in many cases, right from the inception of a project. My officials give careful and thorough appraisal to projects before they are approved for grant. Through our partnership with the NRA, which undertakes most flood defence works, we are encouraging a movement away from a piecemeal approach in defence construction towards long-term strategic planning—something for which my hon. Friend called—for instance, by supporting a detailed study of the Anglian coastline, which he mentioned, to ensure that the long-term problems are clear and that the best solution for the area is identified.

The Government also have an important role to play nationally through setting a strategic framework for consideration of priorities for defences, funding research and development—for which my hon. Friend called—to elucidate approaches to defending the coastline, and through providing grant directing it to the priority areas. As guardians of investment of Government funds, through

my river and coastal engineers, we ensure the economic, technical and environmental soundness of projects that are grant aided.

This is a carefully balanced relationship, and it actually works on the ground. To change the balance of responsibilities in either direction would, I believe, render the provision of nationwide inland and coastal defence less effective, either because of overcentralisation in national Government, or because the potential difficulties of local bodies taking narrow local priorities would be exacerbated.

High priority is given to coastal defences. My hon. Friend will be pleased to know that we are increasing the maximum grant for coastal defences from 70 to 75 per cent. next month. Over the next three years, the total Government grant provision in Britain for flood and coastal defences is £161 million, and, of this sum, 80 per cent. is likely to be spent on coastal works. These amounts represent substantial increases in provision by my right hon. Friends' Departments and my own. Increases average about 50 per cent., while, in my own Department, grant provision to the NRA—increased following both the 1988 and the 1989 public expenditure survey rounds as a result of a comprehensive review of flood defence needs—will almost double by 1992-93.

In Wales, Scotland and England, grant provision is assessed on the basis of plans submitted by the authorities responsible for carrying out the works. In England, for example, the NRA submits annually a five-year programme of works. Information of this nature provides the medium-term planning which underpins our assessment of funding requirements, while also providing the information necessary to determine the capital expenditure limits in each region for the subsequent year.

In England, funding is targeted according to priorities that put flood warning systems and the protection of people and property first. Additional support is given to sea and tidal defence works, which attract a supplement of 15 per cent. rising to 20 per cent. from next month.

In the Anglian region, where needs are particularly high, capital expenditure limits, while already high, are being raised by 17 per cent. next year and are likely to increase further in succeeding years. Anglia also attracts some of the highest grant rates in England. The south-west is another area where flood and coastal defence needs are growing.

Capital expenditure limits have been increased by 33 per cent. together with an increase in grant rate for coastal works to 65 per cent.. In the southern region, the entire planned programme for 1990-91 will attract grant from my Department.

Mr. Barry Field: No one faults the capital grants, but the problem is how to maintain the defences, once they have been erected.

Mr. Maclean: I noted carefully what my hon. Friend said in his speech. I shall consider the question of maintenance and will write to him, giving a detailed and considered reply.

While the majority of the coastal defences in Britain stood up very well to the challenge of the recent extreme storm events, a few areas, most of them well publicised, have suffered the effects of flooding. I should stress that the weather conditions that led to the flooding have been exceptional. In a number of flooded areas, works were already programmed or under way. However, we have asked the authorities responsible for defences in areas where flooding and damage has occurred to review the defences and to give us an early indication of changes to programmes so that we can reconsider needs and priorities.

I am aware of the particular problem of loss of beach material on the south coast which is causing anxiety to authorities and ourselves. Therefore, in partnership with the NRA and local authorities, I am considering the need for a study of the circumstances leading to the loss of beach material, with a view to identifying robust remedial measures.

Interest in coastal defences has, I know, also grown through increasing awareness of the greenhouse effect and the consequent speculation on the possible effects this might have on sea levels. While the precise effects of global warming are not yet known, the greenhouse effect and its consequences are being extensively researched through international programmes with United Kingdom involvement.

My Department is responsible for the national flood protection research programme and at present funds some 30 research projects on coastal defences, at a cost of £1·4 million. After the debates I will show my hon. Friend the Member for Bristol, East the list of those 30 projects This research ranges from United Kingdom sea level trends to the action and effects of waves, the behaviour of shingle beaches and the effectiveness of various types of sea defences. Many of these projects will assist in ensuring that coastal defences are so designed that any necessary adjustements, as sea level rises, can be made easily, thereby safeguarding the present investment. Currently, a relative sea level rise of 30 cm per century is taken into account in designing sea defences; this is about twice the present trend in sea level rise.

My Department does not only involve itself in research related to the greenhouse effect; it also plays an active role in promoting the study of coastal regimes and encouraging the long-term strategic planning of flood defence works. For example, the most comprehensive study in the country is currently being undertaken on the Anglian coastline from the Humber to the Thames.

Some of those present will recall the tragic events in 1953 when so many lives were lost as a result of flooding on the east coast. The defences built after that event have successfully withstood a similar threat from the North sea on several occasions. These defences are now reaching the end of their useful lives, and this major study will investigate coastal processes such as sediment movement and offshore conditions, to establish the best means of providing a sound defence along this vulnerable coastline. That is exactly the research for which my hon. Friend the Member for Bristol, East was calling.

The research and development programme includes projects investigating extreme events, studying wave generation and predicting waves at the coast. The projects help to inform the design of protective structures, but some will be more immediately applicable. At the moment, there are questions about the best types of defences, whether they should be "hard", such as walls, or "soft" such as renewed beaches. There are research projects into the design of sea walls and examining cliff stability, sediment transport and beach profiles that will help to answer some of those important questions.

[Mr. Maclean]

However, there is unlikely to be a single solution that will be suitable for every site. The type of structures that have worked well in the past may be favoured in the future, but new understanding will allow more informed choices and the adoption of newer approaches to coastal defence.

In summing up, I repeat my sympathy to those who have suffered flooding as a result of the exceptional weather. However, I remind the House that our coastal defences are kept under continual review and this is why, despite repeated attacks by wind, tides and surges, most of our coastal defences were effective and held up pretty well. Substantial increases in Government funding, including increasing the maximum grant rate for works on the coast and inland, have already been announced following our on-going reviews, and we intend to ensure that Government funding is sufficient to take account of necessary adjustments to programmes and priorities as a result of the recent storm events.

My hon. Friend the Member for Bristol, East urged me to accept the acronym CRAC. We are right up to crack with CRAC. My Department is carrying out the co-ordination, we are committed to the research, we are treating the matter urgently and we are piling in the cash. I am grateful to my hon. Friend for giving me the opportunity to respond to this very important debate.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at twenty-eight minutes to Eleven o'clock.

House of Commons

Thursday 22 March 1990

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

DEATH OF A MEMBER

Mr. Speaker: I regret to have to inform the House of the death of Allan Roberts, esquire, Member for Bootle, and I desire, on behalf of the House, to express our sense of the loss we have sustained and our sympathy with the relatives of the hon. Member.

PRIVATE BUSINESS

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL (NO. 2) BILL *(By Order)*

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on Question proposed [26 February],

That the Bill be now considered.

Debate further adjourned till Thursday 29 March.

EXMOUTH DOCKS BILL *(By Order)*

Order for Second Reading read.

To be read a Second time on Thursday 29 March at Seven o'clock.

Mr. Speaker: As the remaining 11 Bills have blocking motions, with the leave of the House, I shall put them together.

SHARD BRIDGE BILL *(By Order)*

VALE OF GLAMORGAN (BARRY HARBOUR) BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

Orders for Second Reading read.

To be read a Second time on Thursday 29 March.

ADELPHI ESTATE BILL *(By Order)*

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on Question proposed [27 February],

That the Bill be now read a Second time.

Debate further adjourned till Thursday 29 March.

LONDON DOCKLANDS RAILWAY BILL *(By Order)*

LONDON UNDERGROUND (VICTORIA) BILL *(By Order)*

LONDON REGIONAL TRANSPORT (PENALTY FARES) BILL *(By Order)*

LONDON UNDERGROUND BILL *(By Order)*

CATTEWATER RECLAMATION BILL *(By Order)*

HUMBERSIDE COUNTY COUNCIL BILL *(By Order)*

CLYDE PORT AUTHORITY BILL *(By Order)*

LONDON LOCAL AUTHORITIES (NO. 2) BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

Orders for Second Reading read.

To be read a Second time on Thursday 29 March.

Oral Answers to Questions

HOME DEPARTMENT

Special Constables

1. **Mr. Key:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has any plans to increase the number of special constables; and if he will make a statement.

6. **Mr. Pawsey:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement about the current level of special constable recruiting.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Peter Lloyd): At the end of 1989, there were 15,589 special constables in England and Wales. I am very keen to see an increase. With that objective, there will be a national, centrally funded recruiting campaign and sympathetic consideration will be given to the possibility of a special payment, or bounty, on an experimental basis.

Mr. Key: That is good news and I congratulate my hon. Friend. Will he consider improving allowances? Many people feel that a bounty is not in keeping with the volunteer spirit of the specials. In what ways does my hon. Friend think that specials should be made more use of than at present?

Mr. Lloyd: My hon. Friend is right to imply that there is a difference of views about a bounty and that is why we are thinking about it thoroughly. If it can be useful in increasing the number of special constables, we should want to try it out. Expenses have been improved recently, but if my hon. Friend has any suggestions about out-of-pocket expenses that are not covered properly under the present system, I should like to hear them. He is also right in believing that not all forces use special constables as imaginatively as they might. Those that use them well get enormous benefit. I am thinking of the specials' particular role in crime prevention advice and in supporting neighbourhood watch schemes. My hon. Friend is right to draw attention to that.

Mr. Speaker: I remind the House that it is fairer to other hon. Members if one question is asked at a time. We then get further down the Order Paper.

Mr. Pawsey: I thank my hon. Friend for his full and complete reply, such as we have grown used to receiving from him. Will he comment a little further on recruiting, expecially among the ethnic communities? Will he also speculate on the improvements that might take place within the specials were their training to be stepped up? I understand that currently, they support the regular police, but they could do a great deal more if their training was a little deeper and more extensive than is currently the case.

Mr. Lloyd: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his opening remarks and I shall welcome them by being short rather than long in my answer. Much can be done on training, and the imaginative use that some forces have been able to make of the specials is a result of having trained them for those roles.

Mr. Madden: Will the Minister give a firm assurance that the effort to recruit more special constables will not be allowed to dilute the efforts being made by all police forces to recruit from the ethnic minorities, as such recruitment remains extremely disappointing?

Mr. Lloyd: No, the effort will not be used in that way. The ethnic minorities are better represented among the special constables than in the police force at large. One characteristic of the special constabulary is that many of its members go on to become regular policemen. We have had some recruitment efforts among the ethnic minorities. I am thinking especially of Tooting, where the increase in numbers was large as a result. There is a great deal that can be done and in some places, it is being done. We are trying to urge other forces to copy that good example.

Mr. Salmond: Are there any plans to increase the number of special constables, to protect the Secretary of State for Scotland from the righteous anger of the Scottish people, after his failure to defend our interests in Cabinet and his unwillingness to come to the House to explain his position?

Mr. Lloyd: People in Scotland are much more law abiding and sensible than the hon. Gentleman implies.

Mr. Shersby: Is my hon. Friend aware that the Police Federation is strongly opposed to the introduction of bounties because it believes that specials would then be used as cheap labour in preference to the use of regular constables? Is my hon. Friend further aware that the federation would strongly support financial recompense to specials who lose earnings as a result of having to give evidence in court?

Mr. Lloyd: We are very much aware that that opinion is widespread in the Police Federation and that is why we would not begin to pay bounties to all special constables. If we moved ahead at all, we should want to experiment to see whether the idea was effective in recruiting and did not dilute the motives of those who join.

Mr. Sheerman: Is the Minister aware that the recruitment of specials is closely linked to final recruitment into the regular police force? Is he further aware that the Government's latest act, reneging on what many of us believe to be a sacred agreement on arbitration, will mean that the Government will be unable to recruit not only special constables, but any constables?

Mr. Lloyd: I do not think that that will have any effect on the recruitment of special constables, for reasons that have already been made clear. At present, special constables receive only out-of-pocket expenses. Therefore, the idea of rent allowances does not weigh with them at all.

Neighbourhood Watch

2. **Mr. Carrington:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many neighbourhood watch schemes now operate in England and Wales.

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. David Waddington): At the end of December 1989 there were estimated to be over 81,000 neighbourhood watch schemes in England and Wales, covering more than 4 million households, compared with 64,000 at the end of December 1988—an increase of 26·5 per cent.

Mr. Carrington: I am grateful to my right hon. and learned Friend for that most impressive answer, which shows the great popularity and success of neighbourhood watch schemes. Does he agree that his answer shows the important role of such schemes in crime prevention, which justifies the encouragement that the police give to those schemes and the commitment of substantial police resources to ensure that they prosper and continue to provide the services that they have provided already?

Mr. Waddington: There is not the slightest doubt about the important role that neighbourhood watch schemes play in crime prevention. I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his question. Eight schemes now operate in Fulham, covering more than 2,500 households, and I hope that there will be more schemes there shortly.

Mr. Maclennan: How is the information about neighbourhood watch schemes centrally collated? What is the measure of their effectiveness?

Mr. Waddington: I do not think that we have any difficulty in collating information as a result of inquiries made of the police. Obviously, the effect of particular schemes depends to a large extent on the enthusiasm of the participants. I could cite many examples of schemes where one can show without peradventure that after their being set up there was a decline in crime in the area, particularly in burglary.

Mr. Simon Coombs: Given my right hon. and learned Friend's natural and very proper support for neighbourhood watch schemes, can he justify to the House a cut in the Wiltshire constabulary's budget for vehicles, plant and equipment of more than £800,000 for next year, when that money could reasonably have been expected to do much to support neighbourhood watch schemes in my constituency?

Mr. Waddington: I can assure my hon. Friend that there has been an 80 per cent. rise in real terms in expenditure on vehicles, plant and maintenance since 1979. That is just one sign of the enormous increase in resources made available to the police since this Government came to office.

Mr. Corbett: While I welcome growing citizen interest in neighbourhood watch and business watch schemes, does the Home Secretary accept that they are no substitute for public demand to see more officers with their feet on the beat? Does he recall that that was a major finding of a recent Police Federation survey? How does he intend to respond to that clear expression of public opinion?

Mr. Waddington: The hon. Gentleman should make known his new enthusiasm for neighbourhood watch schemes to Labour authorities that have persistently obstructed the setting up of neighbourhood watch schemes in their area. I hope that he will go straight out of the Chamber and ring Cleveland county council and Stockton, Hartlepool and Langbaurgh borough councils. After he has done that and shown his determination to see more neighbourhood watch schemes set up, he can come back and ask further questions.

Prisoners (Hepatitis B)

5. **Mr. Alton:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what action he is taking to protect prisoners from contracting hepatitis B.

The Minister of State, Home Office (Mr. David Mellor): I refer the hon. Gentleman to replies given on 2 March 1990 to previous questions tabled by him. I have nothing to add to those answers.

Mr. Alton: After the sad death of one of my constituents from hepatitis B, does the Minister agree that now is the time to start collecting statistics from our prisons to establish the high incidence of hepatitis B among the prison population generally? Does he accept that as the disease is 100 times more virulent than HIV and as immunisation is available by vaccine, we should take urgent action to vaccinate prisoners and staff against it and to collect reliable statistics?

Mr. Mellor: I am aware of the sad case to which the hon. Gentleman refers. I should welcome the opportunity to discuss the matter with him at greater length, if he cares to come to see me. We take the most careful medical advice from the prison medical service and act on its advice in any cases where, for instance, it advises vaccination either of staff or of prisoners, if a vaccine is available. I shall be only too happy to discuss all the details of the matter with the hon. Gentleman. He is right to be worried about the issue, on which I assure him that the prison medical service is particularly active.

Mr. Barry Field: Will my hon. and learned Friend confirm that the recommendations of the chief inspector of prisons on national prison hospitals, with regard to hepatitis B and HIV, have been fully implemented and recognised?

Mr. Mellor: Yes, indeed. We take seriously the professional advice that we receive and, in particular, the role of the chief inspector of prisons, whose job is to cast an objective eye over that and all other aspects of running the prison service.

Mr. Ashley: As the Minister is so ready to take advice, will he also consider the advice of the joint committee on vaccination, which recommends vaccinating all high-risk people, including staff and prisoners?

Mr. Mellor: As the right hon. Gentleman will be aware, it all turns on the definition of high risk. We certainly have a policy of taking advice from the prison medical service. Anyone whom it wishes to see vaccinated as part of its clinical discretion, and who agrees to be vaccinated, can be. It is always a matter of judgment how far one should go in categorising people independently of the individual judgment of a medical officer. I repeat that we are willing to have our arrangements tested against any independent advice to which hon. Members may have access.

Prisons

7. **Miss Emma Nicholson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the current prison population; what it was one year ago; and what projections he has made for the prison population over the next five years.

Mr. Mellor: The prison population in England and Wales on 16 March 1990 was 47,115. The corresponding figure for 17 March 1989 was 49,837, a reduction of just over 2,700.

Projections published last November, which are in the process of being revised, suggest that the prison population will rise steadily over the next five years to reach 58,200 in 1994-95. The year 1989 has, however, seen an encouraging downturn in the prison population—the average population being some 1,300 fewer than in 1988. Accordingly, the revised prison population projections—due to be published later this spring—will, of course, reflect that fall.

Miss Nicholson: Given that we have an unacceptably high prison population in the United Kingdom, the results of which I see in Dartmoor prison, what steps is my hon. and learned Friend taking to ensure that the lowest number of people are sent to prison, while reflecting the seriousness of the crimes committed, and that we are not merely falling into the habit of sending people to prison because we have no better way of dealing with them?

Mr. Mellor: As my hon. Friend knows, no Government have done more than this one to develop non-custodial penalties that offer the courts a wide range of viable alternatives to custody. That process has been taken a stage further in my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State's recent White Paper. My hope and belief is that as further arrangements become available, the courts will make increasing use of them so that the prison population will increasingly comprise only those who undoubtedly, on any judgment, deserve imprisonment. It will always be a difficult balance to strike, but we are taking great steps in that proper direction.

Mr. Gale: Will my hon. and learned Friend take this opportunity to reaffirm publicly that community service, as proposed in the White Paper, will not be seen or used as a soft option to imprisonment? Will he also reaffirm that there is no question of anybody who has been convicted of a violent crime being allowed to remain on the loose in the community and that, when it is used, community service will be rigorous?

Mr. Mellor: The first point that needs to be made absolutely clear is that the courts have ample powers to punish violent offenders. Most people will continue to believe, as we do, that violent offenders will usually merit a custodial sentence for the protection of the public. However, equally, we have nearly 20 years' experience of community service. Community service is rigorous: it means work for the community's benefit. Under the guidance of the Minister of State, my right hon. Friend the Member for Oxford, West and Abingdon (Mr. Patten), national standards are now being promulgated. Our community service scheme leads the world. It is not a soft option. It ensures that those convicted of offences put something back into the community.

Mr. Randall: On the question about the current prison population, is not the Minister ashamed of the Government's performance when dealing with young remand inmates, some of whom, according to the chief inspector of prisons, are living in unacceptable conditions in prison, and being denied sufficient education and exercise? Some are even locked up for 20 hours a day. What does the Minister say to that?

Mr. Mellor: First, nobody is remanded in custody without the courts being satisfied that that person cannot safely be left at liberty. Remand should be an option of last resort. To begin with, therefore, those youngsters are in remand because of things that they are alleged to have done and because the courts lack confidence in their ability to behave themselves while awaiting trail.

Secondly, it is all very well for the hon. Gentleman to rush to judgment on such matters, but no Government have done more than this Government in building new prisons and refurbishing old ones. Ten years ago we inherited the most run down prison system in Europe as a result of the persistent and flagrant neglect of the previous Labour Government. That cannot be reversed overnight.

Remand Prisoners

8. **Mr. Hind:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the current number of remand prisoners held in police cells; and what it was one year ago.

Mr. Mellor: On Friday 16 March, there were no remand prisoners held in police cells in England and Wales. That compares with 182 people held on 17 March 1989, most of whom were on remand.

I am very glad to be able to say that the measures that my right hon. Friend the Member for Witney (Mr. Hurd), the previous Home Secretary, introduced to overcome the problem of the need to hold prisoners in police cells for lengthy periods of time have proved a success. My right hon. and learned Friend the present Home Secretary is determined to see that this success is maintained.

Mr. Hind: Will my hon. and learned Friend congratulate the prison service on achieving the end of that use of police cells? How are his deliberations on the use of private companies to construct remand centres progressing? Does he agree that there are several good models in the United States, where the remand centres are located in cities, close to the courts and to the families who wish to visit the prisoners, and much more convenient for the purposes of transportation? When will my hon. and learned Friend be able to tell us that he has reached a verdict on those considerations?

Mr. Mellor: Obviously, it is important that, as far as possible, no prisoners are held outside purpose-built prisons. I am glad to say that as a result of a combination of factors—not least the Government's commitment and willingness, unlike the Labour Government, to make resources available—it has been possible to achieve that.

Private remand prisons are under active consideration and I hope that my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary can make a statement before too long.

Birmingham Pub Bombings

9. **Mr. Harry Barnes:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received from Birmingham city council on the Birmingham pub bombings.

10. **Mr. Mullin:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has sought the opinion of the Lord Chief Justice on the new evidence in the Birmingham pub bombings case.

Mr. Waddington: I am not aware of recent representations from Birmingham city council about the Birmingham pub bombings case. I have not sought the opinion of the Lord Chief Justice on the Birmingham pub bombings case.

Mr. Barnes: I am a little surprised by that answer, because I thought that the right hon. and learned Gentleman had received a delegation from Birmingham. What is the purpose of this further, fifth and, I hope, final police inquiry, when it is understood by the Home Office, whole sections of the police force and the judiciary, that there will be eventual freedom for the Birmingham Six? In those circumstances, is not it disturbing that the Birmingham Six should remain imprisoned and branded as guilty when procedures are being set in motion for, I hope, their release?

Mr. Waddington: Justice demands that innocent men should go free; it also demands that guilty men should stay in gaol. Claims have been made, and the object of the exercise is to determine whether there is any substance to them. I have asked the chief constable of the West Midlands police to report on a number of specific points that were put to me recently, and he has decided to ask the Devon and Cornwall police to consider those matters. The basic question is still whether the representations made to me constitute new evidence relevant to the safety of the convictions.

Mr. Mullin: Will the Home Secretary confirm that one of the principal obstacles to the case being referred back to the Court of Appeal is the implacable hostility of the Lord Chief Justice? Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman agree that the resignation or the early retirement of the Lord Chief Justice would be a small price to pay for justice being achieved in this case?

Mr. Waddington: That is one of the most preposterous and irresponsible statements that I have ever heard in the House. Incidentally, I am amazed by the sheer irresponsibility of the hon. Gentleman who, while protesting his concern for the Birmingham Six, has steadfastly refused to reveal material that he claims would prove their innocence. Must we wait for another novel from him?

Mr. Alexander: Will my right hon. and learned Friend accept the thanks of many Conservative Members for the open-minded way in which he accepted the new evidence presented to him before Christmas? Is he aware that the fact that someone else will be investigating the matter with an open mind is largely welcome? If something sinister appears, will he reconsider asking the Court of Appeal to examine the case again, once the Devon and Cornwall police have finished their inquiries?

Mr. Waddington: I am grateful for the way in which my hon. Friend put his question. As I said, the basic question is whether the matters that have been put to me constitute new evidence that casts doubt on the safety of the convictions. If, as a result of those inquiries, matters are put to me that convince me that new evidence casts doubt on the convictions, I shall take appropriate action.

Mr. Gow: Can my right hon. and learned Friend tell the House the nature of the fresh evidence that has been provided and upon which he has asked the police to

report? Can he assure the House that the police will conduct the further inquiry as rapidly as possible, consistent with examining the evidence thoroughly?

Mr. Waddington: I wish that I could help my hon. Friend on his first point, but I do not think that it would be proper for me publicly to disclose all the matters that I have asked the chief constable of the West Midlands to consider. However, I take my hon. Friend's second point —these are important matters that should be dealt with as quickly as possible, and I am sure that the police realise that.

Mr. Mallon: Given the various disturbing factors that have come to light since the original jury trial of the Birmingham Six, will the Home Secretary say whether, in his professional experience and judgment, the new evidence leads him to believe that if it had been given to the original jury they would have found differently? Will he be guided by the informed opinion of Lords Scarman and Devlin and concede that there may well have been a miscarriage of justice in this case?

Mr. Waddington: I think that I have already answered that question. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman realises that the difficult task that I have to perform when material is put before me is to come to a conclusion about whether it constitutes new evidence which casts doubt on the safety of the convictions. That is the task which I am trying to perform to the best of my ability.

Mr. Dickens: Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that there is a simple answer to all this? If the Birmingham Six are innocent, and I say "if" because I have no way of judging, would not the simple answer be for those who are campaigning for them to be released—the IRA—to supply us with the names of those who did the bombing?

Mr. Waddington: One does not have to go as far as the IRA—one can ask the hon. Member for Sunderland, South (Mr. Mullin). He says that he knows all about these matters, but he has steadfastly and irresponsibly refused to give the authorities the information that he says will help.

Mr. Hattersley: First, I congratulate the Home Secretary on the decision that he announced yesterday—not least because there is a general wish throughout the country, particularly in Birmingham, for the men or women who were genuinely responsible for the pub bombings to be convicted and imprisoned, rather than those whom it is increasingly believed are not guilty. Does he understand that having set out on that course—I repeat my congratulations on that—there can be no going back and that having begun with a limited inquiry he now cannot avoid a comprehensive and complete inquiry? He should understand that his impartiality on this matter will be better understood and appreciated if he attempts to answer questions from Opposition Members in a way that is appropriate to a Home Secretary.

Mr. Waddington: I imagine that the right hon. Gentleman's last reference had nothing to do with the Birmingham Six, but was a reference to my reply about neighbourhood watch schemes—[HON. MEMBERS: "No!"] If it referred to the hon. Member for Sunderland, South (Mr. Mullin), I certainly do not need to defend myself about that—it is time that the hon. Member recognised his responsibility as a Member of this House. I should have thought the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) would also know that.

Mr. Cryer: The Home Secretary should sit down—he does not own the place.

Mr. Speaker: Order. We often hear things in the House with which we do not agree.

Mr. Waddington: I shall address myself now to the question put to me by the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook, which might have been better if he had not gone on to subsequent matters. The issue is a simple one: material has been put before me and I must determine whether it constitutes new evidence that casts doubt on the convictions. I am entitled to seek what advice I can in order to come to a proper conclusion about the matter. That is what I was about when I addressed certain questions to the chief constable of the West Midlands. One should not conclude from that that it is necessary to have another inquiry.

Juvenile Crime

16. **Mr. Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a further statement on the progress of his policy on developing parental responsibility for juvenile crime.

Mr. Waddington: Our proposals were set out in the White Paper "Crime, Justice and Protecting the Public", published in February. We intend to strengthen courts' powers to require parents to attend court with their children and to bind the parents over. The parents' means would be taken into account in fixing the level of any fines for the children's offences and parents would normally be ordered by the courts to pay the fines. We have already received some encouraging responses to the proposals.

Mr. Amess: Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that it is necessary to make irresponsible parents more conscious of their responsibility for the criminal activities of their children? Does he also agree that, as the peak age of offending is 15, it is not good enough for some parents to expect schools to be totally responsible for the discipline of their children out of school hours?

Mr. Waddington: My hon. Friend is right. It is a very sad fact that young people sometimes appear in court with no parent alongside them. The courts ought to have a duty to order parents to attend unless it would obviously be unreasonable so to do. The whole House, I am sure, will agree that in deciding what is an appropriate financial penalty to impose on a young person the court should have power to bear in mind the parents' means.

Mr. Heffer: Would that also apply to Members of this House? Over the years, children of many hon. Members —on both sides, but especially on the Conservative side —have got themselves into drug problems, and so on, through no fault of the parents, Members of Parliament probably being away from home all week? Will a Member of Parliament be held responsible for everything that his children do? I have never heard such a preposterous suggestion?

Mr. Waddington: The hon. Gentleman should look at the specific proposals. If he examines them individually he

will find it very hard indeed to quarrel with them. Obviously there are cases—probably many cases—in which children get into trouble and it is quite impossible to say that the fault lies with the parents, but equally, as I am sure the hon. Gentleman will agree, it is preposterous for parents whose children get into trouble to say that it is nothing to do with them and that they need not even bother to turn up at court.

Mr. Norris: I welcome the accent placed by my right hon. and learned Friend on parental responsibility, but I wonder whether he agrees that there is a place for parental responsibility in relation to community service orders. My right hon. and learned Friend was right to strengthen community service orders and to increase their importance in the treatment of young people who have committed crimes. Might not an obligation be imposed on parents to ensure their children's attendance under the scheme?

Mr. Waddington: I am not sure about the obligation, but there is a very strong case for expecting those responsible for community service orders to make it clear to the parents what is involved and to encourage them to take the very closest interest in the punishment being meted out to their children.

Hull Prison

22. **Mr. Sheerman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what timetable he intends to introduce for the removal of juveniles from Hull B wing.

Mr. Mellor: Some relief may be provided by a new local authority secure unit due to open in Hull in mid-1991, and a new remand centre at Everthorpe will be ready early in 1992. Until these are available, there is no feasible alternative to the use of B wing at Hull prison for juveniles on remand.

Mr. Sheerman: Is the Minister aware that the conditions in which young people are being held in B wing are the most ghastly, for adults or juveniles, in virtually the entire prison system in this country? Is not it about time that a civilised country stopped putting people under 17 into prison at all, whether on remand or to serve sentences? Will the Minister please make it a personal compaign to have Hull B wing closed as soon as possible?

Mr. Mellor: I return to the point that it is a very exceptional course for the courts to remand juveniles in custody. This is done only when the courts are satisfied that there is absolutely no alternative. We are most anxious to improve this aspect, as well as every other aspect, of our prison stock. I am glad to be able to say that, last week, the number of juveniles held in Hull B wing was down to eight. I hope that it will be possible to maintain that low figure, but I repeat that we have had to address serious deficiencies in the prison building stock across the board. It has not been possible to deal with all problems at once, but there will be new remand arrangements and I hope that within the next two or three years these will remove the necessity to use Hull.

Crime Victims

24. **Mr. Martyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will now collect information on prosecutions and convictions in sufficient detail to identify the sex of victims in each police force area in England and Wales.

The Minister of State, Home Office (Mr. John Patten): We have no present plans to do so. The sex of the victims is already known in homicide cases and sexual offences. Domestic violence is a very wide term which can cover a number of different offences. I can announce today that we are preparing new guidance for the police, for issue in the early summer, in which we shall suggest that all domestic violence cases should be recorded in exactly the same way as all other violent offences. It will also emphasise the need for comprehensive local record-keeping so that every officer who attends a domestic violence incident will have up-to-date information about any previous incidents and can thus accordingly remove the victim to safety and deal suitably with the alleged offender, as I am sure the House would want. A crime is a crime whether it is committed in the home or elsewhere.

Mr. Jones: I am grateful for that reply. Unfortunately, the Minister did not quite answer my question, which did not relate to domestic crime. I asked him about violent crime generally. As the fear of crime is greatest among women, should not the figures for crime against women be available both nationally and locally so that there can be a properly targeted response?

Mr. Patten: If the hon. Gentleman reads question No. 24 carefully, he will find that I answered it exactly. It is necessary for the police to collect statistics only when it is necessary for the police to collect them. Otherwise I should prefer the police to be out preventing and detecting crime and protecting women.

Neighbourhood Watch

27. **Mr. Robert G. Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which local authorities still refuse to allow neighbourhood watch signs to be erected on their property.

Mr. John Patten: Although we do not have a comprehensive record of the local authorities concerned, I am sorry to have to report to the House that some local authorities, including Cleveland county council and Stockton, Hartlepool and Langbaurgh district councils, have refused planning permission for the erection of neighbourhood watch signs. Authorities have power to refuse planning permission only for signs on highway land since the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 1987 gave deemed consent for the erection of signs relating to properly approved neigbourhood watch schemes, which were not to be placed on highway land.

Mr. Hughes: Does my right hon. Friend agree that the announcement that he has had to make is a disgrace? When it came to something positive that those local authorities could do to help to fight crime, they did not bother. Is not it notable that all the authorities concerned are run by the Labour party, which seems not to care about crime?

Mr. Patten: My hon. Friend, characteristically, has put his finger right on the matter. I wish only that the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) and his colleagues, including the Leader of the Opposition, who was here to hear my hon. Friend's supplementary question, would write to those Labour-controlled councils and ask them to support neighbourhood watch and not to attack it.

Mr. Tony Banks: Does the Minister agree that the action of four local authorities is hardly justification for such an outburst of synthetic anger from the hon. Member for Harrow, West (Mr. Hughes)? Would not it be better to put more police men on the beat to patrol the streets rather than people having to rely on self-policing because of inadequate police resources?

Mr. Patten: The list that I gave was rather modest. I could have added some London boroughs such as Hackney and Haringey, which are not exactly helpful towards neighbourhood watch schemes. The hon. Gentleman seems to have forgotten that in the past 10 years we have seen nearly 15,000 more policemen on the streets—there are more to come—and another 10,000 civilians supporting the police. If only we could discover the Labour party's policy towards law and order and how much it would cost in this new world of phantom politics, we should be better informed.

Mr. Ian Taylor: Does my right hon. Friend agree that my constituents are fortunate not to live in Socialist boroughs? Is he aware that the boroughs of Elmbridge and Guildford positively welcome neighbourhood watches, as do the Metropolitan and Surrey police? The importance of neighbourhood watches is community concern about crime prevention instead of reliance on the police. The police are grateful for the help that community and neighbourhood watch schemes provide.

Mr. Patten: I congratulate my hon. Friend and, through him, the boroughs that he represents and the Surrey and Metropolitan police on their positive attitude. We now have 81,000 neighbourhood watch schemes, and the number is rising fast. They are strongly supported by the police, by the excellent organisation Crime Concern, and by the Home Office's safer cities unit. Alas, they are not strongly supported by the Labour party.

Crime Victims

29. **Mr. Burns:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps have been taken to support victims of crime and what compensation is available to them.

Mr. John Patten: In this financial year £3·7 million has been granted for local victim support schemes in England and Wales, and the amount will increase in the coming financial year. On 22 February 1990 my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary announced the publication of the new victims' charter. In addition, my right hon. and learned Friend has announced extra staff and expenditure for the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board. Our criminal injuries scheme is more generous and reaches more victims than any other in the western world.

Mr. Burns: Does my right hon. Friend accept that his answer will be warmly welcomed by the many people who have been victims of crime because for far too long there has been a feeling that too much time is spent worrying about trying to justify the cause of the criminal rather than caring for and helping the victims who have suffered? Will he assure the House that any claims for compensation will be dealt with as swiftly as possible so as to minimise the continued suffering of victims of crime?

Mr. Patten: My hon. Friend the Member for Chelmsford (Mr. Burns) has exactly summed up my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary's policy towards crime and punishment. My right hon. and learned Friend wants to put the victim first and the proper punishment of the criminal second, and to make those two things paramount in his policy. We are doing all that we can to ensure that those who deserve proper compensation from the most generous victim compensation scheme in the western world get that compensation as quickly as possible.

PRIME MINISTER

Engagements

Q1. **Mr. Ward:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 22 March 1990.

The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher): This morning I presided at a meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House, I shall have further meetings later today. This evening I shall speak at a dinner of the Royal Society, along with the Prime Ministers of Norway and Sweden, to conclude the international conference on surface water acidification.

Mr. Ward: Is my right hon. Friend aware of the widespread welcome for the Government's determination to encourage saving and, in particular, for the Chancellor's announcement of the big increase in capital which may be held before people are no longer eligible for community charge rebates and housing and other benefits?

The Prime Minister: My hon. Friend makes his own point. This was a vital part of my right hon. Friend the Chancellor's very popular Budget for savers. It is right to recognise the conscientious efforts of people who have saved over the years especially for their retirement, and that is precisely what the Budget does.

Mr. Kinnock: I welcome the fact that the Government have made a positive response to the demands that I and my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) made to the effect that retrospective payments should be given to people in Scotland who were denied poll tax rebates because of their modest savings. May I say, however, that this is ignominious retreat by Her Majesty's Government still deals with only one of the multitude of injustices in Scotland, England and Wales arising out of the poll tax?

Does the Prime Minister not think that it would be proper for the Secretary of State for Scotland and the Chancellor of the Exchequer to come to the House today to make full statements and to be available for questioning by hon. Members in all parts of the House? Is it not clear from the series of events between Tuesday's Budget and today that the poll tax cannot really be mitigated by concessions and that only abolition will do?

The Prime Minister: No. The community charge will be very popular—*[Interruption.]* with people living alone, such as widows and widowers, who for years have paid high rates and who will be far better off paying a fair and reasonable community charge. Those people—often people who have saved all their lives—have been ignored by Opposition Members.

With regard to the announcement made by my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland—[HON. MEMBERS: "When?"] earlier today, he will be considering—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. This is a matter that the House wishes to hear about.

The Prime Minister: He will be considering with colleagues and with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities how a simple and workable scheme—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. The House is anxious to hear the details of what the Prime Minister has to say. She must be given an opportunity to say it.

The Prime Minister: They will consider how a simple and workable scheme of ex gratia payments can be devised. It will be a scheme administered and funded by the Scottish Office from within its existing resources. [HON. MEMBERS: "Ah!"] My right hon. and learned Friend will report the proposals to the House as soon as the details of a Scottish scheme have been fully worked out. I stress that the scheme is an ex gratia one—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. These are important matters.

Hon. Members: What about a statement?

The Prime Minister: I stress that the scheme will be an ex gratia one. No new legal rights to retrospective payments will be created. There could be no new legal rights on a major statement in a Budget going far wider than the community charge, so the arguments that Ministers have made against formal retrospection stand. My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland has said that as soon as the scheme is fully worked out after consultation he will make a full statement to the House.

Mr. Kinnock: In view of what the Prime Minister has just said and the interest on both sides of the House in the arrangements that the Government are making, why could not the Secretary of State for Scotland come to the House today and make a statement? Is it simply that he is afraid to acknowledge plainly the Government's gross incompetence?

The Prime Minister: I note that the right hon. Gentleman thinks that the excellent proposals that we have made in the Budget were gross incompetence. They were in fact very good and very generous and could not possibly have been announced when a Labour Government were in charge of the economy.

With regard to the way in which people in Scotland are treated—*[Interruption.]* Hon. Members want to ask questions, but they do not want to listen to the answers. Government expenditure per head of population is £2,100 in England, £2,400 in Wales and £2,800 in Scotland.

Q2. **Mrs. Maureen Hicks:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 22 March.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mrs. Hicks: When the law makers opposite become law breakers and stick to their campaign to encourage people not to pay the community charge and to break the law, as part of which they have invited leading highly paid pop stars to the Palace of Westminster next Monday, is that not a disgusting and highly irresponsible example to set the young people whom we represent?

The Prime Minister: I agree with my hon. Friend. It is totally and utterly wrong to break the law, and very wrong to encourage by example young people to break the law. I trust that the Leader of the Opposition will disown this latest manifestation of intent to break the law—or does he depend too much on the 30 hon. Members whose action has made it clear that they should not belong to the Labour party?

Mr. Sillars: On the question of competence, is the Prime Minister aware that, of all the Prime Ministers I have seen in the House, none has ever given a more incompetent performance than hers in answering a question from the Leader of the Opposition? Is not it true that the total value of the poll tax rebate concession in 1990 will be £120 million and that, proportionately, Scotland should receive between £10 million and £12 million but as today's so-called concession is worth only about £4 million the Prime Minister is robbing Peter to pay Paul? What has she got against the Scottish people that she must add insult to injury?

The Prime Minister: The figure of £4 million is correct. I have mentioned the generous arrangements per head for Scotland with regard to public expenditure. With regard to the community charge, the aggregate Exchequer grant to Scotland towards local expenditure, plus the business rate, meets 80 per cent. of local authority expenditure. In England the aggregate Exchequer grant, plus business rate, meets only 70 per cent. of local authority expenditure. Scotland is far better off than England with regard to help from the taxpayer for local authority expenditure.

Q3. **Mr. Anthony Coombs:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her offical engagements for Thursday 22 March.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Coombs: Will my right hon. Friend confirm the comment made last week by the director-general of the Confederation of British Industry, who said that not only is manufacturing output in this country at an all-time record level but exports are rising twice as quickly as world trade generally? Our share of world trade is also rising, and we now export more per person even than Japan. Does my right hon. Friend agree with the vast majority of British business men that the one way to put that trend disastrously into reverse would be to adopt the high-taxation, low-incentive and high-spending policies of the Labour party?

The Prime Minister: Yes, I entirely agree with my hon. Friend. I am happy to confirm that last year

manufacturing output reached an all-time record, as did manufacturing investment. This morning's trade figures show that since December our exports rose by 11 per cent. over last year's figure. Our imports are stable, which provides further clear evidence that the deficit is narrowing and that our policies are working. I note that under the last Labour Government manufacturing production actually fell.

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: Will the Prime Minister join me in congratulating my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar), who led the campaign to get justice——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am not certain that that falls within the Prime Minister's responsibilities.

Mr. Griffiths: Will the Prime Minister, as she is responsible—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. Come on, please.

Mr. Griffiths: Will the Prime Minister recognise that many people in England, Wales and Northern Ireland will feel that it is unfair that they have been unable to claim rebates on their rates this year because they have more than £8,000? Will she examine the injustice of that as well?

The Prime Minister: I congratulate my right hon. Friend the Chancellor on the excellent Budget—*[Interruption.]*—on the excellent and generous provision that he made for capital disregards for a wide range of income benefits, and on a very good savers' Budget.

Q4. **Mr. Oppenheim:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 22 March.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Oppenheim: Would my right hon. Friend like to contrast last Tuesday's Budget with certain previous Budgets? Does she recollect that before certain previous Budgets people used to queue to stock up in case prices rose too much? Does she also recollect that in some of those Budgets certain savings were taxed at a rate of 98 per cent., which led the *New Statesman* to assert that the Labour Government were driving the country from affluence into bankruptcy? Does the Prime Minister agree that whatever economic problems we have now are as nothing compared with those bequeathed by the last Labour Government?

The Prime Minister: Yes, I agree with my hon. Friend and with the vigorous way in which he put his question. It is strange to see the Opposition supporting a savers' Budget when their whole policy was to put a savings tax on investment income. It was this Government who took it off.

Mr. Ashdown: In view of this afternoon's humiliating turnaround in which Scotland was again treated as an afterthought, does the Prime Minister realise what a shambles her Government have descended to? She tells us that her Government is about leadership, but are there not now more Cabinet Ministers travelling behind the elephant clearing up the mess than in front telling it where to go?

The Prime Minister: I should have thought that the hon. Gentleman could do better than that. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor has said that from 1 April this year the capital disregard for four income support benefits is to be put up to as high as £16,000. I am surprised that the Liberal-whatever-it's-called party is not grateful for that. The Government whom it supported in office could never have done such a generous thing—their disregards would have been much lower. I remind the hon. Gentleman that the disregards at that time were about £2,000.

Q5. **Mr. Hind:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 22 March.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Lady—*[Interruption.]*—my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago. *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Hind: My right hon. Friend will be aware of the deep, wounding insult to the people of the north-west made by the shadow sports Minister, the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Small Heath (Mr. Howell), in undermining Manchester's bid for the Olympic games. Will she reaffirm that it is the intention of the Government to support Manchester's bid and to do all that they possibly can to ensure that the games come to Manchester?

The Prime Minister: Yes, we wholeheartedly support Manchester's bid for the 1996 Olympics. The city has put together an excellent brochure which shows how well Lancashire and the north-west have done under a Tory Government, and how they have been able to put up such a good bid. I hope that Manchester will be successful.

Several Hon. Members: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: I will take points of order after business questions.

Business of the House

3.33 pm

Dr. John Cunningham (Copeland): First, I express the deep and widespread sorrow of my right hon. and hon. Friends and myself at the sad and untimely death of our colleague and friend, Allan Roberts.

May I ask the Leader of the House to state the business for next week?

The Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons (Sir Geoffrey Howe): I echo the hon. Gentleman's remarks about his late colleague; we wish to be associated with them.

The business for next week will be as follows:

MONDAY 26 MARCH—Conclusion of the Budget statement.

Motions relating to Personal Community Charge (Relief) Regulations. Details will be given in the *Official Report*.

TUESDAY 27 MARCH—Motion for the Easter adjournment.

Proceedings on the Consolidated Fund (No. 2) Bill.

WEDNESDAY 28 MARCH—Progress on remaining stages of the Social Security Bill.

THURSDAY 29 MARCH—Until seven o'clock motions on Community Charge Benefit Regulations. Details will be given in the *Official Report*.

Remaining stages of the Criminal Justice (International Co-operation) Bill *[Lords]*.

The Chairman of Ways and Means has named opposed private business for consideration at seven o'clock.

FRIDAY 30 MARCH—Private Members' Bills.

MONDAY 2 APRIL—Second Reading of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill *[Lords]*.

[Relevant Documents
Monday 26 March:
Personal Community Charge (Relief) (England) Regulations (S.I. 1990, No. 2)
Personal Community Charge (Relief) (England) (Amendment) Regulations (S.I. 1990, No. 402) EDM 664
Personal Community Charge (Relief) (Wales) Regulations (S.I. 1990, No. 288) EDM 774
Thursday 29 March:
Community Charges (Deductions from Income Support) (No. 2) Regulations (S.I. 1990, No. 545) EDM 698
Community Charge Benefit (General) Amendment Regulations
Community Charge Benefits (Permitted Total) Order (S.I. 1990, No. 533) EDM 773
Community Charge Benefits (General) Amendment No. 2 Regulations.]

Dr. Cunningham: What further thoughts has the right hon. and learned Gentleman had about how the House will be able to deal with the proposals in the important though controversial Bill on embryology? Will it, for example, be possible for us to take as a separate issue in a debate on the Floor of the House the proposals for a 14-day limit on experiments on embryos?

Will any matter related to the issue of abortion law also be taken with a vote on the Floor of the House, rather than in Committee upstairs? It is important that all hon. Members, whatever their view of these important and controversial issues, have the opportunity to hear the arguments and to express their views in the Lobby as a Committee of the whole House.

Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman try to find some Opposition supply time before the Easter recess? Like his hon. Friends, Labour Members are anxious to have an opportunity to debate the developing shambles associated with the introduction of the poll tax. It is important that, before those impositions are imposed on our constituents and before the widespread distress that will result, the House has a further opportunity to consider all aspects of the poll tax and its implications.

Continuing with that issue, is not it clear that every time members of the Cabinet try to dodge issues and duck statements in the House, the Government get into even more trouble? Would not it have been much more preferable, and indeed proper, for the Secretary of State for Scotland to make his important announcement in the Chamber of the House rather than in front of the press, which prevented Scottish Members from asking questions of importance to their constituents? Will the Leader of the House arrange as soon as possible for the Secretary of State for Scotland to come to the House and make an oral statement about his intentions so that we may have an opportunity to ask those questions?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The answer to the first point raised by the hon. Gentleman is that the Government are seeking —and I shall certainly be seeking—to manage the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill as best as possible to give the House the opportunity that is wanted on both sides for views to be recorded and made effectively, regardless of any partisan alignments, because it is a matter of that kind.

The hon. Gentleman will remember that, when the Bill was introduced in another place, it had alternative versions of clause 11 before it. When it reaches this House it will have only one version. But I intend so to organise matters that this House will have a choice between comparable alternatives at the appropriate time. I am consulting widely within the House to work out the best way of handling all those matters, and I shall acquaint the House with my proposals as soon as I sensibly can.

I repudiate of course the ridiculous suggestion made by the hon. Gentleman that the Government's handling of the community charge is regarded as a shambles. It is precisely because that is wholly without foundation that we have no fewer than two occasions next week for consideration of further subordinate legislation in connection with it.

The Secretary of State for Scotland has made it plain, and I do so now, as the Prime Minister has already done, that when he is able to bring fully worked-out proposals forward, he will do so by reporting to the House at the earliest opportunity.

Sir Peter Tapsell (East Lindsey): Can my right hon. and learned Friend tell us when the House will have an opportunity to debate the report of the Department of Trade and Industry inspectors on the directors of the House of Fraser?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: My hon. Friend will be aware that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry has sent an additional memorandum about wider aspects of merger policy and company law to the Select Committee on Trade and Industry. He will, in addition, be giving oral evidence to the Committee next week. I do not

think that a debate on the point raised by my hon. Friend would be desirable, at least in advance of the report of that Committee.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): Can we have the statement for which I have now asked on nine separate occasions on wage rates in the Refreshment Department of the House? Is it possible that the reason for the posts that are being advertised not being filled at the moment is that the wages that we are paying are insufficient? Why does the Leader of the House persist in ignoring the requests for a statement on these matters?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I cannot add anything to what I said a couple of weeks ago. The matter was also the subject of a question to the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Mr. Beith), who answers to the House for the House of Commons Commission, which is, as the hon. Gentleman knows from the answer he received, looking at the matter. It is possible that one reason for difficulty in filling vacancies is the very high level of employment under this Government.

Mr. Nicholas Winterton (Macclesfield): My right hon. and learned Friend has announced that next week there will be further consideration on the Floor of the House of the Social Security Bill. Is he able to tell the House today —it would be very helpful if he could do so—whether the Government intend to introduce during the remaining stages any measures on the raising of income support for those who have to find accommodation in private nursing homes and residential homes? Can he also say whether the Government have any intention of altering the taper in respect of those who wish to apply for a rebate, for housing benefit or for other benefits to which they are entitled, particularly in the light of the Government's announcement relating to the raising of the capital disregard?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: My hon. Friend will no doubt make his own opportunity for raising these matters in the course of the debate next week on the Social Security Bill. He will have to await the declaration of the Government's intentions at a later stage.

Mr. Harry Barnes (Derbyshire, North-East): Can we have a discussion on the state of the franchise, whereby the poll tax is clearing people off the electoral register and, on the other hand, votes for expatriates are replacing them by people who are not involved in the procedures of this country or dependent upon its services? If the Government are doing this, why are they doing it so badly, because they are not doing anything to their advantage as far as their own electoral advance is concerned?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I have seldom heard a more confused question. There is no foundation for the suggestion that the community charge is discouraging people from appearing on the electoral role. Any other charges, such as adding to the electoral roll for expatriate citizens, are taking place in accordance with legislation passed by the House.

Mr. Michael Jopling (Westmorland and Lonsdale): In view of the answer that the Prime Minister gave a few moments ago, will the Leader of the House try to arrange a debate in the near future so that we can try to find ways in which England can get a fairer share of the public purse compared with Scotland?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I cannot think of a more appropriate opportunity than the Budget debate for raising such far-ranging questions.

Mr. Alfred Morris (Manchester, Wythenshawe): While we await the Government's response to their defeat last week over inadequate provision for frail and often confused old people in residential care, can we at least have an assurance in an urgent ministerial statement that there will be no evictions of elderly people who can no longer afford their fees?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The right hon. Gentleman will appreciate that there will be opportunities in the further debates on that Bill and on the Social Security Bill for raising such questions. I will, of course, bring his point to the attention of my right hon. Friend.

Sir William Clark (Croydon, South): Following the question of my hon. Friend the Minister for East Lindsey (Sir P. Tapsell), may I ask my right hon. and learned Friend to reconsider his position on the report on the House of Fraser? While one accepts the fact that a report will go to a Select Committee, this will mean further delay; it will also mean that in the meantime the House of Fraser, through Harrods, is continuing to run a bank. In view of the report, should not that bank licence be revoked immediately, and may we have a debate on the matter?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: My hon. Friend's point is more appropriate for my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer than for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry. As for the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, there is still some substance in the case that the matter should await his giving evidence on all these matters to the Select Committee.

Mr. David Alton (Liverpool, Mossley Hill): When the Leader of the House studies the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill, will he consider the implications of the case in the Liverpool court yesterday? A drunken driver mowed down a pregnant women on a pedestrian crossing and her eight-month-old baby was killed. Is the Leader of the House aware that the judge in the case said that this unborn child had no rights in law and that the drunken driver was charged merely with reckless driving, fined £1 and sent to prison for a mere three months? Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman agree that the safeguards for the unborn child are wholly inadequate and that this appalling state of affairs needs to be rectified?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I share the hon. Gentleman's distress about the facts of that case. The law appears to be as stated in the commentary on that case, but, clearly, it is a matter which I can bring to the attention of my right hon. and noble Friend the Lord Chancellor, and I shall do that.

Mr. Donald Thompson (Calder Valley): Will my right hon. and learned Friend listen carefully to the Opposition's pleas for a debate on the community charge so that we can expose the deliberate and cynical manipulation of the introduction of the community charge by Labour councils and councillors to the disadvantage of old and poor people for short-term electoral gain?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: My hon. Friend makes his point well. He will have an opportunity of doing so yet again in two debates next week.

Mr. Michael Foot (Blaenau Gwent): I apologise to the right hon. and learned Gentleman in advance if I misheard him. When will the Secretary of State for Scotland make a statement to the House? Did the Leader of the House tell us when it would happen and was it with his agreement that, instead, the Secretary of State for Scotland made a statement to the press this afternoon? Did the right hon. and learned Gentleman agree to that procedure?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: As my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has already made plain, my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland will make a statement to the House—[HON. MEMBERS: "When?"] When the details of the proposals have been sufficiently worked out, in a couple of weeks.

Mr. Richard Tracey (Surbiton): In the light of the less than adequate support for the police and neighbourhood watch exhibited by Labour Members in Home Office Question Time today, will my right hon. and learned Friend arrange for an early debate on police matters and neighbourhood watch so that the full-hearted support of Conservative Members for neighbourhood watch can be exhibited to the country?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I sympathise with my hon. Friend's point. I have been seeking an opportunity for some time for a debate on the Government's proposals for criminal justice. I will bear my hon. Friend's point in mind as well.

Mr. John McFall (Dumbarton): The Leader of the House may be aware of the contents of an internal memorandum from the commodore of the Clyde submarine base, which has come to my attention. It says that all 7,000 workers at the base can sign a petition organised by the local Conservative association regarding planning permission for the peace camp outwith that base. That introduces an element of partiality which has never existed before with the forces. Further information has come to me that a local Conservative councillor has had a meeting with the senior naval person at the base. Will the Leader of the House assure me that impartiality will be maintained in future and that he will have discussions with the Secretary of State for Defence to ensure that such a disgraceful situation will never occur again?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: My understanding of the present position is that the guidance issued by the naval authorities, following inquiries made by individual personnel, stressed that under Queen's regulations, service personnel have no right to engage in party politics. The question of planning permission was seen as a local issue, so the workers could, as private citizens and community chargepayers, sign a petition opposing planning permission for the Faslane peace camp if they wished.

Mr. Charles Wardle (Bexhill and Battle): When my right hon. and learned Friend considers the future business of the House, will he consider lending Government support to the proposal that each of the private Members' motions drawn in the ballot be time-limited so that each one gets at least one and a half hours' debate? Is he aware that I have the third motion on tomorrow's Order Paper which would provide the House with an ideal opportunity to consider, inter alia, the DTI inspectors' report into the House of Fraser affair?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I can well understand my hon. Friend's urgent interest in that particular radical proposal for reform. However, I am afraid that I cannot promise to do anything to remedy the position before tomorrow.

Mr. Jack Ashley (Stoke-on-Trent, South): Is the Leader of the House aware that 4,500 severely disabled people rely very much on the independent living fund to cover the costs of disability and to keep some of them out of institutions? However, that fund is drying up this year and there are reports that the Treasury wants to end it. Is not that a matter of great concern and worthy of debate next week?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I am not familiar with the reports to which the right hon. Gentleman has referred. However, I will bring his point to the attention of my right hon. Friends the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State for Social Security.

Mr. John Carlisle (Luton, North): My right hon. and learned Friend will be well aware that we have not had a debate on sport in Government time for many years. Before we rise for the Easter recess, may we have an opportunity in particular to debate Manchester's bid for Olympic games and the disgraceful comments made by the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Small Heath (Mr. Howell) who tried to rubbish the bid? Would not such a debate give Labour Members an opportunity to say whether they support the right hon. Member for Small Heath and, like him, are betraying the interests of British sport in that matter?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: My hon. Friend has taken that opportunity to make his important point. He will have another opportunity to develop the point in the debate on the Easter Adjournment on Tuesday and perhaps in the Consolidated Fund debate.

Mr. Ron Brown (Edinburgh, Leith): As the Government are apparently committed to market forces, is it not a little strange that the Scottish Development Agency—a Government quango in Scotland—should reach a secret deal with Barratts, the building company, to develop a large area in my constituency—West Pilton circus—with a subsidy estimated at £300,000 or perhaps more? Obviously that deal remains secret because Ministers refuse to divulge information. Is that part of the kick-back system and part of a bribe to the Government's friends elsewhere? Frankly, that is morally wrong. Many residents are suffering because Barratts is abusing planning permission in that area in my constituency. Can we have a debate early next week to discuss the role of Barratts, the Government and the SDA?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: If the hon. Gentleman can make an intervention as long as that about a deal that is secret, I tremble to think how long he could speak on a deal that was not secret. He can pursue that matter more fully in Scottish questions.

Mr. Bob Dunn (Dartford): Has my right hon. and learned Friend had an opportunity to see early-day motion 360 which relates to the economic policies of the Labour party?

[That this House, whilst accepting the reluctance of the Leader of the Opposition to make his policies known, wishes to know what the standard rate of income tax would be under Labour.]

Will my right hon. and learned Friend give an undertaking that an opportunity will be found between now and Easter to debate the Labour party's policies—inasmuch as we know them—which we believe the Opposition have a duty to make clear and be frank about, instead of trying to mislead the electorate by saying nothing and doing nothing—or, as they say in Lancashire, saying nowt and doing nowt?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I sympathise with my hon. Friend's wish to expose the high-tax policies that are characteristic of the Labour party and I hope that he will take every opportunity to do that, including any opportunity that may occur to him during the Budget debate.

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): Now that the Leader of the House has been permanently grounded in London, has he noticed, like the rest of us, just how bad the situation is in our capital city? Is he also aware that the Henley Centre for Forecasting has stated that the great majority of Londoners are concerned about rising crime, transport chaos and homelessness? May we please have a general debate about London? The Leader of the House has been asked about that before, and he said that he would consider the matter.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The hon. Gentleman will have to find his own opportunities to raise that matter in debates. I think that I am right in saying that there is likely to be a debate tomorrow on transport in London. That will be at least one opportunity.

Mr. Ivor Stanbrook (Orpington): May we have a statement next week on whether the Prime Minister will see Nelson Mandela on his forthcoming visit to Britain to give her a chance to encourage him in his present statesmanlike approach to constitutional reform in South Africa?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I cannot promise a statement on that. My hon. Friend will have an opportunity to ask my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister about it if he is lucky enough to catch your eye, Mr. Speaker. There was some opportunity to do what my hon. Friend suggests in the brief meeting yesterday between Mr. Mandela and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs.

Rev. Martin Smyth (Belfast, South): The right hon. and learned Gentleman will be aware that the Government have not yet extended the inestimable boon of the community charge to Northern Ireland. Could we have a Minister from the Northern Ireland Office present in the House next week to make it clear whether ratepayers on small incomes will have the benefit of the raised limit on savings to entitle them to a rate rebate?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I shall bring the hon. Gentleman's point to the attention of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

Mr. David Sumberg (Bury, South): May I support the plea made to my right hon. and learned Friend for a debate next week on sport to give us all a chance, particularly hon. Members for the north-west, to express or condemnation of the disgraceful statement of the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Small Heath (Mr. Howell)? Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that many people in the north-west, from both sides of politics, have put time and effort into bringing the Olympic games to Manchester and do not want it scuppered by Labour politicians?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I have a great deal of sympathy with my hon. Friend's point, particularly as I represented a seat in the north-west of England for some time. I shall take every opportunity to underline the points that he made.

Mr. Doug Hoyle (Warrington, North): Will the Leader of the House not hide behind the fact that the Select Committee will question the Secretary of State in the inquiry into the House of Fraser? May I express the view of the whole Committee by asking the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry to take part in a debate in the House as early as possible? The answers must be given by the Secretary of State to the whole House, not just to a Committee.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I shall bring that point to the attention of my right hon. Friend. No doubt the Committee will have an opportunity to do so when he gives evidence to the next meeting.

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): Does the Leader of the House recall that, at the Madrid summit last year, a commitment was made to European monetary union? Is he aware that the EC Commission has now reported to the Council of Ministers on that subject, that that report is distinct from the Delors report last year and that it will be considered by the Council of Ministers shortly when it meets in Ireland? Can he assure the House that the reports will be published and will be considered by the Select Committee on European Legislation so that the Committee can report to the House and make a recommendation on whether it should be debated?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: As the hon. Gentleman will know better than most of us, during the consideration of such a massive topic, many papers are produced and no doubt will be produced by different agencies of the Community for consideration by various council meetings and others. Some of them qualify for consideration by a Committee of the House and others do not. I shall find out whether the document to which the hon. Gentleman referred falls into that category.

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): May we have a debate on water charges? Is the Leader of the House aware that Yorkshire Water plc, as it now is, proposes to increase the connection charge for domestic premises from £37 to over £500? That follows a 33 per cent. increase in standing charges. The textile industry in Bradford and elsewhere in Yorkshire is worried about the increase in water charges because, as the Leader of the House is no doubt keenly aware, that industry depends heavily on a supply of water. The increase in water charges is a potential threat to jobs at a time of high interest rates and the poor economic conditions created by the Government. May we have a debate to go into the matter in some detail?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The hon. Gentleman knows that there are many aspects to such a question. For example, the House is as concerned about environmental matters as about employment. A great deal of the rise in charges payable to water authorities is a result of the rise in standards of environmental care. We always have to try to strike the right balance between them.

Mr. Andrew Faulds (Warley, East): The right hon. and learned Gentleman seemed unusually unknowing a couple of weeks ago when I asked him a question about the problems of marine archaeology. Has he now had time to do his homework? Does he realise that the Joint Nautical Archaeology Policy Committee issued recommendations some time ago, which still await legislative action? When are the Government likely to proceed with those matters, which are important to heritage concerns?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: As a result of the hon. Gentleman's assiduity, I am now aware of those matters, but I am not yet in a position to promise them an early place in the legislative programme.

Mr. Robert Litherland (Manchester, Central): May I draw the attention of the Leader of the House to early-day motion 660, which refers to the lack of funding and education about the virulent disease hepatitis B?

[That this House expresses deep concern at the lack of funding and inadequate information relating to the hepatitis viruses; urges Her Majesty's Government to make provision for the necessary education campaign targeted at high risk groups, giving an assurance that vaccination will be made readily available to particularly vulnerable groups and including hepatitis B in the screening that is currently in progress on the incidence of AIDS and HIV; and congratulates the Russell Harty (Jimmy's) Hepatitis and Liver Research Fund in drawing public awareness to this highly infectious disease.]

I am astounded that hon. Members have such little knowledge about that disease, which kills more people in one day than AIDS kills in one year. Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman confer with his right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Health so that hepatitis B can be included in the AIDS programme? May we have a debate or a statement soon, please?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Health recognises the seriousness of hepatitis viruses. I understand that the incidence of hepatitis B has been declining in recent years, but even so I shall bring the hon. Gentleman's point to the attention of my right hon. and learned Friend, not least because I understand that a new edition of the relevant handbook on these matters is under preparation by the Health Education Authority.

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North): Will the Leader of the House confirm that next Tuesday the Secretary of State for Transport will make a statement about the assessment studies in London? Will he allow the House to have a full debate on those studies, when, I hope, the Secretary of State will announce that he will abandon all the road-building schemes and instead put money into public transport? Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman ensure that that debate is linked to the concerns that have been raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) about the growing worries about the deteriorating quality of life in London?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I know that my right hon. Friend is hoping to make a further statement about those matters before long. The hon. Gentleman will no doubt have the opportunity of raising his points when the statement is made.

Mr. Greville Janner (Leicester, West): May we please have a debate about the tragedy in which three children were killed when they were playing inside a fridge-freezer, the lid of which closed over them? Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman also bear in mind the need for regulations that would require local authorities to collect such fridge-freezers and to dispose of them safely? I ask that because of the extraordinary refusal of the Hinckley and Bosworth district council in Leicestershire to carry out such a collection, which has scandalised all the people of that county, irrespective of their political allegiance.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I cannot comment on what the hon. and learned Gentleman alleges to be the position of the council that is in proximity to his constituency. However, I can endorse his general anxiety about such accidents and shall bring his point to the attention of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment.

Mr. Tom Pendry (Stalybridge and Hyde): May I echo the calls for a debate in the House on sport, during which my right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Small Heath (Mr. Howell) will be able to say that he endorses Manchester's bid for the Olympics, which he has always endorsed, and during which he and other Opposition Members will be able to highlight the problems that sportsmen and women in this country experience as a result of the Government's policies towards sport?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: A number of reasons seem to be developing about why the House wants a debate on sport. I am glad to have that expression of unanimity in support of Manchester.

Mr. George Foulkes (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: I call Mr. Madden.

Mr. Foulkes: I was born in England.

Mr. Max Madden (Bradford, West): Is the Leader of the House aware of the allegations that three Chairmen of Select Committees hold financial interests that bear directly on the work of their Select Committees? Is he also aware that the Select Committee on Members' Interests will find great difficulty in bringing recommendations to the House before the summer recess because of its backlog of work? Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman have discussions with the Chairman of that Select Committee to see whether there is any way in which the Committee can bring recommendations to the House to dispel public disquiet about that matter?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: As the hon. Gentleman knows, there are procedures to deal with any individual allegation, and I encourage him to follow those if he wishes to pursue the matter. On the wider questions, the Chairman of the Select Committee on Members' Interests and his colleagues are considering the several matters before them in the way most likely to bring a conclusion before the House. I was in touch with the Chairman recently and I know that he is seeking to do his best.

Ms. Marjorie Mowlam (Redcar): Will the Leader of the House please stop dodging and weaving on the question of a debate on the House of Fraser? During business questions last week he said that he would give the matter serious consideration. The Chair of the Select Committee on Trade and Industry, behind which the right hon. and

learned Gentleman is hiding, said last Thursday that he did not think that consideration of the matter by his Committee prevented debate in the House.

Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman assure us that once the matter has been referred to that Committee next week, he will confirm during business questions next Thursday, and certainly before we break for the Easter Recess, that he has finally made a decision?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The hon. Lady is energetic in pressing that cause upon me, and she is not alone in doing so. The matter, together with all the evidence from my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, will be fully considered by the Select Committee. It would be sensible to wait for that before reaching a conclusion.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. George Foulkes: My mother was born in England.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Scots have been very patient —*[Interruption.]* There is an adage about the first coming last and the last coming first, and that happens from week to week, but this time I call Mr. Foulkes.

Mr. Foulkes: Good evening, Mr. Speaker.

Does the Leader of the House agree with so many Opposition Members that it is an insult to the House for the Secretary of State for Scotland to make a detailed statement to the press at 2.30 pm instead of coming to the House to make a statement at 3.30 pm? Is the right hon. and learned Gentleman aware that, in his earlier replies, he misunderstood—perhaps deliberately—what we were saying? We want a statement, but we do not want only to ask questions about a detailed statement after the scheme has been worked out; we want to ask questions about what the Secretary of State said today.

Why is the £4 million coming from the already overstretched Scottish Office budget? Which parts of the budget will have to be cut because of that? Will the Secretary of State come to the Dispatch Box at the first possible opportunity to do what he is paid to do, which is to answer to this House?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: As I have already said, my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State will fully report his proposals to the House at the earliest opportunity after the details have been worked out.

Mr. Dick Douglas (Dunfermline, West): Perhaps the Leader of the House could help us because of his previous experience as Chancellor of the Exchequer. Are we to understand that the statements about capital offsets were made in Cabinet and accepted by the whole of the Cabinet, and that it was not until the Secretary of State for Scotland threatened to resign and the hon. Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) expressed his displeasure that a rapid turnabout occurred?

Will the Leader of the House assure us that the person who comes to the Dispatch Box before Scottish questions next Wednesday will be the right hon. and learned Member for Edinburgh, Pentlands (Mr. Rifkind) and not the hon. Member for Southend, East or the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth)?

Above all, I invite all those who wish to pursue the campaign against the poll tax in Scotland to attend a rally in Glasgow on 31 March, when we intend to show our total opposition, not manufactured opposition, to the poll tax.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: Despite my passion to help the hon. Gentleman and despite his newly independent status, I am not prepared to divulge what took place in Cabinet. I assure him that all his allegations stand on imagined foundations.

Mr. Malcolm Bruce (Gordon): Does the Leader of the House accept that the Secretary of State for Scotland has effectively been cut adrift by the rest of the Cabinet over this issue? In those circumstances, his future is at stake, and his inability to come to the House and tell us what a packed press conference heard is not only unacceptable but further undermines his already weakened position. Is not it a fact that the £4 million that he has put aside has come from his Scottish Office budget, which shows that the rest of the Cabinet have washed their hands of him?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: There is no basis for reaching such a conclusion. As one would expect, my right hon. and learned Friend has discussed the matter with his colleagues, including my right hon. Friends the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The Prime Minister has already answered questions about it in the House, as have I. The position will be explained to the House in due course by my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State.

Mr. Thomas McAvoy (Glasgow, Rutherglen): I am tempted to say, "Good morning." As you have repeatedly said, Mr. Speaker, this is a United Kingdom Parliament. Bearing in mind the fact that, particularly since 1987, the Government's decisions have been vindictive and unfair to Scotland, will the Leader of the House undertake to have a debate in the House next week to consider the record of this Conservative and Unionist Government on damaging the Union?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: Speaking as a Welshman for another national component of the United Kingdom, I find the sensitivity of the Scots on this matter difficult to understand. The Government seek to govern the United Kingdom, and do so effectively; Parliament seeks to represent the United Kingdom, and does so effectively. We shall continue to do so.

Mr. Andrew Welsh (Angus, East): When I previously asked the Leader of the House what should be done when important Scottish business was put through the House so that it minimised parliamentary scrutiny, he expressed some concern, yet once again he has allowed that to happen. It is insulting enough for Scotland to be treated as an afterthought, but worse still when parts of the Scottish Office budget are to be transferred and services endangered without the Secretary of State for Scotland being here in any shape, form or presence to answer for his actions. If his statement was made today, surely his response should also be made today.

What can be done about a Prime Minister who deliberately misleads the House——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman must withdraw that remark. No Minister, or even hon. Member, misleads the House.

Mr. Welsh: I was only asking whether anything could be done, because clearly——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman may have done so, but I am asking him to rephrase his question.

Mr. Welsh: I shall certainly do so. What can be done about a Prime Minister who, perhaps accidentally, misleads the House? When she says that the poll tax will be popular, not only does she mislead the House, but she totally deludes herself.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has expressed her opinion on the matter clearly, and it is one which we share. I hope that the House will also come to share it.

Dr. Norman A. Godman (Greenock and Port Glasgow): I offer the right hon. and learned Gentleman no apologies for staying with the issue of the implementation of poll tax concessions to people in Scotland. If the matter, as it relates to England and Wales, was important enough to be outlined in detail by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on Tuesday, why have we heard only a statement of sorts today by the Prime Minister and the Leader of the House concerning the Scottish poll tax payers? The issue is above party politics; an increasing proportion of our surgery workload each week is concerned with dealing with distressed, elderly constituents who simply cannot find the means to make their poll tax payments, be they weekly or whatever. A statement should be made from the Dispatch Box. Has the Leader of the House received any information in the past few minutes about whether such a statement is to be made by the Secretary of State for Scotland on Monday or Tuesday of next week?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: It is because of the need for clarity about such matters, as the hon. Gentleman said, that I have said that my right hon. and learned Friend will make a statement to the House when the details have been fully worked out and can be understood.

Mr. William McKelvey (Kilmarnock and Loudoun): Does not the Leader of the House, with hindsight, confess that, had he given serious consideration to the setting up of a Select Committee on Scottish Affairs, the great disorder, the shambles, that is now apparent in the Scottish Office might not have occurred?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: There is no such shambles in the Scottish Office; nor does the hon. Gentleman's argument add to those that have already been made about the possibility of setting up a Select Committee.

Mr. John Home Robertson (East Lothian): Why is the Secretary of State for Scotland being kept under wraps today? Does this latest victim of the pampering of the Scots by the Prime Minister have one black eye or two? As this must be just about the only example of a Secretary of State, on a Thursday, handing out from his overstretched budget £4 million in settlement of a claim that on the Wednesday he dismissed as bogus, may we now have a proper explanation?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland, and the Government as a whole, have responded sensibly, within the budgetary framework, to the case that has been canvassed in this House. The House will be told about it in due course by my right hon. and learned Friend.

Mr. Alex Salmond (Banff and Buchan): I am aware, Mr. Speaker, that one day the last will be first.

Is the Leader of the House really saying that a Lobby briefing was given today on a scheme that had not been fully worked out, a scheme that the Chief Secretary to the Treasury had said was impossible? Is not the real reason for the lack of a statement by the Secretary of State for Scotland the fact that such a statement would quickly expose the hollow sham of recycling money in the Scottish Office budget, by comparison with the provision of the new money that was announced by the Chancellor on Tuesday? Does the Leader of the House not understand the wish of Scottish Members to question the Secretary of State for Scotland? The only reason that we can think of for his remaining in office is the identity of his possible successor.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The hon. Gentleman is again allowing his fancy to run riot. The fact is that the proposals that my right hon. and learned Friend has disclosed will be presented to the House in due time. [HON. MEMBERS: "When?"] When the details have been fully worked out.

Motion for Adjournment

4.16 pm

Mr. Speaker: I have a short statement to make about arrangements for the debate on the motion for the Adjournment which will follow the passing of the Consolidated Fund (No. 2) Bill on Tuesday 27 March. Members should submit their subjects to my office not later than 9 am on Monday 26 March. A list showing the subjects and the times will be published later that day. Normally the time allotted will not exceed one and a half hours, but I propose to exercise discretion to allow one or two debates to continue for rather longer—up to a maximum of three hours. Where identical or similar subjects have been entered by different Members whose names are drawn in the ballot, only the first name will be shown on the list. As some debates may not last the full time allotted to them, it is the responsibility of Members to keep in touch with developments if they are not to miss their turn.

Mr. George Foulkes (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: If I divine what it is about, I am not sure that I can answer it.

Mr. Foulkes: I am sure that you will do your best, Sir. You will have heard the genuine anger from the Leader of the Labour Party, from the shadow Leader of the House, and from spokesmen of all other Opposition parties, about the fact that the Secretary of State for Scotland has not made a statement to the House but, instead, has made a statement to the press. Will you, Mr. Speaker, raise again the question of the Government's ignoring the convention that statements should be made to the House and, instead, briefing the press? Perhaps you, with all your authority, can do something about it.

May I ask you, Sir, also to use your good offices to ensure that, if we cannot have a statement, the Secretary of State for Scotland might be allowed to speak from the Dispatch Box in the Budget debate to explain why he has made this amazing U-turn? As my hon. Friend the Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson) has said, the Secretary of State has today acceded to a claim that yesterday he described as bogus. Can you use your influence to have the Secretary of State brought to the Dispatch Box? He is not usually reluctant to come to the Dispatch Box; indeed, he is normally very enthusiastic. Can you ensure that that enthusiasm is channelled?

Mr. Speaker: Who speaks from the Dispatch Box is not a matter for me. As to the press being briefed before hon. Members are briefed in the House, the whole House knows my strong feelings.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing (Moray): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. I emphasise that this is the third occasion on which the Secretary of State for Scotland has shown gross discourtesy to hon. Members and, through them, to their constituents. After all, it is our constituents whom we are elected to represent. Particular issues are the future of lowland airports, the distribution of fishing quotas—a vital matter in Scotland—and now cash limits under the community charge regulations. It seems that this discourtesy is becoming a matter of policy that is exercised by the Scottish Office.

These back-door announcements cannot be tolerated by Members, who are democratically elected to look after their constituents' interests. I ask you, Mr. Speaker, as the protector of Back-Bench Members, to raise the matter directly with the Leader of the House, the Secretary of State for Scotland and the Prime Minister, who was obviously finding great difficulty in responding to questions on the issue this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Lady knows that that is not a matter for me. Undoubtedly her remarks will have been heard by the Leader of the House. I remind the hon. Lady that there will be opportunities to raise the matter during the Easter Adjournment debate and during Scottish questions on Wednesday.

Orders of the Day

WAYS AND MEANS

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on Question [20 March].

AMENDMENT OF THE LAW

Motion made, and Question proposed,

That it is expedient to amend the law with respect to the National Debt and the public revenue and to make further provision in connection with finance; but this Resolution does not extend to the making of any amendment with respect to value added tax so as to provide—

(a) for zero-rating or exempting any supply;
(b) for refunding any amount of tax;
(c) for varying the rate of that tax otherwise than in relation to all supplies and importations; or
(d) for relief other than relief applying to goods of whatever description or services of whatever description.—*[Mr. Major.]*

Question again proposed.

Budget Resolutions and Economic Situation

[Relevant documents: European Community Document No. 9487/89 on the Annual Economic Report 1989-90 and the un-numbered Explanatory Memorandum submitted by HM Treasury on 31st January 1990 on the final version of the Report as adopted by the Council.]

Mr. Speaker: Before I call the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, I tell the House that many right hon. and hon. Members wish to participate in the debate, but not enough to impose a 10-minute limit on speeches. If right hon. and hon. Members confine their speeches to about 15 minutes each, all those who wish to contribute to the debate will be able to do so.

4.24 pm

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Mr. Nicholas Ridley) *rose*——

Mr. Dick Douglas (Dunfermline, West): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I wish to take up a remark that you made about the opportunities to raise a matter that concerns many Scottish Members. You referred to Scottish questions next week. Will you try to use your good offices to ensure that we have a statement at least by Wednesday? I appreciate that there are many Scottish questions tabled for that day.

Mr. Speaker: That point has been made on numerous occasions by Opposition Members. I am sure that it has been heard by the Leader of the House, who has been present throughout.

Mr. Ridley: We come to the trade and industry part of the debate on the Budget. I shall argue that, through the sound policies of this Government, we live in a very different world from that which we knew 10 years ago. That is too easily forgotten. The Budget, which I strongly commend to the House, will sustain and build on those achievements. It will allow industry and commerce to redouble their growing contribution as engines of growth. All this is in marked contrast with the empty words mouthed by the Labour party. I will press them again and again—and doubtless in vain—to put some flesh on the skeletons that they keep digging out of the cupboards of the 1960s and 1970s when they had responsibility for these matters.

I commend the Budget for three reasons—first, because it is the right Budget to squeeze inflation out of the system, secondly, because it makes valuable changes in relation to the taxation of savings, charitable giving, workplace nurseries and other areas, and thirdly because I believe that it will be good for British business in all its manifestations. I intend to concentrate on the third of those areas.

When Opposition Members talk of business they think of large manufacturing industry, no doubt because their paymasters are manufacturing industry trade unions. In fact, there is a wealth of activities, including small businesses, services such as retail, consultancy and financial services, and many others, as well as manufacturing. It is the success of all sectors which matters for our standard of living.

In the past decade, thanks to the combined success of all these sectors, our standard of living has increased very substantially. I know that the mortgage rate, and the consequences of a spending spree by Labour local authorities are causing deep concern, and some hardship. But the take-home pay of a married man, with two children, on average earnings, has increased by more than a third in real terms since the Government took office. We should look at current difficulties against that background. Most people in this country are considerably better off now than they were in 1979-80.

In relative terms, too, our standard of living has improved. Let us look at "Purchasing power parities", as published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. These make international comparisons of what our incomes will buy in different countries. During the 1970s Britain slipped back, and by 1980 we came eighth of the 12 EC countries. By 1988, we had moved up to fifth. We had overtaken Italy, the Netherlands and Belgium and had moved to within 5 per cent. of Germany and within 1 per cent. of France. Only Japan, of all the 24 OECD countries, has moved up the league table faster. What was the sick man of Europe is now doing very well.

Figures of economic growth in member countries also show that gross domestic product in the United Kingdom grew at an average annual rate of 3·2 per cent. between 1981 and 1989. The figure for Germany was 2·2 per cent. and for France 2·1 per cent. Here is further proof of the resilience of the British economy under this Government.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): If we are doing so well, where has the surplus on invisibles gone? Why has it evaporated?

Mr. Ridley: I am glad that the hon. Member for Workington, (Mr. Campbell-Savours) acknowledges that we are doing so well, and I agree with him. I will give him the answer, if I may, later in my speech. I am coming to the very point that he has raised, but I would rather put it in the right context.

All this is a far cry from the days of the last Labour Government when, with very high levels of unemployment and inflation and appalling standards of living, all the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, the right hon. Member for Leeds, East (Mr. Healey)—who, I am sorry to see, is not in his place—could say—*[Interruption.]*—I quote him

because I am sure that Opposition Members would like to hear what their last Chancellor said, so perhaps they would be quiet and listen—was:

"of course there has been a fall in people's standard of life. And it has fallen this year and will fall again next year."

That is the truth. Labour Chancellors promise misery; Conservative Chancellors have brought economic success.

In examining the current state of business in Britain, I want to look at the various sectors I mentioned earlier. First, small businesses: in 1988 a total of 1,200 small businesses a week came into existence—that is a net figure, after allowing for firms going out of business. The corresponding figure in 1980 was 300 a week. Much of the credit for this belongs to the Government. Reductions in personal and corporate tax and succesive programmes of deregulation have produced in Britain one of the best climates in the world for the birth and early growth of new businesses. My right hon. Friend's Budget continues the good work in several ways.

The increase in the profit limit for the small companies' rate of corporation tax and in the upper limit above which companies will pay the full rate will release £40 million in a full year which small businesses can use for investment. The measure will benefit 20,000 small companies, and it will mean that only companies with profits of more than £1 million will pay the full 35 per cent. rate of corporation tax. The House will recall that, when we took office, a company that made profits of more than £100,000 faced a swingeing 52 per cent. rate of corporation tax. We now have what is probably the most advantageous tax regime for small and medium enterprises of all our competitors.

The changes in value added tax that my right hon. Friend announced will also reduce both the financial impact of this tax and its administrative burden. The new system for bad debt relief will benefit business to the tune of £150 million a year, as well as ending what has become widely seen as an injustice, and the simpler rule for VAT registation by new and growing businesses will bring a useful additional relief, as well as removing a worrying risk of an unwitting breach of the regulations.

In Britain, as in other industrial countries, services account for a growing proportion of the economy. The service sector of the economy has grown by a third since 1981; employment in the service sector has increased by nearly 2·5 million people in the last six years, and services are a major contributor to the balance of trade. Last year, we earned a surplus of more than £4 billion on services. Many of the measures that we are fighting for in the single market negotiations are aimed at making a reality of competition in the supply of services in the community. The opportunities for competitive British suppliers, and the rewards, may well be greater than in manufacturing.

Nowhere is international competition sharper than in the financial services sector, which alone contributed more than £7 billion a year to the balance of trade in 1988. Deregulation, and modern information technology, have revolutionised both the structure of this sector and its operations in a few short years. It is essential for the tax regime to keep pace with these developments.

Stamp duty on share transactions accounts for a quarter of the cost of a modest transaction by a private investor, and for no less than three quarters of the cost of the largest transactions. Other financial centres in Europe are moving quickly to eliminate comparable taxes, and I congratulate my right hon. Friend the Chancellor on doing the same; it is essential if we are not to put at risk the leading position that the City has attained over the years. Together with the introduction of TAURUS, that will enable us to keep London the prime financial centre of Europe. I know that the Labour party hates the City, but we all benefit from its success, including the Opposition.

Mr. Ian Taylor (Esher): My right hon. Friend makes an important point about safeguarding and encouraging the City of London's international position, but does he agree that the abolition of that stamp duty will also help to widen share ownership?

Mr. Ridley: I agree: in a year when the Chancellor did not have much to release from his Budget, that was a wise thing for him to do for our future prosperity and it will help greatly to widen share ownership.

Manufacturing, too, to the disappointment of the Opposition, is a success story. Manufacturing output was up again by 5 per cent. in 1989 to its highest level ever —32 per cent. higher than in 1981 and 7 per cent. above the previous all-time peak in 1974.

Manufacturing investment was up by 5 per cent. in 1989, following a 12 per cent. increase in 1988. Since 1983, the average annual rate of growth in manufacturing investment has been no less than 8 per cent.

Manufacturing profits, too, are at their highest level for almost 20 years. Perhaps most remarkable of all, after our appalling performance of the 1970s, manufacturing productivity has risen by some 60 per cent. since 1980.

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): The obvious question to ask the Secretary of State is why, in view of what he is now claiming to be yet another economic miracle, we had a £21 billion deficit in manufactured goods last year. Why do we keep being told that all the imports are going into capital investment in industry? What are they equipping themselves with—Japanese hi-fi? We do not see any return in terms of the balance of payments on manufactured goods.

Mr. Ridley: The hon. Gentleman simply has not understood or listened to what I was saying. This is the best industrial performance that we have seen in his lifetime, and probably for much longer than that. Why do the Opposition continue to denigrate it, knock it and pick holes in it?

Mr. Tony Banks: A £21 billion deficit is not a hole, it is a chasm.

Mr. Ridley: Many countries would give their eye teeth to be able to quote those figures. But, as I have said before, there is more to do.

Mr. Hugh Dykes (Harrow, East): My right hon. Friend makes a powerful point on behalf of the strength of British industry and our commercial resilience in the face of spurious attacks from the Opposition. Does he agree that that strength now gives us the opportunity to join the exchange rate mechanism without any further delay?

Mr. Ridley: My right hon. Friend the Chancellor dealt with that in his Budget speech. I have nothing to add to, or subtract from, what he said.

As I said, there is more to do. In particular, we need better education, better management education, and better skills training. We recognise that, and we have a clear policy.

[Mr. Ridley]

Training is primarily the responsibility of employers. Private sector spending on training is running at £18 billion a year. The number of employees receiving training rose by 70 per cent. in the five years to 1989. So business is rising to the challenge. The Government for their part are spending £2·5 billion a year on training, and here too, it is right that business should have a large say in the determination of priorities. That is why the training and enterprise councils are being established, to manage the greater part of the Government's training programmes.

I believe that the TECs will revolutionise training in this country, but they never get a mention from the Labour party. The Chancellor's proposals to allow tax relief for a period of five years for business donations to TECs is a cost-effective incentive to further involvement in training by employers.

Mr. John Garrett (Norwich, South): May I revert to what some countries would give their eye teeth for? Is not the Government's forecast for the growth in manufacturing output next year nil? That must be a record since the Red Books were introduced. Precisely what is the right hon. Gentleman boasting about?

Mr. Ridley: It is not a record. When the hon. Gentleman's party was in government, it used to go down every year.

Research and development is equally vital to our industrial success, and here, too, the performance of business has been most encouraging. The value of industry's own-funded R and D was some £5 billion in 1988, having grown at the healthy rate of more than 6 per cent. a year in real terms over the previous five years. As a proportion of gross domestic product, industry's own-funded R and D in the United Kingdom in 1988 was on a par with that in the USA, and ahead of that in France and Italy. Government-funded R and D, as a proportion of GDP, was behind only France and the USA, and ahead of Germany and Japan.

Despite all that, Labour Members go around predicting impending disaster for British industry.

The predecessor of the hon. Member for Dunfermline, East (Mr. Brown), the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould), thought of all sorts of "remedies" for that hoped-for disaster, but it has not and will not materialise. He has now begun to shut up about the payroll tax, renationalisation without compensation, national investment banks and all the rest. He has fallen back on an "apple pie and motherhood" approach with nothing tangible in the way of policy. His buzz words now are "stability, consensus and partnership". Nobody could disagree with any of those. Indeed, I rather think that they are what we ourselves have given British industry over the 1980s. But in his mouth the words are meaningless, and I think that we would all be grateful if for once he would explain what they entail. What exchange rate or interest rate policy do they imply? What changes in taxation——

Mr. John Smith (Monklands, East): What is your policy?

Mr. Ridley: My right hon. Friend the Chancellor told the House on Tuesday what his was.

What changes would the Labour party make to shareholders' rights and company law? Above all, how much will they cost the taxpayer? I realise that to spell it all out would really rock the markets, and there may be a lesson for the Labour party even in that. However, pious aspirations are no substiture for policy. I am prepared to allow the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith) or the hon. Member for Dunfermline, East to intervene.

I see that they do not want to intervene. Exactly the same happened the last time I asked them the same questions, on 6 March. The right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East and the hon. Member for Dunfermline, East sat on the Bench as they are sitting today, mute and inglorious.

Mrs. Edwina Currie (Derbyshire, South): As the idiots on the Opposition Benches are so incapable of answering my right hon. Friend's question, may I offer him one more to put to them? My right hon. Friend will know that Toyota is now active on site in my constituency creating a £700 million factory which will help us to turn around the balance of payments in future. Does he agree that the reason why companies such as Toyota come to Britain —there are many others like it—is that we have a substantially deregulated economy in which there is relatively little interference with business? Does he agree that if that little lot opposite got their hands on business, British or otherwise, the regulations would go on, the interference would go on and the compulsory investment pattern would go on, the subsidies would be re-created, the tax system changed, and those businesses would fly from this country as fast as ever they could?

Mr. Ridley: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. Would she have a word with Toyota to ask whether it has included in its costings the payroll tax that the Opposition said that they were going to impose? It must be important for Toyota to know the answer. I am afraid that I cannot give my hon. Friend the answer to her question, but perhaps one day the Opposition will.

I wonder what the truth is. Either the Opposition have no real criticism of what the Government are doing, and thus no alternative policies to offer, or they intend to press ahead with—*[Interruption.]* I heard an Opposition Member say that they would not tell the electorate their policy until after the next election. That confirms my thoughts on the matter. I believe that the Opposition are still thinking in terms of imposing an East German solution on the problems of West Germany. They still do not understand that the process is the other way around, but they have wisely decided that discretion is the better part of valour.

Dr. Norman A. Godman (Greenock and Port Glasgow): Would the right hon. Gentleman mind my asking a constituency question about the competitiveness of the shrunken British shipbuilding industry in the light of the unification of the two Germanies? Is he aware that, when the two Germanies become one, the German shipbuilding industry will be increased by 17 or 18 yards and by 55,000 lowly paid shipbuilding workers? Will those yards be entitled to claim subsidies under the sixth EC directive on the shipbuilding intervention fund?

Mr. Ridley: It is not for me to interpret what the Commission might say to that, but I should imagine that the West German managers, in the bracing atmosphere of the Community, with all its policies on restricting state aid

and getting to market pricing, would want to ensure that their capacity was either economic or taken out, as has happened here.

The Opposition must realise that their form of genteel intervention has been rejected by tens of millions of people in east Europe. The drug of interventionism is addictive. East Europe has been so revolted by the full dose that it does not want the drug at all: it wants it banned. That is why East Germany voted last Sunday for the CDU, not the SPD. East Germans realise that the market economy works and Socialist intervention does not.

The Opposition demanded a debate last month on one erratic set of trade figures. Today's trade figures—I am sure that the Opposition will welcome them—show a return to the progress that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor predicted would reduce the current account deficit over time. The deficit fell to £1·4 billion in February, reflecting the continued strong growth in export volume and the sharp slowdown on the growth of import volume which has been obvious for some time to all but the Opposition. Underlying export volumes have been growing more than twice as fast as underlying import volumes since last November—*[Interruption.]* It is odd that, whenever the Opposition hear good figures, they sit and shout. I am almost beginning to be delighted that the House is being televised; I hope that the public can see the way in which the Opposition react to good news.

In the three months to February, export volumes, less oil and erratics, were 3·5 per cent. higher than in the previous three months and 11 per cent. higher than a year earlier. Import volumes, less oil and erratics, were 1 per cent. lower than three months earlier and only 0·5 per cent. higher than a year earlier. The trend remains good. The improved trade figures include an estimated zero contribution from the invisible sector, reflecting, among other factors, exceptionally high payments to the European Community and lower net earnings on interest, profits and dividends.

My right hon. Friend the Chancellor was right to say that it is demand which has grown too much. Export performance remains good. My right hon. Friend has taken steps in the Budget to keep demand under control while production and exports grow, to eliminate both inflationary pressures and the trade deficit.

The task now for industry and Government alike is to ensure that the progress of the past 10 years is safeguarded and maintained through the 1990s. The level of pay settlements remains critical to industrial costs and to our ability to compete. It is far more vital, in fact, than the interest rate as an element of industrial costs. Unfortunately, our unit labour costs are once more rising faster than they are in some competitor countries. It is up to each company to consider what wages it can afford, bearing in mind its productivity and competitiveness. I hope that the trade unions will see that that has been our Achilles heel in the past.

Partnership and consensus are vital. The Opposition are always eager to support any group hell bent on defying that principle, but the public should be aware that the inevitable result of such defiance is pricing ourselves out of world markets, which would lead in turn to higher unemployment or a loss of trade share.

Internationally, we are working for open markets everywhere. We are doing so in the Community by a constructive contribution to the completion of the single market. Worldwide, we are taking an active part, through the Community, in the negotiations for the GATT Uruguay round. Huge opportunities for investment are opening up all over eastern Europe. Investment will lead to markets, and markets will lead to trade and to profits. Profits will help the trade deficit and the growth of the economy.

In due course, this will lead to more direct trade opportunities, too. These opportunities cannot be exploited by the Opposition's mixture of milk-and-water Socialism and their ludicrous proposal for returning to the barter system. My recent visit to Poland convinced me that the way to help the Poles and ourselves is to encourage private investment. I am glad to say that our business men are taking the opportunities that exist there now.

Unlike the Opposition's recipes, the Budget is a Budget for stability, growth and prosperity. It will drive down inflation, for which the Opposition have no policy, without harming production and exports. It will increase saving to fund more investment and it will ensure that the United Kingdom can meet the challenge of the coming decade.

4.50 pm

Mr. Gordon Brown (Dunfermline, East): I now realise that when the previous Chancellor described 1990 as a year that would be dull, he meant not just that the economy would have a dull face but that the Budget would be dull and all the speeches about it from Ministers would be dull.

I am surprised that we did not hear from the Secretary of State this afternoon a statement about the amendment that has just been made to the Budget, especially as it refers to the policy that the right hon. Gentleman was prominent in introducing—the poll tax—the policy which he used to call the flagship policy.

On Tuesday, when making his announcement about the capital ceilings for poll tax rebates, the Chancellor refused on principle to provide those rebates to Scottish pensioners. On Wednesday, the Chief Secretary said that it could not be done in practice. Today we have the Cabinet in full retreat.

The Secretary of State for Scotland should have come to the House this afternoon to explain the change of policy, to explain why it took the Opposition to secure that change, to explain what will be done to pay for the £4 million and which parts of the Scottish budget will be cut to make way for that expenditure and to explain that it is not the moderation of the poll tax that is now necessary, but its complete elimination.

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry did not say that, in the Budget speech, the Chancellor had to admit that inflation will be above 7 per cent. by Christmas, the highest in Europe; that manufacturing industry will stagnate this year, the worst performance in western Europe; that interest rates will remain high during the year, and they are the highest in western Europe; that the downturn is likely to be quite severe, as the Chancellor put it; and that business investment will fall by 1 per cent. The Chancellor also said that unemployment may rise over the year. None of that was mentioned today by the Secretary of State.

Mr. Kenneth Hind (Lancashire, West): The hon. Gentleman says that British industry will stagnate this year. Does he still stand by the Labour proposal to introduce a payroll tax of 0·5 per cent.—a tax on the

[Mr. Kenneth Hind]

payroll of every company in Britain—and, if so, what does he think that would do for the stagnation of British industry?

Mr. Brown: I wish that the hon. Gentleman would listen to what is being said. I said that the Chancellor reported that manufacturing industry will stagnate this year.

Mr. Hind: Answer my question.

Mr. Brown: I will answer the hon. Gentleman's question when he gets his facts right. The Chancellor said that manufacturing industry will stagnate this year—*[Interruption.]*

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): Order.

Mr. Brown: Our commitment to invest in training is well known and is expressed in our policy review. If the hon. Gentleman wants to read that, he can pick up a copy for £2·50 from the Labour party office.

Mr. Ridley: I am grateful for that information. Will the hon. Gentleman confirm that the policy review proposals in relation to industry are still the policy of the Labour party?

Mr. Brown: Of course the policy review proposals on trade and industry are still this party's policies. The policy review was passed by the party's annual conference. I have been going round the country talking to representatives of business and industry and they have made it clear that they want the implementation of Labour's policies to deal with the problems of the economy—*[Interruption.]*

The hon. Member for Lancashire, West (Mr. Hind) spoke about manufacturing output. It is interesting to note that at the last general election the hon. Gentleman said: "inflation to be further reduced"—

Mr. Hind: It was.

Mr. Brown: He said:

"interest rates falling . . . inflation, scourge of the poor and elderly, is under control."

Mr. Richard Tracey (Surbiton): The hon. Gentleman says that industry is waiting for the implementation of Labour's policies. Will he confirm that a payroll tax, as spelt out in Labour's policy review, would add £1 billion to industry's costs? Or does he intend to fudge what he is saying this afternoon as he did in "The Money Programme" on BBC television at the end of February?

Mr. Brown: The hon. Gentleman cannot have been noting what has been happening throughout the country. Good firms are complaining about the performance of bad ones.

Mr. Tracey: Answer my question.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Brown: I am answering. Firms are saying that it is totally wrong for companies that do not train to poach people from other firms. They want policies that will deal with the situation in which half the people in British industry are at present not receiving any in-work training. Indeed, 100,000 young people leaving school and entering work are not receiving any training either. That is why they need the statutory underpinning that Labour policies will provide.

We needed an investment Budget to deal with the problems of training in industry, a Budget that would pave the way for negotiations to enter the European monetary system, a Budget that would do something about the problems that industry now faces, with investment flat and falling away.

Mr. Graham Riddick (Colne Valley): Since the Italian lira and the French franc entered the exchange rate mechanism of the EMS, those two currencies have been devalued against the mark by more than the pound. Will the hon. Gentleman explain how membership of the ERM would provide the stability of sterling which presumably he seeks?

Mr. Brown: The hon. Gentleman does not seem to be part of this debate. He should realise that the pound in relation to the mark has moved from 3·20 to 2·60 and now stands at about 2·70. It is precisely for the achievement of stability that industry wants us to open negotiations to join the ERM. The hon. Gentleman knows that many of his hon. Friends support that policy but dare not speak up because of the policy being pursued by the Prime Minister.

Sir Peter Tapsell (East Lindsey): The Labour party does not seem to have grasped the point. Since the ERM was established, the Italian lira has devalued against the deutschmark six times and the French franc has devalued four times. The idea that joining the ERM by itself provides monetary stability is abolute nonsense.

Mr. Brown: France has 3 per cent. growth and 3 per cent. inflation and does not have the problems that we have as a result of the policies that have been pursued by Her Majesty's Government.

We needed a Budget that would deal with the problems of investment and training, that would begin the negotiations to enter the EMS, that would do something about the problems of investment, that reflected the new consensus in Britain that is led by the Labour party, but which the Government are unable to join. We have had instead a Budget containing a series of small measures—on small business debts, on the poll tax, on football and on nurseries—about which we have been pressing the Government for some time.

At the heart of the Budget is a yawning gap, a massive failure to address the central problems that the economy faces. What is left when we strip away from the Budget the measures that were pre-announced for the Budget of 1991, the measures that were re-announced from the Budgets of 1988 and 1989 and the measures that the Chancellor announced but which would have been better announced by the Secretary of State for the Environment, the Secretary of State for Wales and the Secretary of State for Scotland?

The Budget was dressed up to sound good on Tuesday, it drew scepticism on Wednesday, and today, Thursday, its hollow reality is being exposed. It contains nothing to bring interest rates down, nothing to raise investment this year and nothing to deal with our supply side problems.

What does the Secretary of State do in Budget week? What is his contribution? He goes to Cambridge—one of his few public engagements in the country. It was so

important an engagement that it was worth the effort of an advance press release, a speech and, I gather, even a photo call. Did he go to Cambridge to open a factory, to encourage small businesses, visit a science park or talk about new technologies? No. The purpose of his visit to Cambridge was to launch his new insolvency service for British business. Is not it grimly symbolic that the most conspicuous event in his diary for this week was the opening of the insolvency service in its new status as an executive agency?

I have here a press release which says that the right hon. Gentleman launched the insolvency service as the Department of Trade and Industry's latest and biggest executive agency. This is what he said in Cambridge:

"In making the Insolvency Service one of the new Next Steps agencies, we recognise that the major part of its business is the execution of Government policy."

Perhaps there could be no better commentary on this week than that the Secretary of State heard the Budget on Tuesday and, on the following day, opened the new insolvency service.

We have the highest interest rates in Europe, the biggest trade gap, the worst inflation, the slowest growth and the lowest investment.

I come first to the Government's promise to create zero inflation. They have pushed up water charges by up to 20 per cent., electricity by 7 per cent., rents by up to 50 per cent., prescription charges by nearly 9 per cent.—affecting everyone. At the same time, inflation in Japan is just 3 per cent., in Germany less than 3 per cent., in France just over 3 per cent., and in America 5 per cent., while the average in the EEC is 5 per cent. Here it is 7·7 per cent. and rising.

It is not international economic factors, it is not the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries, it is not the oil sheikhs, it is not international situations and commodity prices beyond our control, and it is not the unions, as the Secretary of State tried to say. There is no one to blame for the inflation that has risen after 10 years but the Government themselves, through mistakes made in Downing street and mistakes that will continue throughout this year and even in the next few weeks as public sector rises continue.

Mr. David Nicholson (Taunton): Would the hon. Gentleman care to tell us when a Labour Government last had inflation of 5 per cent. or below?

Mr. Brown: I can tell the hon. Gentleman that in the last full year of the Labour Government, 1978, inflation was at the European average and falling, even when massive oil problems throughout the world were affecting the economy. This year our inflation is well above the European average and the cause is problems created in the Treasury by Ministers themselves.

I come to interest rates. We hear business men throughout the country complaining about high interest rates and the impact they have on industry. Yesterday we heard the Engineering Employers Federation, the small businesses federation and various business federations throughout the country complaining about what the Government's Budget had not done. We heard the finance director of one of Britain's largest companies saying that interest rate policy is more applicable to a three-ball shop. How slowing down manufacturing industry is good for the country needs explaining.

What do the Government do? What is the Conservative party's policy? What do they say to these business men throughout the country about the impact of interest rate policy? I have here the Conservative party's own document, "The Economy: Questions and Answers". *[Interruption.]* Indeed, very useful and very interesting. We see on page 212:

"Don't higher interest rates increase the cost of borrowing thereby hitting industrial investment?"

[HON. MEMBERS: "Read the answer."] It goes on to say that, as the great majority of investment is funded from firms' own funds, the key to boosting investment is to create conditions to create profits. But, as the House knows, profits are not being sustained; businesses are having great problems. Then it says:

"British business is actually less exposed to high interest rates than it has been for a number of years."

[Interruption.] The Financial Secretary says, "That's right," but there has been a doubling of interest rates over the last 18 months.

Mr. Ridley: The hon. Gentleman has totally missed the point. Is he not aware that, as British industry is making record profits, far higher than it ever made under a Labour Government, it can finance a very high proportion of its investment without borrowing at all? That is the point which the hon. Gentleman failed to give when quoting from that document. He does not seem to understand it.

Mr. Brown: I do not know whether the Secretary of State is aware of what is happening throughout the country. Bankruptcies are rising by 19 per cent. in the construction trade, 20 per cent. in food and drink, 30 per cent. in the furniture trades, 40 per cent. in clothing and textiles and more than 50 per cent. in services, according to the latest survey. Yet he says that there is nothing to worry about. Bankruptcies have been rising in every region of the country and particularly in the south, and this is industry supposedly less exposed to high interest rates than ever before.

Mr. Giles Radice (Durham, North): Clearly, the Secretary of State is not aware that the business sector is now in massive deficit.

Mr. Brown: I thought that the Secretary of State would know that business borrowing has had to increase from £10 billion to £23 billion and that there has been a 67 per cent. increase in interest payments. But now he tells us that industries are less exposed to high interest rates than ever before. It is no wonder that all the business federations in this country are appalled at the failure of the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry to act.

Our complaint is that these are problems not just of the last two years but of the last 10 years. Our argument is not just that interest rates, inflation and the trade gap are the worst in Europe. It is that a consumer boom without adequate investment in training and technology was bound to be unsustainable and to lead to the problems that we face. Without the necessary investment in our future, the problems with which the Secretary of State now has to cope will remain.

Dr. Keith Hampson (Leeds, North-West) *rose*——

Mr. Brown: I am not giving way again; I have already given way many times.

When the problems of the economy are not just problems of demand but problems of capacity, not just problems of consumption, but problems of investment, and not just problems of the short term, but problems of

[Mr. Brown]

the long term, a Budget that fails to address the shortage of capacity, the downturn in investment and the challenges of training and technology is the wrong Budget for Britain, based on the wrong analysis and pursuing the wrong policies.

If the problem was only demand and not capacity and investment, if it was only consumption, as the Chancellor wanted us to believe yesterday, why has industrial production been falling? Why has manufacturing output fallen for four months? Why has investment fallen in the last three months? Why, this year, will investment be flat in this country, indeed declining, for many sectors of the economy but will rise in every other country—by 5 per cent. in Germany and France, 4 per cent. in Italy and more in many other countries? Why are we producing less in many of the important sectors of our economy than we produced even in 1979? Metal goods, mechanical engineering, motor vehicles, drink and tobacco, textiles, man-made fibres—these are all sectors in which we are now producing less than we did in 1979. Is not it true that, industry by industry, sector by sector, we have abandoned products and processes, leaving the field to foreign competitors, and that the Government have done nothing about it?

Faced with the worst trading start that Britain has had in any year in its trading history the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry might have been expected to take the trade deficit seriously. Instead, he said that the trade deficit was good. Britain is now in deficit in high technology as well as in traditional industries; in deficit over the year with eastern as well as western Europe; in deficit in the last six months in invisible as well as visible goods. Yet this is barely worthy of a mention by the Secretary of State responsible for industry and trade in this country.

We used to be told not to worry about the manufacturing deficit because there was a large invisible surplus. That surplus has fallen from £9 billion in 1986, to £5 billion in 1988 and to just over £2 billion in 1989, and is predicted to fall to £1·5 billion in 1990. We have had a deficit in invisibles over the past six months of £700 million —a deficit not just in holidays and travel, but in aviation, shipping, services and consultancies. We have had a deterioration in City earnings and a deficit caused by the massive interest payments we are having to make for the hot money that must be brought into this country.

Ours is now an economy increasingly at the mercy of hot money flowing in from overseas. The trade figures published today, with the emphasis on the invisibles position and how it is deteriorating, show that this is not a "loadsamoney" economy benefiting the people of Britain: this is now the hot money economy of benefit to the speculators of the world. The problems on the invisible and visible side of our trading performance cannot be addressed by a Government who insist on cutting and cutting the industry budget and the training budget in the run-up to 1992.

Although we have all these problems—although we import 50 per cent. of our cars, 60 per cent. of our washing machines, 80 per cent. of our dishwashers and 90 per cent. of the most modern computer equipment; although we import massively, especially from the European Community countries—the only question that is asked of the Department of Trade and Industry is not what it will do, but what excuse it will give for doing nothing.

Dr. Hampson: I have much sympathy with the hon. Gentleman on his point about improving efficiency on the supply side, and especially with his point on training. However, does he recognise that there is a lead time in education and training of 10 to 15 years? Does the hon. Gentleman remember that the only Government since the war who cut the proportion of young people going into higher education were the Labour Government just over 10 years ago and that the only Government who cut the amount of money going into further education were the Labour Government? To deal with the unemployment of young people, the Labour Government had the youth opportunities programme, which created jobs counting lamp posts in Barnsley. That is the level of training with which they left this country, as the hon. Gentleman should know.

Mr. Brown: That is not the case, and it does not help to begin to solve the massive problems this country faces. If the hon. Gentleman believes that the problems are now urgent, why does not he persuade the Secretaries of State for Trade and Industry and for Employment to act on our present training difficulties and training shortages? The problem is that there are no lengths to which the Department of Trade and Industry is now not prepared to go to do nothing.

I make no apology for raising the matter of the Al-Fayeds. We know now from the accumulated evidence that they were guilty of proven and persistent misrepresentation. We know that they were found guilty by the inspectors of misinformation and deception, and that there were accusations of dishonesty. We know that the inspectors wanted them to be disqualified as directors and we know that, under section 8 of the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986, at which the Secretary of State chose to look, provision is made for such disqualification. What did the Secretary of State do? Absolutely nothing. His Department is the do-nothing Department, where anything goes.

What had Ministers previously said about the importance of the disqualification of directors provisions in the legislation? The Secretary of State for Employment, when he was Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry—the City Minister—said:

> "The Government confirms its determination to support the disqualification provisions as a major deterrent to unacceptable conduct by a minority of company directors."

The Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry —the City and consumer Minister—who is now Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, said:

> "The Act poses a real deterrent. It demonstrates our commitment to ensure that the public and shareholders are protected against the small minority of directors who are tempted to abuse their position."

He was explaining that the disqualification procedure was not only a punishment for those who erred, but a deterrent, to uphold the standards of the City.

Will the Secretary of State tell me what is left of the deterrent, when even proven wrongdoers go scot free without punishment? At what point is the public interest protected? Left with no possible means of acting to reinforce that deterrent, the Secretary of State does nothing. His is a do-nothing Department where anything goes. If it will not act where there is proven and persistent

misrepresentation, in what circumstances will the Department act? How can the standards of the City be upheld by a Department that refuses to act when all the evidence is there?

What of the rest of the Department? There is the same do-nothing attitude where anything goes in the rest of the Department. The Secretary of State announced the abolition of the market sectors division a few weeks ago. It was set up only two years ago by his predecessor as a new initiative and as the interface between the Department's headquarters and industry. How is the abolition of that division represented in the press release? It says:

"The DTI given fresh focus . . . A more concentrated focus on long-term issues."

If the abolition of the market division is described as a new focus, will abandoning regional policy be presented as a breakthrough for the north, or will cutting export services be described as winning the trade war? The Secretary of State appears determined to walk away from his responsibilities for the regions, for new technology, for standards, for consumer protection and for city regulations—responsibilities that all other Governments accept as part of their duties. He is in the process of winding down the Department. It is a reworking of one of the best-known maxims in politics—"If you can't stand the heat, close down the kitchen."

I have just seen the Department of Trade and Industry advertisements, such as "Where are you?" and "Ou etes-vous?", and other advertisements in Spanish, French, Italian and German. At first I thought that "Where are you?" was the Secretary of State trying to get through to industry, but I now know that "Where are you?" was industry trying to get through to the Secretary of State. When we need a presence, there is a void. When industry needs an advocate, it does not even have an apology. Instead, we have a whole Department devoted to doing absolutely nothing.

I want to tell the Secretary of State what he should have said. When research and development, expenditure on the regions and incentives for investment are all behind what other countries can offer, when we spend a smaller proportion of our national income on those vital services, when market forces on their own have failed, when other countries with less to gain do more, but we with most to gain do least, and when even in America, the Government are considering an office of civilian research and a congressional report is demanding an industrial strategy, I urge the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, in the interests of the trade and industry of Britain, to respond to the gap in research, in technology, in training and in investment. He should do so not by cutting the Department's budget further, as he plans to do, but by responding to the consensus that is developing throughout the country that we should invest for the long term, that we should tackle our supply side problems, that there should be a genuine partnership between Government and industry and that Britain works best when Britain works together.

The Budget does nothing for the vast majority of families whose child benefit has been frozen. The Budget does nothing for the vast majority of pensioners whose pension rise has already been wiped out.

The Budget does nothing for the vast majority of home owners who will have to live with high mortgage rates for many months. It does nothing for the crumbling and underfunded public services, because the Chancellor wants whatever Budget surplus he has left for tax cuts and not for public investment.

This Conservative Government do nothing for our industries and companies, which have looked to them and now feel betrayed again and again. The Budget offers nothing for the future. This is a Government not of economic miracles, but of missed opportunities, not of long-term resolution, but of short-term expedients. This Government have walked away from the central challenge of our industrial economy and the country will judge them harshly for it.

5.18 pm

Mr. Ian Stewart (Hertfordshire, North): We have just heard a remarkable speech from the hon. Member for Dunfermline, East (Mr. Brown). It was remarkable for its almost entire lack of serious content. The House and others will note that the only matter of substance that the hon. Gentleman vouchsafed about Labour party policy in this important Budget debate was that it was Labour policy to impose a tax on the payroll of British companies in the hope that that would in some way make them more efficient. The points that the hon. Gentleman tried to brush aside with a louder and more hectoring tone in response to inquiries from my hon. Friends about what the Labour party would do and about his understanding of the exchange rates, interest rates and inflation showed the emptiness of the Opposition's position on the Budget's central issue.

I want to deal with two matters arising from the Budget statement, which I thought was an extraordinarily skilful and successful presentation of the problems and the way in which the Government propose to tackle them. I was disappointed by the final remarks of the hon. Member for Dunfermline, East. As he approached his peroration, he said that he would tell us what needed to be done, but he then threw away the next half-dozen pages of his text. That demonstrated the nature of his approach to the problems.

The two points to which I want to refer have already been raised in this debate. The first relates to the exchange rate mechanism and membership of the European monetary system, and the second is about inflation.

I have listened to the debates and I believe that there has been a great deal of misunderstanding about the practical implications of what is involved in membership of the European monetary system. One of the arguments for early entry of sterling into the exchange rate mechanism is apparently that it would make life easier for industry. However, alongside that there is an assumption that somehow entry would provide a comfortable way out of high interest rates. I do not believe that that is possible. I want to explain why the practical reasons argue against an early entry of sterling into EMS, and why it is deceptive to suggest that entry is feasible under current circumstances.

The present exchange rate of the deutschmark, which is about 2·72 to the pound, is the current rate at which we can exchange pounds for deutschmarks today. However, let us consider what the exchange rate would be in this case. If we wanted to do a deal today to make an exchange transaction in 12 months' time, there would be a discount of about 15 pfennigs. That is a premium in favour of the deutschmark and a discount against sterling. The exchange rate would be not DM2·72, but about DM2·57.

[Mr. Ian Stewart]

That is miles outside the band in which the currencies operate within the exchange rate mechanism. It is about 5 per cent. instead of 2·25 per cent., which is the normal band.

It would not be possible for the exchange rate mechanism to operate with sterling within it if the forward rates for six months out or a year out were not within the standard bands on which the mechanism is based. That is an overwhelming and decisive argument why my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer is correct to believe that we should not hasten to join the exchange rate mechanism until inflation and interest rates are lower. If we were to join now, interest rates would come down, but that would not assist the battle against inflation, as it would actually generate more expansionary economic and monetary conditions in this country, which would set off the inflationary spiral once again.

Those of my hon. Friends, such as my hon. Friend the Member for Harrow, East (Mr. Dykes) and others who feel attached—sometimes I believe for emotional reasons—to membership of the exchange rate mechanism are missing a central point. Until the mechanism was consistent with the proper conduct of monetary policy in this county and would contribute to the effective management of monetary conditions that would lead to a reduction in inflation, membership would be not only unwise but be positively counter-productive. It would be more difficult—if conditions eventually became suitable for our joining—for our entry to come about.

My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer was right to restate the Madrid conditions and to say that we need lower inflation and lower interest rates before such a major step can be taken. When the time comes and those conditions are fulfilled, that will be another matter. However, for the time being, it is misleading to suggest to industry that its problems can be solved by early entry into the mechanism.

Mr. Riddick: My right hon. Friend has suggested that there will still be a time for membership of the EMS, perhaps when inflation has come down. However, I have still not heard any convincing arguments in favour of joining the EMS. Why do we need to join even when the conditions are right?

Mr. Stewart: If the exchange rate for sterling could be kept more stable against European currencies, I concede that that would be an advantage. It remains an open question whether it will be consistent with the proper conduct of our domestic monetary and economic policy for sterling to belong to the exchange rate mechanism. However, I am willing to contemplate that possibility and it is only sensible to consider it seriously if the conditions laid down at Madrid are fulfilled. If we tried to enter too early, that would cause far more difficulties than we face now in organising suitable monetary conditions in the fight against inflation. It is deceptive to suggest that entry is possible now.

I should not consider it improper for sterling to join the exchange rate mechanism, if circumstances permit in due course, with a much wider band than the present 2·25 per cent., which applies to most of the currencies in the system. Over a considerable period, rather higher interest rates have been required in this country to keep the lid on inflationary pressures than in some other countries. No doubt in Germany that is because of the terrible experience of the inflationszeit a generation or two ago and the deep impact that that has had on the financial psychology of two or three generations of German citizens.

It is also partly due to the different structure of their financial institutions. We should have to see progress in removing artificial constraints to German institutions investing in British or foreign bonds as well as the dismantling of exchange controls by the countries that still have them. I have an open mind about the practicality of that in due course. However, I want to emphasise that it is not in the bounds of possibility for entry to happen in the immediate future and it is misleading for anyone to suggest that that is the case.

My second point relates to the inflation rate. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor referred in his Budget speech to retail price inflation, and there are references in the Red Book to retail prices index inflation. Like my right hon. Friend the Member for Blaby (Mr. Lawson), when he was Chancellor of the Exchequer, I have increasingly come to believe that the RPI is no longer a realistic basis for measuring the level of inflation. It should no longer be the key against which various benefits and other commitments are uprated.

Including mortgage interest rates in the RPI exaggerates the rate of inflation when interest rates are rising. It understates it when interest rates are falling. The RPI fluctuates far more violently than the underlying level of inflation. That has a practical as well as a psychological effect. When inflationary pressures develop, if the Government are wise—as this Government are—they will take corrective action by raising interest rates to tighten monetary conditions. However, that very act will add to the recorded figure for the retail prices index and will then appear to suggest that inflationary pressures are building up as a direct result of measures taken to cool down those inflationary pressures.

My right hon. Friend the Chancellor also referred to the effect of more than 1 per cent. on the RPI, which will come through in the next month or two as a result of increased expenditure by local government through raising the community charge. I wonder whether it makes sense to include local government expenditure—financed locally—in the RPI, but not to include central Government expenditure funded by central taxation. After all, if an increase in the rates or community charge to fund extra local Government expenditure represents an increase in the retail prices index, all that the Government would have to do would be to give local authorities £10 billion or £20 billion and fund the whole of education, the police service or whatever. The retail prices increase would fall to zero and might even be negative. But everyone would know that the extra money was merely being collected by the central Exchequer instead of town halls. It would not represent an actual change in the economy.

The distortion in the way in which the RPI is constructed means that we have a figure of almost 8 per cent. inflation at present, whereas the underlying level is only 6 per cent. If we add on a percentage point or more for changes in local government expenditure and further increases caused by rises in mortgage interest rates, we simply create an entirely artificial yardstick by which to measure inflation. We encourage unrealistic wage claims and slow down the process of change in employers' and

consumers' understanding of what the inflation level is. Therefore, we make our task of using monetary measures to get on top of inflation harder.

I tabled a question some time ago to my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary to the Treasury about the implications of the construction of the RPI. He told me that most public service pension schemes and allowances such as the principal Civil Service scheme, the local government superannuation scheme, the police pension scheme, the retirement pension, widows' benefits, attendance allowance, the invalidity pension and so on are all uprated by reference to the RPI. The artificial distortions in the retail prices index mean that in some years those items are uprated by more than the underlying rate of inflation and in other years by far less.

I wish to suggest to my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer through my hon. Friend the Economic Secretary that we should take the opportunity over the next 12 months to plan to switch to a different index of inflation that does not include the interest cost of acquiring the capital assets of houses, which by no stretch of the imagination can be described as retail expenditure, and a more sensible approach to the treatment of local government expenditure. We need an index of inflation which is realistic, which enables monetary and economic policy to be conducted in a more sensible fashion, and which does not produce such misleading swings in the RPI upwards and downwards, which do not represent changes in the underlying level of inflation.

The reason why I ask my hon. Friend the Economic Secretary to speak to my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer in good time is that during the next year or two there will be an excellent opportunity to make such a change. It should be made only at a time when those who receive upratings of pensions or allowances would do better as a result of the change than if we stuck with the RPI.

Just as the RPI goes up too far when interest rates rise, so it goes down too far when interest rates fall. When interest rates fall, the underlying inflation rate is higher than the retail prices index. The change could be made so that the beneficiaries of the various pensions and allowances upratings did better at the outset. Over time, it would even out and there would be no difference, but the adjustment would be more in line with the real level of inflation and not with a figure that is becoming increasingly artificial and unrepresentative of the rate of inflation.

During the coming months we shall have many debates about the inflation rate. Hon. Members will be referring not to the inflation rate but to the retail prices index, which is a misleading indicator. Over the next few months, I do not expect inflationary pressures to increase, but the RPI will increase. We can look forward to interest rates coming down in the next year or two. That will reduce the RPI artificially. We may see the same reaction to that in the media and the press as we see in headlines when inflation rises.

It is not healthy or sensible to conduct economic policy on the basis of an indicator that is so far removed from reality. The items that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer included in his Budget speech have drawn attention to the fact that the index can rise or fall by 7 per cent. as a result of factors that are not related to inflation.

As a footnote to what I consider a skilful and admirable Budget, on which my right hon. Friend the Chancellor should be congratulated, I ask him to look further at the presentation of the inflation rate. Also, he should not hesitate to spell it out in discussions on the exchange rate that the Government do not have any political reason for being obstinate in not allowing sterling to join the exchange rate mechanism of the European monetary system, but that there are good practical reasons for not entering it and it would be against the interests of Britain to do so when conditions are not appropriate.

5.36 pm

Mr. William McKelvey (Kilmarnock and Loudoun): I shall try to be brief because many hon. Members wish to speak. I wish to highlight two areas of economic policy. First, as a Scot, I must mention again the way in which the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that the amount of savings that people could have before being disqualified from a community charge rebate was to be raised from £8,000 to £16,000. The manner in which the House heard today of the change announced by the Secretary of State for Scotland was also most unsatisfactory. He should have come here to make a statement from the Dispatch Box because we have applied pressures not only on the Chancellor but on the Scottish Office.

First, I must put the record straight. One newspaper from the popular press said that the shadow Secretary of State for Scotland, my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) was among the first to rise to his feet to protest that the increase in the amount of savings allowed would not be retrospective in Scotland. He was not among the first—he was the very first—and that is how it should have been reported. Those of us who know him well were somewhat surprised at the way in which he protested—it was completely out of character for him to interrupt the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer in such a fashion—but such was his anger and so greatly was he incensed at the manner in which the announcement was made that hon. Members, at least on this side of the House, owe him a debt.

I used to enjoy the verbal swordsmanship between my hon. Friend the Member for Garscadden and the Secretary of State for Scotland when both were on their mettle. It was something to see two trained advocates arguing the merits or demerits of legislation. It is extremely sad to see the demise of the Secretary of State for Scotland. He is not the man he was and he does not argue his case with the passion that he used to show. Clearly, his heart is not in the statements that he is forced to make. Sometimes he seems to be unaware of the statements prior to being handed them. Certainly he seems not to be well briefed on them. While the stature of my hon. Friend the shadow Secretary of State and others on the Opposition Front Bench grows daily, the Secretary of State for Scotland is sadly but a shadow of his former self.

Frankly, we in Scotland feel that, the sooner the right hon. and learned Gentleman packs up that job, the better for Scotland. I hope that he will read in *Hansard* what I have said about him in the Chamber. If I get the opportunity to do so in one of the Corridors, I shall tell him to his face, because that is how I think that people should hear such things. As the right hon. and learned

[Mr. William McKelvey]

Gentleman is not in the Chamber in person, however, and as I have not had time to change the address that I wish to give to the House, he may have to hear it this way.

Although there appears to have been a change of heart about the rebate which is supposed to be paid to people in Scotland, hon. Members should be aware that the subject is not closed just because a statement has been made. I remind the House that in October last year there were rumblings of discontent about the poll tax at the Conservative party conference. The rumblings then began to gather strength and out of the blue—perhaps one should say, "out of the true blue"—policy was change on the hoof. There then followed an announcement by the Secretary of State for Scotland that transitional payments would be made to those who had to lay out more than £3 extra per week. That was interesting and good news for those of us in Scotland trying to protect the poorer people in our society who could not afford to pay the poll tax.

Shortly after Christmas, I received a letter from the Secretary of State in response to a letter than I had sent to him asking when the scheme would be put into operation. The right hon. and learned Gentleman said that the scheme was still being finalised. To this day, it appears that the scheme has not yet been finalised. Not one person in Scotland is in receipt of the transitional payment.

I do not know when the scheme will be finalised, but I know that many people with small resources are greatly in need of transitional payments and are subject to abject poverty because the Scottish Office is unable to finalise the legislation and bring the scheme into being. I can advise the Scottish Office that when the legislation is finalised it will be almost impossible to put it into operation through the computer for at least another year. I have received representations to that effect from Strathclyde regional council.

I therefore advise the House that any further policy which is made on the hoof to placate some of the forthcoming poll tax payers here in England may take years to come into operation. I hope that, by then, the poll tax will have disappeared from the statute book, because people will understand the difficulties of implementing such an obnoxious, unwanted and unwarranted form of taxation.

Mr. Malcolm Bruce (Gordon): Does the hon. Gentleman agree that many people are incensed because, although the Government announced that anybody paying more than £3 per week more in poll tax than in rates would receive a rebate, the rebate is to be based only on the notional poll tax, rather than on the real poll tax? The Government's explanations do not wash. People feel that they have been cheated—and, indeed, they have been cheated.

Mr. McKelvey: The hon. Gentleman makes a correct point. People are cheated not just once, but twice, if not thrice, because those provisions may never come to pass. If the Secretary of State is a man of honour, I trust that he will repair that anomaly before relinquishing his office, as I am sure that he will.

Having dealt with one pending resignation, I now press for another. I refer to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whose treatment of the Scotch whisky industry is utterly unacceptable. I am sure that the anger of the Scots will be heightened even further when they hear of his sabotage of that industry. The deal that has been struck is incredible, as is the way in which the Chancellor has treated that industry.

Mr. Keith Raffan (Delyn): Is the hon. Gentleman aware that there has been a fall of 30 per cent. in the real value of the duty on spirits, including whisky, in the past 10 years? The Scotch whisky industry has fared extremely well under the Government.

Mr. McKelvey: Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will accept that, of the £8, the price at which a bottle of whisky retails in the shops, £6 is tax. That is a whacking great tax. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will also understand that, as we move towards 1992, when we hope that there will be an equalisation of measures such as the taxation and excise duty on spirits, we are not doing any favours to the Scotch whisky industry.

Incidentally, Scotch whisky is produced almost entirely from products which are themselves produced in Scotland. Apart from the cork in the bottle, everything else—including the bottle, the label and the contents—is produced in Scotland. The £1·5 billion that the Scotch whisky industry earns for this country in exports is therefore the true figure. It is not like the export of cars, for instance, half of which are produced from imported parts. The Chancellor should recognise the value of that true figure of £1·5 billion.

I notice from the press that the Revenue currently gives £350 million to the Treasury and that it is expecting a further £20 million as a result of the 10 per cent. rise in duty. I do not understand the way in which the Treasury works—the figures mystify me. From simple mathematics, I should have thought that 10 per cent. of £350 million worked out at roughly £31·5 million, so where is the missing £11·5 million? I can only assume that the Treasury is including in its calculations the assumption that, because the price is increased, customer resistance will also increase, which will reduce sales in the home market so that the Treasury takes less in tax.

The Scotch whisky industry is extremely important to the economy of Scotland. More than 8,000 people are directly employed in that industry. There is more than the possibility of a threat—there is a real threat—to some of the jobs of those workers, especially in the bottling sheds. The Government and Conservative Members cannot simply pass off what has happened as an increase which should have been made years ago and say that the relative value is the same as 10 years ago. All hon. Members should recognise that a tax of £6 on a £8 item is a colossal tax.

My main complaint about the Chancellor's activities in relation to duty relates to the increase of just 7p on a bottle of wine. Up in Banchory, workers at the distillery cannot understand why the Chancellor has imposed an additional tax on whisky. Those workers will not be dancing in the streets, although people will certainly be dancing in the streets of Bordeaux when they read what the Chancellor has done in relation to wine, which will be imported in ever-increasing quantities.

Kilmarnock in my constituency is the home of Johnnie Walker whisky. People in the bottling sheds there will be scratching their heads and asking, "Why on earth is the Chancellor increasing the revenue difference between spirits and wines?" I hope that that will be equalised in 1992. The workers in Kilmarnock may be wondering what

it is all about, but at this very minute the workers in Koblenz are probably not just naming a holiday after the Chancellor but naming a whole festive season in his honour because of the way in which his Budget will increase imports of their wine.

What the Chancellor has done is absolutely inconveivable. I ask the Government to remember the value of the Scotch whisky industry, the number of people that it employs in this country and the prestige that Scotch whisky enjoys. All of that has been threatened by a Chancellor who has been so ill advised that he does not even begin to understand the difficulties facing the Scotch whisky industry at the moment. It is inconceivable that this should happen at a time when, through the efforts of the Scotch whisky industry—with, I grant, some assistance from the Government—Scotch whisky is managing to penetrate the Japanese market when for years we could not break down the Japanese tariff barriers.

With some help, we have also managed to persuade the South Korean president to remove his country's barriers so that our whisky can penetrate the South Korean market. We now have an opportunity to penetrate the Taiwan market. That increase in exports is extremely welcome and is bringing more and more money into this country as we try to balance our trade deficiencies. Yet the Chancellor kicks the Scotch whicky industry in the teeth by imposing a whacking great increase of 10 per cent. in excise duty.

Like other hon. Members, I must ask, why 10 per cent.? If inflation is running at 7·5, 7·9 or even 8 per cent., why choose 10 per cent.? The answer came when the Chancellor himself said that inflation would go up before it goes down. He has probably chosen the figure of 10 per cent. because he thinks that inflation will increase to 10 per cent. shortly. The Government must then explain why their policies have produced a 10 per cent. inflation rate, which is greater than the figure that they inherited in 1979.

The Government's policies are not working—the House knows it, the voters in Mid-Staffordshire know it and people throughout the country know it. At the next election, which for me cannot come too soon, their voices will be heard. In the meantime, it would benefit the country if not only the Chancellor but the whole Cabinet resigned. I was about to suggest that the Prime Minister should also resign, but I do not actually want that—I want her to stay where she is, because she is our best guarantee that Labour will win the next general election.

5.50 pm

Mr. Keith Raffan (Delyn): I apologise to the House for the fact that I cannot remain for the reply to the debate as I am still recovering from a back problem. I am delighted to follow my fellow Scot, the hon. Member for Kilmarnock and Loudoun (Mr. McKelvey). Even though I am a Scot sitting for a Welsh seat, I am well aware of the importance of the Scotch whisky industry. However, methinks he doth protest too much. There is no doubt that the industry has fared very well under this Government. Indeed, during the past 10 years the Treasury has been too susceptible to the industry's persuasive powers.

As I shall explain later, there is a strong argument for a greater over-indexing of spirits than that introduced by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor on Tuesday. I am sorry to note that that makes the hon. Gentleman gasp. It appears that the whole of the population of Kilmarnock is employed in the Scotch whisky industry, something of which I was not aware.

The hon. Gentleman will appreciate that I am being objective, because Wales also produces whisky. As a Scot, I must tell my fellow Scots on the Benches opposite that they have protested too much about the whole question of the community charge and the change in the capital rule. I am glad to note that my near parliamentary neighbour, the hon. Member for Wrexham (Dr. Marek), is sitting on the Opposition Front Bench. Being a wise man, he has kept a respectable silence during the past 48 hours—as, indeed, have all Welsh Members.

We are aware that the community charge in Wales covers only 15 per cent. of local authority revenue. We do not shout that loudly in the House, especially when so many English Members are present. In Scotland, the community charge covers 18 per cent. of local authority revenue and in England it covers 23 or 24 per cent. That is substantially more. The Scots and the Welsh have done extremely well.

I do not deny that there are good reasons for that, but Scottish Labour Members should be careful. If they ask for Budget favours, everthing will be open to examination and analysis. Difficult questions might be put to Scottish Ministers about the very favourable budgetary circumstances and public spending for Scotland. Similar difficult questions are occasionally raised with Ministers during Welsh questions, even though we try to keep out English Members, especially when good news is about to be announced.

I join in the congratulations extended to my right hon. Friend the Chancellor, which came even from the Leader of the Opposition, who was generous and fair. My right hon. Friend's first Budget was an "excellent maiden sortie". The vast majority of Conservative Members thought that it was excellent not only in style but in substance—notwithstanding the short-term reaction from the City. The late Iain Macleod once said that the reputation of a Budget that faced immediate adverse reaction invariably fared better six months later, whereas one that found favour seldom looked so good with hindsight.

In the Budget statement, my right hon. Friend rightly emphasised the high level of business confidence and the underlying strength of the economy. He mentioned the 1,500 new businesses created every week, the rising level of employment and investment and the growth in exports. That strength is evident in my constituency and, indeed, in the constituency of the hon. Member for Wrexham. I am sure that he would agree with that. Our constituencies, together with the constituency of Alyn and Deeside, which is wedged in between, have led the economy in north-east Wales, and in Wales as a whole, out of recession.

There have been substantial reductions in the unemployment rates—52 per cent. cut in my constituency during the past two years. The new jobs created in my constituency have been predominantly male, predominantly full-time and predominantly in manufacturing. Formerly, our jobs were concentrated in just two industries—textiles and steel. Now there is a far more diversified industrial base, resulting in a much stronger local economy which is much more capable of withstanding periods of economic adversity.

Dr. John Marek (Wrexham): I congratulate the hon. Gentleman on his good fortune in his constituency, but in mine many of the new jobs are predominantly female. There is nothing wrong in that, but they are low-paid and, in the main, part-time.

Mr. Raffan: The old cry from the Opposition is that the new jobs are low-paid. Unemployment has been high in our constituencies. Indeed, four years ago male unemployment stood at 42 per cent. in two of my towns. If we can dramatically reduce the unemployment levels even further, wage levels will automatically rise as demand for labour exceeds supply. That is what will happen, and there is evidence of that already in our constituencies and throughout north-east Wales. We must question whether the Opposition are in favour of jobs, albeit relatively low-paid, or whether they would rather not have any jobs. Are they advocating unemployment?

The hon. Member for Wrexham should be more generous about the Government. We on this side are fond of the hon. Gentleman, and the Government have introduced a great deal of industry to his constituency. He knows that he has done extremely well, especially with the Japanese. His constituency is one of the focal points of Japanese inward investment. We have 70 per cent. of Japanese United Kingdom investment in Wales, a great deal of it in the hon. Gentleman's constituency. He prefers to keep quiet about that. The reason why Wales is attracting so much inward investment, especially from the Japanese—who are known to be rather discriminating—is that they believe in the underlying strength of our economy. The hon. Gentleman and his constituents are benefiting from that.

As my right hon. Friend the Chancellor said, all the evidence from high street sales, the housing market and imports shows that demand is slowing, but it is not yet slowing quickly enough to curb inflation. In a flexible economy, the slowing of demand should contribute to a reduction in inflation by keeping wages in check. However, it is clear that wage levels are not yet responding to weaker demand. Action is needed to slow the economy further, to take away the demand granted by wage increases and to keep a tight lid on the growth in real disposable incomes. Taxation is obviously an instrument for doing that.

I am glad that my right hon. Friend did not fulfil media predictions that he would not fully index personal tax allowances. That would have hit the better-off, but it would have borne especially hard on those with low incomes as they would have been drawn up, through inflation, into the tax net.

On the question of indirect taxation—this will no doubt cause another gasp and sigh from the hon. Member for Kilmarnock and Loudoun—some have argued for a standstill in excise duties to keep down the recorded rate of inflation. But there is a strong case for over-indexing cigarettes and alcohol, in particular, more than proposed in the Budget. There is no surer way to deflate demand. Of course, the higher recorded rates of inflation that will occur in the summer as a result—the hon. Member for Kilmarnock and Loudoun was right about that—will help my right hon. Friend, albeit indirectly, to maintain the high interest rates squeeze.

Over-indexation this year will allow under-indexation next year and so bring a sharp fall in the published inflation rate. That is the reverse of what usually happens——

Mr. Nigel Forman (Carshalton and Wallington): Hear, hear.

Mr. Raffan: Perhaps my hon. Friend says that because of experience in his previous incarnation when there were standstills in excise duties. When a Chancellor begins to index again and to increase taxes in line with inflation, having not done so for two years, he will produce a marked inflationary bulge. We do not want that to happen again.

There has been a drop of one third in the real value of duty on spirits during the 10 years of this Government. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer could have raised duties even more on spirits and alcohol. There are good health reasons for doing so. Sooner or later we shall have to resolve the conflict between the Treasury's eagerness for revenue from the sale of alcohol and cigarettes and their consequent reluctance to impose penal taxation on either, and the massive National Health Service bill that we have to pick up as a result of smoking and alcohol abuse. Sooner or later, the Government must face that conflict.

I strongly support the various measures brought in to encourage savings, such as the abolition of the composite rate tax and the introduction of TESSA. They will help "the culture of thrift", to use one of the memorable sound bites of the Budget, to replace the current epidemic of overborrowing. However, I strongly agree that interest rates must remain the main and most flexible weapon against inflation because they both discourage personal borrowing and reward personal savings.

Like all hon. Members, I want interest rates to come down as soon as possible, but I want them to do so without dramatically reducing the exchange rate, because that not only increases the cost of imports but weakens British producers' resolve not to give in to inflationary wage claims. We do not want to trigger a wage spiral. That is what poses the greatest danger to the economy at present.

My right hon. Friend the Chancellor said that inflation had proved far more stubborn than anybody had expected. He said, rightly, that the largest factor in that was the increase in local authority spending. I do not know whether the hon. Member for Wrexham is winding up the debate for the Opposition.

Dr. Marek *indicated assent.*

Mr. Raffan: I am glad to see that the hon. Gentleman is nodding. I shall read his speech with great care. I am only sorry that I shall not be here. I am sure that he will want to respond to this point. The Labour-controlled county council in Clwyd, covering my constituency and that of the hon. Gentleman, is greatly increasing projected spending. The hon. Gentleman may well look down at the floor of the Chamber, because the council is increasing spending by £28·5 million or 18 per cent. That is unjustifiable and inexcusable.

Is that a foretaste of what the Labour party would do at national level should the nightmare occur and it got into government? There are so many questions on their policies that the Opposition have left unanswered. As my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry rightly said, how would a Labour Government effectively control inflation? How much would they add to public spending? I see that the shadow Chief Secretary is present. We read some interesting quotes from her in the press, particularly when she is cornered in television interviews. It is more difficult to corner her effectively here; she is not

subjected to repeated questioning here. She always gives vague answers to questions about spending plans and how far the Opposition would raise taxation to pay for those plans.

Any Opposition attacks on Government economic policy will be blunted and rendered ineffective by their inability and reluctance to answer such questions, and their evasiveness and ambiguity when forced to do so. As the months go by and we draw closer to a general election, that will become increasingly apparent.

The trouble with the Labour party is that it is far more concerned to tell us how it would distribute wealth than how it would create it in the first place. We suffered some bad experiences, albeit 10 years ago. Ten years is not a lifetime: it is only a generation ago. We will remind those who have had the good fortune not to live under a Labour Government in this country exactly what happened under the last Labour Government. They promised the earth. They told us how they would distribute wealth, but they could not create it. Ultimately they had to go begging to the International Monetary Fund for the largest loan which that organisation has ever given to any country, banana republics included.

The Labour party has failed to advance a credible policy on interest rates, exchange rates, inflation and spending or to answer the questions, about its spending plans. It promises so much to so many but few believe it can deliver. That is what ultimately undermines its credibility. That is why it will not win the country's confidence at the next general election.

6.5 pm

Miss Kate Hoey (Vauxhall): I am pleased to make my contribution today—definitely for the last time as the newest Member and almost definitely, I hope, for the last time as the newest woman Member. I shall be brief, taking note of what the Father of the House told me when I first came to the House—that it is better to be brief than to be boring.

I shall mention a couple of issues in the Budget about which I feel particularly strongly and which I believe should be brought to the attention of the House. There has been much talk about this being a Budget for savers and for women. I shall concentrate on why the vast majority of women have not gained from the Budget. Many women, particularly the low-paid, have lost as a result of Government policies over the past 10 years.

The Budget has done absolutely nothing to help women home owners, who are still saddled with high mortgage interest payments—as well as having to pay the poll tax. It has also done nothing for the low-paid, two thirds of whom are women, or for mothers, particularly those whose child benefit has been frozen since 1987.

There has been just one move forward for women and we all welcome it—the change for women whose children are in workplace nurseries. The Chancellor of the Exchequer finally gave in to pressure from the Labour party and from women throughout the country to go back on a previous Conservative measure. We should not forget that the tax was introduced in 1985 by a Conservative Government. Now they have turned around and flown in the face of what the Chancellor himself said when he was Chief Secretary to the Treasury. Last year he said that the Government would not change that tax, and that its removal would have little effect on creating conditions to enable mothers who wished to work to have access to affordable means of child care.

We welcome that change, but it will affect very few women. Only 3 per cent. of employers' organisations provide workplace nurseries. Not one new child care place will be created by that move. The women who have benefited from workplace nurseries since 1985 have, to date, paid an average of £4,500 in tax as a result. That money will not be refundable. The Budget does nothing for the millions of women who have to make difficult decisions about where and how they will work, whether they can afford to go back to work and how their children will be looked after.

As recently as 26 October, in answer to a question during Prime Minister's Question Time about whether the tax on workplace nurseries would be abolished, the Prime Minister replied categorically:

> "No. Workplace nurseries are treated just as other extra facilities are—as benefits in kind for those earning over a certain salary. It would be quite wrong if those who have nurseries available at work were not to regard that as a benefit in kind while other people who had to make their own arrangements had to pay out of net taxed income."—[*Official Report*, 26 October 1989; Vol. 158 c. 1041.]

The Chancellor of the Exchequer has changed that policy, so presumably the Prime Minister has changed her mind—if not, according to the logic of her argument, she will have to come forward with measures to allow all women tax relief on child care. I hope that the Chancellor will bear that in mind.

The second issue that I wish to mention relates to the reduction in tax on football pools and the way in which that money is to go back into football. That is very welcome, and something that Labour and the football industry have been recommending for some time. At last we have a Chancellor who takes a little more interest in sport even than the Minister for Sport. It is very important that that money should be spent correctly, and I am very pleased that it will go to the Football Trust—a body set up by my right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Small Heath (Mr. Howell), who was a member of the then Labour Government. The trust has shown that it can spend money wisely, and the Chancellor's decision was an admission that football has been starved of the funds needed if grounds are to be made safe. The Government have been pushed by the Taylor report into taking that action and of course we welcome it. We need to move towards the provision of all-seater stadiums.

The money provided will help to improve ground safety, but we must not forget other aspects of the game. For instance, it is crucial that entrances to grounds and particularly the number and type of turnstiles should be taken into consideration.

Mr. Doug Hoyle (Warrington, North): Because of my hon. Friend's expertise in football, I am listening with great interest to her remarks. Does she agree that other sports will also need assistance? I am thinking particularly of cricket and rugby league, which face the same problems.

Miss Hoey: It was my intention to deal with that very point and my hon. Friend's question reinforces that intention.

If it is necessary to provide seating in order to save lives, can we afford to wait so long for action by individual clubs? The estimated total cost of making all football grounds safe is up to £200 million. Surely all works should

[Miss Hoey]

begin simultaneously. The money could be made available to the football clubs and paid back over a period from the money generated from the extra pools revenue. Where safety is involved, it is not good enough to carry out work gradually—all schemes should be undertaken immediately. Financial arrangements such as I have described could be made.

The Taylor report has had a knock-on effect on sport in general. I am thinking, for instance, of cricket, rugby league and rugby union. Clubs involved in all those sports will have to spend very large amounts of money on their grounds. Where will that money come from? In the case of designated cricket grounds, a huge amount of work will be needed. In the case of cricket grounds, such as the Oval in my constituency, clubs will have to spend at least £1 million in the very short term to satisfy the requirements of the Taylor report.

Sport generates an enormous amount of income for the Government. It is time for the Government to step in and find ways to provide the necessary finance. That is what happens in other countries when safety considerations are involved. The Chancellor gets up to £1 million per year in VAT on the sale of tickets at cricket grounds. That money could immediately be returned to cricket clubs to enable them to bring their grounds up to proper safety standards. I hope that the present Chancellor, who is interested in sport, will take my suggestion on board.

Very few people in my contituency will have been celebrating on the streets following the Budget. The greatest need in my area, just the other side of the river, is for housing, but the Budget contains not one suggestion, not one mention, not one proposal, to alleviate the housing problems in my borough and does nothing for the 15,000 people on the housing waiting lists there. It does nothing to help the many hundreds of families in the borough who are in bed-and-breakfast accommodation. It also does nothing to help people—particularly young people—wishing to move out of the family home, to get married and to set up family life in an independent situation. The Chancellor, in his Budget, seems to have forgotten that this country faces a housing crisis.

As I have said, the Budget does nothing to bring more women back into work, although there are the first signs of recognition that women are needed in the work force and that women want to work. In my constituency, however, many young single parents are sitting in their flats all day because they cannot afford the cost of child care. In those circumstances, it is nonsense for a single parent to go out looking for a job, especially one of the low-paid jobs available in my area. Having taken the first step in respect of workplace nurseries, the Prime Minister must stand by what she said in the House in October.

6.15 pm

Mr. Nigel Forman (Carshalton and Wallington): I welcome the Budget as a prudent and responsible package of measures—notably the encouragement to savings in the form of the TESSA scheme and the abolition of the composite rate tax. I am particularly pleased that the Chancellor has introduced measures to encourage still further the process of wealth creation and dispersion. As an honorary director of Job Ownership Ltd., I am delighted with the small but important change in the treatment of capital gains tax—the roll-over relief for ESOPs, the employee share ownership plans. Wider share ownership is an excellent move in the right direction.

The Budget will be seen as having adopted the appropriate fiscal stance for the current stage of the economic cycle. The Chancellor was absolutely right to place himself slightly on the tough side of neutral at a time when the relevant statistics still point in contradictory directions. In macro-economics and in politics it is always a good rule that, if one is not absolutely sure about the side on which one should lean, it is best to remain upright and to maintain broadly the existing policy stance.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Cirencester and Tewkesbury (Mr. Ridley) was absolutely right when, in his excellent speech, he said that Labour's policy alternative, so far as one can divine it from the party's policy review and elsewhere, is either vacuous or, in some cases, outright dishonest. As *The Independent* put it in a recent editorial, Labour policy is really a combination of

"warmed-over coporatism"—

dating from the 1960s and the 1970s—

"and vindictively higher taxation."

The British public have already begun to see through that particular aspect of Labour's policy. According to a poll conducted recently for the BBC, the results of which were published in *The Independent*, nearly twice as many people still think that the economy would be weaker, and prices would rise faster, under Labour than under the Conservatives. More than twice as many people believe that, for the average family, taxes would be higher. These are potent public anxieties that reflect the common sense of the British electorate.

Looking to the future, and regarding this excellent Budget as the first in a series of what I hope will be winning Budgets from my right hon. Friend the Chancellor, I hope that the Government will work towards two further institutional changes, which together would give them an even better chance not just of reducing but actually of eliminating altogether the scourge of inflation.

Let me digress for a moment. I heard the compelling speech of my right hon. Friend the Member for Hertfordshire, North (Mr. Stewart). I should like to place on record my strong agreement with his view on the RPI and the distortions that it can reflect. I hope that, when we come to a quieter period of lower inflation, it will be possible for the Government and the RPI Advisory Committee to look again at this matter. My right hon. Friend's arguments were very persuasive.

In relation to institutional changes, my first and foremost point relates to the statutory position of the Bank of England. I agree entirely with my right hon. Friend the Member for Blaby (Mr. Lawson), for whom I was proud to work for two and a half years at the Treasury, that a new basis of statutory accountability to Parliament for the Bank of England would be in the national interest and in the interests of the British people. There are several reasons why I say that, but there are three principal reasons why the change would be beneficial which are worth putting on record.

The first reason is that it would give undoubted added market credibility to the use of monetary policy as the principal anti-inflationary instrument of the Government and any other responsible Administration. Furthermore, it would assist the Bank of England, as the relevant body, in the administration of monetary policy. It would be the equivalent of good corporate management in a company

where a division, or a part of the company, is given clear responsibility for an overriding task—in this instance, the elimination of inflation—and is allowed to get on with the job, with the requirement only that it should report back and be accountable. In this instance, I suggest that the Bank of England should be accountable to Parliament rather than to Ministers.

The second reason why the idea is so attractive is that it would help to entrench a thoroughly non-inflationary approach to monetary policy within our political system. It would thereby help greatly to safeguard what Mr. Enoch Powell used to describe, rightly, as honest money against the temptations of the political cycle.

The third reason—it is probably the least important of the three—is that it would equip us with an institutional framework which would be usefully compatible with the framework that operates already in the countries of our European Community partners, with which, no doubt, we shall be co-operating even more closely in the years ahead within an embryonic system of European central banks.

I do not believe that at this stage in the economic development of the Community we should hasten too precipitately in the direction of a single central bank. Nor do I believe that it is necessary for the co-ordination of fiscal policy to be a vital accompaniment of the co-ordination of monetary policy. If we start from the angle of monetary policy, I think that we shall find that some virtuous consequences in fiscal policy flow automatically in market terms from that.

I say to my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Industry and Consumer Affairs, who I know is listening carefully to the debate, that the statutory accountability of our central bank would be an important buttress to the success of our counter-inflationary policy over the next few years. I hope that it will receive careful attention.

The other institutional change that I would urge upon my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he comes to consider these matters again at the appropriate time is something which I regret has become something of a King Charles's head, although it is none the less important for that. I refer to entry at the appropriate time into the exchange rate mechanism of the European monetary system. I know that my right hon. Friend the Member for Hertfordshire, North has already spoken about the matter and arrived at a different conclusion from the one at which I shall arrive.

It seems from the evidence that I have seen, from the French and Italian experience in particular—in many ways, they started with a more difficult inflationary situation than our own—that, after an initial period of undoubted interest rate volatility, we would see the interest rate premium that we have to pay of 6 or 7 per cent. vis-a-vis West Germany diminish over time to the point where we would not have to pay it at all. We would find that in consequence the financial markets would have greater confidence in the rigour and discipline of our monetary policy. Ultimately, that would greatly reduce the exchange rate fluctuations. That would be a valuable development.

Any senior industrialist or person in financial services will say that, of all the various non-tariff barriers which British industry and commerce are facing, none is more significant than exchange rate fluctuations and volatility. There is no doubt that the nations that have been within the ERM over the past few years and have managed to pursue the necessary monetary discipline to buttress the exchange rate mechanism have found considerable benefit for themselves and their export sector from being within the mechanism. I have no doubt that it would be one of the best ways in which we could take full advantage of the single European market.

Now that most of the external conditions that were set by the Government at Madrid for our full participation in the ERM have been met, I trust that it is only a matter of economic and political judgment before my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer decides that the time is ripe to take Britain into the mechanism.

With the firm foundation of this sensible Budget and the prospect of the institutional changes which I have recommended, we shall defeat inflation, promote the revival of our economy from the present temporarily difficult phase and bring about still further improvements in the prosperity and living standards of the British people.

6.26 pm

Mr. John Garrett (Norwich, South): With inflation due to rise to nearly 10 per cent. in the next few months, with a rate of economic growth down to a miserable 1 per cent. for the year and a forecast balance of payments deficit of £15 billion—the Government are usually optimistic in such forecasts—in earlier times our economic condition would have been characterised as stagflation, the constant problem of the vilified economic management of the 1960s and 1970s. The Government seem to be trying to give the impression that we face merely a temporary pause in our economic miracle, but we have only to read the forecasts in the Red Book to appreciate that the condition is far more serious than that.

The major indicators show that we are in a worse position than that which we faced at the beginning of the great economic experiment a decade ago. The need for a neutral Budget is clear enough when we are about to face the deflationary effect of poll tax—equivalent to 2p on the standard rate of income tax—as well as an unprecedented rise in council rents of 50 per cent. to 60 per cent. in some areas—and high interest rates. It is clear why the Chancellor of the Exchequer felt unable to take more purchasing power out of the economy.

The growth rate of 1 per cent. includes a significant increase in North sea oil output. That means that non-domestic oil output will increase by an amount so small as to be virtually unmeasurable, and certainly not a reliable figure. It must be a long time since the growth in manufacturing output was forecast as nil for the coming year. In anyone else's language, that means that we are heading for a recession, if not already in it.

A significant increase in unemployment is inevitable regardless of the behaviour of wage bargainers, but there is no forecast in the Red Book or in any of the statements by Ministers of the level to which unemployment is expected to rise. The idea that inflation will fall from well over 9 per cent.—probably nearer 10 per cent.—in the spring to 7 per cent. in the autumn is hard to believe, let alone the notion that it will decrease to 5 per cent. next year. Of course, the Government always forecast that it will fall to 3 per cent. in the year after next, but we never manage to achieve that.

The support that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has given to guidelines or a code of practice for credit lending institutions is unlikely to have much effect. It is false to

[Mr. John Garrett]

argue that credit controls cannot work in a deregulated financial system. Most non-housing lending is undertaken by banks and building societies which are licensed. A Bundesbank research paper issued this week states:

"Reserve requirements help control liquidity in the money markets as well as automatically acting as a brake on the creation of money."

One of the advisers to the Treasury and Civil Service Select Committee put the case for direct credit controls clearly when he said:

"Whichever of the monetary policies the Chancellor might choose, his task in making it work would be easier were a minimum reserve asset system restored. The ability to limit money growth with lower interest rates than are at present required would also have a longer-term beneficial effect on inflation by reducing the extent to which capital investment plans are aborted. Indeed the Bank of England can still call for special deposits, and it might be advisable for it to do so."

On other key indicators, fixed investment is likely to fall by 1·25 per cent. this year compared with an increase of 1·25 per cent. forecast as recently as last November. Manufacturing output, which will show no growth in 1990, will enjoy a recovery to only 0·75 per cent. in 1991—far below the rate of growth in other European economies and far below the rate of growth in East European economies, let alone those of our direct competitors. It is very hard to see how such a level of recession will prepare us for the increase in competition in 1992.

British industry will continue to be under-invested, under-trained and inadequately supported by research and development in the next two years, and as far ahead as we can see. The Budget did nothing to meet those inadequacies in British industry which mark us out from our competitors—inadequate investment in new plant and machinery, in training, in research and innovation and in energy conservation. Those should be central concerns for the future.

It is hard to see the tax relief for company contributions to training and enterprise councils as anything more than a gesture. No wonder the proposal has had a lukewarm response from business. It is Government's job to promote and fully fund training for industry—it is not for industry to make donations to training institutions. In any case, funding for the training and enterprise councils has been reduced, despite loud complaints from industry.

Nor has there been a warm response to the ending of tax on workplace nurseries. There are only 3,000 places in workplace nurseries, mostly in hospitals, health authorities and local authorities. Working mothers need a network of nurseries provided by local authorities, or there should be a levy on employers to provide for public child care. In this country, 40 per cent. of three to five-year-olds attend nurseries compared with 95 per cent. in France. Working mothers will gain very little from the Chancellor's proposals.

In this context, it is also right to mention child benefit, which after all partly replaced the tax allowance. It is a scandal that child benefit continues to be frozen, as there is no more effective device for the relief of family poverty.

I welcome the differential tax on unleaded petrol, but I believe that much more could be done to limit environmental pollution by way of taxation or tax relief. A whole range of innovations is taking place throughout Europe using taxation or tax relief to promote environmental protection. In Sweden, there are taxes on sulphur emissions and there will be a tax on carbon dioxide and nitrous oxide emissions, in Norway a tax on emission of CFCs, and in Finland a tax on phosphate fertilisers. In West Germany, motor taxation is being switched from engine size to classification by exhaust emission and noise, and in Italy there are taxes on sulphur dioxide, plastic products and herbicides.

All those means could be used to set the tone for environmental protection, to show that the Government intend to discourage the use of pollutants. A variety of tax penalties and incentives could be used to give signals to industry about the need to reduce pollution or to invest in environmental equipment or energy conservation. The Budget could have provided an opportunity to set the direction for a programme of inducements to reduce pollution, but in that regard, as in most others, the Budget misses the opportunity. It could have addressed the long-term needs of the economy for productive and environmental investment, but in fact it is little more than window dressing by a Chancellor left no room for manoeuvre by his predecessor.

6.33 pm

Mr. Matthew Carrington (Fulham): I greatly welcome the Budget. It is doing what the economy requires at present. In particular, I regard the strong commitment expressed by the Chancellor to bear down on inflation and to continue the fight against it as one of the most important aspects of the Budget. Its fiscal stance is about right: fiscal tightness in the economy is at about the right level, just as monetary tightness is at about the right level.

In particular, interest rates are probably about as high as they need to go, because one runs into a law of diminishing returns fairly soon: the higher interest rates go, the less effective they become. This is partly because of the political effects of interest rates, which need not be spelled out, given that we are a nation of home owners, but also partly because of the economic effects of high interest rates on wage rises and so forth. If, however, we accept that interest rates are as high as they need to go, we must also accept a degree of volatility and of uncertainty in the exchange rate which might be difficult to tolerate but which ought to be tolerated until such time as the interest rates have done their work and inflation starts to come down.

The other side of this—also addressed in the Budget and also very welcome—is an emphasis on increasing savings and enabling people to transfer their money into the savings sector. The abolition of composite rate tax is one of the most exciting innovations in the Budget and one which will do a great deal of good, particularly for small savers and especially for the elderly and for young people who, on the whole, will not be taxpayers. It will boost savings and be of considerable benefit to the economy as a whole. Nevertheless, we must wait for the economic medicine to work, and we must try not to get upset about the economic problems that we undoubtedly face in the short term.

It is often said that there are no alternatives to high interest rates, but this is incorrect. There are many alternatives to high interest rates. The great problem is that, on the whole, they do not work. The hon. Member for Norwich, South (Mr. Garrett) spoke about credit controls. Such remarks are often made about the beneficial

aspects of credit controls—the trouble is that they often come from theoretical economists rather than from people who have practical experience of how our banking system currently operates. It is not hard to see how many banks and financial institutions could get round any credit controls that Government imposed.

Mr. John Garrett: I was quoting from a paper by the Bundesbank on the effectiveness of reserve asset ratios and other forms of control. West Germany happens to enjoy an inflation rate of 3 per cent. at the moment, so the West Germans may know quite a lot about the usefulness of such instruments.

Mr. Carrington: The hon. Member anticipates me slightly—I was going to come on to reserve deposits in a moment. The Bundesbank report referred to the German economy and banking system, which are very different from our own and which have different regulatory frameworks, for reasons which I will come to in a moment.

Going back to credit controls, because it is important to realise how mechanisms for getting round them would operate in practice, if a borrower was denied credit by a bank because the bank, for whatever reason, felt constrained not to lend by Government regulations, either that borrower would go to other financial institutions which would not be limited by the regulations imposed by the Government—thus creating an artificial impediment to competition and efficiency in the lending market—or, if that failed, and he could not borrow domestically inside the United Kingdom, in the absence of exchange controls, any borrower of any size—not necessarily a large size—could borrow offshore without problems.

Nor would he have to borrow offshore from an institution which had no presence in the United Kingdom; he could do so from any subsidiary of any institution which was not under Bank of England control. An understanding of the way in which banking control works in the G7 countries and increasingly in the OECD countries means that any bank with its headquarters under the regulatory control of another central bank is controlled by that central bank and not by the Bank of England. Consequently, the ability of the Bank of England to stop a foreign institution lending to British nationals is severely limited. It would not be practical to control it even at that basic level. One has only to look back to the time before exchange controls were lifted to see how inefficient they were in preventing people from borrowing overseas.

Reserve deposits are a little more complicated because they do not have an immediate and direct effect on the lender. They effectively make it more costly for banks to lend, which in turn pushes up the margin or spread that bankers charge on their loans, as happened last time we had reserve deposits, when they pushed up the cost to the borrower, which had the net effect of pushing up interest rates. In addition, there is intermediation from institutions not affected by the reserve deposits. It is difficult to devise a system which catches all the quasi-banks that are capable of lending. One has only to look at the various commercial organisations in the business of providing credit in one form or another to see that, and one has only to look overseas to see the people who would come in to get round the reserve deposit requirements.

German markets still have reserve deposits, but they are being wound down and there is a great argument in Germany about how long they will survive. However, they work in Germany because the German economy is much more closed than ours. German banks maintain a tight control on the availability of the deutschmark, partly through tradition and partly because the German banks own so much of German industry.

Mr. Tony Banks: The hon. Gentleman has given us the key to the problem. The Prime Minister boasts from the Dispatch Box that Britain has the most open economy in Europe, but is that not the problem rather than a measure of our success? If we adopted the German model, we might have a more successful economy.

Mr. Carrington: The hon. Gentleman is right, except that the German economy is moving towards us rather than away from us and it is becoming more open. It is not more open, because the German banks still have a stranglehold, which they are slowly being forced to loosen as they start to conform with EC directives and regulations.

One reason why German banks have managed to maintain the stranglehold on the German economy for so long is that it is difficult to do business in Germany unless one speaks the language. I speak from experience, having done a considerable amount of banking in Germany at various times in my career as a banker before coming to this place. It is difficult to do business with middle-sized German companies unless one is a German speaker. The linguistic barriers to entry into the German market for foreign banks are substantial.

Mr. John Garrett: I am greatly enjoying the hon. Gentleman's mini-lecture on banking for undergraduates. It is most instructive, but I took that course almost 30 years ago. Is he telling the House that the 80 per cent. of lending made by banks and building societies to private individuals for non-housing purposes cannot be controlled?

Mr. Carrington: I am sorry that the hon. Gentleman finds my speech too elementary. It is a shame that he did not adjust his remarks to take account of the fact that what he was saying was wrong, which would have relieved me of the necessity of having to teach the hon. Gentleman a thing or two.

Intermediation and the ability to borrow overseas is no longer largely dependent on the size of borrowing. In fact, it can be done at low levels for a variety of straightforward technical reasons, but they mean that most individuals, even with small amounts of borrowings, can have access to overseas funds without too much trouble.

The third factor that is also mentioned is the exchange rate mechanism of the European monetary system. It is said that if we join, it will bear down on interest rates and so assist our economy. The commitment in the Budget to join the ERM at some stage in the future when circumstances are right is vital. I am strongly in favour of joining the ERM. Currency stability with our major European trading partners is an eminently desirable goal which would be good for industry.

The only problem that we face at the moment is the straightforward practical one that there is not much to join.

Mr. Tim Janman (Thurrock): Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Carrington: If my hon. Friend listens to my speech for a few more moments, he may find that his intervention is less pressing than he thought.

There is not much to join in the ERM at the moment, because we are in for a nasty shock on the ability of European currencies to hold together, particularly now that the Germans are proposing to merge with East Germany at the rate of one ostmark for one deutschmark, which will throw serious pressures on to the German economy. No one at this stage can foretell the effect of those pressures, partly because we do not know how the Germans are proposing to fund it. However, given the way in which Germans have funded things in the past, the likelihood is that German interest rates will rise.

Another consequence is that the deutschmark will become volatile in terms of its historic volatility, and that will not necessarily bear any relationship to the inherent instability and volatility of sterling that we have seen over recent years. Therefore, the ability to hold our currency in the short and even the medium term in relation to the deutschmark within any currency band would be severely constrained.

But that is just a start. The instability of the deutschmark which will be caused by the reconstruction of East Germany is only one aspect of what is happening in Europe at the moment. The European Community will be faced with the major responsibility of ensuring the restructuring of the economies of Czechoslovakia, Hungary and, eventually, Poland. There will be a massive demand on Europe to support those fledgling economies. If we do not, the political risk of those countries ending up in chaos with internal disputes and major border disputes will be serious. That will have major financial consequences for Europe, for ERM and the EMS and it will cause a major rethinking in Europe on how monetary co-operation, let alone union, is to be tackled. At this stage, we cannot foretell how that will come out.

Far from joining the ERM at the moment, we should seek an opportunity, particularly with the French and the Italians, who will be most adversely affected by the immediate changes in the deutschmark, to discuss ways to restructure European monetary co-operation in such a way that we can all co-operate on a basis which will not throw so much dependency on to the monetary control exercised by the Bundesbank as the ERM does at present.

Abolishing the tax on workplace nurseries is a major move in the right direction. To some extent I agree with the hon. Member for Vauxhall (Ms. Hoey) that that is only the start of a major rethink of the way in which we provide support to working women who need or wish to go out to work and want their children cared for during the day. There will always be relatively few children for whom a workplace nursery will be appropriate because of the nature of the mother's work, or the father's work—let us not be sexist about it. I know of a number of instances in which it is more appropriate for the father to take the child to the workplace nursery.

There will be times however, when such nurseries are not appropriate, either for the work or for the child. Many people say that, because of their association with the place of employment, it is not necessarily beneficial for the child to identify itself with being taken by mother or father to the place of work and then being placed in care there. We will need to expand the tax relief to cover other types of nursery provision.

We must also address the question of self-employed women. Almost as much as any other women, they need to be able to afford child care so that their children can be looked after while they are working. At present, child care is not allowed as a business expense for self-employed women, and under no likely arrangement of tax deductibility for child care in nurseries would that be appropriate. I can envisage a position where we will have to allow that expense as a deductible business expense.

My solution would be to raise the higher earnings limit from £8,500, as that would take many people out of taxation and benefits in kind, and would mean that we would save not only the considerable administrative burden in processing all the P11Ds, but ensure that the tax relief went to the least well-off, rather than going, as it will at present—if we expand it—to those who need it less with high marginal tax rates. We should raise the £8,500 higher earnings limit to something more realistic—perhaps close to £15,000.

The Budget is greatly to be welcomed. It is a cautious Budget, but one which keeps the pressure on in the battle against inflation in a highly desirable way that will pay dividends as long as we have the patience to wait for the medicine to work and bring down inflation.

6.52 pm

Mr. Pat Wall (Bradford, North): I took a calculated risk in submitting my name for this debate, as I have suffered from voice problems for a couple of months—probably to the pleasure of Conservative Members, and perhaps occasionally that of some of my hon. Friends. Certainly the chances of my voice fully recovering are somewhat better than the chances of the Government recovering from the economic mess that they have inflicted on the country.

We are told—and it is largely agreed—that this is a neutral Budget. It does nothing to address the gross inequalities in British society, nothing for the 9·4 million people who live on or below the poverty line, including 2·75 million children, nothing for the mass of pensioner couples who, by April this year, will have lost £20 per week in their pensions because of the severing of the link with average earnings, and nothing to make up the loss of child benefit, which has not been increased for the past three years. If anything, the Budget has marginally increased the trend away from direct taxation to indirect taxation and the consequent problems of the poorer sections of society.

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry said that the average couple with the average two children were better off than they had been 10 years ago. However, they now pay 5 per cent. of their incomes in value added tax, as opposed to 2·7 per cent. when the Government came to office.

The Chancellor's attitude to the country's enormous balance of payments problem is certainly less cavalier than that of his predecessor, the right hon. Member for Blaby (Mr. Lawson), but he advances similar arguments. The former Chancellor gave three reasons why the trade deficit of £20 billion could largely be ignored. First, he believed that the deficit could be financed by inward investment, as has happened with the trade deficit in the United States in recent years. Secondly, many of the imports that led to that deficit were for capital equipment, which was only a

sign of the enormous investment and productive boom in Britain. Thirdly, Government cash reserves were high and could meet any contingencies.

We should look at the sheer volume of the deficit—£20 billion. It is greater still in manufacturing industry. Travelling here this morning, I listened to a city expert talking about the Budget and the general economic position. He said that, even if the Chancellor achieved a reduction in the trade deficit to £15 billion next year, had there been a Labour Government the press and the City would be screaming for the International Monetary Fund to come in and take over the British economy.

The trade deficit can no longer be matched either by invisibles, which for the first time have gone into deficit —another Government record—or by the £80 billion from North sea oil, which has been largely wasted under the present Government. There is no net investment into Britain. In 1989, net capital outflow was £14·5 billion. Combined with the current account deficit, that amounts to a total deficit of some £35 billion, which has to be financed largely by hot money from abroad. That sum amounts to 3·9 per cent. of gross domestic product to cover the curent account deficit, and 2·8 per cent. to cover the capital deficit. That is a total of 6·7 per cent.—again a Government record, and the highest figure in British history.

The United States has a deficit for those combined two figures of only 1·6 per cent. Many of the so-called capital goods imports are classed by economists as intermediate goods, which could be better described as semi-consumer goods rather than capital goods. Britain used to have an export surplus in capital goods. The fact that it is now in deficit is a sign not of the strength of the British economy, but of its inherent weakness.

The right hon. Member for Blaby (Mr. Lawson), when he was Chancellor, talked of the official reserves. He should know a great deal about them—in one day under his Chancellorship those reserves fell by $1 billion. Since 1988, the reserves have fallen from £50 billion to £30 billion. That is why it is necessary to attract hot money into Britain, leading to a constant raising of interest rates and all the consequent damage to the economy and manufacturing production in Britain. That poses an awkward dilemma for the Government. There is a possibility of a recession. We are experiencing that already in Yorkshire and elsewhere in the textile industry, which is the fourth biggest industry in Britain. Once again it is suffering from redundancies, short-time working and lay-offs. In that much-vaunted sector of the economy, the service industries, there have been lay-offs in banking, in the City of London and in other sections of the economy.

Mr. Janman: If we extrapolate from the hon. Gentleman's observations about the economy, it is clear that he is making a case for his party, if it returned to government, to reintroduce the exchange and import controls that the Conservative Government abolished in 1979, and which virtually every economy in eastern Europe is turning away from. If the Labour party won the next election, does the hon. Gentleman think it should reintroduce import controls, exchange controls and capital controls in the British economy?

Mr. Wall: The last thing I have ever been is an import controller. If controls on finance and trade are introduced, they will be a result of what is happening in the world economy, which is now in the seventh year of the longest boom in post-war history. However, it has also been the weakest boom, with the lowest levels of growth and profitability. It is now coming to an end, especially in Britain because of the under-investment and under-capitalisation in the British economy.

Our economy will face the dangers of recession far more sharply than those of our competitors in the Group of Seven. It is in those circumstances that trade wars and restrictions on the export of capital, finance and goods will arise. The conflict between Japan and America that is developing now reflects the difference between a surplus nation—Japan—and its interests, and a deficit nation—America—and its interests. That has nothing to do with political dogma; it has to do with world markets, and it explains why these conflicts will develop.

I should like to give a few more illustrations of the nonsense of the so-called economic miracle. We are told that production has grown enormously, but growth in production in the 1930s was just as great as it has been in the past 10 years. Ignoring oil, which did not exist then, it stood at about 19 per cent. in both decades. Manufacturing output only reached the 1973 level in 1987, following the recession of 1979-81. It is now about 8 per cent. higher, but in the same period manufacturing production in West Germany rose by 40 per cent., in America by 70 per cent. and in Japan by 80 per cent.

It is reckoned that British investment per head is only 60 per cent. of that in Japan and 80 per cent. of that in West Germany, while investment as a percentage of gross domestic product has risen over the past two years from 13·7 per cent. to 17·7 per cent. Virtually all that increase was in the service sector of the economy. Wynn Godley and Ken Coutts in *The Political Quarterly* reckon that investment in new plant and equipment and in replacing obsolete equipment, compared with the years 1971 to 1979, has fallen by 63 per cent. in real terms.

This morning and yesterday a much vaunted increase in exports was announced, but I would argue that most of that increase has taken place because of the 10 per cent. devaluation of the pound since the present Chancellor came to office. Most capital investment is in banking and finance. As announced in the City today, in industries such as chemicals and metals, important to future exports, capital investment has virtually ceased and most of what is left is in banking, which does not bring in much export wealth to the country.

PA Consultants brought out a report on 400 major international companies. The report showed that only 25 per cent. of United Kingdom manufacturers spend more than 5 per cent. of turnover on training and development; the comparable figures for West Germany and Japan are 71 per cent. and 35 per cent. respectively.

The only aspect of the British economy—and its only attraction—of which the Government can boast are the low wages that British workers are paid, as I well know as I come from the town of Bradford, which has the lowest wages of any town in the British isles. The Budget gave concessions and advantages to savers, which no one would oppose, but Conservative Members may not be aware that many of my constituents who receive their benefits or wages on Thursdays and who work in the mills and foundries will have spent the lot by the end of the weekend and have to eke out Tuesday and Wednesday on virtually no money. The attraction of savings therefore has little

[Mr. Wall]

meaning for them. The Budget, and the Government and their policies, have done nothing to advance the interests of many of my constituents.

We have heard today about eastern Europe. The Secretary of State talked about the attractions and superiority of the market economy. What the events in eastern Europe have marked more than anything else is the fact that any society which cannot improve its economy within a fairly short period is a society in crisis. That was clearly shown in eastern Europe by the bureaucratic regimes, with all their corruption, nepotism and rottenness and their failure to advance the economies of Russia and eastern Europe. That failure caused divisions.

The British Government face the same problem, albeit on a lesser scale. They can no longer advance the economy of Britain, so what took place in eastern Europe will happen here. Divisions will begin to widen in the leadership of the Conservative party, just as they have developed among the leaderships of Russia and other eastern European countries in the past few months.

Last year there was a leadership contest in the Conservative party in which, for the first time since the Roman emperor Caligula, a group of politicians sought leadership from a quadruped, however well meaning he was at the time. The Tory party now faces a different type of horse—a Trojan horse being prepared within its ranks, probably in Henley-on-Thames. The Conservative party cannot solve the problems of advancing the British economy. It does not matter who leads the Conservatives after the general election, whether it be a horse or someone swinging through the trees, because the Conservatives will be defeated at the election. Then at least we can begin to solve the problems which face working people in this country and to advance the interests of the mass of the population, not just those of a few spivs.

7.8 pm

Mr. Anthony Coombs (Wyre Forest): In my relatively short time in the House I have heard quite a few examples of hypocrisy but I have never seen such a display of brass-neckedness as we just heard from the hon. Member for Bradford, North (Mr. Wall). The hon. Gentleman is virtually synonymous with corporatism, high taxation and Government intervention——

Mr. Janman: Stalinism.

Mr. Coombs: That is my hon. Friend's word, not mine. The hon. Member for Bradford, North argued about the benefits of the sort of revolutions that have taken place in eastern Europe. But the Czechs, Hungarians and Poles are all coming to Britain wanting to learn about the policies that this Government have championed——

Mr. Janman: I should like to clarify the terminology for my hon. Friend. It is my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) who is the corporatist; the hon. Member for Bradford, North (Mr. Wall) is the Stalinist.

Mr. Coombs: That sounds accurate.

These countries have been coming here because they want to learn about privatisation, the free market, free enterprise and low taxation, all of which have been championed by the Government. So when the hon. Member for Bradford, North tries to argue that these revolutions support his dirigiste, socialist philosophy he is guilty of brass neck of the worst possible sort.

As many of my hon. Friends have said, the Chancellor deserves our congratulations on introducing a balanced, sensible and cautious Budget. It is properly restrictive in monetary and fiscal terms and will produce the proper balance between controlling inflation and avoiding the potential danger of recession. It is in the reforming tradition of my right hon. Friend the Member for Blaby (Mr. Lawson).

It makes several supply side improvements, particularly in the taxation of husband and wife, in savings, in training and in access to the work force by women. As the hon. Member for Vauxhall (Miss Hoey), who is not here now, said, it rightly targets the football industry as in need of specific aid to implement the Taylor recommendations.

It is good to see the markets taking a more sanguine and intelligent view of the effects of the Budget today than they did yesterday. One should not become too worried about what the markets say. I recall that, in 1981, the last time we produced a fiscally restrictive Budget, 365 so-called experts wrote to *The Times* saying that the Government would preside over an economy that would go into slump and depression, whereupon there followed eight years of unprecedented growth.

So the fact that some commentators are saying that the Budget is not deflationary enough, while others are saying that the Chancellor has been unduly pessimistic about the possibility of controlling inflation, means that he has probably got it about right. He has maintained a consistent philosophy involving low rates of taxation, proper monetary control and improvements on the supply side, a policy that has resulted in eight years of consistent growth.

I represent a manufacturing area, involved mainly in consumer durables, particularly the carpet industry. Although there has obviously been a slowdown in the consumer durables and carpet sector in recent months—as should have been the case, with higher interest rates; they were designed to achieve that end—industry bears in mind the economic background against which the changes are taking place.

Companies recognise that they have been making better profits than at any time in the past 20 years. Indeed, when I visited a company in the traditional metal-bashing industry last week, I was told that the firm made 12 per cent. on turnover before tax, which is an extremely good example of some record profits that have been achieved in recent years.

Investment has improved in my area, as it has throughout the economy. Companies are employing more people, and between December 1988 and December 1989, unemployment in my area dropped by over a third, to only 4·2 per cent., compared with about 16 per cent. seven years ago. That has been due to the massively improved performance of companies in the area.

I believe that companies would not expect an athlete to go on breaking records year after year. There must be a time to slow down, take stock and draw breath. That is what 1990 will prove to be. There is no doubt that the Chancellor's deflationary measures are working. Consumer spending is slowing and there is a fall in orders and some retrenchment.

The difference between the present fall in orders and retrenchment and other such movements in the past is that

industry is today far better equipped to deal with that type of mini-recession. It is leaner and more efficient. The stock against output figures have dropped dramatically recently as destocking has taken place.

The growth in world trade is healthier, more firms are turning to export markets and our exports are increasing twice as fast as world trade as a whole. Indeed, a carpet company in my area, Brintons Carpets Ltd., probably the biggest, increased its exports last year by no less than 50 per cent. Businesses are better prepared on this occasion in terms of their financial ratios and gearing for the downturn that we are currently experiencing.

With imports flat and exports growing fast, the Chancellor may have erred on the side of pessimism in estimating that the trade balance will improve to only £15 billion this year. I estimate that there is a good chance of it improving much more quickly.

The British Textile Confederation is prepared to see the multi-fibre arrangement wither on the vine, provided that GATT is adequately reformed to achieve a level playing field for exports. But it is concerned lest the Government and the European Commission do not take tough enough action against countries such as Turkey, which are effectively subsidised by their Governments and are dumping goods into this country.

Turkey is now the largest exporter of textile goods to Europe. There are effectively no duties on its imports to us, yet when we try to export to Turkey, the duties average 200 per cent., including a contribution to that country's national housing fund. That is a particularly virulent form of protectionism, which must be addressed quickly by the British Government and the European Commission.

Continued progress in improving our trade balance will depend on our competitiveness. While last year our unit wage costs increased by only 4 per cent.—although in many countries they did not increase at all—if productivity begins to slacken this year as capacity restraints are reached and as investment growth levels off, our competitive edge may be blunted unless there is a significant restraint on wages. That is crucial for our strategy, and I hope that groups such as the Engineering Employers Federation recognise it.

We cannot take seriously the Labour party's regard for wage costs. Between 1974 and 1979, when Labour was in office, unit wage costs in Britain increased 50 per cent. faster than in any other European country, which inevitably damaged our competitiveness. Labour now proposes a payroll tax of 0·5 per cent. of turnover, which would cost industry £1·25 billion a year, and which again would damage our competitiveness.

Even the Labour party's advisers have estimated that Labour's proposals for a minimum wage—half annual industrial wages working up to two thirds on hourly earnings—would cost, because of reduced competitiveness, about 750,000 jobs once that policy had been fully implemented. How the Labour party can have any credibility, bearing in mind its industrial strategy and proposals for improving competitiveness, is beyond belief.

With industrial profit margins being reduced, there is a chance that industry will hold the line and that unit wage costs will be held down. That will be made more difficult because the labour market everywhere is extremely tight. I pointed out that in my constituency unemployment had fallen by a third in the past year. Skilled people are at a premium and every day one hears of companies, particularly smaller ones, poaching skilled people from their larger competitors.

With that in mind, I urge on the Government two sets of policies which I believe still to be crucial if we are to improve the supply side of the economy. The first set concerns training. There is no doubt that the new training and enterprise councils—one has been set up in Wyre Forest entitled CETEC, the Central England training and enterprise council—will do an enormous amount to ensure that the £18 billion spent by private industry and the £3·5 billion spent by the Government on training will be devolved to where it will be used best and more efficiently.

Equally, the improvements made by the Education Reform Act 1988, devolving more power to colleges and polytechnics, which can thereby improve their links with industry, will result in them providing courses that are more in tune with the needs of industry. Equally, it is good to see that the Government are still committed to doubling —albeit the figure has improved dramatically over the past 10 years, with 1 million people in higher education—the participation rate in higher education, when it fell under the previous Labour Government. All those things are very important.

The one area in which training seems to be missing out is the small business sector. It is good that 1,200 new companies are formed every week. The problem is that those companies need skilled labour and they are often not training themselves but poaching from other companies. Ninety per cent. of training is done by firms with more than 10 employees, while firms with fewer than 10 employees account for one third of industrial output. So we must do something to ensure that smaller companies have an incentive to do the training audits and the training and therefore produce their own skilled people. I believe that a form of accelerated tax relief might well be in order.

The second set of policies that is extremely important —as has been recognised in the Budget—concerns increased participation of women in the work force. Already in this country we are extremely well developed —if I may use the expression—with regard to the number of women in the work force; 44 per cent. of the work force are women. Indeed, I am told that between 1987 and 1988 there was a net addition of 474,000 women to the work force, 81,000 of whom were part-time, so the vast majority were full time. Between 1988 and 1989, 516,000 women were added to the work force, and the number is going up all the time.

The contribution of women is vital; there is no doubt about that. By 1995 there will be 1 million fewer 18 to 25-year-olds than there were in 1985, so we need all the skilled labour, whether women or men, that we can lay our hands on. Separate taxation will be an encouragement to women to come into the work force, and flexible working and home working are things that the companies can arrange in their own interest.

In that regard, the proposal for workplace nurseries is excellent but, like my hon. Friend the Member for Fulham (Mr. Carrington), I do not think that it goes far enough. Only 2 per cent. of working mothers—about 2,000 at present—can take advantage of workplace nurseries. The proposal set out by the Treasury in the Budget militates against small firms that cannot organise their own workplace nurseries. It discriminates against women who are not provided with a workplace nursery by their own firm but who send their children to private nurseries. As

[Mr. Coombs]

my hon. Friend the Member for Fulham said, it also discriminates against self-employed women, who are becoming a more important part of the work force.

I appreciate that there is a delicate balance between encouraging parental responsibility, encouraging women to look after their own children and making sure that delinquency is minimised as a result, and improving the supply of women to the work force and therefore the efficiency of the work force. But I believe that the Government would not err, especially given that the arrangement that they are at present considering would cost only £10 million a year, according to the Budget details, if they gave tax assistance for direct payments by firms to private nurseries on behalf of their employees. In addition, I believe that expenses up to a certain limit per child for self-employed women should be regarded as deductible.

Both sets of policies, concerning training and increased access for women, will be crucial in improving the non-inflationary growth potential of the economy. The only disappointing part of the Red Book was that it talked about a maximum non-inflationary growth potential for our economy of 2·75 per cent. We have just been told that the economy has been growing at 3 per cent. a year over the past eight years, on average. I think that we ought to be able to grow considerably faster than that. It is only by supply side measures of this type that that will be achieved.

In the long term, the most imaginative schemes in the Budget are those for savings. Labour Front-Bench Members talk about support for savings, but the Labour Government diminished the real value of savings by an inflation rate that touched 27 per cent. in their last year in power. They imposed an investment income surcharge and hiked up taxes so that people could not save out of their disposable income. But now, pretending that they have changed their spots, Labour Members are proposing further taxation of investment income, in terms of national insurance contributions being levied on investment income. That is hypocritial nonsense.

The new scheme is radical. It goes far beyond any suggestions that I have seen in the past for tax advantages for savings. Indeed, the only suggestion that I have seen, which was worth thinking about, was by Professor Mervyn King of the London school of economics, who talked about tax-free retirement accounts, where one would not be able to get one's hands on the capital after five years, as in the Government scheme, but not until one was 60. So the scheme is radical, it will be very popular and I believe that it will be economically useful. Indeed, it is very good value for the taxpayer at £200 million a year.

This is a fair, sensible and intelligent Budget, based upon the sound economic achievements of the past 10 years. The blather, huff and puff and political sleight of hand that we heard from the hon. Member for Dunfermline, East (Mr. Brown) are not worth talking about in the same breath. Unlike him, this Budget takes up the economic challenges facing this country properly and seriously, and we commend it to the House.

7.27 pm

Mr. Doug Hoyle (Warrington, North): I shall not detain the House as long as the hon. Member for Wyre Forest (Mr. Coombs) did; I am sure that a lot of his hon. Friends will be very pleased about that.

Tory Members have been whistling in the dark, keeping their fingers crossed and hoping that everything will turn out all right. The euphoric days of the past are well behind them now and they are in some kind of trouble. The Budget was not designed to solve the problems of the country. It was designed for the Mid-Staffordshire election today and for the local elections, in the hope that it would keep up the morale of the party and somehow or other get people who are deserting the party in droves to vote for the Conservatives. It will not have any lasting effects at all. Nowhere does it face up to the problems. It is a tinsel Budget, tinsel in the shop window, with no substance.

If we were a European football team playing in the European League, we should be at the bottom. The goals against us would be remarkable—the highest level of inflation, the highest deficit and the lowest level of growth. The directors would by now be saying that they have every confidence in the manager, and we all know what that means. It is what the Tory grandees have been saying about the Prime Minister, and it usually means that it is time for the person to go.

We can well understand why that in happening. As the Chancellor of the Exchequer said, inflation is starting to go up. It will go up to 9 per cent., which was almost its level when the Government came to power, so what have all the sacrifices of the past 10 years been for? Inflation is going up again.*[Interruption.]* I know that the hon. Member for Epping Forest (Mr. Norris) likes to mumble from behind, but what have the sacrifices been for? We are now facing all the problems that we were assured time after time that various Tory Chancellors would solve. None of the problems has been solved, and we are no nearer a solution than we were before.

It was remarkable today that the Prime Minister claimed as a success story a £1·4 billion deficit for last month. She claimed it as a success story because the figure had come down from £2 billion. Even on the Chancellor's own figures—he talked about a £15 billion deficit for the whole year—that month's deficit would lead to an annual deficit of £16·8 billion if it were repeated throughout the year. Where is the success story there?

We now know that there will be very little growth in the economy. The Chancellor said that growth would be about 1 per cent. overall, yet to listen to the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry today, one would think that we had a remarkable growth record and that we were doing better than most of our competitors. Here again, we are bottom of the league.

The Chancellor talked about the manufacture of television sets as a success story and said that we did not have a deficit in them. He was really talking about Japanese-manufactured television sets. From time to time, Conservative members wax eloquent about how the Japanese companies that have settled here in the motor industry will get rid of our deficit in European trade. They fail to say that we destroyed our own British television set industry just as we have largely destroyed our indigenous motor manufacturing industry. In research and development, we are dependent on other nations.

We have been hearing about employment prospects all afternoon from Conservative Members. An article in *The Times* today says:

"Bubble 'may burst on work prospects soon'".

According to a survey carried out by Manpower,

"only one in four employers intend taking on staff in the next three months."

The economy is starting to run down. That was the Chancellor's fear when he worked out the Budget. If he did too much, he would have pushed us into recession, which is a real problem. He has preferred to do nothing, which will not lead to economic growth.

Conservative Members often talk about the Japanese. I wish that they would study the way in which the Japanese do things. At present, there is an upturn in shipbuilding, for example. However, we cannot take advantage of it. We are still closing two of our most modern yards. I am sorry that the Minister for Industry has gone because he is trying to pick up the pieces in Sunderland. What is happening in Japan? The Japanese have put their yards into mothballs and now that there is a pick-up in shipbuilding——

Mr. Barry Field (Isle of Wight): Does the hon. Gentleman realise that there is no spare capacity in the Japanese shipyards for an order before 1993 and that, in South Korea, inflation is running so high that the yards there have priced themselves out of the shipping market?

Mr. Hoyle: I am pleased that the hon. Gentleman makes my case for me. Instead of closing the shipyards in Sunderland, we should be bringing them back into production to take advantage of the upturn in the market about which the hon. Gentleman is talking. The South Koreans are, of course, now having to charge more sensible prices. That is why the Japanese have benefited and why their shipyards are working to capacity. We cannot do that. We are left with Harland and Wolff and one yard in Scotland. Those are the only places where we can make the vessels now in demand in the world market, yet we could have used the two yards in Sunderland. It is a pity that we did not put them in mothballs. It would have have been better if we had put the Trade and Industry Front Bench—especially the Secretary of State after his performance this afternoon—into mothballs.

Mr. Tony Banks: They are the only balls he has.

Mr. Hoyle: I bow to my hon. Friend's superior knowledge of the Secretary of State's anatomy, but I know that British industry is not safe in the Secretary of State's hands or in those of his ministerial team. We are in a mess.

The Chancellor recognised on Tuesday that he is striking a fine balance. To be successful, he not only needs a fair wind, but the world economic policies must be right. He is dealing with matters over which he has no control. Yet listening to the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, one would have thought that everything in the garden was blooming. He never learns anything. All that I can say for him is that even when one thinks that he has given a truly awful performance one can guarantee that the next one will be even worse. That is the problem.

Time is short for us. There is more than 50 per cent. import penetration in important sectors of industry. Not long ago, we heard from Conservative Members that the electronics industry was one of the sunrise industries which would save our economy. Now we have a large and increasing deficit in electronics. I have already mentioned the motor industry, in which there is more than 50 per cent. import penetration. We are now trying to ensure the survival of the last British company in the motor car industry.

The hon. Member for Wyre Forest has a great interest in the textile industry. He knows that that industry is facing more than 50 per cent. import penetration as well. Is the hon. Gentleman waiting for me to give way?

Mr. James Cran (Beverley): Do not encourage him.

Mr. Hoyle: He needs no encouraging. He had a fair crack earlier. Like me, he is concerned about what will happen to the textile industry and he mentioned the unfair competition in relation to Turkey and other countries. It would be a tragedy if we destroyed the last remnant of the textile industry because of high imports.

Our record on training in Britain is abysmal, as we provide almost no training and much of it is not real training. The Government take people off the unemployed lists, but those people turn up again months later having had no real training. There is a contrast between school leavers in this country and school leavers in West Germany. In West Germany, 90 per cent. find a job. Most of them obtain apprenticeships which lead to qualifications. It is no wonder that we are falling behind.

The hon. Member for Wyre Forest talked about small firms and said that they do not provide training, but poach skilled employees from other firms. If they will not play their part, we should make them pay something towards real training. The Government are giving up their training role and relying on the voluntary sector, but we know that the private sector will not train people. The good firms which train people lose them to small firms which attract them by offering slightly higher wages.

We have also heard about the invisibles today. We used to depend on the invisibles. Not long ago Conservative Members used to say that it does not matter about manufacturing because we have the invisibles.

Mr. Tony Banks: They are really invisible now.

Mr. Hoyle: As my hon. Friend says, we cannot see them now—they are completely invisible. They are in defecit and there is no sign of an improvement. The problem has been caused by hot money and high interest rates, and the invisibles have suddenly vanished.

Mr. Roger Gale (Thanet, North): Just like Labour policies.

Mr. Hoyle: I wonder whether the hon. Gentleman is talking in his sleep again. It will not be very long before he can have a long sleep. I am afraid that his seat is in some jeopardy, but we will miss him in this place, if only for his remarks which none of us can understand.

Invisibles were supposed to save the present Government and, presumably, future Conservative Governments, but they have vanished. We have not yet faced the rigours of the single market and what might happen to our insurance or banking systems. Frankfurt may even bid to take over from the City of London.

One would not have known from any of the Conservative speeches today that the country faced a crisis. We are on the threshold of the single European market which offers great challenges. If we had the right training and the right enterprise in which help is provided

[Mr. Hoyle]

for industry, and if we had the right transport system, we could meet those challenges. Unfortunately, we are getting none of those from the Government.

The Government will blunder into 1992 and the single European market and we shall be decimated because we are not providing the training. We are also providing no research. If we want to compete with West Germany and Japan on research for civilian purposes, we must spend 50 times as much as we are spending now. Similarly, we need 50 times as many industrial research scientists as we have now.

I rather surprised the Minister for Industry by explaining that Siemens of Germany trains more qualified graduate electrical engineers than are trained in the whole of the United Kingdom. That is a sorry story. We are not prepared for the single European market. The Germans, French and Italians are far better prepared and their industries are in better shape than ours. We must also face the Japanese and the Americans. However, there is complacency on the Government Benches about the problems that will beset us when we enter the single European market. We should be able to welcome that market just as we should be able to welcome the fact that eastern Europe is opening up. There are great opportunities for British industry in that area if we are equipped to enter it. Unfortunately, we are not so equipped.

Manufacturing industry is being crippled by high interest rates. It will be investing less, when it should be investing more. We are not providing the training required for a modern industrialised society. The balance of trade will not come right for the Conservative Government, although they have had the advantage of oil, which the Labour Government did not have.

The Chief Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Norman Lamont): Nonsense.

Mr. Hoyle: I know that the Chief Secretary to the Treasury likes a fight—that has been well recorded. He has to say, "Nonsense," because he is on the Treasury Bench, but he must be aware that we are ill prepared to meet the challenges in Europe. If the Chief Secretary says "nonsense" again, he is more short-sighted than I believed him to be. He knows that I am right and that he has presided over the decline of British industry. In the early 1980s, the Government destroyed industry and we lost one third of our manufacturing industry. When the Government refer to a boom, they have very little basis for such a claim.

There is not much hope so long as the Government remain in power. Their ideas and policies belong to the 1980s, not to the 1990s. The sooner we have a general election the better, even though we shall lose some of the familiar faces on the Conservative Benches. The sooner we elect a Government who will be responsible and believe in industry and training and will meet the challenges the better—and that Government, of course, will be a Labour Government.

7.46 pm

Mr. Roger Gale (Thanet, North): Some hours ago, my hon. Friend the Member for Carshalton and Wallington (Mr. Forman) reminded me of a parliamentary truism by telling me that the best way to keep a secret in the House is to include it in a Back-Bench speech during the Budget debate. Listening to the hon. Member for Warrington, North (Mr. Hoyle) it became abundantly clear that by this time in the Budget debate just about everything that can be said has probably been said by hon. Members on both sides of the House. That is probably why the Press Gallery is empty. Nevertheless, I want to raise several points on behalf of my constituents.

I thank my right hon. Friends the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the First Lord of the Treasury for listening to our representations and for increasing the capital allowed against community charge rebate claims.

Many of my constituents are retired and have sold family homes and invested in smaller homes, houses, bungalows or flats. They prudently put the remainder of their money aside as savings to provide for their old age in the certain expectation that they will have bills to meet over many years. They have found it offensive that their prudence has been reflected in the amount that they have been required to pay in the past while others, some of them couples living together, have been allowed much larger capital sums in the bank.

The measures in the Budget on savings will be extremely welcome to many of the people in that category. I am delighted that the Government have recognised the need for prudence and thrift and have tried to recognise and encourage the culture of thrift.

I wish only that my right hon. Friends had gone further and, while reconsidering, had looked again at the uniform business rate and in particular at its effect on mixed hereditaments. Many small hotel and guest house owners and shopkeepers in my constituency own or live in mixed hereditaments. They will bear a disproportionate burden of increased taxation because they will have to pay increased business charges as well as community charges. I hope and believe that as the regulations and legislation are reviewed, my right hon. and hon. Friends in the Treasury will find it possible to take account of the genuine needs of a relatively small, but significant, number of business people.

Mr. Allen McKay (Barnsley, West and Penistone): I agree with the hon. Gentleman about the increase from £8,000 to £16,000 of capital. The change will benefit a few of my constituents. More would benefit if the Government also reconsidered the taper between £3,000 and £16,000. Many people who think that they will receive help will not receive it. Is not it also a fact that the more that we alter the position, the more the people who do pay will have to contribute unless there is help from the Treasury?

Mr. Gale: I hear what the hon. Gentleman says. The Treasury has considered the matter. I believe that the concessions in the Budget will affect a significant number of people positively. Above all, the concessions will send out the right signal. In the past we have said to perhaps too many people that it is no longer worth saving or, if one sells one's house, putting the money aside. It was better to some extent to spend the money and rely on benefit. The message that is now being sent is a Conservative message and the right one. It is the message that it is worth providing for one's old age by putting a capital sum aside, that people will benefit fully from doing so and will not be

penalised for having a relatively small sum of money in the bank. I hear what the hon. Gentleman says, but I believe that the Treasury has got the balance right.

My last point is a matter already raised by my hon. Friends the Members for Fulham (Mr. Carrington) and for Wyre Forest (Mr. Coombs). Tax concessions have been offered on workplace nurseries and playgroups provided by the employer. It is a particularly welcome step in the right direction. I have many constituents who have children and would like to return to work. I have several employers in my constituency who would like to entice married ladies with children back to part-time or full-time work, depending on the ladies' personal circumstances. Employers have found that those ladies have been dissuaded from returning to work because of the additional burden of taxation that they will face.

I agree with my hon. Friends the Members for Fulham and for Wyre Forest that we have not gone far enough. As I understand the new regulations, and as they have been explained to me by Inland Revenue officials, we shall remove from personal taxation the benefits of workplace nurseries and playgroups provided by an employer or a group of employers who have joined together to provide a communal creche facility. The relevant factor in that equation appears to be that the employer must have a stake in the workplace provisions.

In my constituency, we hope that, in the near future, a 170-acre business park will be constructed. It strikes me that it would make eminent sense for the developer to include in the heart of the business park a workplace creche. Under the proposed regulations, unless each and every employer has a stake in that creche, it will not qualify for tax relief. That seems to be an oversight.

I agree entirely with my hon. Friend the Member for Fulham, who took the matter a stage further. He said that a significant number of ladies, sometimes single ladies, would dearly like to set up in business and be self-employed. They find it impossible to do so because they cannot provide care for their children while they work. I hope that the Government will reconsider the matter and at the least permit employers, and particularly small business men who might not have the resources or space to provide creche facilities, to contract out child care for the children of their employees while they are at work.

I entirely accept the potential dangers of allowing tax relief to the employee on money paid for the purpose of buying child care, but I can see no reason why it is not possible to extend the scheme further so that the small business man can buy care from a private child minder or nursery. That would make a significant difference and bring into this new pool of people to whom we wish to give opportunities, the employees of small business men as well as those of larger companies that may take advantage of the concessions.

My hon. Friend the Member for Wyre Valley was right to highlight the potential dangers of encouraging too many ladies to return to work too soon. A delicate balance needs to be struck between encouraging ladies to return to work and make the most of the opportunities that will be available in coming years, and creating a generation of child-minded or latch-key children. We all accept that that is a delicate balance, but there are social advantages, particularly for lone parents—male and female—in extending the opportunity to go out to work to those who find that their entire lives are spent at home. We should offer them not only the financial but the social advantage of getting out of the house for a few hours a day, perhaps in part-time work, in the knowledge that not all the money that they earn will be eaten up in providing care for the children whom they have to place in either a nursery or creche while they are at work.

I welcome the announcement. I believe that it will be positive. I ask my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer to re-examine the possibility of extending the facility further to enable small businesses and the self-employed to take advantage of a worthwhile concession.

7.56 pm

Mr. John Battle (Leeds, West): One point that has not been made so far in the Budget debate is that at the heart of the Budget there is a huge silence about the real problems of increasing low pay in Britain.

In the concluding statement of his Budget speech, the Chancellor said:

"this is a saver's Budget . . . It helps the less well-off. It sets the right course for the '90s."—[*Official Report*, 20 March 1990; Vol. 169, c. 1026.]

I confront that claim with two facts. First, the figure for average weekly savings in west Yorkshire is one of the highest in the country, at £5·84 a week. That is higher than any other region in Britain, apart from the north-west. It is a strange irony that the areas that save the most and give the most in charitable donations receive some of the lowest pay in Britain. West Yorkshire is one of the lowest-paid regions. Only 28 per cent. of the people have an income of over £245 a week, and that is after 10 years of this Conservative Government.

I challenge the Chancellor's notion that his Budget helps the less well-off. It is not a Budget for social justice. It does nothing to root out endemic poverty, particularly among those in low-paid work. The minor alterations to the capital rules for access to social security benefit are no big deal for the poor.

The detailed measures in the Budget simply tinker at the margins. They go no way towards tackling the structural factors underlying the British economy as a result of the Government's policies of the past decade. If anything, they reinforce the current trend towards a two-tier economy, with those in relatively secure, full-time work, with rising incomes, in one tier and those in temporary, part-time, low-paid work, trapped in the low-wage economy, in the bottom tier. The long-term structural trend towards part-time work in the service sector is directly linked to the decline and erosion of the manufacturing base to which my hon. Friend the Member for Dunfermline, East (Mr. Brown) referred.

We are therefore entitled to ask, "What does the Budget do for the those on low pay?" The short answer is that, after 10 years, the better-off have become even better off as a result of the Government's tax-cutting policies. This is the 1990 start-of-the-decade Budget that offers absolutely no help to the 7 million people in Britain who are on low pay and who pay taxes. This start-of-the-decade Budget contains tax cuts for companies, charitable donors, savers and the City, but it does nothing to assist the poorest wage earners to meet the extra costs of higher rents; higher mortgages; higher gas, electric and water charges; higher prescription charges; or the cost of the poll tax. The Government and their policies are directly responsible for

[Mr. John Battle]

all those increases. This start-of-the-decade Budget ensures that the 1990s will be the decade of the low-paid if the Government remain in office.

The Budget is tough, but it is particularly tough on those in low-paid work who pay taxes. As a result of the Budget and the poll tax combined, the direct tax burden on a family of four on half average earnings is proportionately three times as big as it was in the financial year 1978-79. When the poll tax bites in April, a family on half average earnings will be about £1·80 a week worse off because of the Budget. Overall, two out of three households will lose and nearly 60 per cent. of households earning less than £75 a week will lose money.

Many more people will be drawn down into dependence on means-tested benefits. About 5,000 will be drawn into income support, and 1·19 million people will be drawn into housing benefit as a result of the high poll tax charges that the Government are imposing. As tax allowances have not kept pace with earnings, 85,000 more people will be drawn up into the tax net, which means that they will be caught hard in the poverty trap.

What did the Chancellor do to ease the burden on the low-paid or to help the less well-off, as he claimed? He made matters worse, The poor will not be better off, because the changes in the Budget have to be coupled with the effect of the poll tax. The London School of Economics has a computer model—TAXMOD—which has been used by the Low Pay Unit to analyse the combination of the Budget changes and the introduction of the poll tax in terms of the gainers and losers in our society as from 1 April this year. It shows that those on a weekly income range of between £150 and £175 a week—on an average income of, say, £162·50 a week—will lose the most because of the Budget. On average, they will lose £2·54 a week. All those on wages between £75 and £275 a week will lose between £1 and £2·50 a week. In other words, a family on about half average earnings will lose £1·80 a week. A household with earnings equivalent to the Council of Europe's decency threshold of £160 a week will lose £2·54 a week on average.

Such is the crushing burden of the introduction of the poll tax that, coupled with the effect of the Budget, 64 per cent. of households in Britain will lose as much as £15 a week from 1 April 1990. Nearly 60 per cent. of households earning below £75 will lose; nearly 60 per cent. of home owners will lose and 56 per cent. of tenants will lose. For heads of households who earn £157 per week, the changes will mean a weekly loss of £10.

However, worse even than the effect on individual incomes is the effect of the Budget when a combination of incomes is taken into account. Hon. Members should bear it in mind that the loss to a married couple will be £2·07 per week and that households with children will lose £2·35 per week. In other words, married couples with children will lose the most.

A detailed analysis of the effects of the Budget and the poll tax combined shows that this is tantamount to an anti-family Budget for those in poverty or on low pay. In real terms, there is a heavy tax burden increase on those with children, who also have increasing prices to pay, not least as a result of the loss to families because of the freeze in child benefit. In Yorkshire alone, 1,090,000 children will lose out as a result of the Government's failure to uprate child benefit.

Before we are told about workplace nursery tax—welcome though the concession is—let us make it absolutely clear that four in five couples where the wife works will lose an average of £2·79 a week anyway, which will begin to eat into that concession.

During his speech, the Chancellor stated:

"we tax people on low incomes who should not be taxed",

and that following the removal of composite rate tax for non-payers with savings,

"tax will fall on those who should pay it, and will not fall on those who should not pay it."—[*Official Report*, 20 March 1990; Vol. 169, c. 1023.]

Although the Chancellor made that statement, he did absolutely nothing about it in the Budget itself. The Budget retains the Government's built-in bias against the low-paid. In case some may think that that is an overstatement of the Government's policy, I remind the house of the Government's policy as stated in their White Paper, "Employment for the 1990s", which was published in December 1988. Chapter 3 was entitled "Barriers to Employment: Pay". Pay is obviously, therefore, regarded as a barrier to employment. The Government are pricing people into work, regardless of whether those people can afford to live on the rate that they are offered. That is part of the Government's deliberate policy to manufacture low pay.

That policy was made even more explicit in a recent speech by the Under-Secretary of State for Industry and Consumer Affairs. In his address to the February conference of the Confederation of British Industry on the subject of "the Japanese electronics industry in Britain", the Minister declared that one of the great advantages for Japanese industrialists investing in Britain was the

"low cost of the workforce".

He said:

"Britain has one of the lowest labour costs in the EC—one half of the costs in Germany and one third of the costs in France or Italy. Only Greece, Portugal and Spain are cheaper. The workforce is also skilled and flexible since it is not limited by rigid labour laws. For example, women are permitted to work the same hours as men including—unlike in some countries, including Japan—a night shift."

It is not the welcome that we are worried about; it is the terms of that welcome to the Japanese. The Minister welcomed them to a low-wage economy in which women are allowed to work a night shift although that is not allowed in Japan. So much for family values. Boasting about low wages is an insult to many of the people whom I represent and to hon. Members who represent other constituencies in west Yorkshire.

In my constituency, some home workers earn £4·50 for knitting a sweater that can take about 30 hours, while others pack cards for catalogue companies and earn 50p an hour or less. According to the Yorkshire and Humberside Low Pay Unit, although the average male adult full-time earnings are £269·05 a week, the average female adult full-time earnings are only £182·03 a week. In Leeds, 12,000 men and women earn below £100 per week; 54,000 men and women earn less than £140 a week, and if the overtime earnings are excluded, the figure rises to 68,000 people.

About 6,000 women in Leeds work part-time for less than £2·20 an hour; 15,000 work for less than £2·50 an hour and 30,000 work for less than £3 an hour. That is a damn sight less than hon. Members earn per hour. In other

words, the structural shift from manufacturing to service work has a parallel shift from full-time to part-time work, and concomitant with that shift is an increase in low-paid work and family poverty.

On 14 November 1989, I tabled a parliamentary question asking for a breakdown of the employment trends in Leeds during the 1980s, based on the standard industrial classification. The figures clearly show that between 1981 and 1987 the total number of jobs fell by about 7,000—full-time jobs fell by 8,600 and part-time jobs increased by 1,400. The number of manufacturing jobs fell by 13,900, and there was no increase in the number of full-time jobs for men in the service sector. Of the 10,000 new jobs in that sector, 7,000 were full-time jobs for women—paid at a lower rate than men—and a further 2,000 were part-time jobs for men, with the final 1,000 being part-time jobs for women. Therefore, there was no overall increase in employment. Indeed, there was no real increase in part-time employment for women. The new jobs in the service sector simply replaced those lost in manufacturing.

There is a switch from men to women, but with that has come a reduction in pay because women generally are paid less than men. The Government might claim that the vacancy columns show that there are hard-to-fill vacancies, but that is because those jobs are extremely low paid. Despite the doctored unemployment figures, the figure for my constituency is 7·8 per cent., with pockets within that standing at 20 per cent. Some 10,583 people —16 per cent. of my constituents—are on income support; 2,800—4 per cent.—are on family credit. What are their prospects under the Budget?

Paragraph 3.48 of the Red Book states:

"With output growth expected to be low in 1990, the sharp rise in employment of the last few years is likely to tail off and unemployment may rise. But the employment and unemployment outlook depends crucially on wage settlements."

The message is absolutely clear—that there is more unemployment to come, so cut wages; women's work and work in the service sector will be all. It is a return to the classic Tory message.

A survey in *The Sunday Times* covering the top 250 companies in Britain showed that their directors had pay rises of 28 per cent. during the past year, and that their average pay was £221,000 a year. That is a startling contrast to the average pay of £10,206 for their employees. We are entitled to ask why the poor and those with low wages are kept down and effectively priced out of our society while the rich are encouraged to become richer.

Since 1979, the bottom 50 per cent. of British society have lost £8·50 per family because of the Government's tax changes, while the top 10 per cent. have gained £40 per family. That is not a version of trickle-down economics; it is more a direct redistribution from the poorest to the richest. We must not forget that the Social Security Act 1989 put in place the very mechanism that will cause people to accept jobs whatever the low wage offered. If this Government's so-called economic miracle is to be measured by anything, it should be by their exclusion of the poor and the low-paid in society.

The Budget reinforces the Government's deliberate policy to push down wages and to shift from the one-nation approach, involving a jobs-for-all social democracy, to a two-nations approach in which there is a clear structural rift between the rich and the poor. The Budget underlines the fact that the 1990s will be the decade of low pay. It is too late for the Government to change their economic strategy. The only option for the people of Britain is to change the Government.

8.14 pm

Mr. Michael Irvine (Ipswich): Page 16 of the Red Book shows a chart which sets out the course of house price inflation since 1983. There was an acceleration in prices towards the latter part of 1987, and in 1988 there was a significant surge. I believe that that significant surge in house prices had a great deal to do with our present difficulties, acting almost as an engine for inflation in other parts of the economy.

Home owners, as holders of rapidly appreciating assets, realised that they could borrow against those assets, and they also felt more inclined to borrow. The growth of credit then fed upon itself. House prices were driven up beyond the reach of first-time buyers. People mortgaged themselves to the hilt to buy homes and, having done so, then felt the need to press for greater wage increases. Again, that meant inflationary pressure.

There were other effects. Companies in my constituency and throughout the south and south-east found themselves short of skilled labour. They tried to recruit from other parts of the country where the labour market was less tight, but found that the high cost of housing in the south and south-east was a great deterrent to such recruitment —and so the rigidity of the labour market was reinforced.

Part of the reason for the tendency towards house price inflation—which has been a feature of past economic booms, including the economic boom of the past three years—is the incentives for home ownership. I am all in favour of retaining existing incentives, because home ownership is excellent and should be encouraged, but we must face the fact that there has been an imbalance.

For too long, the incentives, the advantages and the tax breaks have been excessively loaded towards home ownership. A redress of that imbalance is badly needed. That is why my right hon. Friend the Chancellor was so right to shift the emphasis to other forms of personal saving, giving them the incentives and tax benefits that have been enjoyed by home owners. That is a significant move, which will benefit the economy, and perhaps, when the economy booms again will reduce the risk of house price inflation taking off as it did in the last boom.

My right hon. Friend's theme of thrift fitted in well with his announcement of the capital limit for community charge benefit being raised from £8,000 to £16,000. If my correspondence and my experience of my constituency surgery are anything to go by, the original £8,000 limit was a source of great grievance and resentment. People thought of it as a tax on thrift and a penalty levied on those who had worked hard and saved for their old age, whereas those who had blown it, those who had spent their income rather than saving, benefited from rebates.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Member for Ogmore (Mr. Powell) is in the Chamber and he should take his seat.

Mr. Irvine: The level at which the community charge benefit cut-off was fixed was widely seen as unfair, and I am glad that the Government were wise enough to listen to the representations made to them by many hon. Members and to act accordingly.

[Mr. Irvine]

Another group of people are affected by the community charge in conjunction with high mortgage interest rates. I am concerned about young couples where the wife has stopped work to look after the children. Mortgage interest rate increases hit such couples hard and the community charge reinforces the impact of that, particularly when the husband is the only earner in a family with an income just above the cut-off point at which he would be entitled to a rebate.

There is a good deal of force in the argument that wives and mothers in such families have made to me—that the Government are moving towards independent income tax for women but that, when it comes to qualifying for community charge rebates, the women's income is not considered in isolation but is taken together with her husband's. There is a risk of such couples facing considerable hardship. I hope that the Treasury Ministers and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment will take account of that.

In my constituency, the community charge is £440, and it will be no surprise to hon. Members to learn that there is a Labour borough council. It is true that the county council is Conservative, but the county council's budget is only 9 per cent. above the standard spending assessment. Yet Labour-run Ipswich borough council's budget is 96 per cent. above the standard spending assessment—the second largest percentage overspend in the country.

Mr. Janman *rose*——

Mr. Irvine: I am afraid that I do not have time to give way.

Although that degree of overspend is very much the fault of the local authority, it does not mitigate the hardship that families such as I have mentioned may suffer.

One welcome item of news in my right hon. Friend's Budget and one which will certainly receive great praise in Ipswich was the generous and well judged financial boost to the game of football. The Taylor report and its implications were bound to put heavy burdens on the finances of football. I know that my hon. Friend the Economic Secretary to the Treasury was also a supporter of Ipswich Town football club, and perhaps he still is, despite his move to the constituency of Mid-Norfolk. It is important that the Government have listened to the representations on behalf of the game of football, because that welcome boost of what is calculated over the next five years to be £100 million will make a significant difference to the game's well being.

By and large, I share the view that the Budget has the balance about right. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor confronted dangers from both sides. There was the danger of being too easy on inflation. Some of the financial markets yesterday showed that they thought that he had fallen into that trap, but they were wrong and, judging from their much steadier performance today, it looks as though they have altered their judgment.

My right hon. Friend could also have fallen into the trap of overkill. Not only are interest rates high, but he is also running a pretty tight fiscal policy. The combination of those two factors is already beginning to work its proper and intended effect.

The magnificent surge in investment by British industry during past years is beginning to show in the immensely encouraging export figures—*[Interruption.]* Contrary to the jibes and jests of Opposition Members, there are definite and significant signs that things are coming right. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor has got it about right—the balance is correct—and in the coming months and years we shall see the benefit of his wisdom and the correctness of his fine tuning.

8.25 pm

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): It is interesting to follow the hon. Member for Ipswich (Mr. Irvine), who is another Conservative Member who has suddenly discovered that the impact of the poll tax is not all good when examined against the detailed problems in a particular constituency. He was right to express concern about those families he described, but he should also realise that the Government have got the facts and figures wrong in their peculiar standard spending assessment system. The idea of blaming the local authority because it has spent over and above the Government's recommended expenditure is to miss the target. The real target should be those in Marsham street who got the SSA wrong in the first place.

I wonder how much longer we shall have debates like this, when we go though an annual parliamentary ritual. The Budget is largely irrelevant in terms of setting the economic scene for the year ahead. We then have three and a half days, after the Budget has already been analysed to death by the commentators, in which to debate it in Parliament. I wonder whether that is the best use of our parliamentary time. On a night such as this, I begin to feel like one of the last few guests left at a boring party. The days have gone when Mr. Gladstone used to stand at the Dispatch Box and speak for seven hours, often without notes. The sort of things he said then would clearly affect the economy in the next 12 months and influence future events.

When I heard the Chancellor of the Exchequer speak, I thought that he was delivering his speech with his fingers crossed. He would have to do that, because what happens in the British economy is determined far more by what happens in Tokyo, Frankfurt, Washington and other capital cities around the world than what is said in the Budget speech at the Dispatch Box. Budgets are becoming rather like yesterday's newspapers—forgotten almost as soon as the Chancellor utters the last words.

I was amused by the right hon. Member for Blaby (Mr. Lawson), the former Chancellor, sitting during the Budget speech like the ghost of Christmas past. He had given the present Chancellor many of his problems by virtue of the enormous tax cuts that he handed out to the rich in 1989. He had a bit of a cheek to turn up to see his successor clear up the mess.

It would be churlish not to congratulate the present Chancellor, who is a former distinguished member of Lambeth borough council. Indeed, he is one of a group of ex-Lambeth councillors in the House, including myself, my hon. Friend the Member for Brent, East (Mr. Livingstone) and my hon. Friend the Member for Stoke-on-Trent, North (Ms. Walley). Of those Members, the Chancellor has done the best—so far. The rest of us

stand around with our fingers crossed, just as the Chancellor did when he was making his speech on Tuesday.

What the Chancellor presented was a Budget for the party. His purpose was to stimulate the party, to try to do something about the depression that now sits on Government Members. That is why they were all waving their Order Papers at the end. It was a Budget for the party, not a Budget for the country. Most Conservative Members are grateful just to wake up in the morning and find that they are still Members of Parliament. So long as that is the case, they will remain cheerful. But they are living very much on borrowed time, just like the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the economy. As has been said, the Chancellor tinkered with the problems of the British economy; deserves to be called Tinkerbell.

The Budget did not address the underlying structural weaknesses of the economy. The skids are under this Government. It is obvious to everybody, inside and outside the House, that they are out of touch with reality. When a Government get totally out of touch with the outside world, one knows that they are finished. They start to believe their own propaganda. In the speeches that we have heard tonight, there has perhaps been more realism, but some things that Ministers have said, and certainly what the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry said today, might lead one to believe that we have an economic miracle on our hands, that our problems are the problems of success. A £21 billion balance of trade deficit, including a deficit of £16 billion on manufactured goods, is some miracle.

There was a time when this country, decade after decade, ran a surplus in manufactured goods. In fact, it was a Conservative Government who took us into deficit for the first time since the Napoleonic wars. In the past, people would say, "Never mind—the invisibles are saving us." But the invisibles, too, are now disappearing. The situation is going from bad to worse. Our inflation rate of 7·7 per cent. is double that in the major countries with which we compete, and there is talk of a dramatic increase of up to as much as 10 per cent. We have the highest interest rates in Europe. We have heard the litany many times, but what we have heard is true; these are all facts. If this is what the Tories call a miracle, I urge caution on any of them before they attempt to walk on water.

The only miracle that I can see is the disappearance, over the past 10 years, of £84 billion of North sea oil revenues, £27 billion of privatisation receipts, and £24 billion from land sales—a massive total of £135 billion. In exchange for that, after 10 years, we have one of the worst economies in the EEC. We have seen poverty and homeless double. We have transport chaos all around us, particularly in London; we have a crumbling infrastructure in the country as a whole; and we have stunning growth in social and economic division. It takes enormous skill for a Government to take in such resources and squander them. Without North sea oil revenue, the continuing crisis in the British economy would have become a calamity of proportions not seen in Europe since the 1930s.

I take no pleasure in saying these things. People involved in party politics experience some warmth from seeing their political opponents in real trouble, but I think about the impact that all these problems—the problems that these statistics reveal—create for the people in the London borough of Newham, which I represent. It is not the Chancellor who will have to live with the consequences of his Budget decisions; it is the people in the country. He has been getting it wrong in the same way as the Government have been getting it wrong almost every year since 1979.

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry claimed that we had a success story in achieving last month a balance of payments deficit of £1·4 billion. That is now success for this Government. The figure has gone down from £2 billion to £1·4 billion. Anywhere else in the EEC, figures of that sort would be considered absolutely disastrous, but in Britain in 1990 a Tory Government claim that they are somehow a mark of success. The whole economic language has been totally distorted by this Government. It is "Maggie in Wonderland": words mean exactly what she wants them to mean. That is the reality of our economy in 1990.

The City did not like the Budget very much. But, of course, I do not like the City very much. I have never been particularly keen on people who simply make money out of money. There is no patriotism in capitalism. Hot money follows the highest returns. The Government have had to make sure that in this country the highest returns can be obtained through high interest rates.

The Chancellor and other Ministers claim that the purpose of high interest rates is to control inflation, but high interest rates themselves create inflation by putting up prices, especially for industry. High interest rates are really needed to prop up the pound. Our economy does not have the structural strength to entice people with money to invest it here on the grounds that they will get a good return. Money is here only to earn high interest, and as soon as interest rates come down, the money goes elsewhere. There is more certainty in the economic strength of other European economies.

The hon. Member for Fulham (Mr. Carrington) referred to the more restrictive nature of the German economy. He talked in particular about the banking system in Germany. It is certainly true that the system there is far more restrictive than the system in this country, but that is also true of the Japanese economy and banking system. The hon. Gentleman knows far more about banking than I do, but I should think that the same is probably true of virtually every other European economy also. The Prime Minister has made it a boast that we have the most open economy in Europe, but because of all the structural weaknesses, an open economy, as she describes it, is a source of difficulty. It is rather like having a patient on a life support system and leaving all the windows open and hoping that somehow the patient will recover.

Mr. Carrington: Do the hon. Gentleman's remarks imply that he would advocate the return by his party to exchange controls?

Mr. Banks: Straight away I say yes, but the party does not say yes. That is the big difference. I want to give an honest answer to the question. The leadership of the Labour party must think about what will happen when there is freedom to move money out. I did not see the centre pages of the *Daily Express*, but I heard something about them on the radio. Apparently the *Daily Express* said that, had there been a Labour Government, even more billions would have gone out of the country because of the freedom of exchange. That is a problem that we must address.

[Mr. Banks]

I am quite sure that the leadership of my party is as acutely aware of it as are the leader writers of the *Daily Express*, and far more aware of it than I am, and I am quite sure that they will address it in terms of their preparedness to act when we win the next election. But I say again that my answer is that I should support a return to exchange controls.

In Newham last night, I did a bit of research into reaction to the Budget. I must confess that my methodology was not based on scientific sampling techniques; actually, it was based on some discussions in a snug at my local pub , the Builder's Arms. The Budget did not go down very well in the Builder's Arms. The beer did, but the Budget did not. The Chancellor said—and it has been repeated—that this is a savers' Budget, but the point that was made to me in the pub last night is that we do not have very much in the way of savings. Fares have gone up by 15 per cent.; rents are going up by about 27 per cent. as a result of the provisions of the Local Government Act 1988; gas, electricity and water charges have gone up. Mortgage repayments have gone up by £153 a month on average since June 1988. Poll tax, of course, will add about 0·75 per cent. to 1 per cent. to the retail prices index.

Those are all Government own goals in the stoking up of inflation. They all represent charges on people's income or supplementary benefit moneys, for example. People do not have money left at the end of the week, or month, to put into new and fancy forms of saving. Will the Budget measures tempt people to save or will they merely ecourage savers to switch their savings from one form of savings to another.

The people in Newham do not choose between expenditure and savings. They do not say at the end of the week or the month, "We have this amount of money left over so we shall put it into savings." They will not examine all the savings plans that are available before opting for the one which the Chancellor of the Exchequer says offers the best return. Instead, they have used their savings to finance day-to-day expenditure. Most of them do not have any money left at the end of the week or the month to put into savings.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer presented a tinkering Budget. It has been described as neutral, but I would say that it is largely irrelevant to the real problems of the economy. It seems that Britain is heading pell mell towards the status of a banana monarchy but without the benefit of bananas. I suppose that a banana monarchy would be the best description of a country that is led by a semi-demented petty tyrant in No. 10 Downing street. Fortunately, the skids are under her, and that started tonight.

8.41 pm

Mr. James Cran (Beverley): It is a stated truism that it would not have made any difference what Budget the Government had introduced. Like Pavlov's dogs, the Opposition would have done entirely the predictable. They have attacked the Budget, and they would have attacked any other Budget that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer had introduced. We all know why that is so. It is clear that some Opposition Members do not like the Budget, but the Opposition's profession is to run down the United Kingdom's economy. That sort of cynicism in British politics has been punished before, and I have a suspicion that it will be punished yet again. We all know that what we have heard over the past two days from the Opposition has been uttered merely for electoral reasons.

My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer was correct when he said:

> "During the last year, business confidence in Britain has remained a good deal stronger than many expected."—[*Official Report*, 20 March 1990; Vol. 169, c. 1010.]

It is certainly a good deal stronger than the Opposition wanted it to be. The economic facts of life have been blithely ignored by every Opposition Member whom I have heard this evening. The technique of politics would appear to be to ignore facts and to pour out unsubstantiated opinions.

Mr. Battle: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Cran: No. I know that some of my hon. Friends wish to contribute to the debate.

My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer was correct to underline the fact—it has been ignored by the Opposition this evening—that new business formation is at a record level. The number of those who are in employment is, again, at a record level. It is astonishing that 27 million men and women are employed.

I was astonished when I heard the hon. Member for Warrington, North (Mr. Hoyle), who is a member of the Select Committee on Trade and Industry, as I am, say that business investment is low. In fact, it is at a record level. So is company profitability, but I must say to my hon. Friend the Financial Secretary to the Treasury that although it may be at a 20-year high, it is not high enough by international standards. We would want to see it improved.

I am prepared to be lectured by those who have done better than the record that the Government can present, but I must stress that that does not include the Opposition. When they had the opportunity, they failed dismally and entirely. I see no reason to suppose that they would do anything different if they ever had responsibility in future, although I doubt very much that they will have.

Opposition Members have ignored what is happening in the regions, especially in the northern regions. They know as well as I do that we have seen something which has not been evident before in post-war years. The northern economies have been recovering far faster than anyone expected, and in some instances faster than the southern regions. That includes, definitely, Yorkshire and Humberside, the region which I come from.

Mr. Battle: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Cran: No. Some of my hon. Friends wish to speak, and I wish to allow them to do so.

I do not expect Opposition Members to accept what I say. That being so, I am happy for them to adopt that approach. Let us remember, however, what was said at the Yorkshire and Humberside council of the CBI, which was reported on 14 March 1990, which means that the quotation is entirely up to date:

> "the general picture is of employment prospects and investment holding up well. From its current firm base, the Yorkshire and Humberside economy can now be expected to begin to grow more quickly."

That runs contrary to the rubbish which I have been hearing all evening from Opposition Members. They say what they do because they want to win the next general election. That is why they ignore the facts.

Mr. Battle: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Cran: No. Sit down and listen to some of the truth, for a change.

Opposition Members might believe what is said by the Labour leader of the Humberside county council. At the end of last year, he said:

"Humberside continues to receive record levels of investment enquiries, many from overseas companies . . . For example, planning applications for industrial and commercial floorspace are up on last year's total by 20 per cent."

For the purpose of my argument, he neatly added:

"And it should be remembered that we are building upon a record year in 1988."

Let us examine what the largest company in my constituency, British Aerospace, is doing. A news release from 14 March 1990, says that 1989 has been

"another record year for profits and turnover . . . During 1989, 60 per cent. of British Aerospace sales were overseas and in the last 10 years the direct contribution to the UK balance of payments . . . was over £20 billion."

That is the proper argument, not the nonsense that I have heard from Opposition Members about the rundown of British manufacturing. The progress that we are seeing in the country generally, and especially in Yorkshire and Humberside, would go out of the window if inflationary pressures were allowed to get out of hand.

I am clear in my mind, as my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer is in his, that inflation is public enemy No. 1. When I was the northern director of the CBI, based at Newcastle from 1979 onwards, I saw at first hand what inflation does to a regional economy, to the companies in that economy and, unfortunately, to the work force. Jobs were like snow on a spring day—here today and gone tomorrow. I left an extremely demoralised region. That is not the position now. Opposition Members should go to the north-east to see what is happening there now.

My right hon. Friend the Chancellor is absolutely correct to put the control of inflation at the top of his list of priorities. It is therefore axiomatic that high interest rates are indispensable. I do not need lectures from Opposition Members or anyone else to tell me that high interest rates are unpopular; my mail tells me so. Mortgagors do not like the present level of mortgages, and I understand that. It is understandable that small businesses do not like high interest rates because of the money they have to borrow.

I am afraid that I must tell them quite simply that it is better for their budget to be stretched now than for them to have no budget at all in the future, because that is what would happen if inflation were allowed to get out of control. Opposition Members are experts at allowing inflation to get out of control; their record on that is second to none, and we should lose no opportunity of reminding them and the British people of that.

I entirely accept that fiscal policy has a supporting role. I also accept that the stance that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor has adopted is a tight one. I just wonder whether it is tight enough, and I slightly reserve my position. Having said that, I echo the words of other Conservative Members: the reaction of the City yesterday was histrionic and totally unjustified. Happily, that has been rectified today, and I think that it will continue to be so.

On the subject of business taxation, I have one carp —I could go on a lot longer, but I know that other Government Members would like to speak—which is a question mark over corporation tax. In 1983-84, corporation tax was under £8 billion; in 1988-89, it was £18 billion. The Financial Secretary would say—indeed I will do it for him—that that reflects growing profitability. So it does. Under this Government, companies have actually been allowed to make profits to invest, and that is why we have 27 million people in work.

The Opposition totally failed to do any of those things. Nevertheless, when the opportunity occurs, I think that the business community is looking for those rates to be re-examined because, as a proportion of GDP, our corporation tax levels are the highest in Europe. I do not think that they should remain there.

The Budget has been innovative in the encouragement of savings, but I am cynical about whether it will have the desired effect. I am a cross between a Scotsman and a Yorkshireman, a devastating combination as far as the saving ethic is concerned. I have been saving since I was so high because it was inculcated in me; my parents insisted that I save threepenny Post Office savings stamps. That has all gone, for reasons that I am not sure I entirely understand. My savings ratio is such that, if it were repeated by everybody else, we would have very high levels of unemployment—so I do not suggest that others follow in my footsteps.

While I wholly accept what the Chancellor says about the need to encourage saving, I am bound to say that, if one cannot persuade people to save at present high levels of interest, I wonder if they will be encouraged to save by the introduction of the TESSA scheme. I hope that it will work, but I just wonder whether it will.

With those few caveats, I am very supportive of my right hon. Friend's Budget and I congratulate him on it. Yesterday, the shadow Chancellor appeared to me rather like a Church of Scotland minister, giving a sermon which was rather too trite for me and rather too trite for the British people. There was a smirk on his face which I have a feeling he will regret when the Budget bears fruit in coming years and we win the next general election.

8.54 pm

Mr. Malcolm Bruce (Gordon): I notice that the hon. Member for Beverley (Mr. Cran) has not lost his combative style, which I first encountered when we were candidates for our respective parties in 1983. It is appropriate that I speak after him because, not surprisingly, being the leader of my party in Scotland I cannot speak on this Budget without making some reference to the poll tax. In my constituency, Conservative councillors will have some difficulty in resigning because there is only one left—and the hon. Member for Beverley may soon find himself in the same situation, the way things are moving.

The statement on Tuesday was extraordinary, but what is even more extraordinary was that the Chancellor, who admittedly is always cool and impassive, seemed totally oblivious of the reason why heat was being generated on the Opposition Benches and north of the border. The idea that there should be some increase in the capital exemption below which people qualify for benefits was trailed in the press and generally acknowledged as something that the Government were planning to do, so it cannot have been a surprise. I even had letters from constituents last week, saying that, if such a relief were brought in, they hoped that I would do my best to ensure that the Scots were

[Mr. Malcolm Bruce]

treated equally with the English, and I did—the tragedy for the Conservative party is that the Secretary of State for Scotland did not.

In consequence, the Secretary of State for Scotland has a considerable amount of egg on his face. He failed to defend Scottish interests in the Cabinet. He then compounded the felony, having apparently—although it is not clear—been hauled over the coals by the Prime Minister, by insisting yesterday that it was quite impossible for any retrospective measure to be introduced in Scotland. Then, at half-past two this afternoon he tells a packed press conference that he has found the money and is going to introduce a retrospective scheme.

Interestingly, the right hon. Gentleman found the money because his colleagues in the Cabinet had abandoned him to his fate; they had decided that on this occasion the Secretary of State for Scotland would not have the support of the Cabinet and that he must get out of a mess of which he had failed to warn them in advance. Consequently, although it is welcome news for up to 20,000 people in Scotland who will benefit from the change, the fact remains that these social security benefits will have to be financed out of the Scottish Office budget. That is extraordinary when, in England and Wales, the benefits will effectively be financed out of the Department of Social Security budget. Such a precedent will create problems in future.

The shambolic consequences of the poll tax, of which this is just the latest twist, only reinforce my view that it will eventually have to be swept away because it is so inefficient, ultimately to be replaced by a local income tax which is a much simpler administrative system and also takes proper account of ability to pay. But that will have to await even more shocks for the Government and, I suspect, the annihilation of the Conservative party north of the border.

Today's debate, at least as far as the Front Bench spokesmen are concerned, relates to trade and industry. The Secretary of State had the audacity to come to the Dispatch Box and announce a £1·4 billion deficit as good news. He is the only member of the Cabinet who could have done that, completely insensitive to the reactions of everyone around him.

Despite the best endeavours of Conservative Members, it cannot be claimed, and the Government do not claim, that the economy is in the best shape. The Government maintain that they have it under control and that it will all come right, but they cannot blame our current problems on the Labour Government. It is not my task to defend the Labour party, but after 11 years in office the Government must explain the current position in terms of their own record.

There are one or two points that the country should address in greater detail and to which all parties should give more thought. I welcome the Chancellor's positive measures to encourage savings and thrift. No one disputes that they are desirable. We have an open, free market system with a minimum of regulation and control, in which companies can sell and be sold, be broken up, bought, amalgamated or merged with far greater freedom than in other countries.

The only other major economy to operate in that way is the United States, and it is interesting to note that the United Kingdom and the United States both operate major balance of payments deficits. In contrast, West Germany and Japan, which operate on an institutional basis with a high savings ratio and a high degree of thrift and long-term commitment, have the strongest balance of payments surpluses.

It is all very well for Conservative Members to denounce what they regard as the rigid stranglehold of the banks on the German economy, but one of the beneficial effects of the structure of the German and Japanese economies is that it creates a climate in which long-term investment is positively encouraged and financiers and the financial backers of industry share that commitment because they are part of the process and are locked into the system. They are usually major shareholders and they usually participate in the board and its decision making.

That is the fundamental difference between our economy and the German economy. We are driven by short-termism, which often undermines investment generally and investment in training and in research and development in a way that the German system does not. If Germany is moving in our direction, we should also be moving in its direction if we are to ensure that in the long term we have the necessary savings, investment and long term commitment.

It is important that we see workplace nurseries not just as a benefit to women as individuals but as a vital first step in enabling the British economy to continue to operate effectively. We shall have to have more women in the work force so that we can make full use of their skills. However, there is a case for going much further than the Chancellor has done. For example, vouchers for workplace nurseries might be a way forward. That would ensure that all women would benefit, either by enabling employers to group together to provide nurseries, for example on an industrial estate, or by enabling small businesses to provide a voucher which will enable women to take advantage of it.

The hon. Member for Kilmarnock and Loudoun (Mr. McKelvey) made a lengthy point about the implications of the increased duty on spirits. However, whisky is different from all other spirits, since it is a statutory requirement that it should mature for three years before it can be marketed as Scotch. Since the abolition of stock relief, it has been the constant complaint of the industry that it has been at a disadvantage compared with its competitors. In those circumstances, the case for a statutory maturation allowance, for which the industry has been campaigning, has been strengthened by the Chancellor's determination to index the duty on spirits by more than the current rate of inflation. Whisky's contribution to the United Kingdom economy is of such importance and its importance in Scotland is so great, that it is time that serious consideration was given to that.

There is a major gap in the Budget—the omission of taxation measures designed to have a beneficial environmental impact. The absence of such measures shows that the Government are in considerable trouble in terms of reconciling the Prime Minister's rhetoric on environmental matters with their record on environmental matters. That reinforces something that I have noticed in the past year—that the Secretary of State for the Environment does not carry the Cabinet with him and is not getting his message across to his Cabinet colleagues so that they understand how pervasive environmentalism has to be if it is to be effective.

The Chancellor made no acknowledgment of his potential to influence things in a positive direction. He could, for instance, have introduced changes in vehicle excise duty to take account of the size of engines. That would encourage people to use more efficient engines, and would benefit people on low incomes in rural areas, who could switch to lower-taxed smaller cars from higher-taxed large cars. He should also have proceeded rapidly with the abolition of company car privileges, which are one of the main reasons why London's roads are choked. That would have resolved two problems in one.

The Chancellor should also have introduced tax incentives for catalytic converters, and he should have heralded grants for specific environmental projects—for example, grants to recover chlorofluorocarbons, both in industry and privately, and grants for energy efficiency. One thing that my party believes that he should have done was to introduce emission ceiling licences for toxic emissions. That must be implemented if we are to achieve real reductions in carbon dioxide and sulphur dioxide emissions. We cannot wait for the White Paper, or for next year's Budget. Plainly, although the Secretary of State for the Environment makes good speeches, his Cabinet colleagues do not listen to them.

9.6 pm

Mr. Tim Janman (Thurrock): It would be tempting to go over some of the empty rhetoric and lectures that we have heard from Opposition Members tonight about how to run an economy. The Leader of the Opposition seems to think that he can run a capitalist economy better than the party that believes in capitalism. Sincere though they may be in their views on the current position, the Opposition Members who have spoken tonight came into politics not because of their commitment to capitalism or free markets but to try to disrupt that mechanism and to drag the country in exactly the direction from which the Soviet Union, East Germany, Hungary, Romania and others are running away as quickly as they can. That will become extremely obvious to the electorate at the time of the next general election.

I want to concentrate on the monetary policy in the Budget. I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Beverley (Mr. Cran)—although he was talking about the fiscal aspects, and I believe that the monetary aspects are more important—in that I share his slight scepticism as to whether the Budget is tight enough.

On page 12 of the Red Book, under the section on monetary policy, there is a nice little graph that charts narrow money and broad money growth from 1974 to 1989. It is noticeable that the narrow money line is in dark ink, whereas broad money is represented by a much fainter dotted line. That tells the reader how much importance the Treasury attaches to the two measures. The graph is rather meaningless, because it does not contain the line that it should have to show what the retail prices index was doing over a similar period. Anyone looking at the graph cannot see the relationship between narrow and broad money and what is happening to inflation.

If we were to plot the retail prices index on an annual basis for that period, and draw it on the graph, it would be clear that there is a firm relationship not only between narrow money—M0—and inflation, but between broad money and inflation—allowing for the 18 to 24 months time lag that inevitably occurs between what is happening to broad money and what is happening to inflation.

Dividing the graph into five periods shows that the excessive broad money growth between 1972 and 1973 —the period of history just before the graph starts— caused the high inflation of 1974-75. A tighter broad money policy between 1974 and 1975 led to much lower inflation in 1976-78. Given the shambles that the Labour Government of the time had got the economy into, we then had one of the most hard-line monetarist Budgets of the past 15 to 20 years, which succeeded in bringing inflation down.

With the general election of the late 1970s approaching, broad money growth was relaxed again in late 1977. That led to much higher inflation from late 1979 through to early 1981. Then broad money was tightened again, and between 1979 and 1985 a fairly firm grip on broad money was kept in the United Kingdom. It produced quite a long period of low inflation, from 1981 to 1986.

Since 1985, an ever more relaxed attitude to broad money growth in the United Kingdom's economy has been adopted. As a result, since 1986 we have once again had higher inflation than we had in the early and middle 1980s.

Contrary to what the Treasury says, it is therefore clear that there is a relationship between narrow money and inflation and between broad money and inflation. That means that the Chancellor is absolutely right to set a target of between 1 and 5 per cent. annual growth for narrow money and to reduce that target range from 1 to 5 per cent. to zero to 4 per cent. in the years ahead. How can my right hon. Friend the Chancellor, however, be so confident that with an annual growth in broad money of about 18 per cent. we can reach the sort of inflation targets that our party wants to reach?

Furthermore, given that the broad money supply is important and related to inflation, why cannot we have some reduction in the standard rate of income tax? A cut in tax merely transfers money, and hence spending power, from the state to the individual. I hope that the Minister will address that point when he winds up the debate and that he will explain why that transfer is inflationary. After all, it is not only the notes and coins in circulation that are important for future inflationary trends; it is the total amount of money in the economy as measured by M4 or any other broad money measure.

This has been a good and responsible Budget, which will steer the economy through the present fairly choppy waters back into the calm sea of the growth of the past few years. I ask my right hon. Friend the Chancellor once again to examine the importance of broad money and determine that there is a relationship between it and inflation. If broad money continues to grow at an annual rate of 18 per cent., my right hon. Friend will not meet the important inflation targets that he gave the House two days ago.

9.15 pm

Mr. Allen McKay (Barnsley, West and Penistone): The hon. Member for Thurrock (Mr. Janman) began by talking about Socialists and Socialism, and it sounded as though he had lifted his remarks straight from a Conservative Central Office publication. I will explain to him why I became a Socialist many years ago. I saw people clearing snow because they had no alternative—they were

[Mr. Allen McKay]

obliged to do it or they would not receive any unemployment or other benefit. I saw people going without food, children without shoes and youngsters without trousers. I discovered that Tories, Tory politics and Tory policies had caused that situation, and I determined to do something about it when I could.

I looked for the best party to help me to ameliorate those conditions. I examined the Communist party, but resolved that it was too rigid. The Labour party, I thought, had the right policies, attitudes and sensitivity. It was clearly the right party for me and for the people whom I later represented.

I fear that those days would return. I am not referring to the precise circumstances that I saw all those years ago, but to a return to the type of Tory philosophy which caused that state of affairs to arise. I accept that people are not in those dire straits, although in some areas they are getting close to it.

The hon. Member for Beverley (Mr. Cran) talked about Yorkshire and Humberside, when he should have talked about his constituency in that whole area. He should not have included my constituency by lumping the region under the title of Yorkshire and Humberside. I say that because my constituency has 14·1 per cent. male unemployment and 5·9 per cent. female unemployment. The unemployment rate among females is rising, against the national trend. If the hon. Gentleman studies the statistics for the whole area, he will see that the situation in south Yorkshire is totally different from the rest of Yorkshire. That is why he should not lump Yorkshire and Humberside together.

The Government have got the poll tax issue all wrong. To begin with, the standard spending assessment is calculated on figures that were used for the rate support grant, and those figures were wrong in many respects. Two years ago, I told my constituents what the rate of poll tax would be and I was only £7 out, although I was £122 out, according to the Government.

If we have to abide by the standard spending assessment that has been laid down, we shall have to close every nursery school, dismiss every home help, serve no meals on wheels and get rid of every non-statutory obligation that we are undertaking.

Mr. Janman *indicated dissent.*

Mr. McKay: It is no use the hon. Gentleman shaking his head. What I say is true. If he doubts it, I will provide him with the facts and figures. I fear that, by dissenting in that way, he wishes to return to the days and events which led me to become a Socialist. He does not know what he is talking about, and by dissenting in that way he is showing his insensitivity. That is typical of the Tories, and the people are fed up with them.

The hon. Gentleman will recall that, when we first started to discuss the poll tax, my hon. Friends and I offered—because we knew that the Government were wrong—to have discussions about alternatives to the rating system, but our suggestion was turned down.

The Chancellor has raised the savings limit up to which benefit can be received to £16,000, and I am grateful for that. But he omitted to tell people that, because of the way in which the taper will work between £3,000 and £16,000, a person with the maximum sum allowable in the bank with additional income of £52 on top of the pension will not receive benefit.

Mr. Janman *rose*——

Mr. McKay: I have only two minutes in which to speak. The hon. Gentleman had his chance.

Mr. Janman: The hon. Gentleman should give way because he attacked me.

Mr. McKay: No. I am anxious to raise a few matters which need urgent attention from the Government.

Sir William Clark (Croydon, South): The hon. Gentleman should get his facts right.

Mr. McKay: If the hon. Gentleman thinks that I have not got my facts right, he can check them for himself, as I have checked them.

Mr. Janman *rose*——

Mr. McKay: No—sit down.

I want the Government to take note of what is happening with Yorkshire Water. Water charges in the area have increased on average by 11 per cent., the standing charge has increased by 100 per cent., the connection charge for a new single dwelling has increased by 900 per cent. and there are proposals to add that amount of increase to each dwelling in a multiple-dwelling development, thus creating an impossible situation.

Then there is the situation with regard to the sale of council houses. People come to me who are homeless and ask for help because they can no longer afford the council houses that they bought in good faith and which at the time seemed a good buy. We want local authorities to be able to buy those houses back, so that people will not be turned out but will be able to remain in their homes as tenants.

9.20 pm

Dr. John Marek (Wrexham): My hon. Friend the Member for Barnsley, West and Penistone (Mr. McKay) should not worry too much about the hon. Member for Thanet, North (Mr. Gale), who is clearly quite in error if he thinks that one has to go to Russia to see privation and people who do not have enough money for a decent standard of living. One has only to go to the arches under Charing Cross station or anywhere along the Embankment to see young people begging. That was never seen under a Labour Government, but it is seen under this Conservative Government.

The Budget and the Chancellor's Budget statement on Tuesday are set against the bleakest economic prospects that I can remember. Despite the once-for-all benefit of North sea oil revenues of £83 billion over the last 11 years, we are on the brink of a recession. Last year saw the biggest ever balance of payments deficit, £20·4 billion, and in the final quarter of 1989, for the first time ever, our invisible earnings were in the red to the tune of £713 million. The Government have brought this situation about.

That is not something which Government Members can spirit away; they cannot say that it is nothing to do with them, that it is the fickle British public borrowing more than they should and bringing in imports, and that the situation will eventually right itself. That cannot be the

excuse. Inflation and a run on the pound will be the consequences of such a hands-off policy and in the long run no Government could hope to win any battle without addressing themselves to the crucial question of the balance of payments or of economic and monetary union.

Since the possibility of economic and monetary union is not on the agenda, I looked for something in the Budget that would help our exports, or at least generate import substitution. But I looked in vain.

I must thank all my hon. Friends for their contributions, including my hon. Friend the Member for Kilmarnock and Loudoun (Mr. McKelvey). I am concerned about the health of the whisky industry. It is important to this country, and I hope that the increases will not place unacceptable limits on its operation.

My hon. Friend the Member for Vauxhall (Miss Hoey) made good points about football and the pools betting duty. My hon. Friend the Member for Norwich, South (Mr. Garrett) made the valid point that the number of nurseries—*[Interruption.]* I wish that the hon. Member for Croydon, South (Sir W. Clark) would not keep interrupting. It does not do either him or this debate and good. For the benefit of his Back Benchers, the winding up started 20 minutes late, so if he would allow me to get through what I have to say I should be very grateful.

My hon. Friend the Member for Norwich, South made a number of points about nurseries and said that the Government's concession would not benefit as many people as had been hoped. He has apologised to the House because he has had to leave on an urgent matter, but I have to say to him—I am sure that he will read the record of the debate—that I hope that, as a result of the Government's concession on workplace nurseries, many more employers will set up nurseries.

My hon. Friends the Members for Bradford, North (Mr. Wall) and Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) made very good points about low pay, as indeed did my hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, West (Mr. Battle). My hon. Friend the Member for Warrington, North (Mr. Hoyle) made pertinent points about training and, finally, my hon. Friend for Barnsley, West and Penistone made the real point that there is poverty and privation in this country and that the Government have done nothing about it.

I looked in vain in the Budget for measures that would change the depressing economic situation we face. Since then, there have been changes. The Government have been forced to rewrite bits of the Budget and they are still rewriting them. I expect that there are many civil servants working out how they can do something about Scotland over the weekend before the Secretary of State has to make an announcement to the House next Monday or Tuesday.

There are measures in the Budget that are not only acceptable to us, but to which we give a general welcome. An example is the proposed removal of workplace nurseries from the tax net. We opposed the introduction of such taxation while the right hon. Member for Blaby (Mr. Lawson) was Chancellor of the Exchequer. We said then that, although we recognised and agreed with the Government's aim of removing unwarranted and unjustified tax breaks for privileged groups, workplace nurseries were not in that category. We said that they were essential to working women with children and not a luxury.

I well remember well our debates in Committee on this subject—which were of no avail until now—so I welcome the Government's change of mind. The Government have gone about it in the right way by taking workplace nurseries out of the tax net. The reintroduction of a tax allowance would have created tax breaks which, for many, would have been unjustified and unnecessary. The hon. Member for Thanet, North (Mr. Gale) made some points that deserve further consideration and which may have some validity.

We also welcome the announcement of a scheme whereby VAT-registered traders will not have to pay VAT on bad debts. It has always been highly iniquitous that traders have had to pay VAT on outputs even though inputs could not eventually be recovered and a bad debt had virtually to be written off. However, I must give a word of caution. I hope that the scheme, when it is detailed in the Finance Bill, will be administratively good and that it will not lead to an increase in VAT evasion. I hope that the Economic Secretary will say a few words on that in his reply.

We also welcome the help for charities. Reliefs for water ambulances and certain medical equipment are rightly being provided, but there are other possibilities on items such as advertising and building that could be explored. There was near-consensus on these matters last year in Committee, and I hope that the same will happen again this year. The Opposition will be tabling amendments on charities when the Finance Bill is in Committee.

We are worried about the effects of the petrol price rise on the disabled who participate in the mobility scheme and who opt to give up the whole of the Department of Social Security disability allowance for the three-year lease or hire period. We wonder whether any compensatory effect could be introduced for that scheme. If the Economic Secretary cannot answer that point immediately, I hope that he will at least consider it. Again, it is a matter to which we can return when the Finance Bill is published.

The help for football is especially welcome. I am worried that the first and second divisions of the Football League will gain most of the money and that the third and fourth divisions, as a result of their lower attendances and lesser needs for safety, may have nothing. The Economic Secretary is shaking his head. I am pleased at that, because every football club in the league needs at least a reasonable proportion of this money to make its ground safer. The question about money for other sports has not been addressed, and it needs to be addressed at some point.

We are not so pleased about the way of increasing the company car scales. For many people, a company car is an extremely good perk and the present taxation is not sufficient. In the London area, far too many business executives drive their company cars with one passenger per car. That makes life a misery for commuters and the rest of the travelling public and the wife is often left stranded at home for the working day.

There is also the problem of evasion. Some executives who should know better regularly allow their accountants to file tax returns that they know to be false. That cannot be good, and greater action——

Sir William Clark: No.

Dr. Marek: It is true. Greater action needs to be taken by the Inland Revenue. The other side of the coin is that, for many occupations, a car is a tool of the trade and a

[Dr. Marek]

necessity. We therefore believe that the taxation system should do more to differentiate between that category of user and others.

Yesterday, I went to a Budget briefing by Price Waterhouse. After what I am about to say, I do not know whether it will invite me to another. Many learned experts appeared on the television screen. They said that three things would appear on the next boardroom agenda. They were summarised as cars, creches and training. In some ways, it is a sad commentary on companies in this country that the first item to appear on boardroom agendas will be cars. That is a pity. I also hope that the unions will ensure that employers do not escape their responsibilities about creches as a result of any concessions.

In that briefing, Price Waterhouse believed that company cars remain an excellent perk. I should like to know what Price Waterhouse told the Economic Secretary to the Treasury. Was he told that company cars were an excellent perk, or was he told something different on behalf of Price Waterhouse clients? Price Waterhouse also said that directors will consider themselves lucky to have got away with £5 or so a week for running the biggest executive cars such as large Volvos, BMWs and Rolls-Royces. Price Waterhouse said that the 20 per cent. increase was 10 per cent. less than expected, and that people with company cars have done very well.

The Government clearly have some way to go. We ask them to bear in mind the tool-of-the-trade car user for whom the use of a car is essential. However, company cars are an excellent perk and they must be taxed. We expect the Government to do something about that.

The Budget, as I have said, will not solve the economy's major problems. The Government must play a vital part in providing conditions for proper training. However, they are set on reducing spending on employment training by £350 million over the next three years. The Budget's proposal that contributions to training and enterprise councils should be made tax-deductible will not compensate for those cuts in training. There can be no substitute for a proper training scheme to harness the latent skills of our people.

An efficient and effective transport system is also vital. Industry needs to transport is goods, and people need to get to work. The roads are overcrowded and inadequate. British Rail, in its already underfunded state, will have its direct grants cut by one third to £345 million over the next three years. People who work in London will continue to have to put up with unacceptable conditions when they travel to and from work and they will be made to pay more for the privilege. Rail fare increases of between 9 and 15 per cent. have been announced. That is surely a good example of a Government inflationary own goal.

A proper transport structure is essential; spending money on one need not be inflationary, and may even be counter-inflationary. As the Government are bearing down on inflation, why have they insisted that BR should raise its prices by between 9 and 15 per cent.? Was that an unintentional inflationary own goal? Not on your life. There have been other Government inflationary own goals. Energy prices are set to continue to increase well above inflation. The London electricity board has just announced plans to increase domestic tariffs by 9·5 per cent. and that will mean an extra £52 on the average bill of a domestic customer. Of course, the industry is being fattened up for privatisation, but those tariff increases will increase inflation.

Council house rents are also rising. Tenants in Canterbury will pay an extra £12·29 a week. Redbridge tenants will pay an extra £15 a week——

Mr. Gale: One third of the area of Canterbury city council area is in my constituency. Council tenants in Canterbury were offered the opportunity of housing association guaranteed rent rises of inflation plus 2 per cent. over five years. It was bad advice from the local Labour party that led them to the pass in which they now find themselves.

Dr. Marek: They are in their present predicament because of the Government's policies, not for any other reason. They wanted to remain council tenants and that was their right. They did not want the ownership of their council houses transferred to an arbitrary body. They have kept that right, but at the expense of crippling increases in their council rents.

Mr. Gale: The hon. Gentleman is trying to talk his way out of it.

Dr. Marek: I have no need to do that.

Water charges are increasing by well over the rate of inflation and will continue to do so if the Government remain in office. The average increase will be 13·5 per cent. All those increases are inflationary own goals by the Government, when inflation in other countries is much lower than it is here. The Government, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Conservative Back Benchers continue to tell us that they are firm in their intent to bear down on inflation. They had better start by tidying up their own back yard. All the measures that the Government have introduced relating to public utilities contribute to inflation, yet we are told that the Government are bearing down on inflation. They are bearing down in inflation by insisting on crippling interest rates which crucify anyone who has a mortgage.

As the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry is in his place, may I quote from a speech that he made on 19 March 1982 when he was Financial Secretary to the Treasury? He said:

> "They argued that if the Government were to spend more money, we would get more business activity, more jobs, and with no adverse side effects."

Presumably he was talking about Labour Members. He added:

> "We always argued that the adverse side effects of doing so would be higher interest rates; that the less the Government spent, the less it had to borrow, the lower interest rates would be."

That was in 1982. Many years have gone by since then. Where are interest rates now? We have interest rates of 15 per cent.

Mr. Ridley: Is not it truer than ever now that, if we were spending at the levels that the Labour party wants—the hon. Gentleman has put in his plea for extra spending in the past 10 minutes—we would have to have even higher interest rates than now?

Dr. Marek: I have not put in any quantified plea for extra spending, but the speech of the Secretary of State stands on the record. After eight years, instead of lower

interest rates, we have the highest interest rates, which crucify everyone in the United Kingdom who has a mortgage.

In another speech, this time on 11 July 1980—going back a little further—the Secretary of State said:

"Viewed from abroad, where I spend much time,"—

the only pity is that he does not spend more time there—

"the admiration of our friends for the Government's policies is unbounded. . . . Why is there such interest and such admiration overseas? I think the answer is that many people think that Britain has an economic sickness. . . . What is the sickness, and what is the cure? The sickness is inflation."

What inflation rate do we have now? It is 7·7 per cent. and predicted to rise to over 9 per cent. It could touch 10 per cent. by the end of the year.

In his opening speech, the Secretary of State said that what had been the sick man of Europe was now doing well. I do not follow the logic of that. If we were sick in 1980, we are sick now. After 10 years of Tory rule, we have not improved. The most that the Conservative Government have done is bandage up the victim and leave him unattended in the hospital. Until we get rid of this Government, we shall not be able to employ any curative policies.

Mr. Ridley: What is sick about an increase of one third in the net standard of living in real terms for the man on the average wage? Can the hon. Gentleman tell us of another country that has done so well in 10 years? When did the Labour party ever achieve anything like that? What is sick about that?

Dr. Marek: The standard of living has been increasing in the developed world. There is no doubt about that. It has increased in other countries a great deal more than it has in Britain. My criticism is that, although some people in employment in Britain have done well, people who have not been in employment, such as old-age pensioners and the unemployed, have not done well by comparison with those in employment.

Mr. Ridley: Does the hon. Gentleman realise that there are more people in employment than ever before—almost 27 million? Does he realise that the figures I quoted were for the average wage? Does he realise that we have gained ground against the Germans, the French and all other countries in Europe, and even the United States in terms of net standard of living? Where does the hon. Gentleman get all his gloom from? One would have thought that he had never left Czechoslovakia.

Dr. Marek: The Secretary of State should listen to what the Prime Minister has said. We still have to catch up with the French. The right hon. Gentleman will have to make his excuses to his hon. Friend the Economic Secretary to the Treasury, because I shall take one minute of his time. I hope that the hon. Gentleman does not mind, but tonight's performance has been the greatest bout of activity from the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry that I have witnessed for a long time.

The country has been split. It is true that some people have done well, but not if they have been unemployed, not if they are old-age pensioners and certainly not if they have a mortgage. The monthly mortgage increase for existing home buyers is £134·29—*[Interruption.]* No, that is a clear figure. No amount of tax cuts could make up for that increase.

We can fight our way out of this terrible situation only if the Government recognise our position as a trading nation and as a creator of wealth. Manufacturing industry's growth rate has fallen from 8 per cent. to 1 per cent. Although manufacturing output rose by 4·75 per cent. in 1989, it is expected to stand still in 1990, and the Chancellor now predicts a fall in fixed investment of 1·25 per cent.

We need measures to dampen the explosion in credit without using the one-club policy of interest rates. Negotiations about entering the ERM are necessary, as are incentives for manufacturing industry, but we looked in vain for them in the Budget. Any fiscal tightening that is necessary could have been achieved by reversing some of the huge tax cuts that were given to the super-rich in the infamous Budget of 1988. Opposition Members looked in vain for any measures that would benefit the country and all its people. We saw nothing in the Budget except some tinkering with which I have no argument. There was nothing in the Budget about the necessity for a sound economy.

As the electors of Mid-Staffordshire are now demonstrating, the public agree with us and yearn for the day of the general election so that we can turf out this Government.

9.41 pm

The Economic Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Richard Ryder): May I begin by saying how sorry I was to hear earlier today about the death of the hon. Member for Bootle, Mr. Alan Roberts? He played an active role in the House and was an expert on many aspects of environmental policy. The condolences of the entire House go out to his family and friends.

My hon. Friends the Members for Wyre Forest (Mr. Coombs) and for Delyn (Mr. Raffan), who have spoken, have expressed their apologies for not being present for the wind-up speeches.

It is easy to forget—it has certainly been easy to forget this today while listening to some Opposition Members—that, over the past 10 years, the British people have achieved far, far more than the gloom merchants, such as the hon. Member for Wrexham (Dr. Marek), thought possible in 1980. Output, manufacturing productivity, investment, jobs and prosperity increased at rates unwitnessed for decades. We only have to look around us in our constituencies to see new offices, new factories, new shopping centres, new homes and millions of new shareholders—all signs of Britain's new prosperity.

We want to build on those successes in the 1990s—and we can do so as long as we control inflation. It penalises thrift and destroys savings. At present, inflation is too high. Interest rates may appear to some people to make it worse in the short term. To start with, of course, they do, but they also cure it. Once inflation is on a sustained downward path, interest and mortgage rates will follow. That will relieve the pressure on mortgage payers, especially young married couples, who find life difficult at present.

This Budget is a tough Budget. It raises taxes for the first time since 1981, by nearly £500 million this year and £1 billion next year. It also means that we shall enjoy a fourth successive year of substantial debt repayment. No

[Mr. Richard Ryder]

other major industrial country, except Japan, has a budget surplus. Ours is £7 billion. So it clearly flies in the face of the facts to argue that fiscal policy is not tight.

This Budget is also a tough Budget because my right hon. Friend the Chancellor has made it quite clear that interest rates will remain high for some time to come. There can be no relaxation in monetary policy—the battle against inflation is too important for that, as my hon. Friends the Members for Fulham (Mr. Carrington) and for Beverley (Mr. Cran) have argued so forcibly and effectively.

As my hon. Friends know, the Budget reinforces our strong stand against inflation and our determination to reduce it. Indeed, inflation is forecast to fall to less than 5 per cent. during next year. The Government's policies are tackling the root of the problem, as I am sure the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) knows in his heart of hearts. Retail sales are now only 2 per cent. up on the year, which is significantly below the rate of growth in 1988 and early 1989. The housing market has slowed markedly and new car sales are also down.

During the past few days there have been suggestions that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor should have done more with fiscal policy, as if fiscal policy could somehow take precedence over monetary policy in the fight against inflation. Fiscal policy has a clear role to play in supporting monetary policy; they act together. Using fiscal policy to try to manage demand in the short term would be impractical and inflexible. What is more, it would run counter to all that we have achieved over the past 10 years in getting down tax rates and creating a stable, consistent environment for businesses, earners and savers. At the same time, those lower tax rates have actually produced more revenue than did the high rates that we inherited from Labour in 1979.

The Government are not in the habit of raising direct taxation, unlike Opposition Members—who, although they do not care to admit it, would like to return to the bad old days of penal tax rates and low incentives. They do not appear to have noticed the moves throughout the world to follow our lead in cutting taxes and broadening the tax base. Even the Socialist Governments of France, Sweden, Spain, Australia and New Zealand have all reduced their direct tax rates—yet the Opposition still want to raise taxes. They are far removed from reality.

I wish to deal briefly with excise duties, which were raised not only by the hon. Member for Gordon (Mr. Bruce) in the latter stages of the debate, but by the hon. Member for Kilmarnock and Loudoun (Mr. McKelvey), who must have left to catch the sleeper. However, I want to answer his points.

When setting excise duties, we need to take account of a number of factors, including inflation, health and revenue considerations. All those matters are borne in mind in reaching a judgment on the right level. We must also remember that the Budget will keep the real costs of some products on which Excise duties are paid at the same level as they were last year. For example, although the duties on petrol and DERV have gone up by more than the statutory indexation figure, the difference covers an unchanged vehicle excise duty—or road tax—for cars, buses, coaches, taxis and many lorries. The real cost of motoring will be the same as last year.

The same is true of wine and beer. On cigarettes and spirits—the hon. Member for Gordon was especially interested in spirits—we are increasing duties above the rate of inflation, but only slightly so. It is just a little over 2p a packet more for cigarettes than would have been the case if we had simply indexed the duty, and 12p to 13p more for a bottle of spirits. The real level of duty on both those items has fallen during the past few years. Indeed, excise duties on spirits have not increased since 1985. Those points were made effectively by my hon. Friends the Members for Delyn and for Ipswich (Mr. Irvine).

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: Does not the Minister accept that whisky is in a special category? Its three-year maturation period means that it costs more than other spirits with which it has to compete.

Mr. Ryder: No one underestimates the immense success and efficiency of the Scotch whisky industry. Spirit duties on whisky have not been raised since 1985. During that time, there has been about a 25 per cent. increase in the retail prices index. On that basis, no one can say that the Government have been unfair to the Scotch whisky industry.

The hon. Member for Kilmarnock and Loudon is a member of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers, and it was the Trades Union Congress that made Budget representations to the Government recommending that excise duties should be double-indexed. I advise the hon. Member for Kilmarnock and Loudon that, next year, he should have a word with his friends on the AUEW and the TUC to see whether they can review the Budget representations that they make to my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

As the House knows, and as the hon. Member for Dunfermline, East (Mr. Brown) acknowledged, there are some important changes to business taxation in the Budget, some of which have been referred to in the debate and all of which have been widely welcomed. The extension of bad debt relief, referred to by the hon. Member for Wrexham (Dr. Marek), should be of particular benefit to growing businesses. The simplification of VAT registration requirements removes a long-standing irritant from smaller firms. Instead of having to undergo four different turnover tests, they will be subject to just one simple test, based on turnover in the preceding 12 months.

The increase in the small companies' corporation tax thresholds will mean that those limits have been doubled in two years, and will benefit 20,000 small and medium-sized companies. Our tax regime for small and medium-sized businesses is the best and most generous among major industrial countries. What a contrast that is to the structure that we inherited from Labour. Then, the small companies rate of corporation tax was 42 per cent., and now it is just 25 per cent. The main rate has fallen from 52 to 35 per cent. The small companies' threshold is now two thirds higher than it was under Labour in real terms. The upper limit, after which the main rate of CT is payable, has increased nearly fivefold.

Arguments on investment were raised during today's and yesterday's debates. The rapid growth of investment is a clear sign that British firms have confidence in the future, and are prepared to make the commitment necessary to take advantage of the opportunities opening up in western

and eastern Europe, which my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer highlighted at the start if his Budget speech.

Business investment grew by almost 9 per cent. last year, bringing the increase over the past three years to more than 40 per cent. and total investment in 1987-88 showed the largest two-year increase since the war. The increase in investment is not just a short-term phenomenon. Even going all the way back to 1979, total investment has grown faster than total consumption. Total investment in the United Kingdom during the 1980s grew faster than in any other western European country and among the major non-EC countries has been exceeded by only Japan.

We have heard some speeches from the Opposition about research and development expenditure. From what they have been saying, one could almost get the impression that the United Kingdom undertook no significant research and development. That is not correct. Britain is the fourth largest spender on research and development in the western world. British firms are not complacent. Expenditure on research and development by industry, as a percentage of its contribution to GDP, is about the same in the United Kingdom as that in both Japan and the United States, and is ahead of that in France and Italy. Of the major nations, only Germany does more, but not that much more.

A number of hon. Members, including the hon. Members for Norwich, South (Mr. Garrett) and for Gordon, emphasised the importance of environmental factors. As the hon. Member for Gordon knows, the Government are fully conscious of the importance of the environment and have already taken action on a number of fronts to benefit the environment and prevent pollution. Indeed, that is why the United Kingdom was a party to the EC agreement in Brussels a year ago that catalytic converters should be compulsory for most new cars by the end of 1992. That agreement makes it unnecessary for there to be any additional fiscal incentive at the moment. It is very encouraging that many manufacturers are already responding by including converters in new models, as we all know from the new advertising campaigns on television.

Several hon. Members, including the hon. Member for Vauxhall (Miss Hoey) and my hon. Friend the Member for Ipswich, referred to my right hon. Friend's measures concerning football. I am glad that my right hon. Friend's proposal has attracted a good response, not least from the hon. Lady and my hon. Friend. My hon. Friend is an avid supporter of football; he and I both support Ipswich Town.

It was not just the hon. Members for Bradford constituencies, two of whom are in the Chamber at the moment, or my hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Hallam (Mr. Patnick), who were appalled by the incidents at the Sheffield and Bradford stadiums. Football is our national sport, and we must improve the quality and safety of football grounds. We want to see stands filled with people who formerly supported football and with families, and we hope and expect that our prompt and positive response to Lord Justice Taylor's recommendations will help to achieve that aim.

I can assure the hon. Member for Vauxhall that we are acting straight away——

Mr. Hoyle: Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Ryder: I cannot give way.

We are acting straight away. Officials will be meeting the pools promoters and the Football Trust next Tuesday. Let us all hope that agreement will be reached quickly, so that football clubs can start to reap the benefits of the change that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor has made.

Some people have suggested that what we have done for football is not enough, but we are offering £100 million over five years, which, together with the £75 million that the Football Trust has already promised, is a considerable amount of money. Our discussions with the Football Trust will aim to ensure that the money saved from the cut in pool betting duty is distributed among clubs according to need. At the same time, I think that the House will agree that at least some of the money needed should be provided by the clubs themselves. The first reaction from the clubs has been positive, and I hope that they will respond favourably in the next few weeks.

As hon. Members know, this measure is designed to help football. It is a sign of our strong concern that the football safety recommendations in the Taylor report should be carried out as quickly as possible. The money saved from pool betting duty arises almost wholly from betting on football, and it is right that those proceeds should go to the game to improve the lot of the fans. I think that that answers the point raised by the hon. Member for Vauxhall.

It would be inappropriate not to end the debate today with a brief reference to the lack of alternatives from the Labour party. The Opposition have failed consistently to answer the key questions on the economy. What would the standard rate of income tax be under Labour? Which taxes would Labour raise? How much would people lose as a result of Labour's national insurance plans? Would Labour reintroduce exchange controls or import controls? Would Labour introduce mortgage controls?

Those are the questions that the Labour party has repeatedly failed to answer during the debate. They are key questions, and we shall return to them time and again, until we get real answers from the Labour Front Bench. By its evasions this week, the Labour party has discarded any openness. The party, including the hon. Member for Newham, North-West, shrank from principle and dodged its duty to the electorate to explain its alternatives. Labour's daily veneration of verbosity at the expense of substance will be seen as exactly what it is—dishonest and discreditable.

Contrary to the futile claims of the Labour party, Britain enjoyed a decade of unmatched prosperity in the 1980s. I am confident that my right hon. Friend's Budget will set a launch pad for another decade of success for Britain. This savers' Budget took no risks with inflation, helped the less well-off, gave women a fairer deal, assisted small businesses and provided a large boost to charities and sport.

Debate adjourned—*[Mr. Patnick.]*

Debate to be resumed tomorrow.

India

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Patnick.]*

10 pm

Mr. Max Madden (Bradford, West): I am pleased to introduce a short debate on relations between Her Majesty's Government and India, the first such debate in the House for some considerable time. I have recently returned from a brief visit to India, and I thank the authorities, especially the governor of the Punjab, for their assistance and co-operation, and a range of human rights organisations and their brave and dedicated members for their help and support during my visit.

My main purpose was to investigate human rights in the Punjab. With the intractable problem of Northern Ireland much in my mind, I realise that no Britisher in India can feel superior when discussing human rights in the Punjab, where the forces of law and order are pitched against terrorists. I talked to police officers in the Punjab who, like security officers in Northern Ireland, told me that many of the terrorists were gangsters who preyed on Sikhs and Hindus for money and power. Few, they argued, were motivated by dreams of an independent Khalistan.

I talked to human rights groups in the Punjab who, like their counterparts in Northern Ireland, told me that state violence and repression had alienated many in the Punjab, Sikh and Hindu, and had provoked widespread violence and terror. Both sides claimed, rightly I am sure, that all ordinary people in the Punjab, Sikh and non-Sikh, are sickened by violence and want an end to it. I talked to scores of those ordinary people, and their stories were deeply disturbing.

I shall never forget the Sikh father whose 14-year-old daughter was raped and drowned by a police officer. The father was brutally beaten by police three times over two days. He was seeking the return of his daughter's body for cremation. He was warned that, if he did not stop complaining, what had happened to his 14-year-old daughter would happen to his seven-year-old daughter. The father is refusing to wear shoes until he gets justice.

I shall not forget the young Sikh who was shot as a terrorist after he stood with his arms above his head in a field for five minutes. The police later admitted that they had made a mistake. Senior police officers saluted at the young man's cremation. His family is still waiting for the compensation that it was promised.

I shall not forget the relatives of the young man who was shot while marching in a Sikh religious festival. Again, the police admitted a mistake. His brother has been warned off pressing for police officers to be punished.

I shall not forget the 500 prisoners in the Amritsar security prison who lined up in the sun to meet me and my team. Each one was holding his record papers. There were more than 300 held on petty offences without bail. The youngest was a boy of 14½ who had been held in that prison for eight months without trial.

There were mothers and daughters who talked about their husbands and brothers who had been abducted by the police months and even years ago. There were men and women who showed us bruises, scars, broken arms and broken legs that were the result of police interrogation. I shall never forget the men and women who complained of systematic police harassment, with regular house searches, property smashed, goods and money stolen, and threats of extortion of money to avoid imprisonment.

There is no doubt that Operation Bluestar, the Army code name for the attack on the Golden temple in 1984, will never be forgotten or forgiven by most Sikhs. It defiled their holiest place and strengthened the view of many of them that the last Indian Government had embarked upon a deliberate policy of eradicating Sikhs, who form just 2 per cent. of India's population. Such feelings were intensified by the massacre of 5,000 Sikhs in Delhi hours after the assassination of Mrs. Indira Ghandi and of many Sikhs in other parts of India.

In Delhi, I visited some of the 1,200 widows struggling to bring up their families alone. One woman cried bitterly as she showed me the photographs of her dead husband and sons. She lost 18 relatives to the murderous mobs. From the window of a two-roomed tenament, home to a family of six, I looked down across a mud hut village which is home to 1,000 families who fled east Delhi to find relative safety with other Sikhs in west Delhi. With the monsoons, this mud village becomes a sea of mud, with the summer heat a stinking cesspit. There are no drains, water supply or electricity; there are typhoid and cholera. The new governor of Delhi has promised these people a plot of land nearby where they can build decent homes. They hope that this promise will be kept and that the bulldozers will not return to demolish their huts.

None of these people, the victims of murderous communalism, believe that what happened was spontaneous. The mobs were organised. They were led. The plan was to kill as many male Sikhs as possible, including boys and even babies.

While the horror of the massacres will never dim, many Sikhs cheered last year's election of Mr. V. P. Singh as India's Prime Minister. The BJP, the Hindu fundamentalist party, appears opposed to Mr. Singh's pressing on with his plans, announced after his election victory, to secure reconciliation with the Sikhs in the Punjab. Elections to the Punjab state assembly are seen by Mr. Singh as a top priority. However, unless they are called by 11 May, President's rule will continue—and that will surely spark off more and escalating violence.

There are those inside and outside the Punjab who believe that a new settlement for the Punjab is possible. A federal solution, with the central Government retaining powers over foreign relations, defence and communications, is widely supported. The Prime Minister and the new governor of the Punjab rightly stress that building confidence and trust is vital if reconciliation is to succeed. Early elections to the Punjab state assembly are seen by many as vital to that confidence-building process.

There should also, in the view of many, be independent machinery for monitoring human rights in the Punjab, together with independent machinery for investigating complaints against the police. Amnesty International, which has hitherto, unfortunately, been refused permission to visit the Punjab, could offer the governor and the Government of India valuable advice about how to establish that machinery.

During my visit, Sikhs complained to me about a number of problems. They complained about there being no Sikh in the Cabinet or in any of the senior executive positions in the Punjab Government. They complained about the apparent bar on Sikhs reaching the most senior

ranks of the army. Many Sikhs believe that they are mistrusted. They resent the propaganda that has depicted the Sikh turban worldwide as a symbol of terrorism.

People living overseas, including British citizens of Sikh origin, find it difficult to visit their families and friends. I hope that the British Government will make representations to the Indian Government to make that easier. I also hope that they will make representations to the Indian Government urging them to allow young Sikhs fom the Punjab to study in Britain and other overseas countries. At the moment, they experience great difficulty in obtaining student visas to study here or elsewhere.

If there is uncertainty about the future of the Punjab, there is great anxiety about the future of Kashmir. During my visit to Kashmir, there were many reports of mass protests involving anything up to 1 million people, with deaths, injuries and many more soldiers being deployed. It is now believed that between 200,000 and 300,000 security forces are deployed in Kashmir, and more are on the way. A permanent curfew has been in place for the past nine weeks.

Many argue that the people of Kashmir should be given a referendum in which they could vote freely and fairly for their future. There appear to be three options—for them to remain part of India, for them to join Pakistan or, the option that has been gaining support, for Kashmir valley to join Azad Kashmir and parts of Jammu, to become a new independent state.

During my visit, a prominent Kashmiri business man who favoured the third option said:

"We could become the Switzerland of Asia, with tourism and the careful development of our natural resources. The borders could be guaranteed internationally, safeguarded by the United Nations. A state of 10 million people, we could become a tranquil, prosperous buffer between India and Pakistan."

The Indian Government are making a serious mistake by alleging that there are those outside Kashmir and outside India who are instigating violence and disorder in Kashmir. In making those charges, the Indian Government's credibility is seriously undermined so long as they refuse permission to foreigners to visit Kashmir, and so long as they stop the world's media reporting what is happening in Kashmir.

I hope that India's new Prime Minister will quickly see the difficulties that his Government will face if they continue that policy. I hope that he will allow visitors and the free reporting of what is happening in Kashmir. I hope that the Indian Government will agree to a request that I made informally today to the Indian high commission for a parliamentary delegation from the House to be allowed to visit Kashmir shortly. I welcome the visit that is to be made to Kashmir next month by my right hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman).

Some 56 British Members of Parliament, representing all political parties and from all parts of the United Kingdom, have now signed and supported motions on the Order Paper calling for the people of Kashir to be allowed to determine their own destiny.

At this time in Kashmir, there are severe shortages of food and water. There are drastic evacuations of non-Muslims from Kashmir. The authorities are transferring large numbers of prisoners from Kashmir to the much hotter climate of Rajastan, and there are worrying reports that death squads are being formed and trained. As I said earlier, there are reports of substantial extra troop deployments to Kashmir.

There can be no doubt that what has happened in the Punjab since 1984 scars the reputation of India, the world's largest democracy, and that the popular uprising in Kashmir threatens peace in the region. All true friends of India—we are all well aware of the deep affection and regard that you, Mr. Speaker, have for that country, which is shared by many hon. Members—wish every good fortune to Mr. Singh and his Government in resolving the vexed and dangerous issues that threaten the future of his Government and, more important, the future and well-being of all the people of all religions of India.

I hope that the Minister can say tonight that the Government are anxious to make representations to the Indian Government—especially on my requests for more efforts to facilitate visits by British citizens of Sikh origin to the Punjab, to help young Sikhs to study overseas, to allow foreign nationals to visit Kashmir and to allow the foreign media to report what is happening in Kashmir.

I do not believe that the true friends of India would be unwilling to make such representations, because—as with any family—there are times when it is necessary for us to express our views robustly in private and, when the need arises, in public. The human rights position in the Punjab and the dangerous position in Kashmir, which seems to be deteriorating fast, call for the British Government to make such representations. Britain has a great historic responsibility for India's past, and it has a great responsibility now to speak up on behalf of people who have many relatives and friends there.

The Kashmiri community are desperately worried about their families and their friends, and are concerned about the future of their country. Sikhs, too, have great worries. I hope that the Minister will echo their concerns, and will make it clear that the British Government, in the spirit of true friendship, are prepared to make representations to the Indian Government.

10.16 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Tim Sainsbury): I congratulate the hon. Member for Bradford, West (Mr. Madden) on raising the important subject of Britain's relations with India. Those relations are reinforced by strong links of many kinds and on many levels—historical, political, cultural, commercial and, indeed, personal. The planned state visit to Britain next month by the President of India will be an occasion to which to celebrate the closeness and the warmth of those relations—a closeness and warmth which I know that you experienced, Mr. Speaker, during your visit to India last August.

I shall not take up the time of the House by speaking at too much length of Britain's involvement in India's history before independence, except to note that it has left us with many things in common beyond a language and an obsession with cricket. Our democratic, administrative and legal systems are similar, but many countries have parliaments, bureaucrats and courts. What matters in this case is that Britain and India both rely on those institutions to protect the same values, the same democratic rights and the same civil liberties. When an Englishman and an Indian talk of freedom of speech and of the rule of law, they are talking about the same thing. I am certain that the Indian Government, no less than the British Government, are committed to the maintenance and promotion of those values, rights and liberties.

[Mr. Tim Sainsbury]

If I talk of a long historical connection, it is emphatically not out of a sense of nostalgia, but because our shared past gives both India and Britain common guideposts to the future in our shared determination to sustain democratic institutions and individual freedom under the law.

One of the most important elements in relations between our two countries is represented by the many people of Indian origin who have settled in Britain. They have made a significant contribution to all aspects of national life here. Their continued involvement in, and concern for, their country of origin can be of great value in making our relations still closer, more substantial and more productive.

The hon. Member raised certain human rights issues. I do not suggest that anybody in India would claim that India has a completely unblemished human rights record. Indeed, it is hard to point to a country that has. The Indian Government are the first to concede that abuses have taken place. As is scarcely surprising in so vast a developing country, the administration of law and order sometimes falls short of the best intentions of the Government. But India cannot reasonably be compared with countries that systematically abuse human rights as a matter of Government policy.

India is a democratic country with an independent legal system to which those who believe they have been treated unfairly have recourse, and there is a vibrantly free press in which injustices can be and are exposed. I have no doubt of the genuine commitment of the Indian Government to the maintenance of political freedoms and civil liberties. Before we start to criticise, we need to consider the magnitude of the problems that India faces, in maintaining the unity and integrity of a secular state in so vast and complex a country, with its great diversity of race, religion, and language.

The hon. Member also mentioned problems in Kashmir. Both the Indian and Pakistani Governments have been concerned by events there, and I believe, wish to avoid further increase in tension in the area. We have made clear our concern at the political unrest in the Kashmir valley, and at the loss of life that has resulted, whether through acts of terrorism, which, I am sure the hon. Gentleman will agree, can solve nothing, or through the shooting of reportedly unarmed civilian demonstrators by the security forces.

Our own long-standing position on the dispute over the status of Kashmir has been one of neutrality. We believe it can be settled only by agreement between the two Governments concerned. We have recently discussed the situation there with representatives of both the Pakistan and Indian Governments. We have made it clear that we believe that the dispute is one to be settled between them, and we hope that they will be able to reach a peaceful settlement of the issues involved. We have encouraged both sides to avoid a confrontation which we are convinced neither side wants. We have also made it clear that we have absolutely no sympathy with those who espouse violence for political ends. At the same time, we hope that the problems of law and order to which the hon. Gentleman referred can be handled with maximum restraint.

There were a number of United Nations resolutions on Kashmir in 1948 and 1949. The issue at the time was whether Kashmir should accede to Pakistan or India. Britian voted in favour of these resolutions, the texts of which represented agreement between India and Pakistan at the time, but much has happened since, not least the 1972 Simla agreement on bilateral relations between India and Pakistan. Under that agreement, both countries agreed

"to settle their differences by peaceful means through bilateral negotiations or by any other peaceful means mutually agreed on between them".

Both sides also committed themselves to

"a final settlement of Jammu and Kashmir".

Our long-standing position is entirely consistent with the terms of the agreement. We are confident that real progress in settling this dispute can be made only by agreements reached between India and Pakistan.

The hon. Member may have read that the Indian Prime Minister convened an all-party meeting on 7 March to discuss the situation in Kashmir. The next day, a senior delegation of Indian Members of Parliament visited Kashmir to assess the situation. Mr. V.P. Singh has since appointed a Cabinet Minister for Kashmir, and a multi-party committee to assist him. We welcome these moves and hope that they may contribute to the search for a peaceful solution to the current problems.

The hon. Member was able to be among the first foreign parliamentarians to visit the Punjab recently to investigate reports of alleged human rights violations. The House will have been concerned at learning of the various incidents to which he referred; but I am sure that he will not expect me to comment on them. The fact of his visit is, I hope the hon. Gentleman will agree, an encouraging sign of the determination of the Indian Government to find a solution to the current problems, and of their refusal to brush those problems under the carpet.

I well understand the concern felt by many in the community here about their friends and families in India as a result of reports received about the situation in Punjab. However, we should look at the situation in the Punjab as a whole. In our view, many of the reports reaching people in this country do less than justice to the truth of this tragic and complex problem.

The history of the current troubles in the Punjab is long and complex. The Sikh community in India have played a distinguished part in Indian life and customs, and continue to do so. Many of them seek to pursue their grievances and aspirations, as they are entitled to do, by legitimate constitutional means, but a minority are engaged in a bitter terrorist struggle against the authorities to achieve what they cannot achieve by democratic means—the dismemberment of the secular state of India. It is against this background that we need to view events in Punjab.

Last year, tragically, over 2,000 people were reported killed in the Punjab in terrorist-related violence. There have been many reports during the last year of indiscriminate attacks on innocent people, including some by Sikhs on Sikhs trying to defend other members of the community. Earlier this month, we saw reports of terrorists firing on a bus in the Punjab. In the incident, 10 people were reported to have been shot dead. In the same week, we saw reports of an attack by terrorists who opened fire in a crowded bazaar in Abohar in the south of the

Punjab, in which at least 31 people were left dead. Attempts to pin all responsibility for such outrages on the Indian Government fly in the face of the facts.

Under the previous Government, in March last year a package of measures was introduced including the easing of restrictions and the release of detainees when no evidence could be brought against them. After being elected to office last November, the new Indian Government announced that they would give priority to resolving the current problems in the Punjab. Prime Minister V. P. Singh's visit to Amritsar in December was a brave and widely welcomed gesture.

Last December and in January this year, he held two all-party meetings to discuss the Punjab. At the January meeting, the Indian Government introduced a package of measures which included a review of all detainee cases, and reminders to local police authorities of the need to maintain stricter police discipline, and I am sure that the hon. Gentleman welcomed that. The new Indian Government have also promised to bring to trial those accused of involvement in anti-Sikh riots which followed Mrs. Gandhi's assassination in late 1984.

As the hon. Member went to the Punjab, he may be aware that the Indian Prime Minister visited the Punjab on 14 March and announced the formation of an advisory committee to help the administration of the state. That committee will consist of representatives of different political parties and social groups. I see that this development has been welcomed in the Indian press.

The hon. Gentleman referred to the importance of building confidence. I agree with him, and I hope that he will agree that the measures to which I have referred are a step in that important direction.

The Indian Government are determined—as any Government must be—to root out terrorism. We have made it clear on a number of occasions that we support them in their attempts to maintain the unity and integrity of India and in taking the necessary measures to deal with those who use violence as a means of achieving their aims.

The hon. Gentleman referred to a number of points on which he asked me to comment. He referred to encouraging young Sikhs to study in the United Kingdom. We welcome any overseas students from India who have been accepted for a full-time course of study and who can show that they have funds to support themselves here without working.

In 1988-89, a total of 1,839 Indian students in the United Kingdom received British Government support. The special Foreign Office scholarships scheme for India has been increased since 1988, so that in this financial year we intend to spend just under £1 million, which will fund about 130 students here. We have no knowledge of students from the Punjab, or indeed from Kashmir, being prevented from attending courses.

The hon. Gentleman referred to Amnesty International. We have commended Amnesty to the Indian Government at ministerial level as a serious and responsible organisation, but we accept that the issuing of visas is a matter for the Indian Government. We welcome the Indian Foreign Minister's answer to a parliamentary question on 15 March, when he said that the Indian Government were considering allowing an Amnesty International team to visit the Punjab.

I return to the general subject of the debate—Britain's relations with India. I listened with interest to what the hon. Gentleman said and I urge him to work with us to continue to improve those relations and to encourage those in this country who have ties of blood and of kinship with India to support those who seek to resolve the country's problems by peaceful and constitutional means. That is what we owe to India, and to the principles by which we in Britain and the people of India live.

The Question having been proposed at Ten o'clock and the debate having continued for half an hour, MR. SPEAKER *adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to the Standing Order.*

Adjourned at half-past Ten o'clock.

House of Commons

Friday 23 March 1990

The House met at half-past Nine o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Mid-Staffordshire By-election

9.34 am

Mr. Win Griffiths (Bridgend): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Would it be in order for you, on this historic morning, to send a congratulatory telegram to the winner of the Mid-Staffordshire by-election, who will shortly be gracing the Labour Benches?

Mr. Speaker: I do not think that we have had that precedent in the House——

Mr. Donald Anderson (Swansea, East) *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I shall have the opportunity of welcoming the hon. Lady some time next week.

Mr. Anderson: Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. Will it be within the terms of the first motion to be discussed today for us to refer specifically to transport journey times to Mid-Staffordshire and other areas, or would you rule that inappropriate and perhaps intruding on the grief of the Government?

Mr. Speaker: I do not know about the grief of the Government, but I should have thought that the motion is wide enough to deal with journey times to Mid-Staffordshire or anywhere else.

Public Transport

9.36 am

Mr. Robert Adley (Christchurch): I beg to move,

That this House welcomes the Government's statement in their objectives set to British Rail, that projects not meeting the required rate of financial return but having social, environmental or other external benefits, should be assessed by cost-benefit analysis; further welcomes the Government's commitment to maintain the existing railway network, and to continue to pay the Public Service Obligation grant, whilst noting the report of the Central Transport Consultative Committee on British Rail; notes both the investment regime and subsidy policy pursued by the French and West German governments; calls on Her Majesty's Government to assess road and rail projects on an equal basis in the light of the congestion, pollution and aggravation caused by the proliferation of the internal combustion engine; welcomes the Government's important decision to refuse closure of the Settle and Carlisle railway line as a significant change to policies pursued by previous governments; and requests British Rail to end the policy of selling off railway trackbed from which services have been discontinued.

Like my right hon. Friend the Member for Aylesbury (Mr. Raison) last week, I have waited almost 20 years to win the ballot to debate a motion of my choice. I hope that after the House has heard me it will not wish to wait another 20 years before having an opportunity to hear me again.

I am extremely grateful to my hon. Friend the Minister for Public Transport, because I know that he has had severely to reorganise his timetable, which I believe included a meeting with a Community transport Minister. I understand that he was able to hold that meeting yesterday, and I am grateful to him for being present today.

I anticipated that Labour Members would comment on the by-election result. It would be churlish not to congratulate the victor, but the fact that it has been described as the Labour party's best result for 60 years says rather more about the Labour party than the state of politics. I enjoyed the results from places such as Ashfield, Birmingham, Stechford and Workington under a Labour Government and endured the results from Ryedale, Crosby and Croydon, North-West. I recall visiting the constituency of the hon. Member for Brecon and Radnor (Mr. Livsey), who is in his place, during his by-election victory. I think that on that occasion the Conservative party, which had held the seat, came third.

Mr. Anderson: The hon. Member for Brecon and Radnor (Mr. Livsey) is still here.

Mr. Adley: He is still here, and his party is still in Opposition. The point has been well made, so I shall move on to debate transport matters.

I ask the House to try to debate public transport policy without too much party-political dogma. Public transport policy and party-political dogma make uneasy bedfellows. I should be delighted if we could use this opportunity to take a long, cool look at how successive Governments have organised transport policy.

We must consider the true position facing this congested and crowded island and try to debate the motion in the way that we have just prayed. We prayed to forgo our private interests, prejudices and partial affections and it would be good if we could stick to that.

Perhaps on that basis I should declare an interest as a member of the Select Committee on Members' Interests.

[Mr. Adley]

For many years, I have received assistance and hospitality from British Rail. I am an author of railway books, and my next book, entitled "Out of Steam", which is to be published by Patrick Stephens Ltd. in August, is priced at £17·50 and will be available from all good bookshops.

Mr. Donald Anderson (Swansea, East): On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. I know that we are on television, but are we on commercial television?

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): That seems to be the case.

Mr. Adley: The hon. Member for Swansea, East (Mr. Anderson) makes an interesting point.

Mr. Steve Norris (Epping Forest): I was interested in my hon. Friend's assessment that being given tea by British Rail was considered to be a commercial advantage.

Mr. Adley: Lobbying crossed my mind as one subject for debate. The hon. Member for Swansea, East made the point that, if one is not careful, a declaration of interest can be turned into an advertisement.

The motion emerged after fevered discussion with a number of my colleagues. As one of those who voted consistently against the community charge, I thought that we might have a debate on local government finance, but that idea was not entirely popular with some of my colleagues. I then invited my hon. Friend the Minister to consider the possibility of a debate on public transport policy. He was very courteous and said that the first draft of the motion that I showed him probably would have required the Government to impose a three-line Whip. We managed to reach an agreeable compromise, resulting in the motion on the Order Paper.

My proposition is simple. In the past 10 years, there has been considerable economic success, resulting in the enormous proliferation of motor cars and other vehicles on our roads. Simultaneously, we have seen the growth of environmental concern and recognition across the party divide that the internal combustion engine, which is a major source of pollution, congestion and aggravation, cannot be the only solution not only to the individual's problems but to the country's transport policy needs. The internal combustion engine, which once appeared likely to sound the death knell of the railway system is, by its proliferation, the source of railway renaissance. The policy and the procedures by which those policies are framed and which have been pursued by this and previous Governments do not take account of the relative merits of road and rail investment. The criteria used by the Department of Transport have become bogged down in ancient prejudices, presumptions and propaganda. I shall address most of my remarks to those procedures.

The wording in relation to road versus rail criteria was one matter that my hon. Friend the Minister and I discussed. I am sure that my hon. Friend will say that, in his view, the criteria used by the Department of Transport are fair to road and rail, but I do not believe that they are. I invite the House to take a fundamental look at the purpose of taxation. A dictionary provides a definition, but if the House thinks about taxation for a moment, it will see that we provide, for example, taxation for the Ministry of Defence, the Departments of Health, Education and Science and Transport and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. What is the relationship between the provision of public funding through taxation and the expectation of obtaining a commercial return through the provision of funds to the areas of Government activity receiving those funds? Do we expect the Ministry of Defence, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Department of Education and Science and the Department of Health to show a profit? Of course we do not. Do we expect the Department of Transport to show a profit? No. Do we expect the roads to show a profit? No. The Government and their predecessors expect British Rail, almost alone among Government activities, to operate as if it were a commercial organisation. That proposition is fundamentally flawed.

The criteria employed by the Department of Transport in assessing road versus rail investment proposals should surely deal with the real costs to the nation of everything that can directly be attributable to rail or road usage. I could spend two hours discussing that simple point, but I shall not. I shall take the police as an example. A few days ago, I asked my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary about the police time spent on all activities relating to traffic management. On Monday, he replied:

"In 1987, 1988 and 1989, approximately 8 per cent. of the total police strength in England and Wales was deployed on specialist traffic duties."

My right hon. and learned Friend went on to say, significantly:

"The proportion of non-specialist officers' time spent on traffic matters is not recorded. The total costs could not be reliably estimated."

It is clear to anyone who thinks for a moment about the time of the police and other related activities, such as attendance in court—involving the Crown prosecution service, lawyers and clerks—that an untold and unknown sum of money is devoted to dealing with problems directly related to road transport. How can the Department of Transport genuinely be expected to undertake a proper assessment of the costs of road versus rail if my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary openly admits that no such information is available?

Each year we kill 2,500 people and maim 250,000 on our roads, and untold others are injured less seriously. The cost must be astronomic. This week, I asked my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Health

"if he will estimate the cost to the National Health Service, for the latest year for which figures are available, of all road accidents."

I received this simple answer:

"Data on the actual cost to the National Health Service in England of Road accidents are not collected by the Department."—[*Official Report*, 19 March 1990; Vol. 169, *c.454-73*.]

How can the Department of Transport be entirely confident that the information on which it bases its investment criteria is based on facts, when those facts are unknown?

Many of the people who are involved in accidents spend weeks or months in hospital before they die, as do those who are maimed. Goodness only knows the extent of the hospital costs and Department of Health costs that are incurred. Many thousands of people will be on social security benefit when they leave hospital, and those costs are unknown. We expect the Department of Transport to carry out an analysis in the absence of the facts that would make it meaningful.

In response to my probing questions about the activities of staff in the Department of Transport, my hon. Friend

the Minister for Roads and Traffic told me that, rounded to the nearest 500, 16,500 people in his Department were directly engaged in transport and planning matters. I do not know whether any of my hon. Friends or other hon. Members would care to guess how many out of those 16,500 civil servants were involved with the railways. Any guesses forthcoming? It may interest the House to know that of those 16,500 civil servants in the Department of Transport, a grand total of 200 were involved with railways and that figure includes the entire railways inspectorate.

Mr. Anderson: I thank the hon. Gentleman for giving way. Perhaps I should call him my hon. Friend in this case as he has a distinguished record of supporting the railways. Given those comparisons of the personnel in roads and railways in the Department of Transport, is not it the more puzzling that the Government have a propensity to take people from senior positions in the Department of Transport for senior positions in British Rail?

Mr. Adley: That is a fair and reasonable point. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will take part in the debate so that he can expand on that point. He has raised a serious problem. I hope that he will allow me to continue to provide the House with a little more information so that we can see what all the people in the Department of Transport do.

There are 200 civil servants dealing with railways including those in the railway inspectorate. For highways, including bus and taxi policy, there are 550. There are 100 in road safety. There are 1,000 traffic area staff excluding those currently elsewhere such as driving examiners. Six hundred are employed at the transport and road research laboratory. The driving standards agency employs 2,000 and the vehicle inspection agency employs 1,600. The driver and vehicle licensing agency employs 5,500. Aviation employs 350, which is almost twice the number in railways, and there are 950 in shipping, almost five times as many as those in railway activity in the Department of Transport. I do not know whether the salaries of all those people in the Department who are allocated to what one might generally call roads activities are included by the Department in "load" costs. Perhaps my hon. Friend the Minister will elucidate on that later.

We need to debate whether there is a fair assessment between road and rail. My hon. Friend the Minister claims that there is, but the Confederation of British Industry clearly agrees with me. In a parliamentary briefing sent out a couple of days ago, the CBI said that it

"would welcome the assessment of rail investment on an equal basis with road projects."

I should welcome that, too. I telephoned the CBI yesterday and confirmed that its understanding of the position was the same as mine—that there is at present an unequal assessment of rail as opposed to road investment within the Department of Transport.

One could show endlessly that that is the case. To take one example, we are at present contemplating the construction of a rail link from the Great Western main line to Heathrow. For years, I have advocated that if that link is built, in addition to there being an eastbound rail link into Paddington, there should be a little link of 200 or 300 yd westbound so that all potential travellers to Heathrow from south Wales, the west country, the south-west and the south of England could catch trains going directly into Heathrow—but no. That 200 or 300 yd track will not be built. Can anyone imagine that if a road was being built, the same strict financial criteria would apply? One has only to ask the question to know the answer.

Investment criteria must, of course, be related to commercial reality, but they must also be more closely related to environmental and social needs. We need only look at the commuter problem to understand what we are talking about. British Rail did not invent the rush hour. Without a railway system in our major cities, life would be intolerable. Every day, British Rail carries 500,000 passengers into London during the morning peak. The House should contemplate that the more people British Rail succeeds in attracting on to its commuter peak-hour services, the more it is required to generate its own capital investment in capital equipment which is used for only four out of 24 hours every day. No normal business could operate by acquiring expensive equipment and leaving it idle for 20 out of 24 hours. That is as good an example as one needs to illustrate that it is fundamentally wrong to equate investment in our railways with normal commercial investment in business and industry. The railways are a vital part of the nation's infrastructure, and should be seen and dealt with as such.

I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will excuse me if I talk briefly about the public service obligation grant. To some of my hon. Friends, the word "subsidy" is a dirty word. I suppose that they would like to see the armed forces privatised, so that we could then test our weapons in private enterprise battles between the armies of Wessex and the armies of Mercia. That proposition does not especially attract me.

To suggest, as my hon. Friend does, that there is merely a coincidence of timing between the reduction of the PSO grant and the increasing incidence of late arrivals, shorter trains, service reductions, staff shortages, and unmanned stations is to stretch credulity to breaking point. Most hon. Members and most members of the travelling public would regard that as an unreal proposition. Given the commuter problem, simplistic commercial considerations are not in the interests of the nation when assessing the value of the rail network to the people of this country.

I am sorry to say to my hon. Friend the Minister that I shall quote briefly from the Central Transport Consultative Committee report which came out a few days ago. I do not think that my hon. Friend liked what it said. The CTCC is not exactly an organisation manned by members of the Militant Tendency. It is funded by the Department of Trade and Industry. Its members are appointed by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry. The present chairman, Major-General Lennox Napier was first appointed in 1985 when my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit) was Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and his position was confirmed and his appointment renewed last year by my right hon. Friend the Member for Cirencester and Tewkesbury (Mr. Ridley). Times change, and both my right hon. Friends may be changing their political stance, but if they are, it is news to me. Someone appointed by them is likely to be considered reasonably independent minded on matters such as railway investment. Among the other members of the CTCC are our former colleague, John Corrie in Scotland, Angela Hooper in southern England, who is known to many of us, and Sir Robert Wall in the west of England, a long-time leading

[Mr. Adley]

Conservative member of Bristol city council. we are not dealing here with a rabble-rousing, Left-wing organisation.

I want to read a few quotations from the CTCC report which came out a few days ago. It says:

"The new objectives"—

the objectives laid by the Government on British Rail—

"demand that B.R. reduce its requirement for grant to support socially unnecessary but unprofitable passenger services"—

the PSO grant—

"by roughly 30 per cent. between 1989-90 and 1992-93. This comes on top of a cut of over 50 per cent. which B.R. has already achieved since 1983. At the same time, capital investment for B.R. is set to rise, totalling £4·9 billion during the five years of the Plan. But whereas the grant which B.R. is losing comes from Central Government, the new investment is coming almost entirely from higher fares and traffic growth, together with property sales and loans from Government which have to be repaid with interest . . . the Committee believes Government should be providing more of it through grants rather than loans in recognition of the railways' role in relieving traffic congestion and improving the quality of life. Also, the C.T.C.C. has long been critical of the severe reductions in the level of P.S.O. Grant over the years. There have been many instances where services have been pruned or much-needed service improvements have not been made because of a lack of cash."

Those are the comments of a Government-appointed body.

Finally, on Network SouthEast, the CTCC says:

"Because of N.S.E.'s cash crisis, things are now going to get even worse."

That is not something which my hon. Friend the Minister or his constituents in London will regard with equanimity. The CTCC continues:

"In an attempt to meet its financial targets, N.S.E. is preparing to breach its quality objectives by introducing cuts in peak train services from May. This will mean fewer or shorter trains."

At the risk of offending BR, I have to say that I find its response to the CTCC somewhat economical with the truth. For example, it says:

"Electrification in South Hampshire and between Kings Lynn and Cambridge is not affected by the need for short term economies."

The reality is that, as from May, through trains from King's Lynn to London are to be discontinued and all passengers will have to change at Cambridge. That will not be regarded with equanimity by those travelling from Norfolk. British Rail also refers to

"changes in demand patterns that we address twice a year with timetable changes."

I shall resist the temptation to weary the House with endless quotations. But I wonder how travellers from Eastbourne to London will feel when they find that the 7.42 am train to London Bridge is to be discontinued. That is the last through train of the morning from Eastbourne to London Bridge. The next through train from Eastbourne is the 8.37 am to Victoria. I imagine that plenty of people who will be affected by the results of changes in the PSO grant will find it hard to accept British Rail's proposition that everything has to do with changing service demand.

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): Does the hon. Gentleman agree that there are also extraordinary anomalies in the much-vaunted capital investment about which the Government are always telling us? The hon. Gentleman mentioned the electrification of the line from Cambridge to King's Lynn, which few would oppose. But is not it strange that there is to be one train an hour from Ely northwards, in remarkably sparsely populated country, while the Government refuse to consider the electrification of the line from Manchester to Blackpool —a relatively short route in a densely populated urban area with a great deal of traffic? Are not there anomalies in investment as well as in running?

Mr. Adley: The hon. Gentleman is quite right. The Manchester to Blackpool line is a classic example of shortsightedness in planning. I think that I am entitled to say on behalf of the Government that, as a result of their successful economic policy and the revenue that BR is attracting, a major investment programme is taking place on the railways. In Manchester, the construction of the Windsor link is the realisation of a dream that many people in that part of the world have nurtured for over a century. But to go ahead with the Windsor link, with all the new opportunities that that will create for rail travel in and through the city of Manchester and then not to sanction the electrification of the line from Manchester to Blackpool shows an inconsistency that is also evident in the Heathrow example that I gave a moment ago. Both are illustrations of shortsighted planning and the superimposition of unreal financial criteria on a transport problem. I believe that to be unjustifiable and unsatisfactory.

In a debate the other day, I referred to the fact that the Government and Conservative central office are happily proclaiming the amount of investment that is going to BR. Many of my hon. Friends who do not perhaps study these matters as closely as I do, because they have different primary political interests, will say, "Ah yes, surely we are right in saying that the Government are investing huge sums in BR." But that is not so. In 1982, 1983, 1985, 1986 and 1987, British Rail had no recourse whatever to borrowing from the national loans fund, and in 1984 and 1988 it had only limited recourse to the fund. Almost all the new investment is coming straight out of the pockets of Britsh Rail's customers. A brief from the Conservative research department the other day made some rather bland comments about the levels of railway investment. It would have been more straightforward had the brief simply said, "Her Majesty's Government are allowing British Rail to spend its own earnings." That is what is happening. The Government spend taxpayers' money on the road; British Rail spends its own earnings on its own investment programme.

Mr. Hugh Dykes (Harrow, East): I am loth to interrupt my hon. Friend's extremely skilful and persuasive speech, which is most welcome. In a debate on 14 February he dealt with similar matters. Has he been able to solve a puzzle that came to light then concerning the German system? Apparently, the premier capitalist economy in Europe—far more successful than we are, unfortunately —offers far more financial support through the investment programme and for other aspects of its railway system, which is already ahead of ours. Yet we are given to understand by the Secretary of State for Transport that German transport Ministers regard the subsidy and the granting of further amounts as an outrage. Has my hon. Friend been able to clarify that misunderstanding?

Mr. Adley: The answer to my hon. Friend the Member for Harlow, East (Mr. Dykes) is yes. Yesterday afternoon I spent some time with Herr Rudolf Richter, the director

in the United Kingdom and Ireland of the Deutsche Bundesbahn. In view of my hon. Friend's intervention, I shall deal with the question now. The current BR five-year investment programme entails an investment of £4·9 billion.

Mr. Roger King (Birmingham, Northfield): I must apologise to my hon. Friend for having missed the first part of his speech. I was half an hour late because BR took two hours, rather than the usual one and a half, to get me from Birmingham to London. I shall let that pass, however.

A few moments ago, my hon. Friend said that taxpayers paid for roads and that railways financed their own investment. That is not correct. Road users pay for road development. They contribute about £16 billion to the Exchequer each year and of that, only about £3·5 billion—rising to £5·7 billion in the next year or so—is paid back into roads. It is road users, not taxpayers, who pay for investment in roads.

Mr. Adley: My hon. Friend, who is a skilful and determined exponent of the road lobby, makes a foolish point which does not bear examination. It has never been the policy of any Government to indulge in taxation hypothecation. If we pursued his proposal to its logical conclusion, the Governmnt would spend all the money that they took in gambling taxes on building new casinos. He does not bother to ask himself——

Mr. Geoffrey Dickens (Littleborough and Saddleworth): That is silly.

Mr. Adley: My hon. Friend says that it is silly; perhaps he would like to intervene.

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): He is a specialist.

Mr. Dickens: I am not a specialist but there is a lot of truth in what my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Northfield (Mr. King) says about road users. Commercial and domestic road users pay a devil of a lot of money into the Treasury, through vehicle and excise licences and taxes on petrol. It is foolish to argue that road users do not pay for the roads, but that users of the railway have to pay for investment in railways.

Mr. Adley: Without being too rude to my hon. Friend, I must say that I would rather he called me foolish than sensible. I do not know where he supposes the Minister of Defence, the Department of Health or the Department of Education and Science would get their funds. Perhaps he believes in the hypothecation of taxation. That would be the ultimate extremity of Right-wing politics and not something that I should find remotely attractive. One has only to contemplate that proposition to see how foolish it is.

Let me return to the pertinent question asked by my hon. Friend the Member for Harrow, East. British Rail's investment programme for the current five years is £4·9 billion. The Deutsche Bundesbahn's current five-year investment programme is 40 billion deutschmarks which at the current exchange rate is about £14 billion. That is the position on investment. What about operating deficit? In 1990 the Deutsche Bundesbahn's operating deficit, set by the West German Government is 4 billion deutschmarks, which is about £1·5 billion. That is the planned operating deficit, over and above the investment level. I am afraid that my hon. Friend the Minister will have to take this like a man. My hon. Friend planted a question for answer on Tuesday night—the night of the Budget statement—concerning British Rail's grant for 1989-1990. It was an extremely skilful and largely successful operation that managed to hide from the public almost completely what the Government's proposals were.

If my hon. Friend the Minister was proud of the cut in the PSO grant which is the much-vaunted policy of the Department of Transport he would not have sought to have a written question on the Order Paper on Budget day. He would have ensured that the Government's great achievement in cutting the PSO grant was trumpeted from the heights. However he, I and the House know that the constant attempt to cut the PSO grant and BR's operating subsidy—which was once the totem of Government monetarist policy—is increasingly a matter of shame. People know that a cut in the PSO grant is directly related to a cut in the quality of service.

The Minister for Public Transport (Mr. Michael Portillo): I actually announced an increase in the PSO cash ceiling. I am not sure whether my hon. Friend is saying that I was so ashamed about increasing the PSO cash ceiling that I tried to slip it out or whether possibly he misunderstood my parliamentary reply. If the latter is the case, I would be happy to explain the answer in a moment.

Mr. Adley: My hon. Friend the Minister announced in his written answer that BR's grant for 1989-90 was £488 million. I understand that that is £30 million or £35 million less than the PSO grant for the current year. If I am wrong, my hon. Friend the Minister will have to correct me. However, his written answer states:

"£8 million will be available only to accommodate the grant-aided sectors' share of additional safety-related expenditure, particularly that arising from Sir Anthony Hidden's report on the Clapham Junction rail accident."—[*Official Report*, 20 March 1990; Vol. 169, c. *534*.]

I thoroughly enjoyed and wholly approved of the Budget presented by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer. However, one item in the Budget that caused me considerable concern was the money that the Government are making available to finance safety at football grounds. Lord Justice Taylor's report on the Hillsborough accident was not too far removed in time from Sir Anthony Hidden's report on the Clapham rail disaster.

The Government's priority in the Budget on safety funding is to provide taxpayers' money for the pursuit of leisure—watching a bunch of thugs kick a football around on a Saturday afternoon. However, the Government will provide only £8 million of the estimated £500 million that BR will have to find to carry out the safety requirements in the Hidden report. Perhaps my hon. Friend the Minister will tell us today that the Government will announce that they will fund entirely the safety costs proposed by Sir Anthony Hidden in the same way that they have announced funding in relation to Lord Justice Taylor's proposals for football grounds.

I hope that my next comments will not be indecent. I want to share with the House a thought that has occurred to me. There is a certain irony about the Hillsborough tragedy which was caused by the late arrival of a large number of coaches at the football ground as a result of congestion on the M62 from Liverpool. The motorways on which those coaches travelled were provided by the

[Mr. Adley]

taxpayer. Twenty or 30 years ago most of those football supporters would have travelled by rail. However, the coach is one of the most heavily subsidised forms of public transport in the country and British Rail has lost passengers to coach competition running on motorways that are funded 100 per cent. from taxpayers' money. Many British Rail regional managers have given up trying to attract the football thug traffic because most of their trains were vandalised. We could almost say that we are busily subsidising vandalism while we do nothing to subsidise safety on BR.

I want to consider track costs in relation to road versus rail. My hon. Friend the Member for Harrow, East asked me about West Germany. Yesterday I asked Herr Richter, the director of Deutsche Bundesbahn, how he viewed the attitude of the West German Government towards the West German railways in relation to the British Government's attitude towards British Rail.

Mr. Dykes: They are both Conservative Governments.

Mr. Adley: Yes, indeed they are. Naturally, being a foreigner in Britain, Herr Richter did not want to make aggravating comments about Her Majesty's Government.

Mr. Dickens: They are both successful Governments.

Mr. Adley: Yes, they are. However, if I were to ask, "Hands up. Who would swap the current economic circumstances in West Germany for those in Britain?", I suspect that some people would consider the West German example to be attractive. However, I do not want to be diverted on to that.

Herr Richter told me:

"Our Government has started to understand that a railway infrastructure and a railway system is more than just a business, it is part of the health of the people."

I believe that that proposition has not yet permeated through the inner portals of the Department of Transport or into the Government's thought processes.

My hon. Friend the Minister will understand me when I say that there is no shortage of lobbyists for the road transport industry in this country. The Department of Transport admits to having regular meetings with the Bus and Coach Council, the Freight Transport Association, the Road Haulage Association, the motor manufacturers, motor retailers, the Automobile Association, the RAC and the road building contractors—I was also going to say from Marples to McAlpine, but perhaps I should not say that.

Mrs. Gwyneth Dunwoody (Crewe and Nantwich): Does the hon. Gentleman accept that the Department of Transport makes it clear that about 80 per cent. of its priorities lie with roads and very few staff of the Department are involved in railways?

Mr. Adley: The hon. Lady may have missed the beginning of my speech in which I quoted the precise number of people involved. She is right, but I think that she overestimated the number of people in the Department involved in railways.

My hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Northfield (Mr. King) should be aware that I am a member of the AA and the RAC. However, I am a member of those organisations to get help in the event of a breakdown. I did not join those organisations to have them lobby for me on political matters. The proposition that all their funds from membership fees should be available to them to promote roads, is something which I regard as abuse of my membership fee.

What is the position on lobbying in West Germany? I am glad that my hon. Friend the Member for Harrow, East is in the Chamber because he will doubtless know all about the Verkehrsforum Bahn. That professional lobby was not established by one of those nefarious lobbying organisations, the inexorable growth of which we have witnessed in this country over the past few years. That organisation has sprung up and now includes 160 companies, banks, commerce and industry whose sole ambition is to lobby the German Government and West German public opinion on behalf of more investment in West German railways. We do not have such a body in this country.

British Rail management is part of the rail lobby in this country. However, the relationship between a nationalised industry and the Government of the day is so close and obvious that BR management cannot be considered as part of the rail lobby. If the management speaks out of turn, it is slapped down. Similarly, the trade unions could be construed to be a particular interest and cannot be considered an independent and powerful lobby. Then there is me, and I am just a lone voice. The rail lobby in this country is non-existent and it is a great shame that we cannot find a body like the Verkehrsforum Bahn which could lobby public opinion and the Government for more funding for the railway system.

The supervisory board of the Deutsche Bundesbahn has a particularly interesting line of activity between the Government and the railways, although the supervisory board is not really a lobbying organisation. It is an independent regulator. We in this country need an independent regulator between the Government and British Rail to check on British Rail's performance, fares and so on. Again, that would help to concentrate the minds of the warring parties.

Nothing better illustrates hon. Members' attitudes to safety matters than the way in which we deal in the House with transport accidents. There has only to be the slightest railway accident—even if one person is killed—for an hon. Member with a constituency interest to ask for a private notice question, and very often the request will be granted. Day in and day out our constituents are killed and maimed in road accidents—if one is dead, one is dead, and if one's family is bereaved, one's family is bereaved. It is every bit as tragic, whether it is a road or a rail accident. However, hon. Members do not make demands for private notice questions after road accidents, and we certainly do not see the headlines that we are accustomed to seeing whenever there is a rail problem.

I can illustrate another difference between road and rail. On the railways there is signalling to separate fast moving vehicles travelling in the same direction. Of course, we have no such signalling on our roads. There is a conflict between life and death on the one hand and personal convenience on the other. We put warnings on our cigarette packets, but we do not put warnings on our motor cars. The value of human life is high and, on the railways, is regulated by Parliament. The value of human life and limb on the roads is something which we are prepared to cast aside in the interests of personal convenience. If we were to put railway signalling systems

on our roads we would save lives and, at one stroke, make British Rail the most attractive investment in the world, but nobody would dare do that.

What else do I have to say to the Department of Transport about its recent legislation?

Mr. Dickens: Nothing.

Mr. Adley: My hon. Friend the Member for Littleborough and Saddleworth (Mr. Dickens) says, "Nothing." I am sorry, but I have waited 20 years for this opportunity, and he will have a chance to have his say. I am prepared to sit down for a minute and take a vote on whether I should continue.

Coach deregulation has been a major contributor to congestion in this country. The Deputy Assistant Commissioner of the Metropolitan police wrote to me:

"You will be aware that in the Central Area problems with coaches are quite horrendous."

That is a direct result of the Government's legislation. The police are almost unable to cope with the problems of congestion and pollution caused by coaches. Hon. Members have only to go out of this building and walk across Westminster bridge, around Parliament square or anywhere around Victoria coach station to see what is happening. Coaches are parked and often left for hours on end with their engines running, pouring filthy diesel fumes up the noses of people who have the misfortune to live nearby. Coach engines are left running to provide air conditioning for the commuter passengers in the summer and to keep the heating going in the winter.

Some of my hon. Friends will recall the late Marcus Lipton who, at every state opening of Parliament, would make a speech about access to Parliament. I wonder what he would say now about the way in which coaches are clogging up the streets around Parliament square.

Commuter coaches in particular use motorways in peak hours, they park free in the streets and cause great congestion and pollution. That is a result of the coach deregulation problem. A few months ago, Sir Robert Reid said to me, "I wonder what people would say if I decided to park my trains at Piccadilly circus." One has only to state the position to understand the problem. For the city of Westminster, coach deregulation has been a near disaster, and they are still trying to come to terms with the problems which it has caused. While the coaches park in the streets paying nothing for so doing, British Rail of course pays a substantial sum in rates.

I do not know whether anyone has thought about that problem, but, as a result of questioning my hon. Friend the Minister for Local Government and Inner Cities, I understand that the uniform business rate estimate for British Rail for 1990-91 is £56·5 million. Is that figure included in the Department of Transport's assessment of road versus rail costs? British Rail provides its own policies and maintains hundreds of listed buildings.

Everybody—even my hon. Friend the Minister—would agree that traffic wardens undertake an activity which is directly related to roads. There can be no question about that. One could say that, of course, 100 per cent. of traffic wardens costs should be allocated to road transport. Are they? No. Not 75 per cent., 50 per cent., 25 per cent., but only 7 per cent. of traffic wardens costs are allocated by the Department to road costs, and the other 93 per cent. is obtained from general taxation. That is only one of numerous examples.

We need a system that the West Germans are considering, whereby track costs of rail and road are assessed equally and funded equally by the State. Unless we get such a system we will not have a fair assessment.

I welcome the decision by my hon. Friend the Minister, which was announced recently by the Secretarty of State, to introduce cost-benefit analysis into some rail investment assessments. Our European competitors do that as a matter of course. A special plea concerns the Waterloo-Salisbury-Exeter line, which is a victim of historic railway rivalry. There is now but a single line westward of Salisbury to Exeter. That is the sort of insanity that only we in Britain could contemplate. The line runs through an area of considerable growth and prosperity, yet we have virtually an extended branch line. Any true cost-benefit analysis taking in the points that I have mentioned would ensure the reintroduction of a double track railway.

My hon. Friend the Member for Beckenham (Sir P. Goodhart) is anxious to make some remarks about the Channel tunnel if he catches your eye, Madam Deputy Speaker. It is essential to have a proper cost-benefit analysis of the need for a Channel tunnel rail link. I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will make the great announcement for which we all await. My Channel Tunnel Act 1987 (Amendment) Bill comes up for Second Reading today. My hon. Friend the Minister may say, "We have changed our mind. We will not reject it this year as we did last year." Unless the Government are willing to fund a substantial part of a fast rail link between the Channel tunnel and London, we will continue to have a horse and cart railway line, which is ludicrous.

Mr. Tony Banks: Does the hon. Gentleman agree that, if the Government were to amend the 1987 Act and provide public money for the Channel tunnel, concomitant with that should be a complete study of the chosen route? The one that is currently on offer is not the best.

Mr. Adley: The hon. Gentleman has a particular point to make in regard to his constituency interest: the idea of ending the railway at Stratford. It might as well end at King's Lynn.

Mr. Portillo: My hon. Friend will have noticed that the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) spoke from the Opposition Dispatch Box. Will my hon. Friend clarify whether the hon. Gentleman's intervention was an official statement of Labour policy?

Mr. Adley: No doubt the hon. Member for Lewisham, Deptford (Ms. Ruddock) will elaborate.

Mr. Banks: Let me do that, because I am the Whip this morning. I make it quite clear that I never mentioned Stratford. I said that if public money is to be found, a proper public study of the route should be undertaken. It might not then be Stratford.

Mr. Adley: I have two points to make. First, that railway must finish in central London—there is no question about that. Secondly, the associated environmental costs must be borne by the Government.

Last week I was able to congratulate my hon. Friend the Minister on the decision on the Winchester bypass, which included a substantial cost of returning the existing road—the A33 around Winchester—to greenery. Of course it is essential and right that that should be done, and of course the cost will be borne by the taxpayer. Yet

[Mr. Adley]

again, the taxpayer will pay for all the environmental costs of that road, as with all roads, but British Rail is expected somehow to cope with the competing and conflicting interests of those who want the railway and want the fast travel and those who believe that a railway might cause environmental damage. Of course the Government must apply the same criteria to financial assistance for essential but environmentally sensitive transport links.

As part of its investment regime, SNCF, which is building the line to the Channel tunnel, receives 30 per cent. grant from the Government and low interest loans. To pick up on the point that has just been made by the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks), when I recently spent a day with SNCF and the French Department of Transport in Paris—I am talking not about the trip that the hon. Member for Swansea, East and I enjoyed the other day, but about a trip that I made about a year ago—it was interesting to learn that the French Department of Transport insists that with every application for investment grant, SNCF must produce a 20-year do-nothing scenario. One can answer for oneself the question about what projections would flow from a 20-year do-nothing scenario on the route of the Channel tunnel rail link.

The hon. Member for Swansea, East and I enjoyed our visit to France. I am sure that he will agree that a great deal of the aggravation that is being promoted by certain people, some of whom have a clear financial and commercial interest in preventing the fast rail link from being built, about the so-called "environmmental damage" of the high-speed train is total and utter nonsense. He and I stood literally at track level by the TGV, which was travelling at 300 km an hour, and it was much less noisy than existing trains travelling on existing tracks.

Mr. Anderson *indicated assent*——

Mr. Adley: The hon. Gentleman is nodding. I am sure that he is confirming what I have said.

I want to make a point about environmental improvements and railways in relation to what the hon. Gentleman and I saw last week. My hon. Friend the Minister knows that I have a bee in my bonnet about the policy that has been pursued by successive Governments who have ripped up and sold off railway track when services have been discontinued. France has no such policy. The track bed belongs to the Government, not to SNCF. The TGV Atlantique runs right into the centre of Paris. About 10 km of that railway line has been built on a disused railway line that was closed in 1938 but which, because of the French Government's policy, had never been sold off or destroyed. Using modern technology and a route that has existed for years, the French have cut and covered and have built a brand new railway underground. In effect, on top of the line is 10 km of urban parkway, on either side of which beautiful houses have been built. Far from that railway line being an environmental problem, the French Government's policy has turned it into a huge environmental and social asset. That is what we should be doing in this country. Therefore, I hope that section 42 of the Channel Tunnel Act 1987 will be repealed.

In due course, my hon. Friend the Member for Battersea (Mr. Bowis) will move his motion about public transport in London. The Government put forward three schemes under the central London rail study, aimed at relieving congestion in central London. The Paddington-Liverpool Street line was considered by most people who study these problems to be of the highest priority in relieving the congestion in central London. The Chelsea-Hackney line—another cross-London line—was the second priority for giving the greatest relief to the problems of congestion on the Underground. Third by quite a long way in environmental terms was the extension of the Jubilee line. It will be very nice for me, as a Member of Parliament, to be able to go directly by Underground from Westminster to Waterloo, but I cannot honestly say that my transport needs in London deserve the highest priority when I am trying to catch a train back to Dorset. Although I am sure that that proposal is welcome, especially to the property developers who will do very nicely, thank you very much, as a result of it, it is the least necessary of the schemes and the least likely to have any effect on dealing with congestion in central London.

I have made my point about selling off the track bed. Beeching's legacy on that has been a disaster and a scandal. British Rail may well own surplus land, such as marshalling yards, but to destroy the transport arteries that were the fruit of the labours and the investment of our forebears is beyond contemplation.

An attendant in the House has asked me to ensure that I mention the Somerset and Dorset Joint Railway. It is a classic example. There has been huge urban growth at both ends of the line, but the line itself has been destroyed. Perhaps I can do no better than to quote from page 82 of my forthcoming book, "Out of Steam", where, in a caption to a photograph, I wrote—*[Interruption.]* As I have said, it is to be published in August——

Mr. Tony Banks: What is the price?

Mr. Adley: We have had all that.

I wrote:

"Where *that* railway used to run:"—

the word "that" refers to the Somerset and Dorset line—

"and how we wish that it did still. Wimborne and Blandford have changed, as rural life is encapsulated by urban-orientated activity and mobility. This is the S&D bridge over the River Stour at Sturminster Newton. The erstwhile small towns at the heart of the countryside pierced originally by the Dorset Central and Somerset Central railways, feel the pincer of pressure at both ends, as Bath and Bristol, Poole and Bournemouth, seek to extend their influence, road pressure and congestion grow and we are left only to mourn the shortsighted selling-off of land that once provided a transport link."

I could weary the House by talking indefinitely about other railway lines that were closed in the wake of Beeching. I could refer, for example,to the Great Central Railway, which was the only railway line in this country to be built to the Berne gauge—how we mourn it. I could also refer to the Waverley route between Carlisle and Edinburgh. Barbara Castle's legacy hangs heavy on those of us who mourn the loss of so many railway lines.

My hon. Friend the Minister has allowed me to refer in my motion to the importance of his decision, and that of my right hon. Friend the Member for Southend, West (Mr. Channon), in refusing to grant BR's closure proposals for the Settle-Carlisle railway line. That most important decision was not taken simply to please enthusiasts. It was significant because, in attempting to meet the criteria that had been laid down by successive Governments for closing railway lines, British Rail has

fiddled the figures over the years by increasing the costs of operating railway lines, overestimating the costs of repairs to structures and generally doing everything that it could to reduce the revenue of lines by destroying connections and making the train times the least convenient.

The Settle-Carlisle line was a classic example. The Glasgow-Nottingham trains were moved away and all the freight traffic was taken from the line. The connections to Leeds and Carlisle were broken. Even so, British Rail was still not satisfied. It said that it would cost more than £6 million to repair the Ribblehead viaduct. Of course, the viaduct has been repaired for a tiny fraction of that sum. As a result of the Government's brave decision, there is now a chance that other threatened railway lines may be reprieved. I certainly hope so.

I do not know the purpose of railway privatisation. Perhaps some of my colleagues who have advocated it will be able to enlighten me. I do not know what its purpose would be other than pure party political dogma, which is not good enough for me. The competition argument about privatisation is total nonsense. Beeching saw to that. There used to be competition between London and Birmingham. There used to be a service from Euston to New Street and from Paddington to Snow Hill. There were also links between London and Nottingham—between Marylebone and Nottingham, Victoria, and between St. Pancras and Nottingham, Midland——

Mr. Roger King: My hon. Friend has mentioned competition between London and Birmingham. I wish that there had been some competition this morning. The monopoly of the service on the old London-Midland region line, which is now electrified, would have been more than enhanced for me if I could have travelled to Snow Hill station on a high-speed train via Reading, Leamington and High Wycombe to Paddington. We used to be able to do that in the old days. There is no reason why that could not be reinstated.

Mr. Adley: My hon. Friend tempts me. I do not know whether he is aware that that line has been deliberately destroyed and reduced to single track. The fascinating thing about my hon. Friend's point is that that part of the line that he has just mentioned, via Coventry, covered part of the former Great Western Railway and part of the former London, Midland and Scottish Railway. A classic example of one of the advantages of a nationalised railway is that the best possible service can be provided by using whatever track is available. As far as I understand it, there is nothing to stop my hon. Friend approaching his friends in the City, Birmingham or anywhere else, and saying, "Let us build a new railway line." All they need is a little bit of money. I do not believe that there is any legislative barrier——

Mr. Dykes: Run by Lord Hanson.

Mr. Adley: Indeed. There is no legislative barrier to prevent their doing so. We have only to look at the Channel tunnel rail link to see the real barriers to the building of new private railways in this country. Beeching and the policy pursued by successive Governments have removed the reality of railway competition in Britain. The use of the word competition in relation to privatisation is an unreal proposition.

The railways carry people and freight safely and reliably. They alleviate traffic congestion in towns and cities all over Britain. Without the railway, travel would become intolerable, if not impossible. If the freight that they carry were translated on to lorries on the roads, the cost in terms of pollution and wear and tear on the roads would be ghastly.

The hours worked by railwaymen are among the most unsocial imaginable, for which they receive little credit. The Government seem to make British Rail feel guilty for being in receipt of public funds when no other European Government would contemplate squeezing and reducing the amount of public funding at a time of increasing road traffic and growing concern about the environment. A sensible Government would look at ways of increasing the share of the traffic that the railways can carry. They would copy the West German example of cajoling traffic on to the railways with a pricing policy which clearly has that aim.

Criticising British Rail is a national obsession, as my hon. Friend the Member for Northfield has shown this morning. Whereas most of our European partners are proud of their railways and have every reason so to be, in our hearts many of us still prefer to knock the system, rather than concentrate ways of improving and adapting it to serve the needs of the nation. I hope that as a result of this debate, we can persuade the Department of Transport, through my hon. Friend the Minister, to look again at the investment criteria of road versus rail.

10.40 am

Mr. Donald Anderson (Swansea, East): It is always a pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Christchurch (Mr. Adley), particularly when he speaks sense, as he did in great abundance this morning from his unparallelled experience in the House and his knowledge of our railway system. Brief as it was, I felt that his speech was perhaps a trailer for his book. The only thing that he did not mention about his book was the publisher——

Mrs. Dunwoody: And the price.

Mr. Anderson: —and the price, as my hon. Friend says. Perhaps he will enlighten us about that later.

I was intrigued when the hon. Gentleman said that he hoped that the Minister would say something positive about the Channel tunnel rail link. The Minister looked down a little gloomily at that point. Perhaps we could put it in the context of the Mid-Staffordshire by-election. It is the only reference that I shall make to it because I do not believe in loading grief on grief. Prior to the by-election, one saw the Government's panic reaction to the poll tax in Scotland. As the Government become more panicked, they throw goodies overboard. As they have done on the Scottish poll tax, perhaps the Government will have a quick rethink about the Channel rail link. We might have some pleasurable reaction this morning, but that remains to be seen.

I shall make only three propositions. First, there appears to be a consensus among our people that the condition of British Rail is a national scandal. Secondly, the stagnation in British Rail, as the hon. Member for Christchurch said, is in sharp contrast to what we see among our competitors and partners on the Continent, particularly in the SNCF and Bundesbahn. Thirdly, the stagnation seems to stem from the Government's ideological obsession and apparent pathological distaste for rail, whatever the reason for it. The reason may be the solidarity of the rail unions or the fact that the railways are

[Mr. Anderson]

still one of the pieces of family silver that has not yet been sold off. One sees it symbolically in the way that the Prime Minister adamantly refuses to travel by rail. I am told that the only journey that she has made was from London to Gatwick. Symbolically and otherwise, leading members of the Government have no attachment to our rail industry. It remains one of the under-utilised assets in our country today.

I shall be brief about the condition of British Rail because much of what I would have said was said more eloquently by the hon. Member for Christchurch. He drew on the central transport consultative committee report published this month. The report is worth reading in detail by all hon. Members and by the Government. As the hon. Gentleman said, the committee was not a rail lobby as such, but people appointed by the Government, many of whom are close to the Government, and of Conservative Members. The hon. Member for Brecon and Radnor (Mr. Livsey) will be aware that the same point applies to the transport users consultative committee in Wales. Increasingly, true believers in Government policy have been put on that committee. But even they have gone native, as the Prime Minister might say. They have voiced strong criticisms of the rail system in Wales.

No one can seriously deny that there has been a decline in British Rail. Overcrowding and poor timekeeping were reflected in the CTCC report. The points that it made about British Rail's 1989 corporate plan covering the years from 1989-90 to 1993-94 are well made. The new objectives demand a reduction in the public service obligation grant of about 30 per cent. on top of the 50 per cent. cut since 1983. Who can forget the eagerness with which Sir Robert Reid told the Government that he could go even further than the Government wanted? That showed that his was a disastrous appointment. He made only a few plaintive criticisms of Government policy at the very end of his tenure.

The lost Government grant has been countered by new investment from higher fares. Higher fares are likely only to drive people from the railways. Traffic growth is based on an assumed growth of the economy which is not now accepted by the Treasury. In its corporate plan, British Rail is forced by the Government to assume an annual growth of 2·7 per cent. per annum, but the Chancellor of the Exchequer this week, in his Budget, said that we should assume only a 1 per cent. increase in the growth rate. Thus the very basis on which the Government assume that new revenue will be generated for the railways has been undermined by the Government's own forecast.

We know that since then demand for rail travel has fallen substantially. Hence the British Rail cuts which are in prospect in May of this year and cuts in various sectors, whether Network SouthEast, where the CTCC said that the reduction in manpower at stations made stations a "playground for vandals", or InterCity, for which the subsidy was ended in 1988, leading to overcrowding and cancellations.

It is hardly surprising that the CTCC ended its report by stating:

"British Rail is in trouble. The financial targets set out in the Corporate Plan are seen as a 'virility' symbol which must be achieved even though the financial climate has changed and whatever the costs to the passenger in service cutbacks, delayed investment or higher fares. Meanwhile, many thousands of commuters are forced to endure the daily degradation of travelling in grotesquely overcrowded trains and because of BR's decisions, this will get worse."

That was the indictment of the CTCC.

One sees problems in terms of service quality on the line I regularly use and which I shall use this afternoon—the south Wales lines from Swansea to London. In the early 1970s when high-speed trains on InterCity were introduced, we were at the forefront of development in Europe. It is fair to say that since that marvellous investment in HST, which cut transport times, there has been a substantial period of stagnation, if not a fall, in the quality of services on that line. In south Wales, because we cannot meet the Government's criteria for electrification, we are likely to have to endure the current 125 diesel services which are now obsolescent in today's world. We are likely to endure them for 15 years until the life expiry time of those services.

Those of us who travel on London Underground can see a similar problem in terms of service compared with other countries. I travel regularly on the underground system from Holland Park, which is where I live in London. When I reach Holland Park station, I expect at least one of the two underground lifts to be out of operation. At Notting Hill, I expect at least one of the two escalators to be out of operation. At least we have loudspeakers now, but they tell us only of cancellations and problems. Eventually, I arrive at Westminster, which is one of the more squalid of the underground stations in London. I am sure that there are even worse examples, but Westminster is one of the major tourist areas. I was recently there with a Norwegian friend, who is pro-British. He was ashamed at the squalor which he saw in the station. That sums up much of our public transport system.

The squalor and stagnation on the south Wales line and with the HSTs is in stark contrast with what is to be seen in France. The hon. Member for Christchurch mentioned the visit to France on 6 February. There we saw the TGV Atlantique. That is the new system, following the success of the Paris-Lyon route. There is a new system snaking out in a Y from Paris to Le Mans and from Paris to Tours. By June, the TGV system will be in operation to Bordeaux in the south-west. Many of the trains travel at 300 km an hour, which is roughly 186 mph.

I shall compare current journey times within the French railway system and the cost per mile with those factors within the British system. My examples are Paris-Angers in the Loire valley and London-Swansea, south Wales. Angers is as far away from Paris as Swansea is from London, yet in terms of travel time it is as far away from London as Bristol, Temple Meads. The two routes—Paris-Angers and London-Swansea—are exactly 191 miles. The TGV time from Paris to Angers is 1 hour 29 minutes and the HST time from London to Swansea is 2 hours 37 minutes. The average speed on the TGV route is 129 mph and the average on the HST line is 73 mph. A single fare from Paris to Angers is £22·80 and from London to Swansea it is £30. The fares per mile in France are about a third lower than the equivalent fares within the United Kingdom.

Mr. Roger King: Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will take into account the cost of super-saver tickets. British Rail offers a wide range of fares and it is not fair, if I may use that word, to pick only one example from it. British Rail's pricing policy, rightly or wrongly, is to offer a wide range

of fares. It could be that it is cheaper to travel from Paddington to Swansea using a super-saver ticket than from Paris to Angers.

Mr. Anderson: If I were to take all the fares that come within the bewildering range that is offered by British Rail and compare them like for like with the fares within the French system, I should be on my feet for a long time. I have tried, so far as it is possible, to make a fair comparison between one and the other. I think that it would be accepted generally that the equivalent cost of fares in France is about 30 per cent. less than those in the United Kingdom. If the hon. Gentleman can find a means of travelling more cheaply at odd hours in the United Kingdom compared with the cost of travelling in France, let him advance that argument. I have tried to make an honest comparison.

Morale within the French railway system is much higher than in the British system. The French railwaymen have pride in their jobs because they are in a growth industry. There is a buoyant feel in the French railway system, and the environmental benefits that have been gained as a result of investing in it are there to be seen. The financial regimes in France and the United Kingdom are entirely different. In France, there is a greater concern for planning transport throughout the network and with environmental matters than there is in the United Kingdom. In France, there is a willingness to consider regional factors in a way that is not done within our system. One example is the projections for the Paris-Strasbourg line, which cannot be warranted on normal commercial criteria. When it comes to electrification in south Wales and on the south-west line, the Government merely parrot, "The line does not meet the financial criteria which we, the Government, have set."

The result of the non-electrification of the south Wales line will be the exclusion of south Wales from the major benefits of the Channel tunnel. We shall be unable to lock into the electrified system to the tunnel. We know that the Channel tunnel could have adverse regional effects, and those effects will be magnified as a result of the rail regime which the Government impose upon British Rail by their financial policy.

I shall not bore the House by referring to all the available statistics on rail investment as a percentage of gross domestic product, but the latest available figures show that the United Kingdom is at the bottom of the list with the Republic of Ireland.

It is my submission that the crisis in British Rail—the squalor and the stagnation which are so manifest—is due primarily to Government policy. The difficulties with the Channel link can be compared, symbolically, with what is being done in France to effect links with the Channel. The TGV will come from Paris to the Channel port and to Brussels.

Non-electrification means that south Wales has had a poor deal. The journey time from Cardiff to London is about two hours and the projected journey time in 1993, with the opening of the Channel tunnel, from London to Paris will be three hours. That should mean that the journey time from Cardiff to Paris will be five hours. The result of non-electrification is that only one train a day arrives at Waterloo from south Wales, and a change of trains is involved. That is due to lack of imagination in Government policy.

The Secretary of State for Transport laid bare his views on British Rail on the television programme "On the Record" on 25 February. I was so appalled by what I heard that I thought that I would watch the programme again to see whether I had had too good a Sunday lunch on that day. I shall quote some of the Secretary of State's remarks during his interview with David Dimbleby. When talking about rail investment, he said:

"I set out options for people to choose."

He spoke of

"what 56 million people may choose to do with their money".

He seemed to suggest that that was of no concern to him. He said:

"If you offer a range of items, the public is capable of choosing the ones which suit it."

He added:

"It is not my job to say to people that they should travel by rail."

It is the Secretary of State's job to inspire policies that can influence the mode which people choose, whether they be planning policies in cities and outwith them, or subsidies for environmental reasons for the perceived public good. A transport policy cannot be based on the aim of cutting subsidies without regard to environmental gains, such as reducing congestion and vehicle emissions. If this most ideological of Governments opt out of investing in British Rail, they are failing the nation.

10.59 am

Sir Philip Goodhart (Beckenham): Over the past few years I have often disagreed with my hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch (Mr. Adley) on a range of issues, particularly transport matters. However, I am glad that he reminded me that we tramped through the Division Lobby frequently a couple of years ago in our opposition to the community charge. I am also delighted that, he has taken up the cause of the Network SouthEast commuters, many of whom are from my constituency. I entirely echo the words that he used about their plight.

I suppose that over the past century almost every hon. Member has used in the House or at public meetings Disraeli's great dictum:

"There are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies and statistics."

We could paraphrase that by saying that there are three sorts of damned statistics: statistics, misleading statistics and the performance statistics put out by Network SouthEast.

My constituents were, to put it mildly, astonished to learn that 92 per cent. of Network SouthEast's trains arrive on time and that 98·6 per cent. of them run at all. Those figures have been greeted in my constituency with disbelief, indeed hilarity. One of the great advantages of being a Member of Parliament is that generally one does not have to travel during the rush hour. However, my secretary comes up from my constituency virtually every day on the train. When I told her, earlier this week, that 98·6 per cent. of the trains that she tried to catch were running and 92 per cent. of them arrived on time she first laughed, then she began to cry and then it seemed that hysteria was about to set in. We gave her a mild sedative and sent her home in a minicab. Many of my constituents know that travelling on Network SouthEast is a nightmare.

I appreciate the Government's argument that it is wrong that taxpayers in the less prosperous parts of the country should be taxed in order to subsidise fares in one of the most prosperous parts of the nation. However, the

[Sir Philip Goodhart]

practical facts that my constituents have to face are that the reduction and rapid phasing out of the subsidy will mean fewer trains at peak times and at off-peak times, and more unmanned stations.

Therefore, I suggest to the able Minister who is to respond to this debate a form of compromise. In 1992, we shall see the introduction of the new Networker trains which hold out considerable hope for my constituents. I urge the Minister to stop the phasing out of the subsidy at least until after 1992, when the new Networker trains have become standard throughout Network SouthEast.

We all know that in a matter of days my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport will be faced with demands for a substantial subsidy to pay for the high-speed rail link between the Channel tunnel and the centre of London. Recently, the Economist Intelligence Unit, commenting on the present planning position on the high-speed rail link, said:

"It seems astonishing that a rail based project costing up to £7 billion can have got so far without British Rail having come up with a viable solution for joining it to the rest of the rail network. Such inertia, not to say incompetence, may well affect investors's views when they are asked to provide more money to finance cost overruns."

I admit that I am torn because I realise the dilemma facing my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State. My constituents are strong supporters of the Ove Arup scheme, which would mean that lines would be built far away from Bromley, ending up at Stratford. I appreciate my constituents' wish that the lines should run far away from Bromley, but I have the gravest doubts about whether Stratford is the right place for a high-speed rail link to end up. My constituents are also fearful that no viable proposition of any sort will be put forward and the new traffic generated by the Channel tunnel will run on existing tracks, many of which pass through Bromley. That would not only be an environmental calamity for some of the people who live near the existing railway tracks, but would add substantially to the congestion on some of the most crowded and intensively used railway lines anywhere in the country.

The British Rail consortium on the European rail link has made it perfectly plain that it opposes the Stratford route. I do not suppose that the Treasury will be much encouraged by the fact that that route is backed by the Bechtel Construction Company, the largest and one of the most profitable construction companies in the entire world, which knows a gravy train when it sees one. But I have considerable doubts about the wisdom of pouring billions of pounds of taxpayers' money into a venture that may make as little economic sense as Concorde.

The argument in favour of the high-speed rail link is largely based on the success of the Paris-Lyon TGV line which came into operation in the early 1980s. My hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch and the hon. Member for Swansea, East (Mr. Anderson) referred to their trip to France on 6 February this year to see the TGV trains in operation. That very week *The Economist* contained an article on future train investment in Europe saying:

"The change in passenger behaviour on routes between Paris and south-east France after the introduction of TGVs in 1981 was indeed striking. In 1980, about 1 million people flew and 2 million took the train from Paris to Lyon; now about 500,000 fly and 5 million take the two hour train journey."

It went on:

"But Paris-London is not Paris-Lyon."

Mr. Adley: My hon. Friend is right. Does he agree that among the inevitable repercussions that a genuine high-speed link between London and Paris would bring, one of the great side benefits would be a substantial disincentive for people to fly from London to Paris, Brussels and Amsterdam, thus releasing valuable air services at Heathrow and Gatwick? That saving in cash and environmental terms should be a perfectly genuine factor for the Government to take into account in assessing the advantages of investing in a high speed rail link.

Sir Philip Goodhart: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for bringing me on to my next point. I believe that in the next few years there will be a vast expansion in the air traffic between Britain and the Continent. Quite clearly, between now and the middle of the next decade there will be increased deregulation between the air traffic companies which will inevitably lead to lower fares. The distance between Heathrow and Charles de Gaulle is almost exactly the same as the distance between New York La Guardia airport and Washington DC Capitol airport. The one-way fare between London and Paris is £95; the fare on the admirable shuttle service between New York and Washington is $95. Given the increased deregulation that is bound to occur, air travel between London and Paris and London and Brussels is certain to become cheaper.

Mrs. Dunwoody: Does the hon. Gentleman accept that air space will not expand and that our air traffic control system is still underresourced, undermanned and in need of considerable investment which it will get late and which will certainly take some time to come into operation?

Sir Philip Goodhart: I am grateful to the hon. Lady for leading me on exactly to my next point. In the next decade, there will be substantial improvements in air traffic control, access to airports and handling of aircraft on the ground. Under the present scheme for improving air traffic control there will be 30 per cent. higher capacity at Heathrow by 1995 and £30 million is being spent on extra terminal facilities for dealing with shuttle services. I am sure that I join my hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch in hoping that the rail link between Heathrow and Paddington will be completed as quickly as is humanly possible.

I believe that there will also be more air space in the next few years as part of the peace dividend. At the moment, one of the constrictions on air travel in Europe is the amount of air space that is taken by military flying. Given the peace divided and the reduction in flights by the Royal Air Force and the French, German and American air forces which is bound to occur in the next few years, there will be more air space for civilian air traffic. That suggests to me that the competition between the airlines and the high-speed rail link is considerably greater than many of the experts would admit.

However, British Rail has substantially underestimated the amount of freight that is likely to move on rail to the Channel tunnel and beyond. I am exceedingly unhappy about British Rail's current proposals for handling that freight. It seems to envisage that most of it will run on lines through west London and south London that are already congested and there will be a Beckenham bottleneck.

Mr. Adley: As it seems we are now allowed to advertise, has my hon. Friend seen the book that I wrote called, "Tunnel Vision" which includes a proposal fully to utilise the railway line built in the 1870s with the Channel tunnel in mind, which runs from Ashford to Redhill round through Guildford to Reading? That line exists and is in use. It needs to be improved and some of it needs to be electrified, but if British Rail cannot meet the Government's investment criteria, does my hon. Friend support that proposal which would help to solve his constituents' problems?

Sir Philip Goodhart: I entirely agree with my hon. Friend. I am willing to pass him a pen in the hope that he will autograph his pamphlet which, in view of my own cash flow problems, I hope he will give me free.

We need to look anew at the way in which British Rail should handle that freight problem, and I believe that my hon. Friend's proposals are entirely sensible.

We shall face a crunch in a few weeks' time. We know that the main players in the Channel tunnel rail link game are to meet the Minister, when they will tell him, "If you don't put up the money, there will be no chance of a high-speed or freight rail link being built." I have an ambivalent attitude towards the Channel tunnel. I do not dispute that it would be a pity if, having progressed so far, that extraordinary engineering project was not completed. However, I suspect that many of my constituents hope in their hearts that the tunnel will fail financially—and I believe that it will, unless my hon. Friend the Minister makes public money available soon.

11.20 am

Mr. Richard Livsey (Brecon and Radnor): I congratulate the hon. Member for Christchurch (Mr. Adley) on bringing his motion before the House. If the hon. Gentleman were moved to the Government Front Bench, there is even a chance that the Government might be saved —but I do not expect that to happen.

The rail system in my constituency was butchered by Beeching when his axe fell. Some 110 rail men lost their jobs when the lines from Brecon to Swansea, to Newport, to Merthyr, to Hereford and to Newtown were all closed in 1962. There is a strong case for reopening at least one of those lines and connecting it to the national rail network. The population in my area has increased considerably. In the town of Brecon, it has grown by one third. There is clearly a need for that part of my constituency to be linked again with the national rail system. In a more enlightened age, that may happen.

The debate concerns rail investment on an equal basis with road investment. It is ludicrous for the rail system to be judged by a criterion of an 8 per cent. return on capital investment. Road congestion costs this country £20 billion per annum, and half that is accounted for in the London area alone. We are paying that massive on-cost every year as a consequence of neglecting the rail system.

The British Rail network is one of the few in Europe whose investment is not judged by cost benefit analysis. In recent months, the Government have changed their attitude very slightly and the Department of Transport is beginning to think again. A comparison between the French and British railways reveals the extent of the problem. Over the next 10 years, the French will invest £2 billion per annum in rail capital projects, whereas in the 1990-91 financial year, British Rail will invest just £618,000—a sum wholly inadequate to sustain the system.

What are the consequences of that differential in investment? I, together with other members of the Welsh Select Committee studying Channel tunnel rail links with the Continent, found—as was said by the hon. Member for Beckenham (Sir P. Goodhart)—that SNCF's TGV virtually knocked out air traffic between Lyons and Paris, and over the past 10 years it has carried 100 million passengers. That success has enabled further investment in the TGV Atlantique route between Paris and Rennes. There continues to be a vast growth in rail passenger traffic in France.

Construction will begin shortly on a rail route of 114km that will bypass Paris, at a cost of £1·7 billion. It will also link Charles de Gaulle airport to the rail system, making that route the hub of the European transport system. It will cut two hours from the rail journey between Lyons and Lille in northern France, as trains will not have to travel through Paris. That is what I call a transport system with vision. The scope exists not only for increasing passenger traffic but freight. There is also massive scope for construction in this country of a Berne gauge spine to take all freight traffic, as we have massive problems in transferring freight between the continental rail system and our own.

Mr. Roger King: I listened with interest to the hon. Gentleman's comments on the construction of a rail route bypassing Paris. Does he imagine that London residents would accept the construction of such a link if British Rail proposed building one around the capital? Experience suggests that however green rail travel might appear to be, no one wants it.

Mr. Livsey: I shall come to that point shortly. I believe that the British public would accept such a project.

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North): Can the hon. Member for Brecon and Radnor (Mr. Livsey) say how many miles of motorway could be built for the £1·7 billion that it is costing to construct 114km of French rail bypass?

Mr. Livsey: I cannot instantly recall the cost of constructing one mile of motorway, but perhaps another hon. Member can do so. However, I am sure that the figure is very high.

Mr. Adley: That question can be answered by pointing out that it cost £2 billion to reopen the Thameslink line that already existed. The answer to the point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Northfield (Mr. King) is that most of the lines for a rail bypass around London also already exist and only small additional links would need to be constructed between them. Many of the existing lines are currently unused, and most are underused.

Mr. Livsey: I thank the hon. Member for Christchurch for that expert information.

The criterion of an 8 per cent. return on capital militates against specific projects. As the hon. Member for Swansea, East (Mr Anderson) said, it militates against investment in the south Wales, Bristol, Great Western line, which will not be electrified under that criterion. However, electrification would proceed under cost benefit analysis. One consequence of the criterion is that there will be no

[Mr. Livsey]

daytime links to the Channel tunnel and to the Continent because of the absence of electrification. That means that south Wales, Bristol and the south-west, Hereford and Gloucester, Oxford, Swindon and Reading will have no direct link with the Channel tunnel. That is absolute madness.

Why cannot specific projects be judged by cost benefit analysis? Why not have a London rail bypass? The costs of the M25 and of its widening have already been great in terms of environmental damage, so why not construct a high-speed rail link running alongside the M25? Who from the regions and countries of Britain actually wants to stop in London? We want to travel to Madrid, Moscow, or to eastern Europe, as it is opened up. We do not want to stop in London and to experience its massive problems of traffic congestion.

There is no reason why the bypass could not be linked with mainline stations in London, with speed limits for trains of 60 or 70 mph. It would avoid dragging up half of London and the suburbs and would link with the national rail system. It would mirror the Paris bypass, which has been costed at £1·7 billion, and would speed up travelling times between the regions and the Continent for passengers and freight. It would benefit the environment and would reduce the number of people and the amount of traffic in London. Its environmental cost would be far less than putting masses of concrete over southern Britain for more roads. In the context of 1992 and beyond, it would have many benefits for British industry and tourism.

It may be asked how we would find the money to pay for that bypass. In the Budget, the Chancellor paid off £7 billion of the national debt, and some of that money would have been better invested in our rail infrastructure.

The cost to the environment of the road system is immense. The Department of Transport forecasts a 142 per cent. increase in road transport by 2025. People in the south-east should not shrink from seeking basic improvements in rail infrastructure, because more roads will be far worse for the environment.

Figures for 1987 show that 98 million tonnes of carbon dioxide is emitted from road traffic per annum in Britain. The figures for nitrous oxide and carbon monoxide are enormous. When one considers that it takes 25 acres of land to construct one mile of motorway, one appreciates the environmental cost of road systems.

The statistics on road accidents are horrific. Figures for between 1980 and 1986 show that 40,000 people were killed on the roads, whereas over the same period there were only 32 deaths on the railways. What a safety comparison.

Rail subsidies vary tremendously between one country and another. The subsidy per kilometre of track in Italy is £10·52p, in France £5·83p but in Britain £1·95p. The public service obligation is essential to some routes, particularly to the central Wales line in my constituency. It is assisted by that subsidy and has remained open sometimes because it runs through five marginal constituencies.

The fares situation is also scandalous. The Select Committee on Welsh Affairs discovered that fares in Britain are 60 per cent. higher than in France, where rail transport is much more competitive. British Rail's fares policy paints a very unattractive picture. In 1978, a return ticket from London to Brighton cost £5·65p, but in 1989 it cost £16·20—an increase of 200 per cent., while the increase in the retail prices index over the same period was 115 per cent. That is a quite astonishing state of affairs.

When the Channel tunnel is open, the British public will be horrified by the comparison between the modern continental system and our ancient and inefficient system. They will travel on faster, cleaner and cheaper services and will demand the same for this country. We need to have the foresight now to do something about it.

For six months, the Select Committee on Welsh Affairs studied links between Wales and the Channel tunnel. It recommended, first, electrifiction of the south Wales and west of England routes to enable direct links to the Channel tunnel. That is the only way that we shall get them. Secondly, it advocated electrification of the Crewe and Holyhead route and talks with the Irish Government on how best to achieve it. Thirdly, it advocated a Berne gauge freight link to penetrate all major manufacturing areas of Britain to enable industry to compete with that on the Continent. Fourthly, it advocated cost benefit analysis of rail investment. It regarded that as extremely important. Fifthly, it advocated repeal of section 42 of the Channel Tunnel Act 1987. That Act must cover not only private sector fundng but mixed funding. We are burying our heads in the sand if we allow section 42 to cover only private sector funding. I gather that Trafalgar House, one of the main groups involved in the Dover to London link, is screaming for public money because it cannot make that route pay. Sixthly, the Select Committee advocated that British Rail should treat European funds as a net increase in resources. Such a programme is required.

There is little vision in the Department of Transport. The Secretary of State and the Minister for Public Transport should radically change their policy and thinking on rail investment. Our forefathers would have looked with astonishment on our attitudes to rail investment and on the Government's blinkered view on the means of evaluating rail investment.

It is time for us to roll up our sleeves and to bring Britain into the 21st century with a modern rail system serving all our citizens and industry, bringing tourists into this country and creating greater international understanding and offering us the quality of life that we desperately need.

11.37 am

Mr. Gary Waller (Keighley): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch (Mr. Adley) on his choice of subject and on the distinctive style with which he presented his case.

The surveys that have been carried out of the priorities of those considering locations for industrial investment reveal very clearly that good transport links are high on their list and that they vie with the availability of skilled labour. Invariably, they are even regarded as more important than such factors as the availability of regional grants. As far as rail links are concerned, the Bradford area has been competing under the burden of a real handicap. For reasons of historic and geographic accident, the city has never enjoyed the access to the national rail network possessed by its larger neighbour, Leeds, and other cities of comparable size. The position might have been better if, in the last century, two competing rail companies had not left Bradford with two stations

permanently separated and half a mile apart. I am sure that my hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch could give its history in considerable detail.

A fleeting opportunity now exists to redress the balance and to provide the city and its immediate hinterland with an advantage that would act as a crucial lever in attracting further private investment to an area that certainly needs it. Recently, under the wise leadership of local Conservative control, Bradford has attracted more than £1 billion of investmemt in the west end, Forster square and other imaginative redevelopment schemes. However, a city whose traditional industries are textiles and engineering can never rest on its laurels because it will always be vulnerable to fleeting changes in the economic climate, in fashion and demand.

The major rail proposals which are about to come before my hon. Friend the Minister of State for consideration involve the electrification of the route between Leeds and Bradford, Forster square via Shipley, and the local network immediately to the north; the Airedale line from Leeds and Bradford through Shipley and Keighley to Skipton; and the Wharfedale line from the two cities to Burley in Wharfedale and Ilkley. These proposals follow hard on the heels of the encouraging results of the intermediate Transmark study for the passenger transport executive which was completed in January.

Inadequate rail services are a major headache for thousands of commuters and essential travellers. Overcrowded and often unreliable trains largely reflect burgeoning demand combined with inadequate investment in the past. Electrification will create a fast, reliable service on each of the three routes that I have mentioned and will enable British Rail InterCity services on the new electrified east coast main line—we are delighted to have it—to run on to Bradford from London and all points in between.

The capital costs of these schemes require an investment of some £20 million for wiring the routes and providing the power supply and for engineering works to bridges, tunnels and the lineside to provide adequate clearance and safety. We are talking also about an initial 17 train units, at a cost of up to £2 million each. The amounts are not inconsiderable, but they must be set in the context of the fact that the local authority has a revenue budget equivalent to that total figure every few months.

The time scale is crucial. The design and implementation of the scheme could take more than two years. There is now a limited window of opportunity which could enable the scheme to be operational by May 1993 at a cost that would be considerably lower than if a decision were delayed. To take full advantage of this opportunity, authorisation by the Secretary of State must be granted by May, and I realise how little time this gives for a decision.

The need for a speedy decision relates largely to the completion of electrification works on the southern section of the east coast main line. It would enable the West Yorkshire PTE to take advantage of the Doncaster electrification depot, providing an immediate saving of £650,000, and to carry out the works at the most favourable price, for it is likely to rise by at least 10 per cent. once the main line works are complete and the team is dispersed. There is also a chance to order the trains at optimum prices by linking them to an existing order from British Rail. The passenger transport authority, Bradford city council and British Rail are together saying to my hon. Friend the Minister of State that they believe that the scheme can be justified not only in terms of the investment criteria of the Department of Transport by bringing about additional revenue and cost savings, showing more than an 8 per cent. rate of return over its lifetime, but in terms of the broad economic and environmental benefits to millions of people in Bradford and west Yorkshire which would be highly visible, even if they were hard to quantify.

As for operating costs, electric trains require less maintenance than diesels and, because they are more reliable and efficient, not as many are needed. The supplanted diesel rolling stock could relieve other overcrowded services in the county. It is calculated that the savings to local services could be £900,000 per annum, in addition to operational savings for InterCity. The present plans for British Rail's Bradford services involve a change of traction at Leeds, because the Leeds-Bradford line can take only diesels at present.

Obviously the improvements in reliability and performance will result in more passengers on local rail services, generating considerable additional revenue. Reliability and comfort are critical factors, as they are in many other places. At present, many trains are late and too many passengers are unable to find a seat at peak periods. Potential customers are prepared to pay more for their journey if they can be sure of travelling in comfort and on time. I am prepared to say for myself that some increase in fares would strengthen the case for electrification arising out of the Transmark study. It is likely also that an improved service would attract more revenue to British Rail by drawing local people to link with InterCity.

The environmental return will come about largely by a transfer from car to train. There are projected road improvements in the Aire and Wharfe valleys, but their time scale is uncertain and they will remain relatively congested for years to come. Electrification provides dividends in terms of less air pollution—a factor which will also count for more in the future.

I now come to the wider economic case for Bradford electrification. The city council has said that the provision of good public transport is crucial to the city's future. Only half of Bradford's households have access to a car, a figure well below the national average. Electrification is, in effect, the only way that Bradford could truly be retained on the British Rail InterCity network—which I hope everyone would agree is vital. It would surely be unthinkable for the fifth largest metropolitan district and the eighth largest city in Britain to be relegated to a branch line, as would, in effect, be the case.

Connections to the InterCity network and to the Continent via the Channel tunnel are particularly vital for a city that is so dependent on trade. The textile industry in particular has not had an easy time in recent years. Many hon. Members know that in a decade jobs in textiles and clothing have fallen from 850,000 to well under 500,000. This morning, I heard of the loss of more than 60 jobs at a highly efficient textile company, Laxton Crawford, of Silsden in my constituency. The industry has survived because of its export successes. Wool textile exports in particular have been an outstanding triumph, with the United States, Europe and Japan among those clamouring for our products.

The Chamber of Commerce has pointed to the continual need for two-way traffic between supplier and customer and the fact that overseas customers in particular look to a direct link with their Bradford supplier. What

[Mr. Gary Waller]

would they think of a city so off the beaten track as to merit no electrified link with the main line only a few miles away? If action is not taken before the Channel tunnel comes into operation, London and the south-east will be more accessible by train from northern France than from northern England, leaving our traditional home market wide open to attack. Can one imagine the French contemplating that for their country?

Business people in Bradford have shown that they will use trains if a good service exists. Some 83 per cent. of firms participating in a recent chamber of commerce survey said that they would transfer travel from other forms of transport if local electrification came. Of course, demand has increased enormously in recent years, and in May the new all-electric BR timetable between London and west Yorkshire will have more trains and they will travel faster. As yet, few of those journeys are, or can be, made directly between Bradford and the capital.

I am sure that many people will agree that good train services are important to tourism. Bradford has become the model to which other cities around the world look if they wish to see how one can sell an industrial centre as a tourist magnet. Tourism now accounts for more than £56 million per annum in revenue to the local economy and an increasing proportion of the work force depends on it. The National Museum of Film, Photography and Television and the Brontë museum at Haworth attract more than 1 million visitors each year. The former, despite its success in drawing over twice the number of expected visitors, describes the absence of a direct link with the south as a severe constraint on its ability to gain business.

The same factor will clearly apply when the Victoria and Albert museum relocates its Indian collection in the city soon. In my constituency, Haworth and the Keighley and Worth Valley railway, to which I am glad to pay tribute, are very much part of the tourism trail. They had a problem in attracting the overseas visitor who is more likely to be dependent on public transport. For Bradford as a whole, the emphasis should be on weekend breaks and short holidays throughout the year, but those especially depend on good direct rail links.

For long-suffering commuters and shoppers in places such as Keighley and Ilkley, electrification of the Airedale and Wharfedale lines cannot come soon enough. Railway staff are tired of having to placate passengers who have complained for too long of delays, overcrowding and unreliability. They demand—and deserve—an improvement. More reliable trains with an increased capacity of 50 per cent., from 200 to 300 passengers, will fit that bill.

Two years ago, my hon. Friend the Minister, after considerable negotiation, approved a scheme for the reintroduction of trolley buses in Bradford. The trolley buses were to be of a novel and advanced design. As I know my hon. Friend will recall, there were detailed negotiations on the project because issues relating to the investment criteria that did not apply to other more conventional proposals were raised. As my hon. Friend may be aware, the trolley bus project has run into problems because the manufacturers are now projecting far higher costs for the vehicles. I am sure that it would be regretted if it were not possible to proceed with that highly innovative scheme. Nevertheless, I believe that I speak for most people in the area when I say that, of the two projects, electrification, whose immediate benefits would be spread far more widely, must be the priority. It would be tragic if both opportunities were missed

The PTE is putting forward a case for section 56 grants. However, the major demand for capital expenditure will not arise for a year or so, so the vital need is for the Department of Transport to give the project general authorisation so that the PTE can start to invest out of its own resources. Some modest expenditure, for example, would be advisable to protect the depot at Doncaster from vandalism until electrification work recommenced.

The people of west Yorkshire are using the train in increasing numbers. New stations are opening such as the one at Steeton and Silsden in my constituency. The green prospectus must rely to a considerable extent on rail as a vital part of the transport infrastructure. We should not and cannot force people to use trains, but we can make their use sufficiently attractive to make the choice of trains easier. We should not readily be forgiven if we did not grasp a major opportunity to show our faith in the future.

11.52 am

Ms. Joan Ruddock (Lewisham, Deptford): I apologise to the House for the absence of my hon. Friend the Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape). He is privileged to have been a member of the campaign team for Sylvia Heal and he is, therefore, properly celebrating our party's considerable victory in Mid-Staffordshire.

I congratulate the hon. Member for Christchurch (Mr. Adley) on the motion. It notes:

"the Government's commitment to maintain the existing railway network".

Millions of railway passengers have good reason to doubt the strength of that commitment. Only last week, as other hon. Members have pointed out, the Government-appointed chairman of the Central Transport Consultative Committee, Major-General Lennox Napier warned that British Rail is in a mess. The committee met British Rail representatives on 27 February to discuss the 1989 corporate plan which was published last December. The committee was so concerned by what it learned that it took the unusual step of publishing a special report. The report makes damning reading. It says that the new tougher financial targets set by the Secretary of State last December are seen as

"a virility symbol, which must be achieved even though the financial climate has changed and whatever the cost to the passenger in service cutbacks, delayed investment or higher fares."

The report concludes that with the public service obligation grant already cut by 51 per cent. since 1983, demand for further cuts in grant have caused a financial crisis in British Rail.

The report lists services that are to be cut and trains that are to be shortened as a result of that financial crisis. The cuts will cause horrendous overcrowding and a deterioration in services. One would have thought that the Secretary of State would be worried that the new tougher financial targets were having a damaging effect on rail services, but not a bit of it. He said that it was far too early to judge the corporate plan and, as he told the House on 12 March, the problem was that the major-general had been listening to too many speeches of my hon. Friend the Member for Kingston upon Hull, East (Mr. Prescott).

I do not wish to cast any doubt on the persuasiveness of my hon. Friend, but we can safely say that Major-General Lennox Napier, who was educated at

Radley and Sandhurst, was a former commanding officer of the Royal Regiment of Wales and was appointed to his current role by the Department of Trade and Industry, is unlikely to be unduly influenced by Labour politicians. His message to the Secretary of State last week was clear. He said:

"It is up to BR to come clean and tell the Government that it must go back to the drawing board. Large cuts in investment schemes are to be announced. British Rail is in trouble and that means that the passenger is in trouble. A change of direction and a fundamental rethink is needed by British Rail and the Government."

I should have thought that the Secretary of State would want to discuss the matter before rejecting these arguments out of hand, but that was not the case. Last Friday, he told the annual meeting of Northampton Conservative women that he fully endorsed the cuts in rail services. He said that it made sense to cut loss-making services.

As the CTCC report clearly shows, how can it make sense to reduce timetables and shorten trains on services that are already grotesquely overcrowded? How can it make sense to delay the reopening of the Luton to Dunstable line and the electrification of the lines between Ashford and Hastings, Hurst Green and Uckfield, and Reading and Gatwick until at least 1995?

When we need to create an image of a clean, modern railway, why have improvement schemes at 14 stations throughout Network SouthEast also been delayed? At a time when we desperately need to promote park-and-ride schemes as a means of relieving traffic congestion on the roads, what sense does it make to scrap £6 million of investment in new car parking facilities at another 14 stations in the south-east?

Mr. Eric S. Heffer (Liverpool, Walton): My hon. Friend is making an important point. Is she aware—I am sure that she is—of the cuts that have led to a lack of alternative engines when they are needed? I shall give an example. The Minister for Roads and Traffic and I were travelling from Chesterfield across the tops of the mountains, because we had to be diverted, to Manchester. The train broke down. It took one and a half hours to get a new engine. It was the middle of summer and everybody was fed up and worn out. The Minister did not make a protest. I was the only person who suggested that something should be done. We waited for an hour and a half. People who travel from Liverpool to London as regularly as I do know that almost every week the train breaks down, although there has been a slight improvement recently. The breakdowns are a result of a lack of investment and of cuts under this Government.

Ms. Ruddock: I thank my hon. Friend for his contribution. What he has described is typical of the regular experience of far too many passengers on British Rail today.

The most worrying aspect of the CTCC report is that it lists more than 200 stations in Network SouthEast that are left unstaffed for all or part of the day. Women passengers are being put at risk simply so that Network SouthEast can meet the financial targets set by the Government. Surely the Government cannot be oblivious of the fact that women are fearful of using our British Rail services at these unstaffed stations.

Mr. Roger King: Men are fearful as well.

Ms. Ruddock: Yes, men as well. However, the hon. Gentleman would acknowledge that it is especially difficult for women. The survey conducted by British Rail said that 50 per cent. of women tried to avoid using public transport after dark. That is unacceptable in a civilised country. Are we to assume that, to the Government, the staff who provide help and information to passengers and provide women passengers in particular with a greater feeling of personal security are just another loss-making service?

In his Northampton speech, the Secretary of State failed to address the fundamental problem revealed in the corporate plan, which was identified by the Opposition more than a month ago and by the CTCC again last week. All the planned forecasts are based on economic assumptions that are hopelessly overoptimistic. The three-year £3·5 billion investment programme assumes economic growth of 2·7 per cent. with consumer spending forecast to increase by 2·9 per cent. Yet on Tuesday the Chancellor admitted that growth this year would be as low as 1 per cent., making the predictions of 2·7 and 2·9 per cent. seem decidedly unrealistic. An additional problem for British Rail is that the current state of the property market makes it highly unlikely that its property sales can generate the £800 million over the next three years that the corporate plan also assumes.

The downturn in the economy has already badly affected passenger revenue, and the Opposition calculate that the investment programme of which the Government say they are so proud may have to be cut by up to £500 million because of those difficulties. As the Secretary of State has refused to answer that specific charge, I hope that the Minister will be prepared to do so today.

The economic downturn highlights the essential problem facing British Rail. No one can challenge the assertion that there has been an increase in investment, but, because it has been paid for almost exclusively by passengers in higher fares—I remind the House of increases in real terms of up to 24 per cent. since 1979—and by a worse quality of service, it amounts to no more than the minimum that needs to be done to stop things getting any worse. Basically, it involves simply replacing the worn-out old rolling stock that should have been replaced years ago.

In 1992, on the north Kent line, on which overcrowding is at its worst, the old 10-carriage trains will begin to be replaced by new eight-carriage trains. It is to be hoped that the new trains will be more reliable and that the maintenance costs will be reduced, but the problems of overcrowding are likely to be as bad as ever. Because the new trains are to have sliding doors rather than slam doors, the load factor will increase from 110 per cent. to 135 per cent. In other words, passengers can look forward to standing on an overcrowded new train rather than overcrowded old train. Moreover, although they already pay the highest rail fares in Europe, they can look forward to paying real fare increases of 4 per cent. per year for the privilege.

That is why the Opposition fully support the motion, which calls for road and rail projects to be judged by a common criterion that takes full account of social, environmental and other external benefits. That is the only way to ensure that Britain not only joins the railway revolution that is sweeping through western Europe but that we get a truly balanced approach to transport policy.

That approach has proved very successful in other countries. In France, for example, the TGV project would

[Ms. Ruddock]

never have got beyond the drawing board if the French Government had not been prepared to take into account the wider social benefits that it would bring. Now it has proved a major economic success. Most recently, the TGV Atlantique has received a 30 per cent. public subsidy to provide environmental protection in the Paris approaches and help regional development in Brittany and the south-west. The contrast could not be greater. In France, trains will approach the Channel tunnel at speeds of up to 180 mph with passengers enjoying high standards of comfort—including a creche.

On the British side it will be a very different story. Why?

Mr. John Prescott (Kingston upon Hull, East): Where is it?

Ms. Ruddock: My hon. Friend asks, "Where is it?"

Mr. Portillo: Where is the creche?

Ms. Ruddock: As we have no tunnel, no rail link and no train, it is difficult to know where the creche will be.

I was about to explain why it will be a different story on our side of the Channel. As the Select Committee on Transport, pointed out, the Government have refused to adopt a strategic approach. They were warned 15 months ago that the private sector would not come up with the cash to build a new high-speed rail link to London without Government support. They ignored that warning. Now it looks as though the Government will have to do an embarrassing U-turn and find the £700 million if the Eurorail project is to avoid collapse.

It is not good enough for the Government to provide public money to a private project simply as a way to avoid major political embarrassment. I remind the Minister that with public money goes public accountability. It is time for the Government to repeal section 42 of the Channel Tunnel Act 1987 so that we can take a strategic view and ensure that we get the best possible value, in economic, social and environmental terms, for the public money that is provided.

We must also remember that it is not just the link from the tunnel to London that should concern us. We need to develop a national network that provides fast and efficient links for passengers and freight throughout Britain. But while policy continues to be determined by the narrowminded attitude that led Sir Robert Reid to say,

"It's not our job to run a service that's desirable; it's to run one that's profitable".

we can never hope to achieve that aim. That is why we seek the repeal of section 42, accompanied by a decision to give British Rail greater freedom to raise finance for major schemes. I am pleased to learn that the CBI supports our ideas about relaxing external financing limits and allowing British Rail to use its assets to raise loans in the market.

It is not just to ensure that Britain is not left on the periphery of Europe, isolated from the golden triangle, that we need to judge investment in broader terms. That is also the only way that we shall get the new high-quality public transport which is vital to prevent our towns and cities from grinding to a halt as a result of road congestion. In major cities throughout Europe, public transport is judged on its wider social benefits and subsidy is provided, not just to keep fares down but to support investment in new rolling stock, to provide new links and add to capacity —in short, to provide a modern efficient public transport system to meet the needs of the 21st century.

Again, in Britain, it is a very different story. By 1992, London will be the only major capital city in the world which expects its railways to operate without any Government financial support. As the hon. Member for Christchurch has reminded us, in the central London rail study the Government conducted their own cost benefit analysis of investment in new cross-London links. Unfortunately, they then ignored the analysis and went ahead with the extension of the Jubilee line—the line which the study has concluded would do least to relieve congestion in central London. At the time, we were told that the private sector contribution, which clearly influenced the Minister's judgment, would be £400 million. We now learn that Olympia and York's contribution will be worth 12 and 15 per cent. of the estimated cost of £1 billion at 1988 prices. If the costs go higher, as they often do, the proportionate share of the burden will fall even further. Will the Minister tell the House clearly today exactly how much the private sector contribution will be and when it will be paid?

The adoption of a common social benefit cost analysis for road and rail as proposed by the hon. Member for Christchurch would transform transport provision in London and meet the demands that the hon. Member for Battersea (Mr. Bowis) has set out in his later motion dealing with public transport in London. I hope that the Minister will respond in some depth on the question of a common criterion. I have no doubt that if it were properly applied, the consequence for London would be a clear reduction of all the hated road building proposals—not just in Tory marginals—and the speedy acceptance of a major package of public transport proposals.

Ministers are fond of telling us how BR and London Regional Transport have all the investment that they can use for new lines. Why then did he not support the new Bill to extend the docklands light railway to Lewisham and Greenwich which they sought to lay before the House last autumn? The plans were complete, public consultation had been thorough and Lewisham borough council had pledged £5 million. The environmental impact was small and the economic benefits and social convenience were considerable. However, the scheme was turned down for want of a relatively small contribution from the Government. Perhaps the Minister will tell us today whether his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State intends to support a Bill to extend the docklands light railway this autumn and whether the funding will be conditional on a particular level of private-sector development contribution.

I want to consider investment in railway safety. When the Hidden report was published, the Secretary of State said:

"I can assure the House that finance will not stand in the way of the implementation of this report."—[*Official Report*, 7 November 1989; Vol. 159, c. 837]

British Rail's corporate plan makes provision for £200 million of additional expenditure on safety improvements between now and 1993-94 with a further £50 million to be spent by 1994-95. I note, as did the hon. Member for Christchurch, that the cash ceiling on the final PSO grant settlement this year has been increased by £8 million to accommodate safety expenditure arising from the report

on the Clapham Junction rail disaster. All the signs are that the full costs of implementing the Hidden report will be at least £500 million and could be significantly more.

The CTCC report to which I have referred shares our concern that passengers might pick up the entire bill for safety improvements through even higher fares or because investment funds are diverted away from other schemes designed to improve the quality of service.

I join the hon. Member for Christchurch in hoping that the Minister will today give a clear commitment that a substantial amount of the additional investment will be funded by the Government. I also hope that the Minister will accept that it is now time to reconsider the level of staffing on our railways, Underground stations and trains.

I have already referred to personal security being undermined by staff reductions. However, we must also consider operating safety. Anticipating slightly the debate on the next motion, I want to refer to the recent alarming series of accidents, incidents and near misses on the Underground. The new safety culture of London Underground Ltd. seems sadly deficient when a driver can drive his train the wrong way down the track and when a pushchair with a child in it is trapped in the doors of a train and dragged along the platform.

I hope that the Minister can tell us that he has ordered an inquiry into the latter incident which I drew to his attention in a parliamentary question. It is our contention that those accidents would most likely not have occurred if the trains had not been coverted to one-person operation.

For all those reasons—to improve passenger safety and comfort, to build high-speed links with Europe and to ensure that public transport can fulfil its potential to relieve congestion and improve the quality of the environment—we support the motion. Furthermore, I am delighted to assure the hon. Member for Christchurch that he need wait only until the next general election to see a Government in office who will implement proper criteria for investment and provide a new environment in which rail service development can flourish.

12.13 pm

The Minister for Public Transport (Mr. Michael Portillo): I begin by congratulating my hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch (Mr. Adley) on his success in moving today's motion. I had no idea that he had to wait so long to do it, and I congratulate him all the more. For the avoidance of doubt, I should say that although he and I spoke about the terms of his motion, and he was kind enough to consult me, I was in no way the co-author of his speech. I deny any credit for that.

I hope that the House will be able to move on and discuss the next motion on the Order Paper which relates to transport in London. I intend to keep my remarks on London Underground for my response to the second motion.

Mr. Prescott: We may not reach the next motion.

Mr. Portillo: I hope that we do.

I was extremely surprised to hear the hon. Member for Swansea, East (Mr. Anderson) say that we were experiencing stagnation. I can do no better than to quote the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East (Mr. Prescott), the chief Opposition transport spokesman, who said, in our last debate on these matters:

> "I cannot argue with the fact that there is an investment programme. I fully accept it. It is hard to deny that a £3·5 billion investment programme is going on. Of course there is investment."—[*Official Report*, 14 February 1990; Vol. 1511, c. 329]

Of course, there is investment and not stagnation as the hon. Member for Swansea, East described it.

Mr. Anderson: Will the Minister re-examine that proposition in relation to my points about the south Wales line and the fact that the HSTS, which were pioneering in the 1970s, will remain on that line for the next 15 years? There has been a regression in terms of quality of service. In south Wales, we will have only the hand-me-downs and the trains that will no longer be needed on the east coast main line after its electrification. That is not even stagnation; it is regression.

Mr. Portillo: The hon. Gentleman's line has a very high standard of service with high speed trains running at speeds which compare favourably with most of Europe with the exception of the TGV. In much of Europe when people refer to high speed trains, they are referring to 125 mph or 140 mph. Those speeds are quite common in this country now. We have the second highest number of trains that can travel at more than 100 mph of any country in the European Community. Of course, France has the highest number.

Mr. Prescott: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. May I seek your advice and plead with the Minister to reconsider his earlier comment? His point was understandable but, as the first and second motions will be dealt with separately, we may not reach the second motion. We cannot know at this stage. The Minister said that he would wait for the debate on the second motion to reply to the point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham, Deptford (Ms. Ruddock). That would be unusual, particularly as we may not reach the second debate. I intend no criticism of the Minister, but I hope that he will reply to my hon. Friend's question because it is very important.

Mr. Dickens: Further to that point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. I think that I can deal with this so that there will be no more points of order on the matter. The Chair cannot compel a Minister or any other hon. Member to answer, but I am sure that it would be a common courtesy, as the point has been raised, if it might possibly be answered. May I also take this opportunity to say that there is much interest in the debate and I would appreciate it if hon. Members could make brief speeches. Many hon. Members still wish to speak.

Mr. Dickens: Further to that point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. Because the debate on the first motion is about British Rail and transport policy, it was rather unfair and sad that the hon. Member for Lewisham, Deptford (Ms. Ruddock) posed a question about London Underground which is not part of British Rail.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I can deal with that point of order. The motion is about railway investment criteria and public transport policy and that is somewhat all-embracing. Perhaps we can make progress.

Mr. Portillo: I will try to respond to the courtesy of the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East (Mr. Prescott) and the guidance that you have given me from the Chair, Madam Deputy Speaker.

I have an anecdote for the House. The other day I was travelling on the Cambridge line to Liverpool Street. I travelled in the cab of a brand-new class 321 vehicle on a line that had been electrified within the past three years. Both lines to Cambridge, as my hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch will be aware, have been electrified within the past three years. As we went along the line, we passed the point at which the new link into Stansted airport is being built—a major example of new rail investment. We passed through Stansted Mountfitchet, as it will shortly be known, a station that has undergone a tremendous amount of restoration.

At almost every station we saw improvements under way. New lighting was being installed. Most of the platforms along the line were being lengthened to accommodate 12-car trains. That is now a common feature of Network SouthEast investment. When we got to Liverpool Street station, we found the station undergoing a £100 million refit. It is unpopular with the passengers while it is going on, but it is tremendous that British Rail is bringing that station up to 21st century standards.

I asked the traction inspector and the train driver whether they considered that a lot of investment was going into the railway—a question that I regularly ask people when I travel on the railways. They know that investment is going on—they see it every day. They said that they had noticed a tremendous increase in investment. My hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch knows that along much of the line a wide track bed has been preserved for many years, with the possibility of increasing the two lines to four.

When I was in Scotland last week there was a similar story, with class 158s about to come on to the network. They are very fast express provincial units. They are air-conditioned, have sliding doors, and are of a very high quality. New rolling stock abounds in Scotland, as it does in the provincial sector as a whole. The east coast line up to Edinburgh is being electrified. At Yoker I saw a signalling system which I was led to believe is one of the most advanced in Europe, and the people using it were very proud of it.

Mr. Corbyn: I thank the Minister for giving way and for giving us an anecdote about his meetings with BR staff on the trains. Had those staff made detrimental comments about the running of the railway of the management and administration of British Rail they would have faced instant dismissal under BR's code of practice. Any railway worker speaking publicly against the railway, even in the interests of public safety, faces dismissal.

Mr. Portillo: Those people were not speaking publicly, they were speaking within the confines of the cab. When I travelled in the cab on the Settle to Carlisle railway line, the people to whom I spoke had no compunction about telling me that the line should be kept open.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): Will the Minister get his Department to ask Australian National Industries, Aurora plc or William Cook plc where it is proposed that specialist rails fabricated at the Atlas steel foundry at Armadale are to be made if the transfer to Bathgate does not last for a number of years? The alternative is to buy specialist rails from France. Will the Department of Transport interest itself in this issue, which comes before the Office of Fair Trading this very afternoon, and on which some hon. Members have been in court this week to get a referral from the Monopolies and Mergers Commission?

Mr. Portillo: If the hon. Gentleman will forgive me, I shall reflect upon what he said when I read *Hansard,* and try to respond to him in due course.

My hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch was concerned about investment criteria, as was the hon. Member for Lewisham, Deptford (Ms. Ruddock). We must remember the similarities in the investment criteria for road and rail. We appraise road and rail on the basis of an 8 per cent. discount rate, and we treat costs in a similar way. The problem is that the costs of rail investment can be met directly through fares, so financial appraisal is possible. There is no direct charge for roads, so investment proposals are appraised in terms of the benefits of investment as valued by users and the likely reduction of accidents—that is, on a cost-benefit basis.

My hon. Friend said, "Let us take into account the cost of the National Health Service." We certainly take into account the cost of accidents on the roads. Very often, one of the main reasons for justifying a road project is that it saves lives. My hon. Friend will know that the value of a human life is assessed at £500,000. I thought that my hon. Friend's argument was a little dangerous. If we argue that we should invest in rail to save lives on the roads, we must demonstrate that people are changing from road to rail. For investment in roads, we have only to prove that we are improving a particular section of road where lives will be saved. That is precisely one reason why road investment often has a high benefit-to-cost ratio.

My hon. Friend misunderstood some information given to him by my right hon. Friend the Member for Southend, West (Mr. Channon), the former Secretary of State. My right hon. Friend said that 7 per cent. of all police costs are attributable to traffic activity; the £282 million, the figure that he was given by my right hon. Friend, is the total figure for traffic policing and traffic warden costs. The costs are taken into account in the cost-benefit analysis and in working out track costs.

People who use the roads pay about three times as much in taxation as the amount required to cover the total track costs of the roads, and that includes policing costs. We have recently said that we are prepared to use cost-benefit analysis for rail services where significant benefits are not captured in fares. That is probably pretty unlikely for long-distance services, but we have made it clear in the latest objectives to British Rail that, where investment to meet growth in demand on local rail services cannot be justified financially, a capital grant might be paid if the cost-benefit analysis demonstrated worthwhile benefits such as the relief of road congestion. My hon. Friend knows that the lines proposed in the central London rail study were appraised in that way. I came up with a cost-to-benefit ratio of about one. None the less, we took a great deal of notice because we said that we hoped to be in a position, further to the extra work that was needed, to approve a Bill this November for either the east-west cross rail or the Chelsea-Hackney line.

The Jubilee line extension was the recommendation from the east London rail study. It is directed towards a different set of objectives, not principally the relief of

congestion in London. It is directed to opening up docklands, giving benefits to constituencies such as that of the hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing), and providing public transport services to parts of south London that do not have them at the moment.

To avoid further controversy, I inform the hon. Member for Deptford that £100 million will be contributed by developers during the public expenditure survey period—that is, during the first three years—and the balance of £300 million will be paid in the years after that. Those moneys are paid over—they are not loans, they are cash sums. There is no change from the position that I gave in my original answer and in subsequent answers to the hon. Lady.

My hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch was concerned about the continuance of the public service obligation grant. He was kind enough to wecome the Government's commitment on that matter. The case for subsidy to maintain rail services that would not otherwise be provided is that people may have come to rely on them for essential local journeys, for example to schools, hospitals and shops, or that local communities may have become economically dependent on such services.

It is absolutely right that the bulk of the PSO grant made by the Government should go to the provincial sector. However, I see no reason for apologising for wanting that subsidy to be used carefully and reduced over time. That is especially the case when we are investing as much as the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East has recognised, because it leads to reductions in the costs of the railway. Investment often produces lower costs in the future.

My hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch underestimated the importance, in a railway requiring ongoing subsidy, of trying to achieve a businesslike approach so that we can spend our money sensibly. In his famous speech, Sir Robert Reid, the outgoing chairman of British Rail said:

"The Public Service Obligation system of subsidy . . . required the Board: 'to operate its railway passenger business so as to provide a public service which is comparable generally wth that provided by the Board at present'. While this seemed all right at the time, because it gave us a sense of security, it was very negative, 'Stay as you are' it seemed to say. There was no sense of purpose behind it, no focus, no forward looking strategic aim."

He then referred to the change in culture that occurred when he received the letter of instruction from the former Secretary of State for Transport, my right hon. Friend the Member for Cirencester and Tewkesbury (Mr. Ridley). He said that the letter

"gave me well stated objectives and a clear financial remit. In summary these were: To run an efficient railway providing good value for money. To reduce the . . . PSO by 25 per cent. over three years. There should be no major route closures. To operate freight and parcels on a commercial basis. To procure rolling stock by competitive tender. To increase private sector participation . . . For the first time we knew what was expected of us."

Sir Robert Reid clearly welcomed that important change.

Mr. Adley: I should not like my hon. Friend to think that I am simply having one long whinge about this, but will he reconfirm his belief that there is no connection whatsoever between the continual reduction in the PSO grant and the increasing number of complaints about dirty, late and cancelled trains? Is my hon. Friend seriously trying to persist with the proposition that those two things are unconnected?

Mr. Portillo: Not only that, but I wish that I had brought with me an audio-visual aid such as my hon. Friend produced. I should then be able to show him the contrast in the two. When the public sector obligation is reduced, the amount of investment increases. The two simply cross over. It is only to be expected that when the railway is operating efficiently and can reduce its costs, the amount of money needed to subsidise it from day to day reduces and the amount of money that can be put into long-term investment increases.

Mr. Adley: I am sorry—we seem to have had this argument before—but there is no relationship between the two. Investment is simply investment in new railway, and the PSO is the subsidy that is given to those parts of the railway system that are not profitable. I have heard my hon. Friend's argument about the grants crossing over time and time again, but unless I and other people who are transport experts are missing something, we cannot see the correct direct relationship between subsiding the unprofitable parts and investing in a new railway? Will my hon. Friend tell us?

Mr. Portillo: I am pleased that my hon. Friend understands so clearly the difference between subsidy and investment. That has not always been clear to the Opposition. It must be obvious that when the railway can reduce its costs and increase its revenue, it needs less subsidy than before. Furthermore, I believe that morale on the railway increases considerably when it operates more efficiently, attracts more passengers and provides a more attractive service.

Ms. Ruddock: Will the Minister make it clear whether that series of remarks means that he is rejecting everything in the special report of the Central Transport Consultative Committee and whether he intends to replace the chairman?

Mr. Portillo: As I do not appoint the chairman, it is not a matter for me. If I can make some progress with my speech, I shall come to the CTCC report in a moment.

My hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch is concerned about the PSO. My announcement the other day was that at the beginning of the year we set a cash ceiling for the PSO grant of £496 million. That was based on British Rail's claim for slightly less than that—for £492 million. Therefore, we gave British Rail more than it had claimed. At the moment, we believe that we can settle the grant at £488 million, but I have increased the cash ceiling by £8 million. The final amount paid in grant to the railway will not be settled for some time, but it must fall within the cash ceiling that I have just increased by £8 million. I stress that that was not an announcement slipped out on Budget day.

My hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch made comparisons with other countries. One point that is not dwelt upon is the extent to which those countries have enormous accumulated debts on their railways which have to be serviced from year to year. My information is that the railway in France has a £6 billion debt and the railway in West Germany a £20 billion debt, despite the recently announced write-offs. Since the early 1960s we have written off enormous amounts of debts for British Rail —the total amount, at today's prices is £11 billion. It is a bit thick—meaning a bit much—of my hon. Friend the

[Mr. Portillo]

Member for Christchurch to say that the Government expect British Rail to do all its own funding when the Government have written off £11 billion of its debt.

I remind my hon. Friend that the grant to the railways comes from the taxpayers, the property that generates the receipts is owned by the taxpayers through the railway, the loans made to the railway are made by the taxpayers at subsidised rates which could not be achieved on the market and the revenue of the railways is earned on the basis of assets owned by the taxpayer.

When we previously debated the matter, I told my hon. Friend that investment figures for different countries show that in the past year we invested £67,000 per kilometre of route mile in Britain while the French invested £49,000 per kilometre. For coming years, the French plan a large investment programme, but their programme for the Parisian network is £1·5 billion over five years, whereas the Network SouthEast programme is £1·2 billion over three years. More is being invested in the London area than in the Paris area.

Mr. Adley: My hon. Friend cannot get away with that. Network SouthEast covers huge areas, not only of central London but taking in Essex, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Surrey, Buckinghamshire, Hampshire and Wiltshire—one could go on for ever. With great respect, that is not fair.

Mr. Portillo: I am pleased that my hon. Friend did not question my previous figure. The investment per kilometre is higher in this country than in France.

I take issue with the CTCC report because it fails to take account of the many improvements of the service. Overall, Network SouthEast plans to run 2 per cent. more train miles in 1990. That includes an enhanced Thameslink service, peak and off-peak, between Luton and Guildford; increased frequency off-peak on that line and a new evening peak service to Sevenoaks; new electrical services from Southampton to Portsmouth, when the electrification scheme is complete; new direct services to London from Fareham and other services, including Southampton to Gatwick; higher capacity on the Northampton route; enhanced peak services between Euston, Hemel Hempstead and Milton Keynes; increased frequencies from Aylesbury to Marylebone; two new morning peak services on the Fenchurch Street line; a new Shepperton to Waterloo service, with an accelerated journey time; two new evening peak Reading to Gatwick services; enhanced peak services from Charing Cross and Cannon Street to Dartford; improved frequencies on the south London lines; and the reinstatement of services which previously had to be cancelled because of driver shortages.

Ms. Ruddock: We are all absolutely delighted with and applaud that catalogue of improvements. But the point of the CTCC report was that the investment programme has been jeopardised and cuts have occurred. I listed those cuts and asked the Minister whether he denied that there had been specific reductions in services.

Mr. Portillo: There has been a net 2 per cent. increase in train miles that will be run in 1990. That gives the best overall picture.

Mr. Corbyn: I am interested in the Minister's catalogue of improvements. What improvements are planned for the north London line, which is still inadequate, badly served and has inefficient trains on it, even though there have been improvements, which I readily concede? Also, what plans does he have for the Barking to Gospel Oak line? Will he ensure that it remains open, that it is electrified and that it provides a service which seriously connects with the north London line? Many people, including myself, suspect that the inefficiency of the service is a prelude to running it down altogether.

Mr. Portillo: I do not make plans for the railway lines. British Rail brings the plans to me. I know of no plans for the Gospel Oak line. The hon. Gentleman was kind enough to concede that recently there have been dramatic improvements on the line. Stations have been renewed, there is refurbished three-car rolling stock and a 20-minute interval of service. The improvement or rebuilding of Silvertown station is planned and there is the slightly longer-term improvement of Stratford station. The line has already undergone dramatic change. I am pleased about that.

Mr. Corbyn: What about the Gospel Oak to Barking line?

Mr. Portillo: I thought that I had replied to the hon. Gentleman's question about that. No plans have yet been brought to me, so I do not know what the position is. British Rail will make the plans and bring them to me. It will not happen the other way around.

It is correct that the improvement of the Manchester-Blackpool service has not been approved. Ministers have received no proposals for the service, so we cannot be expected to take decisions on submissions that have not yet been made to us. My hon. Friend the Member for Keighley (Mr. Waller) referred to the Bradford service. The scheme is being considered by British Rail and the passenger transport executive. When they have conducted their analysis, they will want to discuss it with my Department. If they apply for section 56 grant, we shall consider the application carefully.

My hon. Friend the Member for Keighley talked about the money for the trolley bus project and asked whether it could be transferred to the railway. We have told the PTE that it can make such a transfer away from the project towards buying electric vehicles. I do not think that that is the way it wishes to go, but the offer was made.

My hon. Friend the Member for Beckenham (Sir P. Goodhart) made an interesting and thoughtful speech. He began by saying that he did not want the subsidy phased out on Network SouthEast. It was my hon. Friend's borough that led the campaign against the subsidies made by the GLC for the Underground services on the basis that the people of Beckenham would not benefit from them. By extension, people throughout the country may wonder why they should subsidise services for commuters in the south-east of England rather than services that meet the wider social benefits of the isolated communities that are typical of the provincial sector.

The main thrust of the speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Beckenham was directed at the high-speed link. I remind him that £1 billion of investment has been put into the present rail service. That will enable a reliable three-hour service to operate between London and Paris. The journey time between London and Brussels will be two-and-three-quarter hours. The question is whether we should use taxpayers' money to knock another 30 minutes

off the journey and to increase the capacity of the line for the longer term. My hon. Friend helped us to put in context what the Government are being asked to do. We are being asked to subsidise a service that will already exist to provide a shorter journey time in competition with other modes of transport which are not subsidised by the Government.

It will be of interest to my hon. Friend the Member for Beckenham to know that I have made an announcement today on noise insulation for new railway lines. We have set up a committee whose remit is to recommend to the Secretary of State for Transport a national noise insulation standard, or standards, for the operation of new railway lines that relate equitably to the standard set by regulations for new highways. The aim will be to arrive at a standard, or standards, at which the duty to offer noise insulation will be triggered, and to set the trigger at a level that will ensure parity of treatment between those who live near new railways and those who live near new roads. I think that that will be welcomed by my hon. Friend the Member for Beckenham and by my hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch, who is always arguing in favour of parity between different modes of transport. The details of the committee are set out in *Hansard* today in an answer to my hon. Friend the Member for Faversham (Mr. Moate).

I was rather surprised by some of the things that the hon. Member for Brecon and Radnor (Mr. Livsey) said about a London bypass by rail. If the hon. Gentleman has a moment, I invite him to talk to some of my hon. Friends who represent constituencies in Kent about the environmental problems of building new railway lines. We must not think that new lines are an easy environmental option. Instead they pose new problems that are as great, and possibly even greater, than those presented by roads.

The hon. Member for Brecon and Radnor talked about connections between the west and Wales with the Channel tunnel services. It is proposed that there should be train services running into Waterloo rather than Paddington which will connect with cross-Channel services. That facility is important and will be envied by other people, because much of the debate on a new link is about how to establish a cross-platform link between one service and the Channel tunnel service. That possibility will exist in 1993 for the constituents of the hon. Member for Brecon and Radnor.

Mr. Dalyell: Is it possible for us to go a little further north? Can the Minister say anything about the electrification of the Edinburgh-Glasgow line, in particular about any discussions with Mr. Bleasdale and his colleagues about the electrification of the southern line, which is much cheaper and overcomes the technical problem of the electrification of the Queen street tunnel? Some of us strongly favour a link-up between Mid Calder and Carstairs.

Mr. Portillo: When I was in Scotland I was impressed by the management's willingness to think creatively and consider all the options. There are three lines between Edinburgh and Glasgow. I shall probably get this wrong, but I think that they are Carstairs, Shotts and Falkirk. At various times, all three have been considered and I know that the management of ScotRail are continuing to think about that carefully. I am sure that they will want to bear in mind what the hon. Gentleman said.

I shall return to the speech by Sir Robert Reid. He summarised his own speech in the following words:

"Prior to 1982 we were organised as a bureaucracy, engineering based, union dominated, production led. The customer took a back seat to what was perceived as being of more importance: engineering and operating expediency led priorities—these spending barons produced demands for ever larger subsidy—undermining our credibility . . . In 1983—our goals were defined—challenging but achievable—we know we could meet them provided we got rid of the old culture. In 1989 we are not completely there and there is much to do. But we are ready for the decade ahead."

This Government have enabled a £3·7 billion investment programme in British Rail and a £2·2 billion investment programme in London Regional Transport to be established. In the years ahead we shall be spending as much on public transport as on roads. Under this Government, the docklands light railway has been built and extensions to it are under way. Under this Government, the Jubilee line extension through London has been approved. That is the biggest project of its sort for a quarter of a century. We are actively considering which new railway line we might be able to authorise under London, whether it will be an east-west cross rail or a Chelsea-Hackney one. We have made an enormous grant to the metro link project in Manchester to extend public transport there. We have given a £6 million grant to Sheffield so that the studies for the super tram can be continued.

That is the record of a Government who are even-handed between road and rail, but have shown a tremendous commitment to providing the investment necessary to improve the public transport of this country.

12.47 pm

Ms. Gwyneth Dunwoody (Crewe and Nantwich): After one has heard the smooth and sophisticated presentation of the Minister for Public Transport, it is always a delight to welcome the efforts of hon. Members such as the hon. Member for Christchurch (Mr. Adley). If the hon. Gentleman will forgive me for saying so, I hope that in the short, remaining period of this Conservative Government we shall see him as Secretary of State. We desperately need someone in the Department who understands the implications of the importance of railways. Such understanding was not demonstrated by the Minister today.

The hon. Member for Christchurch set out, in an exceedingly detailed and informative speech, the case for a proper examination of the different forms of investment. There are two ways to plan transport, both of which are political. One can plan a transport system that is properly intergrated and provides a proper relationship between one mode of transport and another, or one can do what the present Government have done and let the matter be decided, in effect, by default. The result can be seen every day not only in the streets of our capital city, which are becoming increasingly impassable for any mode of transport, but elsewhere, in the cost to British industry of attempting to move freight from one place to another.

I must not speak for long today, so I shall concentrate briefly and strongly on the Channel tunnel link. My constituency has now been chosen as one of the first freight depots. We are delighted about that, but we want the advantages to be passed on to other areas. It is vital that the Government should begin to understand that simply allowing British Rail to increase its external borrowing

[Ms. Gwyneth Dunwoody]

limit while demanding that the return comes almost exclusively from the passenger is to put a self-defeating and deadening hand on the future of transport in Britain.

Increasingly over the past few years the passengers have been made to pay for the improvements that the Minister has listed with such pleasure today. The passengers who use the InterCity services must fund the improvements that make the railway system appear as if it is constantly improving, but electrification must happen much faster and must go much further if we are to begin to compete after the Channel tunnel opens.

Political decisions about the transport network in the north-west will have to be taken. We could provide a land bridge to Ireland through north Wales or, if needs be, through central Wales. The electrification of the line between Crewe and the north Wales ports would provide rapid freight transport after 1992. We look forward to a political decision being taken to enable King's Cross to be considered as the most efficient place to provide a terminus and exchange point for the traffic that will undoubtedly be generated by the Channel tunnel.

One point which the Minister has not accepted today and which ought to be underlined is that the French, the German and the Scandinavian railway systems have planned the development of their railways in relation to the Channel tunnel not over a couple of years, but, in the case of the French, over more than 10 years. They have been able to reach agreement on the environmental costs and the straightforward industrial costs because they have been able to commit money to offering solutions where difficulties arose. The Conservative Government in Britain have not been prepared to step in and think about where the high-speed lines should go, they have not been prepared to offer any sweeteners to enable the people in the areas affected to accept the implications of the high-speed line and they have done nothing to address the political and environmental impact upon the London constituencies. Unless those problems are faced head on, there will be no solution to the line of the route or to the acceptable development of transhipment points.

The Secretaries of State for the Environment and for Transport have both paid at least lip service to the idea; they are prepared to get together to produce some consultation about the environmental costs of transport policy, but in reality very little is being done to make that a positive policy. In 10 years of Conservative Government, they have tended to regard British Rail as a milch-cow capable of putting money into privatisation schemes by selling off British Rail Engineering Ltd., with its vast amounts of acreage, but they are not prepared to invest money to improve the services.

We want a clear commitment from the Government that they view the rail network as part of a planned transport policy, rather than simply rolling out figures and saying, "Over a number of years, we have allowed British Rail to go to the external market and to increase its borrowing powers." We want planned expansion to improve facilities for passengers and freight, taking into account the fact that Britain will shortly be more firmly locked into an open market and that the French, Scandinavian and German railways will be capable of benefiting from that trade expansion, whereas ours will not. It would be a disgrace if the French were the only people prepared to invest in new rolling stock and facilities to provide a cross-Channel link. It would be even worse if that link was not treated as part of the integrated rail system.

The Minister spoke of the difficulties of constructing rail lines but failed to acknowledge that, unless those problems are faced, regions such as mine in the north-west in particular will be badly affected, as will all other passenger and freight services. Electrification without integrated planning is a short-sighted and stultifying policy for any Government to adopt, and one that will cost both the taxpayer and the passenger as well as British industry.

When Britain has a Government who really understand the implications of public transport, they will not take the view that railways operate in a vacuum—or, even worse, that parts of the rail network should do so—that London Transport, for example, should be considered apart from British Rail, and that British Rail should be dealt with separately from the management of British airspace. Anyone who travels between London and the north-west increasingly appreciates that the motorways resemble nothing so much as road trains, with one person per car instead of one person per carriage. Freight is increasingly carried nose-to-tail on minor motorways, and such traffic is reaching saturation point.

The alternative is not double-banking roads or road pricing, although both are a form of traffic management, but a system that reflects the understanding that a large volume of freight must go back on to the railways where it can be transported efficiently and in an environmentally friendly way, bringing positive benefits to the customers concerned.

Above all, Britain needs a Government who understand that railways are not a subject for debate on a Friday in this House, as though they are an abstract topic that can be slotted away for another six months in the hope that the hon. Member for Christchurch will not, with any luck, have another opportunity to make his arguments for some time.

This country is, by default, handing over the management of its transport system to other nations day by day, and the Minister's only response is to trot out a series of meaningless statistics that represent no kind of positive policy for the future. When transport becomes an important element in the next general election, not only will the Government regret their policy but the British public will realise that they have paid for it in terms both of immediate cash and a lack of forward planning. Government transport policy is an extravagance that this country can no longer afford, and the sooner that something is done about it, the better.

12.58 pm

Mr. Geoffrey Dickens (Littleborough and Saddleworth): My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has shown the nation that she obviously gives a high priority to transport policy. She has given the Department one of her best Cabinet Ministers in my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport, whom I shall be meeting this evening, and my hon. Friend the Minister for Public Transport, whom I recognised as a shining star when he served with me on the Energy Select Committee. We have in the Department a good Secretary of State and good junior Ministers.

In a debate on rail and transport policy, it is wrong to offer blinkered and narrow views on only rail travel. The Department of Transport is responsible for travel by sea, road, rail and air, and it must dovetail those means of transport because often one is dependent on the other. Let me give a typical example. My hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch (Mr. Adley), whom I congratulate on securing the debate, said that rail commuters pay for rail investment through fares and that that does not apply to road users. Let us nail that lie straight away. When one buys a motor vehicle one pays tax and VAT on it. One buys a vehicle licence and pays tax on parts, and a high tax on petrol. Motorists use motorway service stations—the Little Chefs and Happy Eaters—which all pay tax, as do their staff. To say that road users do not pay for roads is ridiculous and undermines the argument.

People use the roads and railways. Unless my eyes deceive me, every time I pass a railway station I see thousands of cars parked. The drivers of those cars are also rail users. Roads and railways are dependent on the same users. When road users have paid billions of pounds in the taxes I described earlier, there is much small change left for rail investment.

Mr. Adley: Does my hon. Friend believe in the hypothecation of taxation? From where would the Foreign Office get its money?

Mr. Dickens: The Foreign Office receives money from road users. Their money has helped to subsidise railways in the past, and no doubt some of it has helped with defence. It certainly is not all given to roads.

Those who advance environmental arguments must understand that roads are required to bypass villages.

I serve the constituency of Littleborough and Saddleworth, which surrounds those grand towns of Rochdale and Oldham. The north-west depends on transport to deliver its goods to Europe. The wealth creation of this country depends greatly on industry in the north-west. The textile mills—wool mills in Yorkshire and cotton mills in Lancashire—created the industrial revolution. When it experienced problems and other nations caught up, its workers did not receive the same conditions as miners—guaranteed jobs and wonderful redundancy terms—but had to develop new high-technology skills. Given the spirit and invention of folk in the north-west, they were able to do that.

The north-west must produce goods that people want to buy at the right price, on time and with good after-sales service. To deliver goods at the right price is important. Our main industrial competitor in Europe is Japan, which is a good copier. Britain is the inventor of the world. Television, which was developed from radar, and the jet engine, were British designs. The Japanese are not only great copiers but are good at production methods and at reducing unit costs. If we are to compete, we must improve our unit costs, which we are doing, but it would be nice if we could take advantage of the thousands of miles that Japanese goods must travel to Europe by transporting our goods from the north-west quickly to Europe. We must be able to transport them cheaper than Japan. That would compensate for other advantages that the Japanese have.

The Confederation of British Industry in the north-west made the long journey to the House to meet north-west Members of Parliament. Its main concern was that rolling stock from the north-west to the Channel tunnel would be sufficient, that the service would be sufficiently regular and that there would be sufficient carriages to move passengers and goods quickly to Europe.

Mr. Corbyn: Before the hon. Gentleman leaves the analogy with Japan, is he aware that one reason why Japanese industry and transport are doing well is that the entire historic debt of the Japanese railways has been written off to make them more efficient?

Mr. Dickens: Yes, and the Japanese cured their inflation problem with a tax-free savings exemption scheme, just like the Government introduced on Budget day. The Japanese have learnt from us and we can learn from them—we are not too proud to do that. The industrial base of this nation has taken off. I am disappointed that my hon. Friend the Minister will not have the pleasure of replying to my contribution, but he always reads my speeches in the *Official Report*. Of course, he is listening now, but he can remind himself of my contributions later.

Mr. Adley: Will not my hon. Friend the Minister fall asleep?

Mr. Dickens: No, my hon. Friend the Minister never falls asleep during my speeches.

We in the north-west are anxious to get our goods to Europe at the right price, so we want to cut transport costs. We have the technology, industry and the inventions, but we want to beat other services on the cost of transportation to Europe. Whether the goods go by sea, rail, air or road, we hope that the United Kingdom's transport policy will be sound. I have every reason to believe that it is.

Subsidies are a curse. I remember the period after the war when it was difficult to get rid of many subsidies. I think particularly of housing subsidies, which roll on and on. One should remember that if subsidies are given to help the south-east or the south-west, the people in the north-west, in my constituency, help to pay for them. The more industries stand on their own feet, the healthier and better it is. I was encouraged when my hon. Friend the Minister said that the Government had put just as much money into the railways as into road schemes. That is commendable and long may it remain. Let us rely on the Government to take this message on board and to realise that it is their duty to give us good communications and a good transportation policy for all forms of travel.

1.7 pm

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): I should like to take up the closing words of the hon. Member for Littleborough and Saddleworth (Mr. Dickens) about a good transportation policy. He illustrated the interconnection between road and rail and the importance of trunk routes to the north-west. The problem is that the Government not only have not given us that policy but, alas, show no signs of doing so. That is why this excellent motion was tabled by the hon. Member for Christchurch (Mr. Adley).

The hon. Member for Christchurch is a well-known expert on these matters. He is also a representative of the progressive Toryism of the past which I knew and which has been replaced by the less knowledgeable and less appropriate Toryism of the hon. Member for Littleborough and Saddleworth. The lack of that older

[Mr. Nigel Spearing]

tradition in the Conservative party caused the accident that befell it yesterday in Mid-Staffordshire. If there had been more of the common sense of the hon. Member for Christchurch, there would have been more votes for his candidate and conceivably fewer for mine.

I hope that I can now pass from less partisan matters and return to transport matters. The Minister gave the game away in some respects when he said in concluding, as if with pride, that there is new transport in London—the Jubilee line and the docklands light railway in the Newham constituency. There certainly are new lines, but they are not railways that are built because of strategic considerations or comprehensive transport planning. If they were, they would not be proposed by the Government who, in both cases, are more concerned with the needs of the developers and of the capitalists, some of whom are from different parts of the world, than with developing London properly. Such developments are being made for the wrong reasons and they illustrate the present position.

Most Members of Parliament and certainly most members of the public want a transport system, both rail and road, that caters for mass movement, which integrates the demands of both road and rail and which is planned on the basis of being a public service. The Minister's aim is for some sort of transport and railway system which is linked to theories from a think tank of 10 or 15 years ago and which looks on the transport of individuals purely as a market commodity. That is how the Government have been running the railways. It annoys many of us when we see clearly services that are not up to scratch being advertised in ridiculous television commercials. What might otherwise be an atttractive crooning voice appears ridiculous. The habit of announcers at stations talking about "customers" rather than passengers betrays the philosophy imposed on the British Rail management by the Government.

The Minister talked about the Silvertown and north London lines, to which my hon. Friend the Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) referred, and about the anomalies of the Barking to Gospel Oak service. The Minister may have forgotten that in Question Time recently the Secretary of State admitted that that service was in a terrible state and that a special report had been called for. The service may be a bit better now, but it should not improve only because the subject has been raised on the floor of the House, or because the Secretary of State tried the line himself and found it wanting. That is not the way to make improvements. We want improvements to result from the buoyant demand for mass movement.

I shall confine the rest of my remarks to three aspects: routes, people and safety. It is clear that there is no comprehensive national planning for upgrading or putting in new railway routes. If there were, we should not have our present trouble over the Channel tunnel. The Government do not even understand or look to the vision of their 19th century forebears. The forget that almost 100 years ago Sir Edward Watkin planned the great central railway with a specific eye to serving the Channel tunnel. It would be good for the country, including the north-west, if the remnants of that railway were now safeguarded. I know that it might be difficult to put it through urban areas, but it would be good if it was safeguarded at once. That would plug a gap in the Government's strategic thinking.

The mess-up over the Channel tunnel is another illustration of the Government's lack of strategic thinking and of the fact that the project has been tied to private enterprise purse strings. My hon. Friend the Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) will, no doubt, refer to Stratford. The hon. Member for Beckenham (Sir P. Goodhart) said that his constituents wanted to end up not in Stratford but in central London. It may be forgotten that a journey from Stratford to central London would take only five, six or 10 minutes on the cross-rail—if it were built. People want a big international centre with plenty of space and with fast routes to the Channel tunnel, which is easy to reach from all parts of central London, from the north-west and, as my hon. Friend the Member for Swansea, East (Mr. Anderson) said earlier, from Wales. Stratford would fit that description. It may sound a long way from central London——

Mr. Tony Banks: It is not.

Mr. Spearing: That is true. In terms of time, through the cross-rail route which we all want to see, it would be very close. It would take five to 10 minutes to reach from most parts of the City and the west end. The Government's lack of vision has caused the problems.

I have here a map produced by British Rail in 1980, under the far-sighted chairmanship of Sir Peter Parker. British Rail wanted a cross-rail route from Euston to Victoria and, if it had dared to propose it, a route from Paddington to Liverpool Street as well. The plan was presented complete with a cost-benefit analysis, but the Government turned it down. I believe that it was never meant to have any success. If British Rail had put the plan into action, cross-London trains would have been running now and we should not have our present problems in London. It is because of the Government's shortsightedness that we did not get them at that stage.

We can go back even further. The Government talk about Victorian virtue. The Metropolitan railway joined Liverpool Street and Paddington—now also the northern part of the inner circle—with links at both ends 100 years ago. It was not a capitalist invention. Conservative Members' ideas about economic theory are mostly wrong. The Metropolitan railway was built as a result of the vision of a man called Charles Pearson, solicitor to the City of London corporation, whose driving force was philanthropic. He thought, "Let us build a railway from the overcrowded insanitary city to the countryside so that people can live in decent suburban surroundings and come to the City to work." The driving force of the Metropolitan railway was not capital. The railway was the result of good strategic town planning of the sort that this Government do not even recognise. They are more than a century behind the times when it comes to transport in London.

The cross-rail option would be the better option because it would provide much more relief than some other routes—certainly more than the Jubilee line option, which the Government have chosen. They have no strategic understanding of national trunk routes or even of routes in London.

My second theme is people. The Government regard the public not as passengers but as customers, and their

attitude to the most important people on the railways other than the passengers—those who run it—is deplorable. British Rail's industrial relations record has been very poor lately. BR brought in a gentleman whose name I forget who had been with the motor industry, and we all know the trouble that we had. I know from talking to people on the railway just how dismayed they are at the way things are going. They are squeezed all ways. A few moments ago, the Minister himself referred to the shortage of drivers. Drivers have been resigning from the southern region.

The psychology of the management—the way in which it goes about things—is all wrong. Running a railway is like running a family business: it requires loyalty and team work. Managers must show that they understand the difficulties and problems of those who operate the service, but they are not doing that. My hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham, Deptford (Ms. Ruddock) properly referred to women and safety on British Rail, yet even now it is extending the one-person operation of trains. I shall return to the safety aspect of that in a moment but it is certainly important from the point of view of people travelling at night, especially women. British Rail is steaming ahead —if that is the right word—with disregard for the needs of its passengers, both on platforms and on trains.

My third theme is safety—a theme of considerable importance. Hon. Members have repeatedly referred to King's Cross and Clapham and the Government have made expositions concerning their adherence to safety standards. The Minister has been engaged in conversation for some time, but I ask him to pay particular attention to my remarks on this subject. He and I have had some correspondence about the one-person operation of trains on the older lines of the London Underground. When London Regional Transport—or, more accurately, London Underground—introduced the one-person operation of trains on the Piccadilly line, I protested to Sir Keith Bright, the then chairman. I regarded the introduction of the system as increasing the hazards and asking for trouble.

I raised the matter again in the House on 13 March 1989. I asked the Minister to review that practice. In a public speech on 8 September 1989 in Upminster, bearing in mind Zeebrugge, King's Cross, Clapham and one or two other episodes of that kind, I said:

"We have now seen disaster on the sea, and in London on the river, on an escalator and on an open railway line. In each case we ask, 'Why did it happen?' If we get another London disaster, this time in tunnels in the bowels of the earth, it could be that that question need not be asked, since the answer might be in this speech. Mr. Parkinson must now act to make that impossible,".

In that speech, I was referring to the refusal of the former Secretary of State for Transport, the right hon. Member for Southend, West (Mr. Channon), to ask LRT to stop the extension of one-person operation on London's older tubes. I discount the Victoria line because it works on a different system.

I have had correspondence with the Minister for Public Transport and I am glad that he is present today. In *Hansard* there is an answer from the Minister to one of my written questions, and he has reproduced in full a letter that he sent to me. I asked him to check with the railway inspectorate whether one-person operation on deep tube trains was satisfactory to the inspectorate. I believe that it is inherently unsatisfactory. In his answer the Minister stated:

"The inspectorate arranged for an exercise to be carried out in the early morning of Sunday 28th January on the Bakerloo Line between Oxford Circus and Piccadilly Circus. It involved four trains, none of which was in passenger service. The simulated emergency was deemed to have been caused by the incapacitation of the driver of the leading train. The simulation was done in such a way as to create the conditions likely to be met if the incident had occurred during the peak hour service . . . the Chief Inspecting Officer tells me that he regards the arrangements as acceptably safe and that they constitute a suitable method to deal with the unlikely event of a train stopping within a single-bore tunnel due to the sudden disablement of its driver."—[*Official Report*, 22 March 1990; Vol. 169, c. *655-56*.]

There are other risks with one-person operated trains, as we are aware from the King's Cross inquiry. Hazards occur when unlikely and unforeseen events occur.

When the Minister received the report from the inspectors did he wonder whether the test was carried out with passengers on the trains? Did he wonder whether the test was carried out simply by the staff? As I have given the Minister notice of this point, will he tell us whether the simulated accident or hazard took place with simulated passengers or were the trains empty?

Mr. Portillo: The trains were empty of passengers, but there were observers including London Underground Ltd employees, an inspecting officer from the railway inspectorate and two trade unionists, one of whom was a safety representative.

Mr. Spearing: I am grateful to the hon. Minister. Other than his political motivation and his economics, he is a reasonable Minister. He is courteous and fair. However, I believe that there is a lacuna. When we ask why hazards happen or why a single wire should dangle down, as it did at Clapham, or why a single cigarette should start a conflagration as it did at King's Cross, we may forget that someone in the chain of responsibility has forgotten to ask the obvious.

I am determined to question the safety of one-person operation on the older tubes. The chairman of LUL has pushed the issue aside and the Secretary of State has pushed it aside twice. However, to the Minister's credit, he said that he would consult the inspectorate and, perhaps because of my questions, the inspectorate performed a simulated exercise.

Two questions arise. First, why is it that, two years after the introduction of one-person operation, there was a simulated exercise? From the context of the Minister's letter, I guess that it is quite clear that it was not done before. If there is a disaster—I hope that there will not be —somebody will ask, "Did they have an exercise?" It will be proved that they did not—at least not until the one that the Minister mentioned. Secondly, when the Minister read the letter, as I did not, did he ask himself whether the passengers in the trains were make-believe passengers in the sort of density that everybody who uses London Underground experiences in rush hour conditions? I emphasise the Minister's answer, which states:

"to create the conditions likely to be met if the incident had occurred during the peak hour service."

If we are to test a school fire exit—some hon. Members have done that in their younger days, and I have been responsible for supervising such tests—would it be good enough to say, "Yes, we did a test with the staff and the caretaker"? That is what happened underground. If we conduct such a test in a cinema or a large opera house, as one must do under the law, and we said, "Yes, we did a test

[Mr. Spearing]

with the usherettes and the manager," would anybody accept it as a valid test? I suspect that, when the Minister got the report, he forgot to ask himself that question.

Can we accept as a valid test the evacuation of tube trains underground in a simulated condition that the inspectorate believed is likely to occur in the rush hour when there were no passengers present, not even people who might be expected to simulate passengers? We all know what happens in the event of an emergency at sea, on land or in the air. People do not expect it. The London Underground test was not the sort of exercise that should have taken place. Such a test should be done only when trains are full of passengers and when they do not expect such an exercise to take place. In all modesty, I advise the Minister that he has slipped up in accepting that as a valid test of the safety of our underground trains.

1.27 pm

Sir George Young (Ealing, Acton): It is a pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) who shares with me an interest in the bicycle as an even cheaper means of public transport, and an interest in Acton—an interest which turned out to be mutually exclusive for us. I join the hon. Gentleman in his compliments to my hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch (Mr. Adley) who has ignited a lively debate. As many hon. Members wish to contribute to the debate, I propose to keep my remarks relatively brief.

I inform my hon. Friend the Member for Littleborough and Saddleworth (Mr. Dickens) who, like me, has sat patiently throughout the debate, that I would be the same shape as he is were it not for the fact that I travel regularly on Network SouthEast from Ealing Broadway to Paddington or by Piccadilly line in the rush hour from Acton Town to Westminster. Congestion in the coaches keeps the elongated structure that is now addressing the House.

Anybody who travels on the tube or on Network SouthEast will say that congestion has got worse and that conditions have deteriorated. There are simply more people travelling. Also, there are more interruptions and cancellations than there used to be. Not all of them are the fault of the operators, but quite a lot are. As a result, more people are writing to their Members of Parliament—certainly those in London—complaining about conditions. They know that, over the past 10 years, the economic fortunes of this country have improved. As a result, they expect part of the greater wealth that has been created to be diverted to the improvement, modernisation and expansion of public transport in London, the south-east and in other parts of the country.

Superimposed on the resentment to which I referred and the rising expectations that I have touched on is a third factor, which is linked to the welcome awakening of interest in environmental concern. It is a questioning of the role of the motor car in our society, concern about the pollution that it is causing and anxiety at the land use implications of catering for its appetite. In London, there has certainly been a major shift of public opinion on this matter. In the past few years, there has been a swing against road construction and in favour of public transport.

Our job as Back Benchers is to report that shift in public expectation to the House. That is what most of us have tried to do in the debate. The Minister's job is more difficult. It is to capture the changing public mood and to convert it into practical, realistic and affordable policies. No one could do that better than my hon. Friend who is a fellow London Member and who has finely tuned political antennae. Some of the guiding principles involved in making that difficult conversion from the gut feeling that we should spend more on public transport to devising and implementing he practical policies of building new lines and modernising others have been touched on in the debate.

My hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch said in his excellent speech that we should avoid dogma. We have painted ourselves into a corner over the high-speed Channel tunnel link by saying that there should be no public money for the route. With respect to my hon. Friend the Minister, it is not just a question of a faster link; it is also a question of increasing the capacity. The capacity on the existing proposals will not be adequate if the traffic forecasts are right. It was doubtless a well-intentioned policy at the time to say that there would not be a public subsidy for the high-speed link, but that policy is now outdated and unrealistic and should be changed. We have insisted on high environmental safeguards, which have tipped the project from being viable to unviable. Therefore, it seems wholly sensible that the taxpayer should help to fund the project.

If the full potential of the Channel tunnel investment is to be realised we shall have to look afresh at the rail network in this country, at terminals and all the rest. The investment regime that may have been right when we were considering simply an internal network for this country may be wholly inappropriate when we begin to consider a network that is part of a continental network, with all the implications for competition and exporters that go with that.

I hope that we shall not be dissuaded by Opposition Members from looking to passengers for part of the contribution towards the greater investment that we all wish to see. We are not pushing up fares simply because we are reducing subsidies to public transport. Fares are being increased because the Government are committed to a major expansion in public transport and they rightly believe that as the passenger is the principal beneficiary, he has a role to play in funding the investment.

In retrospect, the worst days for London were when subsidy was diverted into keeping the fares down, when there was little expansion and when congestion worsened. In retrospect, that was short-sighted policy to which I hope that we shall not revert. I am prepared to defend higher fares to my constituents as long as they are linked to substantial investment and to an improvement in services from which they will then benefit.

We have had a debate about level playing fields. I was persuaded by my hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch that at the moment there is some discrimination against investment in public transport. I listened to what the Minister said: he hotly denied my hon. Friend's claim. I felt that my hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch had the balance of the argument, but I am prepared to be persuaded.

I also listened with interest to the remarks about the east-west cross route. That will be of major interest to people in west London because many people who live in

Ealing work in the City. The Central line is congested and slow and an extension from Paddington to Liverpool Street would therefore be of major interest. I am not sure that I accept the argument, which we heard only when the Government said that they could afford only one link, that London's traffic could not cope with two links at the same time. That argument was put forward only after a decision was made that only one would be funded. I am not persuaded by that, because I believe that there is sufficient capacity in London and that London needs both.

I agree that there is a problem with exporting the spoil, but that could be done by canal, for example. Paddington is on a canal and much of the spoil could be removed by that route. The Jubilee line clearly has links with the river Thames and the Chelsea-Hackney route is not all that far removed from the river. Therefore, I do not accept those arguments and I hope that the east-west cross route, which was at the top of the list, is the one that goes ahead.

Two points have not yet been mentioned. The first is highly relevant. Much of the work for which hon. Members have asked during the debate involves legislation and would use the private Bill procedure. I speak as the sponsor of the King's Cross Railways Bill. I am genuinely concerned that the private Bill procedure will not be adequate to cope with the sheer volume of legislation that we want to see, which would be sponsored by British Rail or London Regional Transport. It is easy to put a sleeping policeman in front of a private Bill. The hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) is an expert at it. I have come across it in his opposition to the King's Cross Bill.

If, as a nation, we are to invest heavily in public transport, is it adequate to expect one or two Back Benchers to persuade 100 people to stay behind after a debate on a light evening? Is it right that there should be no amendment in Committee because of the consequences on the Bill on Report? If we are to have a major expansion of public transport we need to examine the private Bill procedure. In my view it is wholly inappropriate.

So far in the debate no one has mentioned the disabled. Some 12 per cent. of the population have a mobility handicap. There are 500,000 such people in London. Much progress has been made in making public transport more accessible. Some 90 per cent. of all new buses will have the features recommended by the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee, including lower step heights, textured and colour-contrasted handrails, and bell pushes which can be reached without getting out of one's seat.

The United Kingdom is working within the European Community to establish the best standards for wheelchair accessibility for buses. Over 2,500 taxis now operating through the radio circuit are wheelchair accessible. By the year 2000 all taxis in London will be accessible to the disabled. Then we have the Taxicard scheme which provides over 750,000 trips for the disabled and others each year, with the number ever rising.

Britain leads the rest of Europe in designing coaches that are accessible to the disabled. The French and Belgian railways have adopted a BR design for on-train facilities. By 1993 all rail routes in Britain will be accessible to people in wheelchairs. Indeed, many trains already have appropriate facilities. There are other services for the disabled such as dial-a-ride in London for which, I am delighted to say, the Government have increased the budget by £1 million. In this debate on public transport, let us not ignore the needs of the disabled.

I was reassured by the commitment of my hon. Friend the Minister to support public transport. I hope that he will be influenced by pressure not just from Opposition Members but from Conservative Members. All my hon. Friends who have spoken wish to see a continuing shift in Government priorities. They are determined to see that public transport gets a square deal.

1.37 pm

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): The hon. Member for Ealing, Acton (Sir G. Young) is right to draw attention to the shortcomings of the private Bill procedure. I hope that the House will examine those matters seriously along the lines that he suggested.

I pay tribute to the way in which British Rail and Scot Rail conducted the centenary celebrations on the Forth bridge, the southern end of which is in my constituency. It was done with dignity, credit and aplomb and that should be recorded here.

As an hon. Member who is sponsored by the National Union of Railwaymen, I draw attention yet again to the success of the Edinburgh-Bathgate line. It is a new line, the financial and other expectations of which have far exceeded what was anticipated.

I welcome what the Minister said about the noise insulation on new lines. I wish that initiative well. It is important, and I take the point of the hon. Member for Christchurch (Mr. Adley) about parity with motorways.

I interrupted the opening speech on the complex matter of the electrification of the Glasgow to Edinburgh line. There is a strong view, which I hope is increasingly shared by Mr. Bleasdale and others, who will take the decisions, that it would be much cheaper and more practical to electrify one of the southern routes than one of the northern routes. Both routes go through my constituency and Linlithgow is my local station. I recognise the problem of the cost of electrifying the line through the Queen street tunnel. Perhaps soon there will be a statement for expectant Scots on this important matter.

Lastly, I speak with some passion on an issue about which I hope the Department of Transport, including the Minister, will do something quickly, by which I mean this afternoon. It concerns the Department because for some years specialist rail equipment of great complexity has been fabricated at the Atlas steel works in Armadale. The steel works is unique in Britain in a number of respects. It was established originally to make armoured plate for the Dreadnought battleships. It has been taken over by William Cook plc. It is not part of my case to denigrate those who run Cooks. Andrew Cook is an extremely distinguished and imaginative iron founder and has a reputation for modernisation. In many of his actions he has not been an asset stripper. The circumstances of Armadale, however, are sad to say the least. It has been decided to close the foundry.

I may have other opportunities to raise in the House other aspects of the events that are taking place at Armadale. I have been lucky to secure a ten-minute Bill on 25 April to amend the Fair Trading Act 1973 to allow the courts further powers of interdict and injunction to prevent purchasers of assets of firms which are subject to potential inquiry by the Office of Fair Trading and the Monopolies and Mergers Commission from pre-empting possible decisions of the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry arising out of recommendations of the MMC.

[Mr. Tam Dalyell]

This very afternoon—this is an indication of the urgency—Mr. Charles Cruickshank and his colleagues in the Office of Fair Trading are seeing William Cook plc about the decision to close the Armadale foundry. Immediately, before a possible recommendation to the MMC, the issue for this debate is where British Rail will obtain the important specialist equipment that it requires if it does not come from Armadale. What will it do if it does not have a guarantee that the equipment, which this very afternoon is being transported by lorry to the North British steel foundry in Bathgate, will be used for many years to come? There is a feeling that Aurora, for all its protestations, will not remain at the North British site at Bathgate for very much longer. If that is the position, and other than the rail-making equipment going to Sheffield, possibly to Whittens, British Rail will have to purchase vital equipment in France? Is it not highly undesirable, not least from the point of view of purchasers across the exchanges, that equipment which has been expertly made by Atlas for many years should have to be obtained in France? We should not have to be dependent upon the French or on any other source outside Britain.

Could the Department, this afternoon, contact Mr. Charles Cruikshank and Mr. Ray Woolley of the Office of Fair Trading to ascertain their point of view? Could the Department contact the officials of the Scottish Office? The Minister of State, Scottish Office, the hon. Member for Galloway and Upper Nithsdale (Mr. Lang), and officials such as David McFadyen and Gordon Kincaid, have been nothing but extremely helpful in these circumstances.

I am the Minister's political opponent, but in this matter I have no criticism of him. On the contrary, he is interested in the issue. Will the Department of Transport contact Scottish Office officials this afternoon to find out their view of the position? They could go one better and talk to Mr. Bob Mairs of West Lothian Enterprise, who has a detailed knowledge of the matter, to find out what I am talking about.

This is a matter of considerable consequence to British Rail. When the NUR group, of which I am a member, gave a farewell meal to Sir Robert Reid, he asked whether there were any last-minute requests. I made a request then, before I realised that the Atlas steel works was to be closed down, that the outgoing chairman should find out about the issue. I put that request to the incoming chairman of the same name, Bob Reid, recently of Shell. I hope that British Rail and the Department of Transport will find out urgently about this matter.

The Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers, Jim Shaw, and I felt strongly enough about the matter to go to the High Court the day before yesterday to try to get an interdict. I make no criticism, public or private, of Lord Marnoch, the judge, for not giving us that interdict. In this country, fair trading is heavily weighted in favour of ownership and it would be difficult for the court to have come to any other conclusion. I am not criticising the judiciary, but this is an urgent matter of public interest and I want the Minister to find out more about it as quickly as possible.

1.46 pm

Mr. John Bowis (Battersea): I hope that the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) will forgive me if I do not follow him down the foundry route. Courtesy of my hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch (Mr. Adley) we have had an interesting ride—in railway terms, one might call it an excursion ticket—round the country's railways, ending in Scotland. I shall bring the debate chugging back safely to London to consider transport in our capital, and link this debate with the theme of my motion—that the solution to London's traffic and transport problems lies predominantly with public transport.

The background to my speech is the London assessment studies, on which we shall soon have an official announcement. If the reported conclusions of my right hon. and hon. Friends at the Department of Transport, as set out in one national newspaper today and repeated on some radio stations, are true and some of the major road options, such as the Chiswick tunnel, the south circular and the western environmental improvement route, WEIR, were not to be pursued, it would be a great tribute to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State's willingness to listen to my hon. Friends and myself in the southern strip of London. I refer particularly to my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Putney (Mr. Mellor), my right hon. Friend the Member for Brentford and Isleworth (Sir B. Hayhoe), and my hon. Friends the Members for Richmond and Barnes (Mr. Hanley) and for Fulham (Mr. Carrington). That would best show that the Government have their priorities right on the future of London's transport.

I appreciate that my hon. Friend the Minister cannot respond to this today because it is a leaked story. However, we must look for public transport solutions and imaginative solutions to our capital's problems. I set my arguments against the background of gridlocked roads and rat-run side roads where, as Lord Dewar said, pedestrians are divided between the quick and the dead as they try to cross some of our side streets. My argument is also set against the background of a public transport system which is overloaded, particularly central London, and the history of public transport in London. That history involves private company fighting private company, fighting public company, with no decisions being made.

The other day the hon. Member for Lewisham, Deptford (Ms. Ruddock) and I shared a morning assignation, courtesy of LBC radio. She departed from a separate starting point by rail, I started by underground and bus and the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) started by taxi. We wanted to see who could reach the station first. I have to say that the taxi got there first followed by the railway train. My package came in last, not least because I started from Battersea square where there is no bus, no railway station and no Underground, so Shanks' pony came into play for the first half mile or so. When I found my Underground station I had crossed the river.

In answer to questions to my hon. Friend the Minister, I was told that there are 244 Underground stations north of the river and only 29 south. That would suggest that more than half the population lives north of the river, but that is not the case. A fair half of the population lives south of the river, yet we are totally unserved by the Underground system. Clapham Junction, the busiest rail

junction in the world, is in my constituency with 1,000 passengers per minute passing through it at peak hours. That station is totally unconnected with the Underground system.

In London more than 80 per cent. of commuters into the centre travel by public transport, but 90 per cent. of people travelling to other destinations travel by car because there are no cross routes. The rail network is directed into the centre and our great capital city has no cross routes, particularly running from east to west.

Mr. Adley: Presumably my hon. Friend is aware that in the days of steam there used to be an excellent service from Clapham Junction to Kensington Olympia and to many other places in London. Does he agree that while the phrase "integrated transport policy" may be anathema to some of our hon. Friends, there is still a lack of adequate consultation and joint operation between British Rail and London Underground? Does he agree that Clapham Junction would have tremendous potential if some of the other lines were used?

Mr. Bowis: I could not agree more and I shall come on to some of those opportunities, although I am not sure that I shall incorporate steam in my plans.

Mr. Matthew Carrington (Fulham): Shame.

Mr. Bowis: My hon. Friend says "Shame" now, but I am not sure that he would approve of steam trains puffing through Fulham.

We have not yet reached the stage at which British Rail is working out ways of bringing long enough trains into our capital city. The trains are too short because the platforms are too short. At one point there was an announcement that British Rail would start a programme of building extensions, but I understand that it has been held back. If we are to have trains which allow people to get in rather than to fall out, we need a serious programme for longer trains to run through inner London.

My hon. Friend the Minister, in his earlier response to my hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch highlighted the Government's achievements and I pay tribute to them. For the first time we have a Government who are enabling British Rail to invest at a level not seen since the Conservative Government of the 1950s. That is a great tribute. We have gone back on to the rails in terms of investment. The same is true of London Underground and the docklands light railway. I want to see Portillo statues of my hon. Friend to match the Brunel statues all round our capital city, when we have expanded the imagination and opportunity that is lacking in the planning of our network.

Mr. Corbyn: What about Adley statues?

Mr. Bowis: They should be outside London, perhaps on the Christchurch line.

When I speak to the planners in British Rail and London Regional Transport, I am impressed by their knowledge, dedication and striving to provide the service that they believe is required. But I always feel that there is something lacking—that little spark of someone saying, "Let's try something new. Give us an idea and we will work it up to a scheme that we can put forward to our bosses and our paymasters." I want to hear hows rather than whys coming out of those offices when I put ideas to them. We could put forward many ideas to solve our problems.

Hon. Members have mentioned how one assesses the relative investment costs as between rail and road. There was an interesting dialogue between my hon. Friends the Members for Christchurch and for Birmingham, Northfield (Mr. King) as to the degree to which car drivers pay for roads through the tax system. Most rail passengers also contribute to road costs as car drivers, whereas car drivers often do not use the rail network to any extent and therefore do not make a contribution to it through rail fares.

Rail investment embraces not only tracks but rolling stock.

Mr. Adley: And signalling.

Mr. Bowis: And signalling, as my hon. Friend says. However, figures for the road network include expenditure only on the roads themselves—not on the vehicles that use them. One must be careful to compare like with like.

Reference has been made to the central London rail study. I am an exponent of the Hackney-Chelsea line. The original study suggested an east-west link in addition to the Hackney-Chelsea line, or a north-south cross-rail. If we can have both, that will be fine—but if not, I want the Hackney-Chelsea line. It will not come as any surprise to hon. Members that that is because the Hackney-Chelsea line could be extended south through the virgin territory of Wandsworth, which is developing in terms of new businesses and other developments. It is territory where private sector finance could be brought into play. The line could be taken to the Southfields link with the District line, rather than to Fulham Broadway. At this point, I stand a little aside from my hon. Friend the Member for Fulham in case he has other ideas.

The London assessment studies contain imaginative ideas such as the light railway link to Roehampton, which could relieve some of the A3 traffic. My favourite proposal is the opening up of the west London line, linking it to Clapham Junction, and in turn linking Clapham Junction to the Underground network. If the line was extended from Willesden to Clapham Junction, there would be the option to extend it further south, to Balham.

Other schemes propose linking the east London line to Balham, and one begins to see a network building up that could provide precisely the kind of east-west link, and the links all round London, that the capital currently lacks. Proposals for many other lines are on the drawing board, in other, some private, studies. They include the new Fleet line, extending the Bakerloo line, the new City line, and extending the Piccadilly line to Clapham Junction via Chelsea and Battersea Bridge road.

Also proposed is linking the Jubilee line to the City airport, extending the Central line to Richmond, and taking the DLR down to Lewisham and up to Finsbury Park. Perhaps the most imaginative of all is the inner London rapid transport scheme, which comprises two intertwining circles. That could make the Gospel Oak connection to which the hon. Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) referred, with interchanges at Clapham Junction, Willesden Junction, Peckham Rye and Canonbury. That is an imaginative scheme for the future, but other schemes go way back in time. There was a

[Mr. Bowis]

proposal in the 1920s for a Wimbledon-Sutton line. We should consider them all, and decide which can be adopted.

If there must be a minimalist solution, I want the Hackney-Chelsea link, the west London line and the east London line to Balham. I would also like Clapham Junction to be rebuilt. It provides an important cross-link in the rail system, but it is totally inadequate in its present form. It is totally inappropriate for the disabled, for example, and consideration must be given to how the whole station could be redeveloped.

Comparisons have been made with the Paris Metro. I am often told that it offers a cleaner and more frequent service that is easier to use than the London Underground. I am sure that all those claims are true. The Metro also has more stations. Passenger journeys in London total 815 million per annum, whereas they number 1,484 million in Paris. The Paris lines are much shorter for the number of stations that they serve. London has 273 stations, whereas Paris has 351. The Metro provides a more convenient service, so it is used more frequently.

Having considered introducing some of Paris's ideas, perhaps we could consider transport over the Thames, which tends to divide London's traffic systems. People often speak of the need for a new river crossing in south and south-west London. Perhaps we need such a crossing, but it should be not a new road river crossing but a public transport river crossing. I can see the case for an imaginative new bridge, incorporating a light railway, a bus lane, a cycle lane and provision for pedestrians. That would add to local services.

Had I had more time, I would have spoken of buses, midi-buses and the opportunities offered by more bus services. The red route scheme is important in enabling buses to travel through London. If that scheme were linked with a transponder system to enable buses to travel through traffic lights, we would have a bus system in our capital city of which we could be proud.

I shall be the first to erect statues of my hon. Friend the Minister for Public Transport if he gets transport in London right—every station could have one. In summary, I shall completely misquote Petruchio from "Taming of the Shrew", which the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) might at least recognise. He said, "Say that she rail, while then I'll tell her plain she sings as sweetly as a nightingale." The more my hon. Friend the Minister rails, the more we shall give him the plaudits that he deserves.

2.1 pm

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): Friday socialism is about to be practised, and I am sure that someone will tell me how much I have so that we may share it evenly until 2.30 pm.

I congratulate the hon. Members for Christchurch (Mr. Adley) and for Battersea (Mr. Bowis) on the motions that they have tabled. I cannot understand why they are in the minority in the Conservative party. Their suggestions not only make sense but are very much in demand among the electorate—certainly among the electorate in London, where transport is becoming a hot political issue.

Even the Government are becoming aware of that. A number of stories have been trailed in newspapers that about next Tuesday the Secretary of State will make announcements taking him somewhat out of the realm of the craven supporter of the road lobby. The Labour party welcomes that. It is not anti-car or anti-road, but it believes that the Government are anti-rail, which is demonstrated by their policies. We want more public transport, specifically more rail use, because we believe that rail travel is cost-effective, environmentally friendly and socially desirable. The Labour party is not anti-car, but it is fervently pro-rail and pro-public transport.

What annoys me is that the Government have washed their hands of responsibility for an integrated national transport policy. No one is taking a strategic overview of transport requirements in Britain or in London. The London group, of which I am chair, met the Secretary of State, who said, "I am not in the strategic transport authority"; and British Rail said the same. Who is the strategic transport authority for London? Labour Members and many Londoners are asking that question.

I looked back through some Greater London council publications and found the 1981 Greater London transport survey, which followed the surveys that it commissioned in 1971 and 1962 as the London county council. It considered all forms of transport in London —road, rail, river—and pedestrians and cyclists. Who does that now? The Government have abolished the GLC and taken away the natural strategic transport authority for London and the south-east, but they have not filled the void. Many of the decisions are dictated not by transport requirements or social desirability but by who can put up the most money, and the transport policy follows. That is happening increasingly in London.

I went to an exhibition that was mounted by Olympia and York, which is putting up some of the money—not a great deal—for the Jubilee line. We have agreed that that is not perhaps the first priority for a new line, but the Government favour it because some money is coming up front. Olympia and York is a responsible company which has transport planners who could show the Department of Transport a thing or two. It even has in its offices a model of London including transport lines which the Department of Transport and the Department of the Environment use. I am all for socially responsible private sector investment, but the idea that the Government have to go to these people for not only money but expertise shows that the Government are derelict in their duty to Londoners and to transport requirements in the south-east.

I have a specific question which has been asked before but about which I am concerned because it relates to the Channel tunnel and the repeal of section 42 of the Channel Tunnel Act 1987. Will an announcement be made? We know that public money must be invested to save the project. The Government have painted themselves into a corner by saying that no public money will be invested. I want the Government to make it clear either that they stand by that statement or that if public money is to be invested in some covert way—as a green dowry or money provided in extra subsidies because of commuter traffic —there will be a proper public inquiry to determine the best route to serve the interests of the south-east and the country generally, linking the Channel tunnel and London.

Ms. Ruddock: Is my hon. Friend aware that yesterday a joint statement was issued by the London boroughs of Southwark, Lambeth, Lewisham and Greenwich making

the very points that he has made and saying that they totally oppose any overground routing of Channel tunnel rail links for freight or passengers through their boroughs?

Mr. Banks: I well understand the points that are being made. The Minister and I have discussed this matter. There should be a public inquiry. We should not leave matters as they are, with British Rail being able to cobble together a deal with someone who comes up with the money and having to use the arcane procedure of a private Bill to get the legislation through. The Government cannot keep washing their hands of what is perhaps the most important transport decision to be made this century and perhaps the next. The Government cannot walk away from the issue of responsibility.

I want a public inquiry. As hon. Members know, I favour the idea of a second Channel tunnel terminal, to be located at Stratford in my constituency in the London borough of Newham, and there are good reasons for doing that. The case is good: it would be £1 billion cheaper; there would be minimal environmental damage; the project is supported by the relevant local authorities; there is a prospect of providing 10,000 jobs in the area; and it would revitalise the east end of London. It is no good my just continuing to make that point. I should like to see a proper, independent public inquiry so that we can find out what is considered to be the best location for the terminal and the linking fast route. I should be happy to abide by a decision of that inquiry.

The Government's decisions are based not on the transport needs of Londoners but on where they can get the most money. The transport decisions follow. The majority of people in London think that transport is one of the most important of issues. Transport chaos looms in the capital city. It is not just a matter of alarmist talk by the Opposition; everyone who moves about in London —whether on the roads, on the Underground or on Network SouthEast—knows that to be a fact. This is the Government's responsibility. They cannot walk away from it. We demand action from them today.

2.9 pm

Mr. Roger King (Birmingham, Northfield): In view of the time, I shall compress my remarks.

I welcome the debate on railways and public transport policy. It is interesting that whenever railways are debated in the House, there is an inevitable comparison between the investment that British Rail puts into the industry and the investment that is put in by our continental cousins, especially the French. The comparison between British Rail investment and that of SNCF with the TGV concept is always made. It is true that the TGV is a glamorous form of rail transport and that every country would like one. With France's land mass and ability to drive railways through the countryside more easily than we can, it has a transport system that is the envy of most of us.

How modernised are the rural railways in the Pyrenees or in other parts of France when one goes off the main glamour rail routes into areas that do not have the benefit of such investment? There is no doubt that railway investment in the United Kingdom stretches from Penzance to Thurso. Wherever the railway is in operation, especially in rural areas such as mid-Wales and the north of Scotland, new forms of signalling equipment, radio telephone equipment and rolling stock have been introduced. That has transformed the railway system in the area. That is the sum total of our investment, which has reached all parts of the country. The French railway system does not reach every part of France. We must be sure in our minds that we seek from a modern railway system not necessarily high speeds of 180mph or 200mph, nice though that might be, but punctuality, cleanliness and reliability.

We still have some way to go, but I am convinced that the people on the east coast route, who are in the process of receiving a brand new railway system, as we did on the west coast route 20 to 25 years ago, will come to appreciate the terms and concept of investment that the Government, through British Rail, are bringing to a large part of the country. I warmly welcome that.

I also warmly welcome the investment in Birmingham. The cross-city line electrification scheme was long overdue. It is now to start in May, with the erection of the wires and the gantries. It is unfortunate that, such is the loading on British Rail workshops to produce new rolling stock and equipment, it is likely that by the time the wiring and signalling have been completed in two years' time, we shall not receive brand new rolling stock as we were promised, and to which British Rail committed itself, because the factories cannot produce it in time. That emphasises, if it needs emphasis, the investment taking place. As Sir Bob Reid, the outgoing chairman said, railway modernisation and investment are up to the limit that we can handle. We need not endorse the achievements of the railway investment programme any more than by emphasising that statement.

I also endorse the 8 per cent. return on investment. It is very easy to be seduced by representations to throw money at and to give blank cheques to a nationalised industry. That money is then absorbed within the ramifications of the industry so that no one knows where it goes. That happened in the railway modernisation programme in the 1950s, when we embarked on a £1,132 million investment. I can never forget that number. I was and remain an avid rail enthusiast. I saw the new equipment cascading into the railway system. Stations were modernised and marshalling yards were built that were never used and were subsequently closed. Rolling stock and locomotives were ordered to the wrong specifications. They were phased out long before they had reached their life expectancy. My hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch (Mr. Adley) will know that the western region specified diesel hydraulics that were given the kiss of death long before their motive power had been exhausted.

Mistakes were made because a lump sum was given to the railways, which was spent accordingly. It was spent in the best interests of the industry which thought that it was doing the right thing, but the safeguards that we introduced by demanding that all investment should have a return must be the only sensible way forward. I do not think that that has stopped any worthwhile investment programme for which British Rail has asked. It has been given practically everything that it has requested.

I want briefly to touch on the role of the bus. I remind the House that I am a non-executive director of a national coaching company, so obviously I have an interest in this matter. The bus is the most flexible form of public transport that we have and it operates extremely efficiently. The Government's policy of deregulation has encouraged new and innovative bus services the benefits of which we have seen throughout Britain. In the west midlands, new operators are beginning to come in and

[Mr. Roger King]

offer a worthwhile challenge to monoliths that have been in place for a considerable time. It is causing established companies to reflect on their services and to seek to achieve higher standards of service and efficiency. I welcome what deregulation has achieved. I warmly applaud——

Mr. Adley: I am glad that my hon. Friend declared his interest; it would have been unfortunate had he not done so. Does he think that all the additional costs that his coaches have caused the Metropolitan police and others to incur should be borne by the bus companies? Or does he think that London community charge payers and taxpayers should bear them all?

Mr. King: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for giving me the opportunity to draw to the attention of the House his comments about coach congestion in London. There is a distinction between tourist coaches meandering through the streets, their passengers rubber-necking at all the sights, and commuter coaches that come in first thing in the morning, park somewhere and go home in the evening. My company is not a party to that. The company of which I am a director—National Express—operates a daily and hourly national service throughout Britain, of which services to London are only a part. Our coaches come straight to Victoria coach station, unload and leave the capital. Very few remain parked here unless, for example, mechanical problems arise.

The deregulation of the bus industry has proved very successful. It has given the public choice—and choice is what the public wants—between using railways and using inter-city coaches. It has also done wonders in providing the impetus for British Rail to provide an ever more efficient and commercial service.

The problems of London and most of our cities could be partially alleviated if we ensured that buses and coaches could travel along the busways allocated to them, free from the vehicles—frequently illegally parked—that lie in their route at present. I welcome the red routes, which will go a long way to overcoming the worst problems of congestion for public service vehicles, which move the bulk of commuter traffic in our city centres.

Will my hon. Friend the Minister kipdly re-examine the introduction of a form of bus grant? As a result of deregulation, many changes have taken place in the structure and ownership of our companies. Our rolling stock—the fleets—are aging and need replacing. I am convinced that the industry will find the wherewithal to replace those vehicles. But what should we replace them with? We have congestion and pollution—it is absolutely right to say so—but the technology is there to produce buses and heavy goods vehicles that are largely pollution-free. That can be achieved by means of filtration traps and the like. I ask the Minister to consider the possibility of providing grants for environmentally responsible public service vehicles. They would emit fewer fumes and, although they would be more expensive to buy and slightly more costly to run, they would be highly beneficial to the environment.

2.17 pm

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North): I am sorry that I missed the first part of the speech of the hon. Member for Christchurch (Mr. Adley). He has done an enormous amount over the years in support of the principle of railways. I pay tribute to him for that and for introducing this timely debate.

I detect that most Conservative Members are rushing like Daniel to judgment. They seek to give the impression that no Conservative Member ever supported the policy of major road building or of cutting investment in British Rail. They speak as though no one had supported the demand for a return on capital or advocated the privatisation of the railways or any other forms of public transport.

I suspect that the planners at the Department of Transport believe that, under the cost-benefit analysis system, road building is essentially a good thing. The team does not take sufficient account of the serious environmental problems of building major roads, the increased pollution from car exhausts and the internal combustion engine or the loss of open space and public land that the building of major roads entails.

It has been said that the amount of land taken up by the building of major roads in comparison to that for railways has damaged the environment. However, the Government still promote major road building which encourages more car commuting and more road freight which, in turn, causes more pollution and congestion in our cities. That encourages the kind of crazy solutions that were foreshadowed in some of the assessment studies as answers to London's transport problems.

The Government's attitude to railways and railway financing appears to be one of reducing investment and encouraging privatisation by stealth and the rapid sales of BR property. I believe that in the long run that will be detrimental to the interests of the railways because those sales remove capacity for later operational requirements that may be necessary if the railways continue to expand at the present rate.

The Government's attitude does not take sufficient account of the overall environmental impact of developing railways instead of roads. The use of energy by the private car is the most wasteful, most polluting and most depressing aspect of transport policy. The major source of pollution in every city is not industry, but internal combustion engines in private cars. Catalytic converters and emisson filters will not solve that problem because carbon dioxide, a major greenhouse gas, will still be emitted.

As a form of mass transit, the railways are most energy-efficient. Railways give the greatest sense of mobility for people in cities and form the best inter-city network. I strongly support rail development for all those reasons.

I draw attention to rail investment and development in London. London is in chaos. Anyone who tries to travel round the city on foot, by bicycle, in a vehicle for disabled people or on a tube train will recognise that London is dirty, dangerous, congested and polluted. That has a bad effect on the children in our capital city and on the health of everyone else. When fire engines and ambulances cannot move round central London, it becomes downright dangerous for all of us. It is time that something was done about that.

I believe that next Tuesday the Secretary of State for Transport will announce his response after the consultation period on the assessment study. In the month after consultation ended, I hope that he read every letter and the top of every petition and I hope that he has taken account

of all the objections. Seventeen thousand people from my constituency objected to the proposal to build a major road through north London. All the postcards, letters and everyone who objected supported improvements to public transport. They called for better funding, lower fares and the better use of public transport.

In my constituency, 27 per cent. of the electorate registered their objections. Only one person muttered to me in the street that there might be a case for road widening, but he had not really thought about it. Therefore, the ratio is 27,000:1 and that one was not very certain.

On Tuesday I hope that the Secretary of State will announce that he will abandon all the road building options for London and instead introduce a refunding of London Regional Transport which will result in lower fares. I hope that he will also announce a major study on safety in LRT, including getting rid of the mechanical Rottweilers at Underground stations so that we no longer have to face those ludicrous ticket barriers. I hope that he will also announce a serious evaluation of railway development potential.

Many lines have been mentioned today which could be developed and improved. In an intervention I referred to the north London line and the Barking to Gospel Oak line. The hon. Member for Battersea (Mr. Bowis) talked about the west London line. There are many other under-used rail facilities in London that could be developed, and by building links we could have a first-class rapid transit surface level rail system in London. We should also be integrating transport in the way that was envisaged by the Greater London council and is now advocated by the CBI.

I also believe strongly that we should be looking more closely at the conditions for proper mobility and safety. My hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham, Deptford (Ms. Ruddock) referred to the safety of women on the Underground and on buses. Problems are caused there because of understaffing. We must also consider the safety of cyclists and the lack of mobility for disabled people. The loss of the previous dial-a-ride services and the introduction of LRT dial-a-ride services have not been a happy experience because the zoning system that has been introduced reduces the mobility of the people whom the scheme was designed to support.

There are major decisions to be taken. We lack the democratic forum within London to make them, because the GLC was abolished and there is no transport authority for London. The Minister might not be very keen on bringing back the GLC, but he must recognise that part of the cause of chaos, congestion, dirt, danger and noise in London is due to the lack of an integrated transport planning system. That is what we require in London and require now.

2.25 pm

Mr. Richard Tracey (Surbiton): I support the motion which was to be moved by my hon. Friend the Member for Battersea (Mr. Bowis), altbough I am happy to intervene under the wing of the motion introduced by my hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch (Mr. Adley). The motion highlights the excellent campaign that my hon. Friend the Member for Battersea has been waging in south London to turn the attention of our right hon. and hon. Friends in the Department of Transport more towards public transport and away from road building. If the rumours about the Secretary of State's announcement some time next week or in the near future are correct, they are a credit to the work of my hon. Friend the Member for Battersea.

The Opposition have suggested that some Conservative Members have had a last-minute conversion on public transport in London. I assure the Opposition that it is not a conversion, but a realisation of the present position. Over the past eight or nine years, because of Her Majesty's Government's policies, there has been a great economic revival in the capital city. Many people are coming to our capital city to work and to indulge in wealth creation. Statistics show a 23 per cent. increase in the number of passengers travelling on Network SouthEast and, in turn, using the London Underground.

As we need to move many people to London from a great distance, it makes absolute sense to do so by rail and to some extent by bus. Constituents in inner London boroughs and in the suburbs recognise that fact when they say that they are not willing to countenance more major road building. That feeling has been behind campaigns against the major road proposals that were put to the Department, by the engineers.

In their strategic role in the Department of Transport, the Government have most certainly turned their attention to public transport. There has been far more investment in recent years in British Rail and Network SouthEast and in the London Underground than at any time in the past 25 years. There is no doubt that the Department of Transport has encouraged London Regional Transport to concentrate on far more investment now than ever took place during the time of the GLC. Certainly, far more passengers now travel on London Regional Transport than at any time under the GLC.

I encourage my hon. Friend the Minister to consider light rail systems and far more use of hopper buses on short routes in outer London suburbrs such as Surbiton. I am convinced that we should be pursuing far more public transport systems as the way forward and that we should not encourage road building in either inner or outer London.

Mr. Adley: With the leave of the House, I thank my hon. Friend the Minister and the hon. Member for Lewisham, Deptford (Ms. Ruddock), neither of whom have left their places this morning.

I have just one last word for my hon. Friend the Minister. The Government have generated considerable economic success in the past 10 years and have raised expectations about public expenditure on our transport infrastructure. We have converted a public sector borrowing requirement into a public sector debt repayment. Can we use some of those well-earned moneys to build transport infrastructures for the future?

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That this House welcomes the Government's statement in their objectives set to British Rail, that projects not meeting the required rate of financial return but having social, environmental or other external benefits, should be assessed by cost-benefit analysis; further welcomes the Government's commitment to maintain the existing railway network, and to continue to pay the Public Service Obligation grant, whilst noting the report of the Central Transport Consultative Committee on British Rail; notes both the investment regime and subsidy policy pursued by the French and West German governments; calls on Her Majesty's Government to assess road and rail projects on an equal basis in the light of the

[Mr. Adley]

congestion, pollution and aggravation caused by the proliferation of the internal combustion engine; welcomes the Government's important decision to refuse closure of the Settle and Carlisle railway line as a significant change to policies pursued by previous governments; and requests British Rail to end the policy of selling off railway trackbed from which services have been discontinued.

Mr. Dalyell: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am not criticising the Minister, but is it not unsatisfactory that in today's debate there has been no opportunity for a reply to be given to particular questions asked of the Minister? I specifically asked whether the Department of Transport was prepared to take action in relation to the Atlas steel works and the fabrication of rails, but there was no opportunity for a reply. Perhaps by some alchemy the Minister will indicate that his Department is doing that.

Mr. Portillo *indicated assent.*

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): The hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) has made his point, but he knows that it is not a matter for the Chair.

Private Members' Bills

CHANNEL TUNNEL ACT 1987 (AMENDMENT) BILL

Order for Second Reading read.

Hon. Members: Object.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): Second Reading what day? No day named.

MARRIAGE (REGISTRATION OF BUILDINGS) BILL

Order for Second Reading read.

Hon Members: Object.
Second Reading deferred till Friday 30 March.

RADIATION EXPOSED CROWN EMPLOYEES (BENEFITS) BILL

Order for Second Reading read.

Hon Members: Object.
Second Reading deferred till Friday 30 March.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: We now come to motion No. 8——

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I shall take it in a moment.

Mr. Skinner: It is about motion No. 8.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Very well, I shall take it now.

Mr. Skinner: You will notice Mr. Deputy Speaker that the two business of the House motions deal with the poll tax and various regulations. One relates to business to be considered on Monday and the other to several motions for Thursday. You will also notice, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the last few lines of the second motion state that any member of the Government may move one of the motions.

I have been considering this matter, together with Standing Orders Nos. 14 and 15, relating to exempted business and negative procedure. In view of what is taking place politically, I think that it would make a great deal of sense for the Prime Minister to come to the House to defend the poll tax regulations and the poll tax generally on either Monday or Thursday. She is allowed to do so under this procedure. If she is not prepared to defend the poll tax, she should come here, pack up the poll tax and pack herself up with it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I am sure that the Prime Minister will take note of what the hon. Gentleman has said.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Ordered,

"That, at the sitting on Monday 26th March, notwithstanding the provisions of Standing Order No. 15 (Prayers against statutory instruments, &c. (negative procedure)), Motions in the name of Mr. Neil Kinnock relating to Community Charge and Community Charges may be proceeded with, though opposed, for one and a half hours after the first of them has been entered upon; and, if proceedings thereon have not been previously disposed of, Mr. Speaker shall at the expiration of that period put successively the Question already proposed from the Chair and the Questions on any further such Motions as may then be made.—*[Mr. Greg Knight.]*

Ordered,

That, at the sitting on Thursday 29th March, notwithstanding the provisions of Standing Orders No. 14 (Exempted business) and No. 15 (Statutory Instruments, &c. (negative procedure)), if the Motions in the names of Mr. Neil Kinnock relating to Community Charges and to Social Security and Mr. Secretary Newton relating to Social Security have not been previously disposed of, Mr. Speaker shall at Seven o'clock put successively the Question already proposed from the Chair and the Questions on any further such Motions as may then be made by a member of the Government, and no other such Motion shall be made.—*[Mr. Greg Knight.]*

Haberdashers' Aske's Schools, Hatcham

2.32 pm

Ms. Joan Ruddock: (Lewisham, Deptford): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I cannot anticipate what the hon. Member for Lewisham, West (Mr. Maples) will say in his Adjournment debate, the subject of which is two schools in my constituency, but the purpose of closing those schools is to create a city technology college. The girls' school has voted against that; the boys' school has voted for it. The Government's proposal is that one CTC should be constituted from those two schools——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): Order. Perhaps the hon. Lady will tell me the point of order for the Chair.

Ms. Ruddock: Indeed, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I felt that it was necessary to give you that explanation because, as a result of what has happened, the Inner London education authority and the London borough of Lewisham are now taking the matter through the courts. There is an appeal hearing in the High Court, which I understand is still going on. Therefore, I wonder whether the matters are sub judice.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I understand the hon. Lady's point and am grateful to her for giving me notice of it. I also understand that a case is now before the courts and the matter is, therefore, sub judice. I am sure that the hon. Member for Lewisham, West (Mr. Maples) and the Minister will take that into account in their remarks.

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Greg Knight.]*

2.34 pm

Mr. John Maples (Lewisham, West): I do not intend to deal with the subject matter of the case that is still before the courts. It is, as will emerge during my remarks, one of five lawsuits brought by the Inner London education authority. That is some measure of the way in which the authority has tried to frustrate the consultation process in schools becoming a CTC. The Haberdashers' Aske's schools in Hatcham are two voluntary-controlled schools which are administered by the same foundation and have had the same governing body for about 100 years. During the past two years they have undertaken a consultation procedure on whether they should remain voluntary controlled, become grant-maintained or become a city technology college.

The story of that procedure is an amazing story of an attempt by a Labour-controlled authority—ILEA—to frustrate it. ILEA has attempted to manipulate the governing body and to remove CTC supporters from the governing body, and has aided the parents group, which is opposed to the CTC, both financially and in other ways that are improper, if not illegal. It has brought five lawsuits in an attempt to frustrate the procedure and spent upwards of £250,000 of public money in pursuit of what can be described only as party dogma.

ILEA did all those things not only during the consultation period but after democratic decisions had been taken to proceed with turning one of the schools into a CTC. I suggest that that is not only profoundly undemocratic but shows that the Labour education authority—the largest in the country—was not prepared to accept the democratic decision of governors, parents

[Mr. John Maples]

and teachers. It is a scandal of municipal bullying, misuse of public funds for party political purposes and attempts to prevent democracy and flout democratic decisions. It is a tribute to those members of the governing body who are not Labour party appointees that they have pursued an extremely beneficial development in the education of Lewisham children.

The story started in 1988. In April the governing body considered a paper on whether the schools should become a city technology college. It was agreed that there would be a lengthy period of public consultation and that parents would be asked their views on the proposals before any decision was taken. At that stage the governing body was made up of 21 people, including 10 appointed by ILEA —of whom eight were Labour party appointees and two were Conservative party appointees—five foundation governors, two head teachers, two other teachers and two parents.

ILEA suspected, rightly, that the governing body would break 12 to nine in favour of the CTC proposal. Only 24 hours before the meeting was due to take place, ILEA's legal adviser told the four teacher governors—the two head teachers and two other teachers—that they could not vote, on the strange ground that they had a pecuniary interest in the outcome. That matter subsequently went to court. It was the only one of the lawsuits that ILEA won.

Although I do not question the decision of the court, it was extraordinary that an education authority which said that its policy was to promote the involvement of teachers in the administration of its schools, sought to disqualify all four teachers on the governing body from taking part in the decision. The teachers were known to be three to one in favour of the schools becoming a CTC. The effect of ILEA's action was to reduce the majority from nine to eight. The eight Labour appointees then voted and behaved as a block throughout the consultation procedures and thereafter. All the other nine governors —the two parents, the foundation governors and the two non-Labour appointees—voted consistently the other way.

At the meeting it was agreed that consultation would take place on all three options—the schools becoming a CTC, adopting grant-maintained status or remaining as they were. The meeting was in May 1988 and it was decided that the consultation should continue until 17 December. A public consultation document was issued in July. There was a public meeting and parents' meetings in each of the schools. Written representations were made and teachers and parents had meetings in both schools.

It was agreed that if the governing body proceeded with either the CTC or grant-maintained option, there would be further consultation on the preferred option and a parents' ballot. There were two groups of parents—those opposed to and those in favour of the CTC option. Quite improperly, ILEA sought to help and promote the interests of the group that was opposed to the CTC. It paid for and produced what must be an extremely expensive leaflet setting out the opposition case. It connived in making available to that group a list of the names and addresses of the parents of the children at one of the schools. ILEA helped and promoted in a variety of ways the interests of parents who were opposed to the CTC. It was agreed that during the consultation period there would be a regular governors meeting every month to review progress. The eight Labour party appointees on the governing body attempted to ambush this procedure twice in five months by calling emergency meetings with some 72 hours' notice, in the hope of frustrating the proceedings. It became clear at the end of the consultation period that a significant majority of the parents, staff and teachers were in favour of the schools becoming a CTC. It was agreed that there would be a governors meeting on 20 January to make a decision.

At this stage ILEA pulled one of the most disgraceful stunts of any education authority or local authority of which I have knowledge. Its first action, which was not especially disgraceful, was another attempt to frustrate the process. It challenged the consultation procedure. At the end of the procedure, which had continued for six months, it was challenged on the ground that it should have been longer. ILEA lost that case at the High Court and at the Court of Appeal. Its second action was a real scandal. ILEA wrote to all 10 appointed governors on 3 November:

> "I ask you to indicate that as a representative of the authority you will support the authority's policy on the schools, namely to continue their status as voluntary controlled status schools".

That is an outrageous interference with the independence and discretion that is normally accorded to governors. At this stage the eight Labour party appointed governors were behaving like puppets. They responded by saying that they would support the authority. The other two governors, one of whom had been a member of the governing body for nearly 30 years and was a Member of this place—the other one is an extremely hard-working deputy chairman of the board of governors—said that they would not do so, as a result of which they received another letter on 22 December in which the threat was repeated in rather more obvious terms. The clerk to the authority wrote:

> "I am writing pursuant to our previous correspondence to inform you that the authority is minded to consider your removal from the governing body."

At a meeting on 17 January, three days before the proposed governors meeting to make a decision, ILEA proceeded to remove the two governors without giving them a hearing. While that was going on my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science wrote to the hon. Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw), the shadow Secretary of State for Education and Science, who had objected vehemently, and I think rightly, to Conservative local education authorities attempting to pack their school governing bodies with 100 per cent. Conservative governors. My right hon. Friend wrote to ask the hon. Gentleman whether he thought that there was a similar case to be considered and whether he would decry and denounce what ILEA was doing. The hon. Member for Blackburn declined to do so for reasons that seemed to me to produce false distinctions. At the end of the day, he was not prepared to criticise ILEA for its behaviour.

The two governors challenged ILEA's decision in the High Court. They won at both the Court of Appeal and the House of Lords. It is one of the worst examples of abuse of municipal power and the misuse of ratepayers' money that I have come across.

The governors meeting was finally held and it was agreed to recommend the CTC option, which the consultation process that had thrown up as the most popular. It was agreed that there would be further consultation on the details of the option at a parents'

ballot on 13 May. The ballot took place and it was won by 58 to 48. The teachers of both schools had previously voted in favour of there being a CTC. The governors therefore proceeded at a later meeting in July to issue a closure notice and to go ahead with the reconstitution of the schools.

One would have thought that at that stage, after democratic decisions of the parents, governors and teachers, that ILEA would say, "We advanced our side of the argument in the consultation procedure and we lost." No, it was not prepared to do that. Shortly before the final governors meeting ILEA attempted to remove one of the parent governors. That was done in early July. The parent's child was due to leave the school in about a month's time at the end of the summer term. She had had her final interview with the head teacher. The ILEA had the nerve, the brass neck, to say that the parent no longer had the right to be a parent governor although her appointment was clearly to last for the whole school year. The matter was taken to court by the parent governor. ILEA settled on terms requested by her at the door of the court. It agreed to reinstate her and to pay her costs. That is another example of municipal bullying.

ILEA then took yet another action. It ordered the governing body to split into separate governing bodies for the two schools despite there having been one governing body for over 100 years. It thought that it might win a governing body vote in the girls' school, although it knew that it would lose in the boys' school. The Secretary of State refused that application. ILEA went to court and again lost in the High Court and the Court of Appeal. ILEA has subsequently challenged the Secretary of State's decision to issue a closure notice. That is the subject of the existing lawsuit and I shall not dwell on that. It is presently in the Court of Appeal; I understand that the hearing is taking place and judgment is awaited.

Earlier this year, the governing body had to be re-elected and reconstituted under the new rules set by the Education Reform Act 1988. That meant there would be five elected parent governors, instead of two. Those parent governor elections took the form of a direct contest between those who were in favour of the CTC and those against. The pro-CTC parents secured four of the five places, and failed to gain the fifth place by only three votes. One would have thought that was an overwhelming endorsement of the governing body's decision.

However, even in the face of that further democratic decision, ILEA has taken several other steps. It has pursued the appeal, the subject of the outstanding case. The five governors whom ILEA is entitled to appoint to the governing body are all Labour party appointees. Not one representative or appointee has been nominated by the minority parties. ILEA has tried again, by administrative measures, to split the governing bodies and the governors have refused.

Lewisham, which will take over education responsibilities in April, is making noises that it might do the same. I hope that it will not, because if it splits the governing bodies, in a year's time there will be the most awful chaos. That would involve new governing bodies being formed in April 1991 and parents' elections, which would take about six weeks. Therefore, in the middle of June, two years later, there would be a vote on whether the schools should become CTCs. At that time the closure process will already be 19 months down the road, the CTC will be due to open in September 1991, teachers will have been hired, money spent and pupils promised places. I hope that it will not do that, although I am not filled with great hope in the light of some of its other actions. It is threatening to refuse builders access to the sites while they remain technically local education authority administered schools.

At the end of last year, the Audit Commission published a report directed at local education authorities' new responsibilities. It made the crucial point that local education authorities must take note of the Education Reform Act 1988. It said:

> "LEAs should recognise these shifts"
>
> —in preferences and alternatives—
>
> "and adapt their procedures. Refusing to do so, campaigning against alternative types of provision and refusing to co-operate with the new CTCs or grant-maintained schools, is hard to reconcile with the LEA's duties."

Apparently, it is not difficult for ILEA to reconcile that, although one would have thought that it should be. I hope that the London borough of Lewisham will adopt a more constructive attitude.

That was an abuse of power by the Inner London education authority on a quite outrageous scale. It attempted to prevent teachers from voting, whom it pretends should be more involved in the running of schools. Its eight appointees behaved like Labour party puppets throughout the procedure and voted as a block. They cannot possibly have all individually agreed on every single issue that came before the governing bodies during that year and a half, but they all voted the same way. It attempted to call three emergency meetings at short notice to reverse decisions that had been taken at meetings of which more reasonable notice had been given. It aided and abetted, in an improper and inappropriate way, the group of parents opposed to the school becoming a CTC. It challenged the consultation in court at a late stage in an attempt to frustrate the procedure. Above all, its attempt to remove the two governors who refused to toe the Labour party line, is one of the most outrageous abuses of municipal power and misuse of ratepayers' money that I have ever witnessed.

After the decision had been made and democratic votes had been taken by the teachers, governors and parents, ILEA refused to acknowledge that decision. It tried to remove a parent governor and split the governing body. It has challenged the Secretary of State in court and even after the new parent governor elections were overwhelmingly won by those in favour of the school becoming a CTC, it pursued that lawsuit and threatens, along with the London borough of Lewisham, to split the governing bodies in a year's time.

In pursuit of this vendetta it has spent more than £250,000 of ratepayers' money. That was an abuse of power, which showed that it had undemocratic objectives of pure party dogma. It is difficult to understand how that can have continued after a democratic decision had been taken. The campaigning that went on before was perhaps the cut and thrust of politics, although it was at the very least bullying for a rich local education authority to use its resources, money and power in that way, but it was totally wrong for it to do so after a democratic decision had been taken.

I should like the Government to do two things to stop this frustration. First, the governing bodies should not be able to vote for the revocation of closure notices which the Secretary of State has issued to be effective without the Secretary of State's approval. If any such processes

[Mr. John Maples]

succeed in frustrating the wishes of the governing bodies of the schools, those closure notices should not be able to be revoked without the consent of the Secretary of State. Secondly, governing bodies should not be able to be split by their local education authorities against the wishes of the members of the joint governing bodies without the Secretary of State's approval. The consultation procedure has shown that those two processes are weapons which those who oppose schools becoming grant-maintained or city technology colleges have in their hands in an extremely unfair way.

Throughout the whole of this sorry saga the Labour-controlled Inner London education authority has flouted democratic procedures, packed the governing body or attempted to do so, misused public money and refused to accept democratic decisions. I am sorry to say that that vexatious harassment continues to this day.

2.51 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science (Mr. Alan Howarth): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham, West (Mr. Maples) on securing this Adjournment debate, and I congratulate his constituents on being represented by him. It is acknowledged on both sides of the House that he is an independent and determined representative of his constituents' interests in education and other matters. As a good representative of his constituents he cares very much about educational opportunities and that is why he is a strong supporter of the proposal that there should be a city technology college in Lewisham.

It is sad that there should have been the history of bitterness and disagreement that my hon. Friend has described. I deplore the obstructionism and the negative, ungenerous and reactionary attitude of the Inner London education authority in the face of proposals that are certainly intended to benefit children and young people in that part of London and would undoubtedly be to their benefit. It is sad that there should be that disagreement, and it passes belief that the assertion should be made that nothing should change in the face of the significant educational disadvantage which too many children have for far too long experienced in parts of London.

Against that background, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State was pleased to agree with the Haberdashers' Company in its generous proposal to participate in establishing a city technology college in the present Haberdashers' Aske's schools. As legal proceedings are continuing in the Court of Appeal, clearly it would be inappropriate for me to comment on matters that are the subject of those proceedings, as you have already advised me, Mr. Deputy Speaker. My hon. Friend outlined the complex and disturbing history of those events fully and usefully, so I shall not dwell on the history of the proposal.

At the end of his remarks my hon. Friend asked me two specific questions. They are important and, of course, relevant to the circumstances that he described. I shall certainly ask my right hon. Friend to consider with great care the suggestions that he made.

I should like to set the Lewisham CTC project in the context of my right hon. Friend's programme to establish a network of city technology colleges. All such schools are established in pursuit of the same broad aims, and have fundamental characteristics in common. Each school will also have its own distinct character, and the potential to make an important contribution to education in its area.

Provision was made in section 105 of the Education Reform Act 1988 for the establishment of city technology colleges. These are independent non fee-paying schools, established in urban areas, for pupils aged 11 to 18. They are required to offer the national curriculum but place special emphasis on mathematics, science and technology. They are established and maintained by sponsors drawn from business and industry, and other sponsors such as livery companies. Capital funding is through a partnership between my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science and the sponsors. My right hon. Friend supports the running costs of CTCs on a basis comparable with expenditure on secondary education by local education authorities in similar areas.

Why has my right hon. Friend sought to establish CTCs? It was the overall purpose of the Education Reform Act 1988 to improve quality and to widen parental choice in education. The city technology college programme addressed a particular problem in education in this country—the fact that children of average and below average ability have been performing less well in mathematics and science than those in some of our competitor countries—West Germany, for example. That problem has been particularly apparent in inner urban areas.

There is an issue, not just of academic attainment, but of whether, in comparison with what happens in some other countries, our young people are adequately prepared for their role in the entrepreneurial and technological society in which we live. Opportunities are becoming more widely available for young people in schools to understand and experience the world of business and industry, and the changing technology, changing markets, and changing management practice in those environments.

Such opportunities need to be extended and reinforced. Ways of achieving that include involving business sponsors in the management of schools and approaches to teaching and learning that take account of the impact of new technology in today's world. City technology colleges are adopting those approaches.

The CTCs already in existence are making a determined and vigorous attack on the problems that I have outlined. Three colleges have opened. Altogether, 12 have firm opening dates for this year and next. Parents in the areas where city technology colleges have opened, or are about to open, are responding positively to the wider choice and new opportunities offered to their children. Admissions to the schools have been heavily oversubscribed in every case. The numbers of applications for teaching posts in CTCs have also been generally very high, and it is clear that many teachers are strongly attracted to the opportunity to teach in those schools.

The curriculum of a CTC will place particular emphasis on mathematics, science and technology, and the use of information technology to support the curriculum in other subjects. The organisation and management of the schools will also normally involve extensive use of new technology, familiarising pupils with everyday uses in businesses and other organisations. CTCs will nevertheless teach a balanced curriculum. It will be possible for CTCs to achieve those two objectives because they normally operate a longer school day than other secondary schools —and in some cases, a longer school year. That approach

makes heavy demands on teachers and pupils alike, but, at the admission stage, the schools ensure that parents fully understand that entering a CTC involves a special degree of commitment to the opportunity offered, including a broad spectrum of opportunities post-16.

The Government's intention is that CTCs will demonstrate new approaches to enabling secondary pupils of all abilities to achieve higher levels of attainment, particularly in mathematics, science and technology. The schools will be exemplars. It is intended that they should build on the good practice that is being developed, but which has not yet been sufficiently widely replicated. CTCs will develop innovative approaches that other schools will want to adopt. As a result, we expect that standards will be raised across the system. I hope that Lewisham children will have the opportunity to benefit in that way.

Each CTC will be consciously part of the national network of CTCs aiming to make a significant contribution to this country's education. A CTC also has an important role as a local school. It will inevitably develop working links with other schools in its area. Those will necessarily include close and fruitful relationships with feeder primary schools. It will be important, for example, for primary teachers, pupils and parents to understand and indeed to "taste" what a CTC offers to pupils within its catchment area. Without such contacts and co-operation, parents and pupils will not be able to exercise a free choice or be prepared for the opportunities available.

CTCs will also seek to develop mutually beneficial relationships with other secondary schools and with local colleges, with a view to sensible sharing of facilities and joint teaching initiatives.

In establishing CTCs, the Government have added to the diversity of educational opportunity in this country, on the basis that problems which have been with us for a long time need to be approached in a variety of ways, with opportunities given for experiment and innovation. Wherever CTCs are situated, and whatever the political views and priorities of the local education authority, it should be remembered that CTC places are open to young people of all levels of ability in their designated catchment areas, and that a new and exciting type of opportunity is involved.

It is, therefore, clearly against the interests of local children and the likely wishes of their parents if local education authorities adopt the attitude which some, sadly, have adopted of not only opposing the establishment of a CTC in their area but of ostracising it once it is established.

As I said at the outset of my remarks, I find deplorable the reactionary, ungenerous, defensive and negative attitude of far too many in the educational establishment —whether they be councillors, officers or, regrettably, teachers—who have not been willing to be generous in their recognition of the attempt made by others who have taken advantage of the opportunity offered by the Government to exercise their democratic right to vote for independence in the grant-maintained sector. They have not been willing to recognise the generosity of benefactors such as the Haberdashers' Company, which is willing to give generous resources to the benefit of education in areas where all too often it has not been of the standard that we want for local children. It is absurd to deny local children the opportunity of a CTC.

Like my hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham, West, I look forward to the establishment of the Haberdashers' CTC and to a new and exciting phase in its long support of education in Lewisham. That will be to the benefit of children in Lewisham.

Mr. Maples: I asked my hon. Friend two specific points, which he said he would discuss with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, about the withdrawal of closure notices and the splitting of governing bodies without someone else's consent. Does he agree that those methods of frustration should not be available to people who oppose these procedures?

Mr. Howarth: I understand my hon. Friend's strength of feeling on those two points, which are enormously important in the context of the events that he outlined. It would be wrong, however, for me to express a view on the proprieties or practicalities of the law. I am more than happy to undertake to draw those important considerations to the attention of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State so that he can think carefully about the appropriate policy.

In the meantime, I very much share my hon. Friend's view that a CTC in Lewisham represents a splendid opportunity for young people there. I am sure that friends of education and children in the borough of Lewisham will look forward to the successful establishment of this important educational enterprise.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at four minutes past Three o'clock.

Written Answers to Questions

Monday 12 March 1990.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Teachers (Unfair Dismissal)

Mr. Kilfedder: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps have been taken to ensure that teachers will be properly protected from unfair dismissal by boards of governors having regard to the additional new powers being conferred on such boards.

Dr. Mawhinney: The employment of teachers in schools in Northern Ireland will continue to be subject to the normal contracts of employment and the protection afforded by employment legislation. Where a board of governors has the power to require a teacher to cease work at a school the Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 lays down clear procedures which must be followed. These provide for the employing authority to give advice to the board of governors in each case and for the teacher concerned to have an opportunity to make representations before a decision is taken, and a subsequent right of appeal.

I shall be taking steps to ensure that forthcoming guidance to employing authorities in relation to local management of schools will stress the need for appropriate advice, support and training to be given to boards of governors in relation to their new powers in this area.

The Department of Education (NI) will also, after consultation with interested parties, be making an order modifying present employment legislation relating to the employer-employee relationship in order to ensure that the powers of boards of governors are matched by corresponding obligations.

Suicides

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many attempted suicides were recorded in Northern Ireland during 1989 at *(a)* prison establishments, *(b)* remand establishments and *(c)* young offenders centres; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Cope: The precise information requested is not available as it is not possible always to distinguish between an attempted suicide and self-inflicted injury perpetrated for other reasons.

The table records incidents of self-inflicted injury in Northern Ireland prison service establishments during 1989:

Establishment	*Number of incidents recorded—convicted prisoners*	*Number of incidents recorded—unconvicted prisoners*	*Total*
Her Majesty's Prison Belfast	9	28	37
Her Majesty's Prison Magilligan	3	—	3
Her Majesty's Prison Maze	3	—	3
Her Majesty's Prison Maghaberry	3	2	5
Her Majesty's Young Offenders Centre Hydebank	2	1	3

Pre-School Education

Mr. Rathbone: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will review the availability and quality of pre-school education in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement.

Dr. Mawhinney *[holding answer 9 March 1990]:* Responsibility for services for pre-school children is shared between the Department of Health and Social Services and the Department of Education for Northern Ireland.

As part of a broader review of health and social services boards' policy on child care, the social services inspectorate of the Department of Health and Social Services is currently undertaking an examination of the level of daycare provision available for young children. The results of this review will be available shortly. Day care facilities are required to be registered by the boards, and the quality of care provided in them is monitored by regular visits by social workers.

The availability of nursery education for children under compulsory school age in nursery schools and nursery classes in primary schools is kept under review by the Department of Education, but in recent years limited resources for school building have made it necessary to give priority to provision for children of compulsory school age. The Department of Education monitors the quality of nursery education being provided through its inspectorate's programme of school inspections and visits.

ENERGY

Natural Gas

Mrs. Wise: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy (1) at what pressure, in the pipeline used to distribute natural gas in the United Kingdom, the natural gas is contained in *(a)* the high pressure regional transmission line, *(b)* the national transmission line, *(c)* the medium pressure distribution line and *(d)* the low pressure distribution line;

(2) how many kilometres of pipeline are used to distribute natural gas in the United Kingdom;

(3) of the total number of kilometres of pipeline used to distribute natural gas in the United Kingdom, how many kilometres are *(a)* high pressure regional transmission line, *(b)* national transmission line, *(c)* medium pressure distribution line and *(d)* low pressure distribution line;

(4) what is the age of the pipeline used to distribute natural gas in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Wakeham: These are matters for British Gas plc.

Gas Meters

Mrs. Wise: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will give precise figures for the results of the sample study of 100 meters mentioned in the 1989 Office of Gas Supply annual report concerning the relative accuracy of synthetic diaphragm meters and leather diaphragm meters.

Mr. Wakeham: The study referred to was commissioned by the Office of Gas Supply. It is therefore a matter for Ofgas.

Privatisation

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will list the activities his Department will carry out after the privatisation of the electricity industry and British Coal.

Mr. Wakeham: My Department will carry out such activities as are appropriate to the achievement of its objectives as stated in chapter 5 (energy) of "Government's Expenditure Plans 1990-91 to 1992-93" (Cm. 1005).

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what was the total sum paid out in fees to outside organisations in the furtherance of privatisation by his Department in 1979-80 and in each subsequent year; and what is his estimate for 1990-91.

Mr. Wakeham: Total expenditure on fees paid to outside organisations in relation to the privatisation of Amersham International, Britoil and Enterprise Oil could not be provided without incurring disproportionate cost. Fees paid to outside organisations in the case of the privatisation of British Gas and in the preparation for the privatisation of the electricity supply industry in England and Wales are:

£ million

	British Gas	*ESI*
1985-86	1·4	—
1986-87	162·4	—
1987-88	10·5	0·8
1988-89	11·1	5·5
[1]1989-90	2·2	16·0

[1] Estimated outturn.

Estimated expenditure for 1990-91 will be published as part of the supply estimates later this month.

Public Relations

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what are the latest figures for the number of staff presently employed, and the full complement of staff, including vacant posts, in the press and public relations office of his Department; and what is the proposed complement for 1990-91.

Mr. Wakeham: The staffing of my Department's press office, including the speech-writing unit, is currently 13. There are no vacancies and no decisions have been made to change the complement for 1990-91.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what was the total expenditure by his Department on press and public relations in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

Mr. Wakeham: The estimated expenditure in 1989-90 is £615,000. This figure includes:

(i) forecast expenditure by the Press Office.

(ii) staff costs (salaries, accommodation and common services) for all permanent information service and support staff currently in post in the press office (including the speech-writing unit).

The corresponding expenditure for previous years is as follows:

	£
1988-89	475,000
1987-88	460,000
1986-87	293,000

Expenditure for the years prior to 1986-87 is not available on a comparable basis. Currently proposed expenditure for 1990-91 is £655,000.

Statistical Divisions

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what are the latest figures for the number of staff presently employed, and the full complement of staff, including vacant posts, by grade, in the statistical divisions in his Department; if he will differentiate between staff in statistical posts and staff in administration posts; and if he will give the staffing complements by grade, and differentiated between statistical and administrative posts, proposed for 1990-91.

Mr. Wakeham: The latest figures are given in the table. There is one vacancy at statistician level. Complements for 1990-91 are under review.

Grade	*Staff numbers*
Statistician grades	
Chief statistician	1
Statistician	5
Assistant statistician	2
Sub-total	8
Economist grades	
Senior economic advisor	3
Senior principal economic advisor	2
Economic advisor	9·5
Senior economic assistant	3
Economic assistant	1
Sub-total	18·5
Administrative and senior open structure grades	
Grade 3	1
Grade 7	1
Senior executive officer	5
Higher executive officer	7
Executive officer	11
Administrative officer	10
Senior personal secretary	1
Personal secretary	4
Sub-total	40
TOTAL	66·5

Advertising Expenditure

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what were the figures for the spending by his Department on *(a)* television advertising, *(b)* radio advertising, *(c)* newspaper advertising and *(d)* other promotional material in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

Mr. Wakeham: The information requested is as follows:

£'000

	Television Advertising	*Newspaper Advertising*	*Radio Advertising*	*Other Promotional Material*
1989-90[2]	0	895	0	1,066
1988-89	0	2,378	4	1,313
1987-88	0	1,513	0	959
1986-87	16,300	11,830	1,219	1,125
1985-86	2,212	1,589	0	[1]—
1984-85	1,302	1,572	27	[1]—
1983-84	682	1,770	50	[1]—
1982-83	292	955	0	[1]—
1981-82	2,550	530	0	[1]—
1980-81	1,500	1,590	0	[1]—
1979-80	20	1,280	0	[1]—

Notes:
[1] Expenditure on Other Promotional Material prior to 1986-87 is not available on a comparable basis.
[2] Latest forecast.

Detailed decisions on expenditure by media in 1990-91 have not yet been taken.

Management Consultants

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what were the total fees paid out by his Department to management consultants in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

Mr. Wakeham: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him by my right hon. Friend the Member for Hertsmere (Mr. Parkinson) on 13 March 1989, *Official Report*, column *20*.

The actual expenditure in 1988-89 and the estimated expenditure in the following two years is as follows:

Financial year	*£*
1988-89	27,496
1989-90	6,000
1990-91	12,000

Electricity Privatisation

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy, further to his answer of 5 February, *Official Report*, columns *455-58*, whether Dewe Rogerson submitted the lowest tender for the contract it obtained in February.

Mr. Wakeham: In appointing advisers, the Department considers all the relevant factors including price, experience, capability and value for money. The relative merits of candidates, on any of these factors, is commercially sensitive and it is the Government's established practice not to reveal information on performance of candidates in tender competitions.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy, further to his answer of 5 February, *Official Report*, columns *455-58*, how many companies were invited to tender for the contracts awarded to each of the advisers listed in his reply with the exception of the UKAEA, Nuclear Services Group and Dewe Rogerson; what were the names of the unsuccessful tenderers; and whether the tender accepted was the lowest.

Mr. Wakeham: It is my Department's policy to award contracts whenever possible by competitive tender, thus securing competitive rates for work. This procedure has been followed for the majority of the contracts awarded to the companies listed in my earlier reply. Details of individual cases are commercially confidential.

Kleinwort Benson

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy on how many occasions and for what purpose his Department has commissioned work from Kleinwort Benson since July 1988.

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is the role of Messrs Kleinwort Benson in the planned privatisation of electricity; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Baldry: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy has commissioned work from Kleinwort Benson on a continuing basis since its appointment as our financial adviser to the flotation of the electricity industry.

Waste Heat

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he has made an assessment of the waste heat generated by radio and television transmission stations; what investigations are taking place on how to enable the use of this waste heat; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wakeham: Equipment for such purposes is available from equipment suppliers, and I understand that following discussions with my Energy Efficiency Office some four years ago the BBC now makes use of such waste heat where it is practical to do so and has initiated a plan to improve energy efficiency in all its operations.

Oil Dumping

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what quantity of oil is dumped each year into the North sea from drilling; what assessment he has made of the environmental impact of such dumping; and if he has any plans to prohibit this practice.

Mr. Wakeham: The annual report published by the Department of Energy on "Development of the Oil and Gas Resources of the United Kingdom" lists the quantity of oil discharged with drill cuttings into the sea since 1981. In 1988 the amount, from 265 wells, was 19,480 tonnes (73·5 te/well). For 1989 the figure is in the region of 12,260 tonnes from 257 wells (47·7 te/well).

The reduction from 1988 to 1989 is due to the requirement that, as from 1 January 1989, the maximum oil on cuttings permitted to be discharged to the sea was 150 grammes oil/kilogramme cuttings.

All operators who wish to use oil-based drilling muds on production and development wells must undertake a programme of defined seabed surveys. The decision to restrict the level of oil on cuttings to 150 grammes/kilogramme was based on the results of these environmental surveys.

The North sea conference this week adopted the following provisions:

(i) Each North Sea country will develop National plans by 1991 aimed at prohibiting the discharges of oil contaminated cuttings; these plans are to be presented to the Paris Commission in 1991.

(ii) All discharges of oil contaminated cuttings from exploration and appraisal wells will be prohibited by 1994.

(iii) The Paris Commission is to decide not later than 1992, based upon work to be carried out by the Commission, on a practical and achievable date for prohibiting the discharge of all oil contaminated cuttings.

THE ARTS

Science Museum

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Minister for the Arts if he will give the attendance figures at *(a)* the South Kensington site, *(b)* the Bradford site and *(c)* the York site of the science museum for each of the last five years; and if he will indicate at what date charges were introduced at each site.

Mr. Luce: I am advised that the number of admissions at the science museum and the following outstations for the years 1985 to 1989 are as follows:

Admissions 1985-89

Year	*Science museum (South Kensington)*	*National railway museum (York)*	*National museum of photography, film and television (Bradford)*
1985	2,738,900	1,113,700	549,900
1986	2,994,500	932,900	677,300
1987	3,116,300	649,800	702,700
1988	2,261,000	565,600	824,800
1989	1,121,100	542,700	736,400

Figures for the years before charges were introduced are estimated attendances. I understand that admission charges were introduced at the national railway museum, York in April 1987 and at the science museum in October 1988. There are no admission charges to the national museum of photography, film and television, Bradford.

Statistical Divisions

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Minister for the Arts what are the latest figures for the number of staff presently employed, and the full complement of staff, including vacant posts, by grade, in the statistical divisions in his Department; if he will differentiate between staff in statistical posts and staff in administration posts; and if he will give the staffing complements by grade, and differentiated between statistical and administrative posts, proposed for 1990-91.

Mr. Luce: The Office of Arts and Libraries has no statistical divisions or posts.

Public Relations

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Minister for the Arts (1) what are the latest figures for the number of staff presently employed, and the full complement of staff, including vacant posts, in the press and public relations office of his Department; and what is the proposed complement for 1990-91;

(2) what was the total expenditure by his office on press and public relations in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

Mr. Luce: The Office of Arts and Libraries is serviced by the press office of the Cabinet Office. I therefore refer the hon. Member to the reply given today by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister to his corresponding questions in respect of the Cabinet Office.

Privatisation

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Minister for the Arts what was the total sum paid out in fees to outside organisations in the furtherance of privatisation by his Department in 1979-80 and in each subsequent year; and what is his estimate for 1990-91.

Mr. Luce: None.

Advertising Expenditure

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Minister for the Arts what were the figures for the spending by his office on *(a)* television advertising, *(b)* radio advertising, *(c)* newspaper advertising and *(d)* other promotional material in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

Mr. Luce: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given today by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister to his corresponding question in respect of the Cabinet Office.

Management Consultants

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Minister for the Arts what were the total fees paid out by his office to management consultants in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

Mr. Luce: The Office of Arts and Libraries was established in July 1983. No management consultants have been employed.

Arts Council

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Minister for the Arts whether he will publish a list of all Arts Council clients that have a current deficit.

Mr. Luce *[holding answer 8 March 1990]:* The Arts Council advises me that precise information cannot be provided until final end-year figures are available, as the financial position of arts organisations is constantly changing. In the latest survey, 43 of the Arts Council's 140 clients were projecting a deficit. Many of these were small, and most of the arts organisations concerned have put in hand action to remedy them.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Developing Countries (Debt)

82. **Mr. Campbell-Savours:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he has made representations to encourage British commercial banks to write down debts owed by developing countries in line with their increased provisions set aside to cover those debts.

Mr. Ryder: My right hon. Friend has made no such representations. It is for commercial banks to decide whether to write down debts owed by developing countries, in line with their own commercial judgments.

Invisible Trade

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the annual total United Kingdom trade surplus in invisibles in each year since 1985.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Estimates are available as series AIMB on the Central Statistical Office databases which is accessible via the Library.

Family Expenditure

Mr. Skinner: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his estimate of how much in combination the increases in electricity, gas, water charges, mortgage repayments and the poll tax will cost in 1990-91 as against 1989-90, for a family on average earnings with two children.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I regret that I am unable to provide this calculation.

Contingency Reserve

Mr. John Hughes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the current level of the contingency reserve.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The reserve for 1990-91 has been set at £3 billion, as announced in the 1989 Autumn Statement.

Private Medical Insurance

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received from the private medical insurance industry concerning the extension of the present tax reliefs on private medical insurance.

Mr. Lilley: My right hon. Friend the Chancellor has received a number of representations.

Works of Art

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how works of art donated to the nation in lieu of Inland Revenue debts are accounted for in the budget for arts and libraries and the public expenditure planning system.

Mr. Norman Lamont: When a work of art is accepted in lieu of tax, the Inland Revenue is reimbursed for the tax forgone. Both the Office of Arts and Libraries and the Department of the Environment have vote provision to make such payments: in 1989-90 this amounted to £1 million for each of them. This provision forms part of their respective public expenditure programmes.

Also, as announced on 26 July 1985, this provision may be supplemented by access to the reserve for up to £10 million in any one year for large and important offers. When such offers are accepted, parliamentary approval for the extra provision is obtained by a supplementary estimate. This access to the reserve does not add to the planned total of public expenditure. No compensating reductions are sought from the Office of Arts and Libraries or the Department of the Environment when such access is granted.

National Income

Mr. Denzil Davies: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what percentage, in the latest available year, of the national income of the United Kingdom was made up of wages and salaries.

Mr. Major: During 1988, the latest available year, wages and salaries made up 63·5 per cent. of national income.

Privatisation

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the total sum paid out in fees to outside organisations in the furtherance of privatisation by his Department in 1979-80 and in each subsequent year; and what is his estimate for 1990-91.

Mr. Lilley: The information the hon. Member requests is already available in the appropriation accounts for the departments of the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the relevant years. The relevant expenditure recorded in those accounts includes fees paid to outside organisations but those fees could not be identified separately except at disproportionate cost. Costs incurred by Her Majesty's Treasury in connection with the privatisation programme in 1989-90 and 1990-91 will be reported to Parliament in due course in the usual way.

Manufacturing Investment

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish figures showing, for each region, total investment by companies in plant and machinery.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 7 March 1990]:* The available data relate to capital expenditure in manufacturing industry. Figures for 1987, the latest available year, are given in the table:

Net capital expenditure in manufacturing industry[1] on plant and machinery in 1987 by standard region of the United Kingdom

Region	*£ million*
North	491
Yorkshire and Humberside	882
East Midlands	610
East Anglia	258
South East	1,964
South West	509
West Midlands	878
North West	956
Wales	523
Scotland	566
Northern Ireland	171

[1] Divisions 2 to 4, Standard Industrial Classification, revised 1980.
Source: Annual Census of Production.

WALES

Library Services

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many applications have been made by district councils in Wales, which are not library authorities, for an order under subsection (2) of clause 207 of the Local Government Act 1972, to operate library services.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: A total of 15 district councils in Wales, which were not then library authorities, made application under this provision in the period before its expiry on 1 April 1974.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether he intends to amend section 207 of the Local Government Act 1972, in respect of the provision of library services in Wales.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: My right hon. Friend has no present intention of doing so.

Meibion Glyndŵr

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many letters he has received claiming to know the identity of Meibion Glyndŵr and claiming the £50,000 reward offered for such information; on what dates these letters were received; and what action he has taken.

Mr. Peter Walker: I have received two letters claiming to know the identity of Meibion Glyndŵr during the past year. Both have been forwarded to the Home Office.

Welsh Language

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make it his policy to secure a transcript of all the comments made in the conference held in Aberystwyth on Saturday 23 February on the need for a new Welsh language Act; and if he will make a statement in response to such an Act.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: My right hon. Friend has already received a report on the conference held in Aberystwyth on 23 February. Careful consideration is being given to the legislative proposals submitted by the Welsh Language Board.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many courses are currently offered in the Welsh language in *(a)* Gwynedd technical college, *(b)* Llandrillo tech and *(c)* the North East Wales institute of higher education; and if he will name the courses and the number of students currently on each one.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: Course details and the number of students currently taking courses in the Welsh language are not readily available. Information is held only in respect of bilingual further education courses by vocational subject areas at the three institutions:

(a) Gwynedd Technical College—Secretarial, Business and Commerce, Nursery Nursing, Catering, Home Economics, Community Care, Communication.
(b) Llandrillo Technical College—Secretarial, Business and Commerce
(c) North East Wales Institute of Higher Education—Business and Commerce, Nursery Nursing, Technician.

Dr. Thomas : To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many courses in the Welsh language will be offered in *(a)* Clwyd college and *(b)* Gwynedd college following the implementation of programmes on tertiary education in both counties.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: My right hon. Friend has not received any formal proposals affecting the organisation of secondary education in Clwyd and Gwynedd. If proposals are submitted and approved, the question of provision of Welsh language courses will be a matter for the respective authority.

Bathing Water Pollution

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will publish in the *Official Report* the results of all the total coliforms samples at Kinmel bay during the 1989 bathing season, together with the dates on which the samples were taken.

Mr. Grist: The information is shown in the table:

Date of Sample 1989	*Total Coliforms per 100 ml*
4 May	50
10 May	100
16 May	830
22 May	3,200
30 May	1,760
5 June	1,800
16 June	90
22 June	14,200
28 June	4,610
4 July	1,010
10 July	5,600
21 July	19,700
27 July	930
2 August	4,700
8 August	1,070
14 August	350
25 August	3,670
8 September	3,120
14 September	2,160
20 September	11,300
27 September	1,600

Roads

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he will be inviting tenders for the construction of the second and third sections of the M4 missing link near Port Talbot.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply I gave on 22 January 1990, *Official Report*, column *608*.

Telephone Exchanges

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many telephone exchanges were based in each district, borough and city council in Wales prior to the privatisation of British Telecom.

Mr. Peter Walker: The information is not available in the form requested. There were, however, 609 exchanges and two trunk exchanges in Wales prior to the privatisation of British Telecom.

Public Relations

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what are the latest figures for the number of staff presently employed, and the full complement of staff, including vacant posts, in the press and public relations office of his Department; and what is the proposed complement for 1990-91.

Mr. Peter Walker: At 1 March 1990, the number of staff in post in the information officer grades in the Welsh Office was 12. At that date there were five vacancies. The proposed complement for 1990-91 remains 17.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what was the total expenditure by his Department on press and public relations in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

Mr. Peter Walker: Figures for expenditure by the Department's information division, including staff and press cutting service but excluding media advertising and promotion material, cannot readily be disaggregated for the years 1979-88.

Figures for the succeeding years are:

	£
1988-89	469,000
1989-90	487,000

The estimated budget for 1990-91 has yet to be settled.

Statistical Divisions

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what are the latest figures for the number of staff presently employed, and the full complement of staff, including vacant posts, by grade, in the statistical divisions in his Department; if he will differentiate between staff in statistical posts and staff in administrative posts; and if he will give the staffing complements by grade, and differentiated between statistical and administrative posts, proposed for 1990-91.

Mr. Peter Walker: Current staffing levels within my Department's economic and statistical services division are as follows:

As at 1 January 1990

Professional Posts	*Staff in Post*
Senior Economic Adviser (Grade 5)	1·0
Chief Statistician (Grade 5)	1·0
Senior Statistician (Grade 6)	1·0
Statistician (Grade 7)	10·5
Principal Research Officer (Grade 7)	2·5
Economic Adviser (Grade 7)	1·0
Statistical Computing Officer	2·0
Senior Assistant Statistician	6·0
Assistant Statistician	2·0
Total Professional Posts	27·0
Administrative Posts	
Grade 7	1·0
Higher Executive Officer	3·0
Executive Officer	14·5
Administrative Officer	22·0
Administrative Assistant	5·0
Personal Secretary	2·0
Total Administrative Staff	47·5
Grand Total	74·5

Since the introduction of delegated manpower budgeting, the formal complement is no longer the basis for staffing. The budget for 1990-91 is not yet determined.

Privatisation

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what was the total sum paid out in fees to outside organisations in the furtherance of privatisation by his Department in 1979-80 and in each subsequent year; and what is his estimate for 1990-91.

Mr. Peter Walker: It is not the practice to comment on individual advisers' fees. However, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment will report the total cost of water privatisation to Parliament, in due course, in the normal way.

Advertising Expenditure

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what were the figures for spending by his Department on *(a)* television advertising, *(b)* radio advertising, *(c)* newspaper advertising and *(d)* other promotional material in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

Mr. Peter Walker: Figures for expenditure on newspaper advertising for the years 1979-80 to 1984-85 could not be split without disproportionate cost. The information is as follows:

	Radio advertising	Television advertising	Newspaper advertising	Other promotional material
		£	£	£
1979-80	Nil		61,000	24,200
1980-81	Nil		62,000	22,171
1981-82	Nil		100,000	43,773
1982-83	Nil		99,000	28,486
1983-84	Nil		108,000	34,234
1984-85	Nil		66,300	100,331
1985-86	Nil	Nil	30,825	91,602
1986-87	Nil	27,000	49,254	330,711
1987-88	Nil	18,363	38,612	589,478
1988-89	Nil	42,400	37,190	975,050
1989-90	Nil	60,408	239,996	953,096

Note: The total budget and media split for such expenditure in 1990-91 is not yet determined.

Management Consultants

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what were the total fees paid out by his Department to management consultants in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

Mr. Peter Walker: I shall write to the hon. Gentleman.

Cancer

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what importance he places on the monitoring of the incidence of various forms of cancer in Wales, generally and by district, in relation to *(a)* identifying trends, *(b)* seeking to identify causes and *(c)* the search for prevention and cure.

Mr. Grist: Cancer registration data covering all forms of cancer in Wales are continually collected, kept under review and periodically published. The most recent report, published in 1988, is entitled "Cancer Registration in Wales 1974-1984". These activities form an important part of the Department's efforts to improve the public health of the Principality.

Health Service Contracts

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether the paper "Contracts for Health Services: Operating Contracts" published by the Department of Health applies to Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: "Contracts for Health Services: Operating Contracts" was issued to Health Service management in Wales on 6 March 1990 under cover of a letter from the director, NHS Wales. Subject to discussion with district health authorities and other health interests in Wales, the arrangements proposed in the guidance will apply in the Principality.

Malpas Bypass

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is the latest expected date for the start of work on the Malpas bypass.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: Start of work is planned in the financial year 1990-91 as announced in the Welsh Office commentary on the public expenditure White Paper published on 9 March.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Immigration

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* staff and *(b)* staff hours are deployed in his private office on hon. Members' immigration arbitration decisions.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Staff in my private office and that of my right hon. and learned Friend undertake a range of duties, including the consideration of hon. Members' representations to Ministers on individual immigration cases. No staff are employed solely to deal with such representations and no record is kept of the number of staff hours spent on such work.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make it his policy to collect information on the number of representations his private office receives from hon. Members on arbitration on a decision of the chief immigration officer.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: No. This information is not readily available and its collection would serve little practical purpose. I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to his question on 2 March at column *349*.

Prisons (Emergency Procedures)

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the policy of his Department in ensuring that all prison officers are fully trained to deal with an emergency within the prison in which they are working.

Mr. Mellor: The policy is that all prison officers should be made aware of what is expected of them in an emergency and be trained in the necessary skills. All new prison officers are required to attend a nine-week residential course and a range of in-service training is provided. During the past year the service has been engaged in a substantial programme to train staff in methods of dealing with major incidents of violent concerted indiscipline.

Meibion Glyndŵr

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many letters he has received from people claiming to know the identity of Meibion Glyndŵr and inquiring about the £50,000 reward offered for such information; and what action has been taken consequent on such correspondence;

(2) whether the policy of offering a £50,000 reward by the North Wales police for information concerning Meibion Glyndŵr was approved by his Department prior to being instigated.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: There is no record of the Home Office having received any letters making such claims. If any were received, they would be passed directly to the police for investigation. The decision whether to offer a reward is an operational matter for the chief officer, which does not require the approval of the Home Office.

BBC

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has made any official representations to the BBC regarding political bias in BBC local radio.

Mr. Mellor: No.

Suspects' Rights

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he proposes to take account of the findings of the May inquiry before deciding on any changes to suspects' rights.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: My right hon. and learned Friend does not intend to hold up the review of the codes of practice made under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, which is nearing completion, but when considering any proposals for changes to suspects' rights he will have regard to the possible merits of postponing decisions until after Sir John May's recommendations have been received.

Suicides

Sir Charles Irving: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many suicides and how many attempted suicides have taken place in penal establishments in each of the last 10 years; and how many of these were *(a)* remand prisoners, *(b)* female prisoners, *(c)* prisoners under 21 and *(d)* prisoners from ethnic minorities;

(2) how many suicides and how many attempted suicides have taken place in each individual penal establishment in each of the last 10 years.

Mr. Mellor: Table A gives the numbers of inmates in each prison establishment in England and Wales who have died in each year since 1980 and have been found at an inquest to have committed suicide. Figures are also given for the number of incidents of self-injury in 1989 which were regarded as suicide attempts; only partial information is available for earlier years.

Table B gives the number of suicides by unconvicted inmates, female inmates and inmates under the age of 21. No such breakdown can be given of figures for attempted suicides. Information on the ethnic origin of inmates who have committed suicide is not readily available.

Table A: Suicides at prison establishments 1980-1989 and attempted suicides 1989

Establishment	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	*1987*	*1988*	*1989*[1]	*1989*[2]
Acklington	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	(–)
Albany	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(2)
Ashford	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	—	(1)
Ashwell	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(1)
Askham Grange	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(–)
Aylesbury	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(1)
Bedford	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1	—	(–)
Birmingham	—	1	—	—	—	2	—	1	1	—	(24)
Blundeston	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(1)
Bristol	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	(3)
Brixton	5	3	1	4	5	2	2	3	1	1	(21)
Brockhill	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(1)
Camp Hill	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	1	—	—	(2)
Campsfield House	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(–)
Canterbury	1	—	2	—	—	—	1	3	—	2	(7)
Cardiff	—	1	2	—	—	—	1	1	—	—	(5)
Castington	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(–)
Channings Wood	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	(4)
Chelmsford	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(5)
Coldingley	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	(1)
Cookham Wood	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(3)
Dartmoor	—	1	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	1	(3)
Deerholt	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(2)
Dorchester	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	(2)
Drake Hall	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(1)
Durham	—	—	1	—	1	2	—	3	1	2	(15)
Eastwood Park	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(–)
Erlestoke	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(–)
Everthorpe	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(1)
Exeter	—	1	—	—	2	1	1	1	1	1	(19)
Featherstone	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(1)
Feltham	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(9)
Ford	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(1)
Frankland	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	(4)
Full Sutton	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(2)
Garth	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	(3)
Gartree	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(1)
Glen Parva	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	(6)
Gloucester	—	—	—	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	(1)
Grendon	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	(6)

Establishment	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989[1]	1989[2]
Guys Marsh	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(1)
Haslar	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(1)
Hatfield	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(1)
Haverigg	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(2)
Hewell Grange	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(1)
Highpoint	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	(5)
Hindley	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	(23)
Holloway	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(12)
Hull	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	(28)
Kingston	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	(—)
Kirkham	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(—)
Kirklevington	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(—)
Lancaster	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	(3)
Latchmere House	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(7)
Leeds	2	—	1	1	1	2	—	2	4	2	(64)
Leicester	—	—	—	—	1	2	—	—	—	—	(2)
Lewes	—	—	2	—	1	—	—	—	—	1	(7)
Leyhill	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(—)
Lincoln	—	1	—	—	—	1	1	2	1	—	(2)
Lindholme	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	(6)
Littlehey	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	(11)
Liverpool	1	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	(19)
Long Lartin	—	2	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	(4)
Low Newton	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(16)
Maidstone	1	—	—	1	—	1	—	—	1	—	(—)
Manchester	—	1	—	1	—	1	2	3	—	3	(26)
Mount	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(3)
New Hall	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(2)
North Sea Camp	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(1)
Northallerton	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(3)
Norwich	—	—	—	1	2	—	1	1	—	—	(12)
Nottingham	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(3)
Onley	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(2)
Oxford	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(1)
Parkhurst	—	—	2	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	(—)
Pentonville	1	—	—	1	1	2	—	2	1	—	(4)
Portland	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(3)
Preston	—	—	—	—	1	1	2	—	1	—	(12)
Pucklechurch	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(6)
Ranby	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(2)
Reading	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(2)
Risley	1	—	—	—	—	1	1	3	4	—	(9)
Rochester	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1	(—)
Rudgate	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(—)
Shepton Mallet	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(4)
Shrewsbury	1	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	1	—	(15)
Spring Hill	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(1)
Stafford	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	1	(6)
Stoke Heath	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	(2)
Styal	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(—)
Sudbury	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(1)
Swaleside	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(4)
Swansea	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	1	—	(6)
Swinfen Hall	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(2)
Usk	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(—)
The Verne	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(1)
Thorn Cross	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(—)
Thorp Arch	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(—)
Wakefield	1	2	1	—	1	—	1	1	1	—	(2)
Wandsworth	1	—	—	—	1	2	—	3	1	1	(2)
Wayland	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(3)
Wellingborough	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(—)
Werrington	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(—)
Wetherby	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(2)
Winchester	—	2	—	2	—	—	—	1	—	2	(10)
Wormwood Scrubs	1	—	—	—	—	2	1	2	2	1	(4)
Wymott	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	(3)
TOTAL	21	16	17	21	23	23	17	40	30	28	—

[1] Figures in brackets are for attempted suicides.

[2] Inquests have yet to be held on seven inmates who died in 1989 and whose deaths are thought to have been suicides. These deaths occurred at Her Majesty's Prisons Brixton, Cardiff, Long Lartin, Manchester, Rochester and Swansea and at Her Majesty's Remand Centre Risley.

Table B: Suicides at prison establishments by unconvicted inmates, female inmates and inmates under the age of 21

	Suicides by remand inmates	Suicides by female inmates	Suicides by inmates under the age of 21
1980	12	—	2
1981	7	—	1
1982	8	—	4
1983	9	—	2
1984	12	—	2
1985	14	—	1
1986	12	—	3
1987	27	1	7
1988	19	1	7
[1]1989	9	—	3

[1] Inquests have yet to be held on 7 other inmates who died in 1989 and whose deaths are thought to have been suicides. Of these, 4 were on remand, one was a female and 4 were under the age of 21.

Remand Prisoners

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what changes he is proposing to reduce the number of hours that young remand prisoners are kept locked in cells.

Mr. Mellor: Governors are encouraged to provide the best regimes possible within the resources available to them. A seminar was held in June 1989 for most prisons and remand centres holding young unconvicted prisoners for the purpose of exchanging knowledge and experience in providing for the needs of such prisoners. This led to action plans being prepared for improving procedures and enhancing regimes, including provision for education classes, physical education and other facilities involving more time out of cell. These plans are now being implemented and the results of the seminar have been communicated to other establishments so that the shared experience may help generally in efforts to improve procedures and regimes.

Ms. Quin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will supply figures for the number of people currently held on remand in British prisons and the numbers of these who have to share cells with *(a)* one other person and *(b)* two or more people.

Mr. Mellor: On 31 January 1990 there were 9,760 males and 443 females held on remand in England and Wales, compared with 10,486 males and 477 females on 31 January 1989.

The most recent readily available information on multiple occupancy of cells designed for one in local prisons and remand centres is given in the table, along with comparable figures for the previous year:

	12 February 1989	*11 February 1990*
Two in a Cell		
Males	11,068	10,476
Females	118	80
Three in a Cell		
Males	5,007	3,333
Females	0	0

These figures cover sentenced and convicted unsentenced prisoners as well as unconvicted prisoners; the information is not collected in a way that enables the number of unconvicted prisoners to be separately identified.

Responsibility for prisons in Scotland rests with my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland.

Ms. Quin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will supply figures for the number of people who are currently on remand in British prisons and who have applied for bail, who are having to share cells with *(a)* one other person and *(b)* two or more people.

Mr. Mellor: Figures for the number of people held on remand who have applied for bail are not collected centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Statistical Divisions

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what are the latest figures for the number of staff presently employed, and the full complement of staff, including vacant posts, by grade, in the statistical divisions in the Metropolitan police; if he will differentiate between staff in statistical posts and staff in administrative posts; and if he will give the staffing complements by grade, and differentiated between statistical and administrative posts, proposed for 1990-91.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: I understand from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that, at the end of February 1990, the complement and strength figures by grade for the statistics branch of the Metropolitan police office were:

	Complement	*Strength*
Grade 7	1	1·0
SEO	1	—
HEO	3	3·0
EO	8	8·0
AO	60	52·5
Support Grade Band 1	1	1·0
Support Grade Band 2	6	6·0
	80	71·5

Only the grade 7 post is filled by a statistician, the remaining posts being filled by executive, administrative and support grades staff, who undertake a mixture of statistical and administrative duties. An additional grade 7 post filled by a statistician is located in the management support department. The complement of the branch will be reduced by three posts in 1990-91.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what are the latest figures for the number of staff presently employed, and the full complement of staff, including vacant posts, by grade, in the statistical divisions in his Department; if he will differentiate between staff in statistical posts and staff in administrative posts; and if he will give the staffing complements by grade, and differentiated between statistical and administrative posts, proposed for 1990-91.

Mr. Waddington: The information requested is given in the table:

Staff of Home Office Statistical Department

	In post 1 March 1990	*Positions 1 March 1990*	*Positions 1 April 1990*
Statistical Posts			
Grade 5	3·0	3·0	3·0
Grade 7	18·0	19·0	19·0

	In post 1 March 1990	Positions 1 March 1990	Positions 1 April 1990
Assistant/Senior Assistant Statistician	6·5	7·0	7·0
	27·5	29·0	29·0
Other Posts			
Grade 7	2·0	2·0	2·0
SEO	1·0	1·0	1·0
HEO	14·0	15·0	15·0
EO	28·0	28·0	28·0
AO	59·0	59·5	62·0
AA	39·5	38·0	38·5
Other Grades	10·5	10·5	10·5
	154·0	154·0	157·0
Total	181·5	183·0	186·0

Public Relations

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what are the latest figures for the number of staff presently employed, and the full complement of staff, including vacant posts, in the press and public relations office of his Department; and what is the proposed complement for 1990-91.

Mr. Waddington: Under the Director of Information there are 20 press officers with seven support staff. In addition within the public relations branch there are 16 publicity officers with six support staff. The same balance and complement is proposed for 1990-91.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what are the latest figures for the number of staff presently employed, and the full complement of staff, including vacant posts, in the press and public relations office of the Metropolitan police; and what is the proposed complement for 1990-91.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: I understand from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that, at the end of February 1990, 88 staff of all grades were employed within the directorate of public affairs of the Metropolitan police office against a complement of 89 posts. A final decision has yet to be taken about the complement of the directorate for 1990-91.

Advertising Expenditure

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what were the figures for the spending by his Department on *(a)* television advertising, *(b)* radio advertising, *(c)* newspaper advertising and *(d)* other promotional material in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

Mr. Waddington: Figures for expenditure on newspaper and television advertising for the years from 1979-80 to 1983-84 were given in answer to a question from the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) on 25 May 1985 at column *587* and those for 1984-85 were given in answer to another question from the hon. Member for Newham, North-West on 19 December 1985 at column *275*.

Figures for radio advertising and other promotional literature for the years from 1979-80 to 1984-85 were given in answer to questions from the hon. Member on 19 November 1986 at columns *202-04* and the hon. Member was also given in those replies figures for expenditure on newspaper, television and radio advertising and other promotional literature for 1985-86. Expenditure figures for the years from 1986-87 to 1990-91 are as follows:

Year	Total advertising expenditure (all media) £ million	Production and distribution of other promotional material £ million
1986-87	5·0	1·4
1987-88	4·7	2·1
1988-89	5·4	2·8
1989-90 (estimate)	5·6	3·5
1990-91 (provisional)	8·3	4·5

It would not be possible to provide more detailed information for these years except at disproportionate cost.

Management Consultants

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what were the total fees paid out by the Metropolitan police to management consultants in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: I understand from the Commissioner that payments by the Metropolitan police to management and computer consultants in each financial year from 1984-85, estimated expenditure for 1989-90 and budget estimates for 1990-91 are as follows:

	£
1984-85	346,000
1985-86	433,000
1986-87	558,000
1987-88	702,000
1988-89	742,000
[1]1989-90	981,000
[2]1990-91	755,000

[1] Estimated.
[2] Budget estimate.

Separate information on management consultants alone is not readily available and cannot be provided except at disproportionate cost. Information for the years prior to 1984-85 is not available.

Breathalysers

Sir Ian Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will arrange for a test for the BTE breathalyser device to be carried out by the organisation which validates the accuracy and reliability of similar machines used by the police and for the results to be published and distributed to all police authorities.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: We have no knowledge of the BTE breathalyser device. If my hon. Friend is able to provide further details of the device, such as the name of the manufacturer, we will make inquiries.

Asthmatic Prisoners

Mr. Andy Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many recorded asthmatics were received into prison in the last year for which there are figures; and how many asthma attacks were reported in that year.

Mr. Mellor: This information is not recorded centrally. Perhaps my hon. Friend would write to me if he has an individual case in mind.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Foreign Students

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list the number of foreign students who have entered British universities for each year since 1985.

Mr. Jackson: The numbers of full-time undergraduate and postgraduate overseas domiciled new entrants at British universities were as follows:

Academic year beginning	*Number*
1985	23,219
1986	24,809
1987	24,909
1988	26,856

Source: Universities' Statistical Record.

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will estimate the income to British universities from foreign students for the past five years.

Mr. Jackson: British universities' fee income from mainly non-EC overseas full-time students in 1988-89 is as follows:

Academic Year	*£ million*
1983-84	92·40
1984-85	104·45
1985-86	124·56
1986-87	142·16
1987-88	156·51
[1]1988-89	171·20

[1]Provisional.

Surplus School Places

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) what is his estimate of the cost of keeping surplus places in *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools;

(2) what is his estimate of the number of surplus places in *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools; and if he will give his answer in tabular form by local education authority.

Mr. Alan Howarth: The premises-related costs at current prices of retaining a surplus primary and secondary place are estimated to be £140 and £230 a year respectively. There are additional but unquantified teaching costs, and opportunity costs arising from inefficient retention of buildings and land.

It is estimated that in January 1989 there were approximately 800,000 surplus primary school places and 860,000 surplus secondary school places in England. Information about the number of surplus places in individual local education authorities is not held centrally.

Local Management of Schools

Mr. Jopling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will explain the arrangements which will allow the transitional funding arrangements for local management of schools to be extended beyond the normal four-year period.

Mrs. Rumbold: We are looking sympathetically at LEA proposals to extend the transition period for individual schools which would otherwise face annual reductions of 1 per cent. or more in their total budgets because of high inherited staff costs.

Mr. Jopling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what percentage of the general schools budget has been proposed by each education authority for which he has responsibility for distribution to individual schools for use under local management of schools; and what levels he has agreed to in the schemes which he has approved.

Mrs. Rumbold: I refer my right hon. Friend to the reply that I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Epping Forest (Mr. Norris) on 5 February 1990, *Official Report*, column *451*. The total amount held back from distribution to schools by local education authorities is not subject to approval. However, there is an upper limit of 10 per cent. of the general schools budget on the amount that may be held back for spending on the majority of items over which local education authorities have discretion whether to retain central control.

Special Educational Needs

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will update the table published in reply to the hon. Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw) of 16 November 1989, *Official Report*, columns *389-92*, listing the number of children with statements of special educational needs and as a percentage of all pupils in maintained schools in England by local education authority; and if he will list the numbers and percentages of children with statements of special educational needs for the years 1984 and 1985.

Mr. Alan Howarth: The information requested for 1985 and 1989 is given in the following tables.

Directly comparable figures for 1984 are not available. The Education Act 1981, which replaced the system of special educational treatment for pupils under the Education Act 1944 with the concept of special educational provision, did not come into effect until April 1983. The first collection of statistics on the number of pupils with statements of special educational needs was in January 1984 and consequently the numbers in this early transitional period are small compared to subsequent years.

In January 1984 in England there were 14,563 pupils with statements of special educational needs and 124,312 pupils requiring special educational treatment attending maintained schools. These represent 0·2 and 1·7 per cent.

of all pupils in maintained schools respectively. Many of the latter would subsequently have been made the subject of a statement.

Number of children with statements in maintained schools January 1985

	Pupils with Statements	As a percentage of all pupils in maintained schools
Barking	328	1·4
Barnet	475	1·2
Bexley	551	1·6
Brent	0	0·0
Bromley	617	1·6
Croydon	710	1·6
Ealing	443	1·1
Enfield	651	1·6
Haringey	399	1·4
Harrow	425	1·5
Havering	569	1·5
Hillingdon	589	1·7
Hounslow	11	0·0
Kingston upon Thames	250	1·4
Merton	128	0·6
Newham	678	1·8
Redbridge	548	1·7
Richmond upon Thames	263	1·6
Sutton	107	0·5
Waltham Forest	689	2·0
Inner London	6,731	2·3
Birmingham	3,368	1·9
Coventry	1,084	2·1
Dudley	833	1·7
Sandwell	1,087	2·0
Solihull	78	0·2
Walsall	755	1·5
Wolverhampton	694	1·5
Knowsley	254	0·8
Liverpool	1,589	1·9
St. Helens	527	1·5
Sefton	496	1·0
Wirral	1,048	1·9
Bolton	587	1·3
Bury	432	1·5
Manchester	340	0·5
Oldham	647	1·6
Rochdale	567	1·5
Salford	791	2·0
Stockport	631	1·4
Tameside	584	1·5
Trafford	261	0·8
Wigan	100	0·2
Barnsley	412	1·0
Doncaster	677	1·3
Rotherham	782	1·7
Sheffield	1,355	1·6
Bradford	1,330	1·5
Calderdale	300	0·9
Kirklees	863	1·3
Leeds	958	0·8
Wakefield	907	1·7
Gateshead	559	1·7
Newcastle-upon-Tyne	812	2·0
North Tyneside	535	1·6
South Tyneside	420	1·6
Sunderland	920	1·7
Isles of Scilly	0	0·0
Avon	553	0·4
Bedfordshire	1,385	1·6
Berkshire	1,823	1·7
Buckinghamshire	2,600	2·6
Cambridgeshire	1,179	1·2
Cheshire	3,046	1·9
Cleveland	2,203	2·1
Cornwall	873	1·3
Cumbria	1,222	1·6
Derbyshire	2,424	1·6
Devon	2,266	1·7
Dorset	1,332	1·7
Durham	1,375	1·4
East Sussex	1,476	1·8
Essex	3,882	1·6
Gloucestershire	483	0·6
Hampshire	4,152	1·8
Hereford and Worcester	9	0·0
Hertfordshire	3,120	2·0
Humberside	2,289	1·6
Isle of Wight	275	1·6
Kent	4,020	1·7
Lancashire	3,497	1·6
Leicestershire	1,690	1·2
Lincolnshire	1,706	1·9
Norfolk	1,372	1·3
North Yorkshire	1,283	1·2
Northamptonshire	1,711	1·8
Northumberland	753	1·5
Nottinghamshire	2,342	1·4
Oxfordshire	932	1·2
Shropshire	733	1·1
Somerset	1,160	1·8
Staffordshire	2,471	1·4
Suffolk	1,325	1·4
Surrey	2,693	2·0
Warwickshire	1,412	1·8
West Sussex	1,234	1·3
Wiltshire	1,538	1·8
England	112,579	1·5

Number of pupils in maintained schools with statements and all pupils in maintained special schools January 1989

	Statemented pupils and special school pupils	Statemented and special school pupils as a percentage of all pupils
Barking	272	1·2
Barnet	525	1·3
Bexley	564	1·8
Brent	458	1·4
Bromley	844	2·4
Croydon	862	2·1
Ealing	634	1·7
Enfield	480	1·3
Haringey	376	1·5
Harrow	420	1·6
Havering	486	1·4
Hillingdon	453	1·4
Hounslow	780	2·5
Kingston upon Thames	334	2·0
Merton	341	1·6
Newham	672	1·9
Redbridge	459	1·5
Richmond upon Thames	284	1·7
Sutton	405	1·8
Waltham Forest	864	2·8
Inner London	8,568	3·1
Birmingham	3,670	2·2
Coventry	1,078	2·3
Dudley	794	1·7
Sandwell	994	2·0
Solihull	480	1·5
Walsall	752	1·6
Wolverhampton	761	1·9
Knowsley	738	2·7
Liverpool	1,842	2·3
St. Helens	573	1·9
Sefton	699	1·5
Wirral	1,236	2·4
Bolton	588	1·3
Bury	605	2·3
Manchester	1,931	2·8
Oldham	813	2·1

	Statemented pupils and special school pupils	Statemented and special school pupils as a percentage of all pupils
Rochdale	724	2·1
Salford	811	2·3
Stockport	828	2·0
Tameside	662	1·8
Trafford	672	2·3
Wigan	895	1·7
Barnsley	381	1·1
Doncaster	854	1·7
Rotherham	783	1·8
Sheffield	1,430	2·0
Bradford	1,278	1·5
Calderdale	392	1·2
Kirklees	1,183	1·9
Leeds	2,525	2·4
Wakefield	805	1·6
Gateshead	524	1·7
Newcastle-upon-Tyne	938	2·4
North Tyneside	595	1·9
South Tyneside	461	1·9
Sunderland	835	1·7
Isles of Scilly	0	0·0
Avon	4,108	3·2
Bedfordshire	1,518	1·8
Berkshire	1,963	1·9
Buckinghamshire	2,499	2·7
Cambridgeshire	1,826	1·9
Cheshire	3,509	2·3
Cleveland	2,334	2·3
Cornwall	1,552	2·3
Cumbria	1,410	1·9
Derbyshire	3,407	2·4
Devon	3,378	2·6
Dorset	1,729	2·1
Durham	1,479	1·6
East Sussex	1,472	1·8
Essex	4,214	1·9
Gloucestershire	1,394	1·9
Hampshire	5,042	2·4
Hereford and Worcester	1,455	1·5
Hertfordshire	3,299	2·2
Humberside	2,062	1·5
Isle of Wight	375	2·2
Kent	4,417	2·0
Lancashire	4,458	2·1
Leicestershire	1,998	1·4
Lincolnshire	1,907	2·3
Norfolk	2,035	2·0
North Yorkshire	1,851	1·9
Northamptonshire	1,679	1·8
Northumberland	836	1·7
Nottinghamshire	2,449	1·6
Oxfordshire	940	1·3
Shropshire	1,516	2·5
Somerset	1,617	2·6
Staffordshire	2,572	1·6
Suffolk	2,088	2·3
Surrey	2,980	2·5
Warwickshire	1,674	2·3
West Sussex	1,468	1·6
Wiltshire	2,201	2·8
England	142,922	2·1

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many appeals he has received in respect of the special education provision being made for children with special learning difficulties such as dyslexia; and what was the longest and shortest period of time taken in making a decision on these appeals.

Mr. Alan Howarth: This information can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he received the appeal in respect of the special educational provision being made for Lorne Felgate of Shoeburyness, Essex; and when he expects to make a decision.

Mr. Alan Howarth: My right hon. Friend received the appeal on 22 May 1989. There has been an extended exchange of correspondence between the parents and the LEA involved and he expects to make a decision as soon as inquiries with those parties have been concluded.

Single-sex Schools, London

Mr. Norris: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if, in respect of each of those local education authority maintained single-sex schools in London which have been closed since 1985 he will list (i) the gender of pupils, (ii) the physical capacity and (iii) the number of pupils on roll at the most recent convenient date before closure.

Mr. Alan Howarth: Information on the physical capacity of schools is not collected centrally. The maintained single-sex schools in inner London which have closed since 1985 and the number of pupils on roll before closure are as follows:

Maintained schools in inner London which have closed since 1985

	Pupils on roll in January preceding closure date	
	Boys	Girls
Boys' schools		
Lambeth, Henry Thornton[1]	279	0
Wandsworth School[1]	666	0
Wandsworth, Spencer Park[1]	645	0
Wandsworth, Sir Walter St. Johns[1]	430	0
Wandsworth, Clapham College	44	0
Hammersmith, London Oratory RC[2]	1,074	94
Wandsworth, John Griffiths RC Secondary	304	4
Edward Rudolf Memorial Special School	13	0
Heathermount School	13	0
Shephall Manor School	13	0
Nathaniel Heckford School	22	2
Winceby House School	20	0
Girls' schools		
Wandsworth, Ensham School[1]	0	679
Wandsworth Garratt Green[1]	0	898
Greenwich, Greenwich Park	0	93
Wandsworth, Mayfield School[1]	0	780
St. Veronica's RC Secondary	0	35
Battersea, Notre Dame High School	0	398
Wandsworth, Convent of the Holy Family	0	90
Northcote Lodge	0	13

[1] Closed for the purposes of amalgamation.
[2] Became a grant-maintained school on 1 September 1989.

LEAs (Invoice Settlement)

Mr. French: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he has issued any notices to local education authorities about the settlement of invoices from suppliers.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend has not issued any notices to local education authorities about the settlement of invoices from suppliers.

Public Relations

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what are the latest figures for the number of staff presently employed, and the full complement of staff, including vacant posts, in the press and public relations office of his Department; and what is the proposed complement for 1990-91.

Mrs. Rumbold: The current number of staff in post and the total number of posts (including vacancies) is as follows:

	Staff in post	*Total posts (including vacancies)*
Grade 5 (Chief Information Officer)	1	1
Grade 5 (Assistant Secretary)	—	1
Principal Information Officer	2	2
Senior Information Officer	6	6
Information Officer	10	12
Assistant Information Officer	1	1
Higher Graphics Officer	1	1
Graphics Officer	5	5
Senior Executive Officer	1	1
Executive Officer	2	2
Administrative Officer	5	5
Administrative Assistant	3	3
Personal Secretary	1	2
Total	38	42

No decision has yet been reached on what, if any, changes there should be to the staffing structure in 1990-91.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what was the total expenditure by his Department on press and public relations in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

Mrs. Rumbold: The expenditure figures for press and public relations by this Department for the financial years 1984-85 to 1989-90 are provided in the table. Figures for 1979 to 1983-84 are not available on a comparable basis. The 1989-90 figure is provisional. The 1990-91 estimate is not finalised.

Year	*£000*
1984-85	788·8
1985-86	1,026·3
1986-87	1,937·8
1987-88	2,313·6
1988-89	2,336·2
1989-90	2,719·8

Statistical Divisions

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what are the latest figures for the number of staff presently employed, and the full complement of staff, including vacant posts, by grade, in the statistical divisions in his Department; if he will differentiate between staff in statistical posts and staff in administration posts; and if he will give the staffing complements by grade, and differentiated between statistical and administrative posts, proposed for 1990-91.

Mrs. Rumbold: The current number of staff in post and the total number of posts, including vacancies, is as follows:

	Staff in post	*Total posts (including vacancies)*
Statistical Posts		
Grade 3 (Director of Statistics)	1	1
Grade 5 (Chief Statistician)	2	2
Grade 7 (Statistician)	8	9
Grade 7 (Principal Research Officer)	1	1
Senior Assistant Statistician	4	4
Assistant Statistician	2	3
Administrative Posts		
Senior Executive Officer	1	1
Higher Executive Officer	11	11
Executive Officer	14	14
Administrative Officer	6	9
Administrative Assistant	2	2
Personal Secretary	3	3
Typist	0·6	0·6
Total	55·6	60·6

No decision has been reached on what, if any, changes there should be in the staffing structure in 1990-91.

The difference between last year's figures and the figures shown in the table is due to the fact that during the year 61 posts from statistics branch in Darlington (mainly concerned with data processing functions) were transferred to information systems branch.

Privatisation

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what was the total sum paid out in fees to outside organisations in the furtherance of privatisation by his Department in 1979-80 and in each subsequent year: and what is his estimate for 1990-91.

Mrs. Rumbold: In the privatisation of the National Seed Development Organisation and some of the assets of the Plant Breeding Institute, the fees and other sale expenses totalled about £600,000, as stated in the published appropriation account for class XII vote 13 for 1987-88. This is the only privatisation conducted by this Department in the period referred to.

Advertising Expenditure

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what were the figures for the spending by his Department on *(a)* television advertising, *(b)* radio advertising, *(c)* newspaper advertising and *(d)* other promotional material in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

Mrs. Rumbold: The expenditure figures for advertising and other promotional materials by this Department for the financial years 1979-80 to 1988-89 are in the table. The 1989-90 figure is provisional. The 1990-91 estimate is not finalised.

Year	*Publicity £K*	*TV £K*	*Radio £K*	*Newspapers £K*
1979-80	12·2	—	—	91·6
1980-81	58·3	—	—	8·9
1981-82	49·9	—	—	86·9
1982-83	33·7	—	—	6·0
1983-84	74·9	—	—	9·6
1984-85	150·6	—	—	18·5
1985-86	184·1	—	—	14·8

Year	Publicity £K	TV £K	Radio £K	Newspapers £K
1986-87	533·0	—	—	532·0
1987-88	1,459·0	—	—	280·0
1988-89	1,156·6	—	40·0	475·0
1989-90	2,346·0	—	11·8	238·9

Management Consultants

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what were the total fees paid out by his Department to management consultants in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

Mrs. Rumbold: I refer the hon. Member to the reply that I gave him on 13 March 1989, *Official Report*, columns *13-14*. The additional information now sought is as follows:

	£
1988-89	165,214
1989-90	[1]357,085
1990-91	[2]290,000

[1] Estimate.
[2] Budget.

Examination Marking

Mr. Latham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what instructions have been given by his Department to General Certificate of Education examination boards to cease to pay teachers, with retrospective effect to the 1989 examination, for marking A-level course work and project work; whether it is intended that such marking in future should be undertaken by teachers on an unpaid basis in directed time under their contract of employment; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: None. Such arrangements are for the GCE examination boards to organise.

Teachers

Mr. Fatchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the progress of his proposals for licensed teachers and articled teachers.

Mr. Alan Howarth: My right hon. Friend has announced his acceptance of 16 bids for support under the local education authority training grants scheme (LEATGS) for articled teacher schemes. The schemes will be run by partnerships involving both local education authorities and initial teacher training institutions. A total of some 600 places will be available for articled teachers this September.

The bids received for funding of licensed teacher training under the new LEATGS national priority area reflect extensive interest in the scheme among LEAs. In advance of specific funding becoming available, 21 licensed teachers have already been appointed and a further 25 applications are under consideration.

The Government are providing grant aid to support £5·3 million of expenditure by LEAs on the articled and licensed teacher schemes in financial year 1990-91. An announcement on the allocation to individual LEAs will be made shortly.

Religious Education

Mr. Anthony Coombs: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what measures he is taking to ensure that a larger proportion of religious education teachers are qualified to teach this subject.

Mr. Alan Howarth: The Government support the in-service training of teachers in religious education under the local education authority training grants scheme. The total of expenditure supported in 1989-90 is £1·1 million. In 1990-91, training in religious education will be subsumed within the national priority area for the basic curriculum and collective worship.

Teachers (Incentive Allowances)

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is his estimate of the level of incentive allowance which would require to be paid in addition to basic starting salary to enable a teacher to enter the housing market, by region, on the basis of the figures given in the answer to the hon. Member for Nottingham, North (Mr. Allen) on 19 February, *Official Report*, column *518*.

Mrs. Rumbold: The ability of an individual on any given salary to enter the housing market will vary according to the size of mortgage he requires for the property of his choice, the lending rules of the source of his mortgage and the proportion of his income he is prepared to devote to this purpose.

Institute of Food Research

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will reconsider his decision to close the Bristol laboratory of the Institute of Food Research.

Mr. Jackson: The decision to restructure the Institute of Food Research was taken by the Agricultural and Food Research Council, an independent body established by royal charter.

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when the purpose-built abattoir at the Bristol laboratory of the Institute of Food Research was built; how much it cost; and if such an abattoir will be rebuilt following the closure of the laboratory.

Mr. Jackson: The carcase and abattoir facilities at the Bristol laboratory of the Agricultural and Food Research Council's Institute of Food Research were constructed between 1966 and 1968 and fully equipped. The cost was in the region of £200,000. The future of the abattoir is under consideration.

Agricultural and Food Research Council

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when the decision was taken that the Agricultural and Food Research Council would henceforth concentrate on generic, rather than commodity, research; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Jackson: The funds received by the Agricultural and Food Research Council (AFRC) from the science budget are used to support basic and strategic research underpinning the needs of the United Kingdom farming

and food industries. Commissions for commodity research, placed with the council, are being reduced following the Government's policy decision to withdraw from near-market research. The council is adjusting its programme accordingly, but commodity research remains an important element of the AFRC programme.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Fiji

Dr. Marek: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the United Kingdom Government have been asked for any advice over the drafting of a new constitution for Fiji; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maude: The Fiji authorities did at one time ask us to provide a constitutional expert to help with the drafting of a new constitution, which we agreed to do. This request was subsequently withdrawn.

Romania

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what reports he has had on the human rights situation in Romania in the post-revolutionary period.

Mr. Waldegrave: There has been a great improvement in the human rights situation in Romania since the revolution. The provisional Government have expressed their willingness to honour fully their obligations under the CSCE. However, there is still cause for concern in a number of areas, such as the rights of minorities.

South Africa

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has made to the South African Government in respect of the further release of political prisoners.

Mr. Waldegrave: We have long urged the South African Government to release all political prisoners. President de Klerk is now committed to releasing prisoners convicted solely for political offences, and has said he is prepared to discuss with opposition groups demands for further releases. We hope those talks will begin as soon as possible.

Israel

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Israeli Government about their wounding of Palestinians in the occupied territories of the Gaza strip on 26 February; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: We frequently remind the Israelis of our view that, pending their withdrawal, they should administer the occupied territories in accordance with international law and their human rights obligations.

Management Consultants

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what were the total fees paid out by his Department to management consultants in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

Mr. Maude: The combined expenditure of the diplomatic and aid wings of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on managment consultants in financial years 1986-87 to 1988-89 and estimated expenditure for 1989-90 is as follows:

	Amount
1986-87	68,329
1987-88	257,272
1988-89	62,512
1989-90	182,444

There is no specific budgetary provision for 1990-91. Present estimated expenditure in the diplomatic wing amounts to £12,400.

Public Relations

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what are the latest figures for the number of staff presently employed, and the full complement of staff, including vacant posts in the press and public relations office of his Department; and what is the proposed complement for 1990-91.

Mr. Maude: The full complement of staff in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office diplomatic wing's news department and the aid wing's press office is 18. There is, at present, one vacancy. There are no plans to alter the staffing complement.

Statistical Divisions

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what are the latest figures for the number of staff presently employed, and the full complement of staff, including vacant posts, by grade, in the statistical divisions in his Department; if he will differentiate between staff in statistical posts and staff in administration posts; and if he will give the staffing complements by grade, and differentiated between statistical and administrative posts, proposed for 1990-91.

Mr. Maude: The information is as follows:
The Foreign Office Diplomatic Wing—Nil.
For the Overseas Development Administration, the information is:

	Complement 1989-90	*In Post*	*Proposed for 1990-91*
Statistical Posts			
Chief Statisticians (G5)	1	1	1
Statisticians (G7)	4	4	4
Assistant/Senior Assistant	3	3	3
Administrative Posts			
Higher Executive Officer	1	1	1
Executive Officer	2	3	2
Administrative Officer	5	4	5
Personal Secretary	1	1	1
Total	17	17	17

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what was the total expenditure by his Department on press and public relations in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

Mr. Maude: Total expenditure by the FCO on press and public relations from 1983-84 to 1988-89, the estimate for the current year and budget provision for 1990-91 are as follows:

	1983-84	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*	*1987-88*	*1988-89*	*1989-90*	*1990-91*
Payment to Central Office of Information for overseas information material and related activities	17·4	18·8	18·3	18·7	19·2	19·2	21·5	24·5
Other information services	0·9	0·8	0·9	0·7	0·9	·09	1·0	1·2
Running costs of Diplomatic Wing Information/News Department	1·8	1·4	1·9	1·9	2·0	1·8	1·9	2·0
Running costs of ODA Wing Information Department	0·3	0·3	0·3	0·2	0·2	0·3	0·4	0·5
Costs of information staff at overseas posts	12·4	12·8	13·6	14·6	17·6	17·5	19·2	20·0
Total	32·8	34·1	35·0	36·1	39·9	39·7	44·0	48·2

Figures for the period before 1983-84 are not available on a comparable basis.

Privatisation

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what was the total sum paid out in fees to outside organisations in the furtherance of privatisation by his Department in 1979-80 and in each subsequent year; and what is his estimate for 1990-91.

Mr. Maude: No such fees have been paid for the period in question.

Advertising Expenditure

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what were the figures for the spending by his Department on *(a)* television advertising, *(b)* radio advertising, *(c)* newspaper advertising and *(d)* other promotional material in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

Mr. Maude: FCO figures for expenditure on advertising and other promotional material from 1979-80 to 1988-89, estimates for 1989-90, and budget provision for 1990-91 are:

	FCO (Dip Wing)	*FCO (ODA Wing)*
1979-80	100,226	214,739
1980-81	116,532	145,697
1981-82	162,988	207,964
1982-83	229,711	135,506
1983-84	205,247	252,691
1984-85	149,932	234,050
1985-86	160,535	271,084
1986-87	335,754	228,347
1987-88	195,000	351,000
1988-89	289,184	714,000
[1]1989-90	329,115	820,000
[2]1990-91	735,000	[illegible]7,000

[1] Estimate.
[2] Provision.

Increases in 1990-91 reflect additional expenditure by the diplomatic wing on publicity to promote the entitlement of certain British residents overseas to vote in British and EC elections. Additional expenditure by the ODA reflects a commitment by it to enhance public awareness of overseas development issues. It is not possible to break down these figures to identify the medium used.

States (Acquisitions)

Mr. Marlow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is Her Majesty's Government's policy on the acquisition by states of territory through war.

Mr. Maude: We support the principle stated in United Nations General Assembly resolution 2625 (XXV) (the friendly relations declaration) that no territorial acquisition resulting from the threat or use of force is legal.

Rockhopper Penguins

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement about the latest information available concerning the deaths of rockhopper penguins in the Falkland Islands.

Mr. Maude: I shall write to the hon. Member when I have obtained further information on the subject.

PRIME MINISTER

European Community

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Prime Minister if she will raise at the next meeting of the European Council the question of the remaining restrictions placed on freedom of trade within the European Economic Community; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: The next meeting of the European Council is the informal meeting in Dublin on 27 and 28 April, which will discuss eastern Europe and the unification of Germany.

I will continue to emphasise the importance that we all attach to completing the single market by the end of 1992. It is important that the Community should not be distracted from this goal. I shall also continue to emphasise the importance of implementation of single market directives now that almost 60 per cent. of the programme is complete and we are on course for meeting the 1992 deadline.

Telex Monitors

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Prime Minister when her office was first supplied with information by Telex Monitors; what the cost has been so far; and for what purposes the information is collected.

The Prime Minister: My office has used the services of Telex Monitors on an occasional basis for a number of years. Details of the cost of the service during that period are not readily available; the cost in 1989-90 to date is £760. The service provides an accurate transcript of radio and television broadcasts for information purposes.

West German Chancellor (Discussions)

Mr. Hunter: To ask the Prime Minister when she next plans to meet the Chancellor of West Germany; and what she proposes to discuss with him.

The Prime Minister: I shall meet Chancellor Kohl for talks in London on 30 March to discuss matters of mutual interest, including the external aspects of German unification.

NHS Review

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Prime Minister, pursuant to her reply to the hon. Member for Newham, South of 5 March, *Official Report*, column *404*, concerning funding for preparation for the implementation of the National Health Service review proposals, under what vote of the House of Commons ministerial authorisation of such expenditure has been made; and what are the planned principal heads of expenditure.

The Prime Minister: The expenditure referred to in my reply of 5 March to the hon. Member falls mainly on expenditure class XIV, vote 1 with a small amount of class XIV vote 3. Main areas in which this funding will be spent include costs of the first medical audit systems, the resource management initiative, strengthening of the finance and personnel functions in health authorities and the development of asset registers.

Cyprus

Mr. Cox: To ask the Prime Minister if she has received the report from the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the breakdown of talks on Cyprus; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: The United Nations Secretary-General gave the Security Council a full report on these talks in informal consultations on 8 March.

We strongly support his efforts to promote a settlement to the Cyprus dispute, within the framework of one state, two communities. In consultation with fellow council members, we are giving urgent and sympathetic consideration to his request for a reaffirmation of his Cyprus mandate.

Public Relations

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Prime Minister what are the latest figures for the number of staff presently employed, and the full complement of staff, including vacant posts, in the press and public relations office of the Cabinet Office; and what is the proposed complement for 1990-91.

The Prime Minister: Seven staff are presently employed on press and public relations activities in the Cabinet Office; there are no vacancies and no increase in complement for 1990-91 is proposed.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Prime Minister what are the latest figures for the number of staff presently employed, and the full complement of staff, including vacant posts, in the press and public relations office of her office; and what is the proposed complement for 1990-91.

The Prime Minister: Including support staff, eight people are presently employed in 10 Downing street on press and public relations activities. There are no vacancies at present. The proposed complement for 1990-91 is eight.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Prime Minister what was the total expenditure by her office on press and public relations in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is her latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

The Prime Minister: Expenditure by my office on press and public relations was not recorded separately before 1987-88. The total expenditure for each year since then and the budget for 1990-91 are as follows:

	£
1987-88	377,987
1988-89	419,326
1989-90	[1]361,520
1990-91	[2]480,695

[1] Estimate.
[2] Budget.

The figure for 1990-91 includes notional superannuation costs, which are not included in the figures for earlier years.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Prime Minister what was the total expenditure by the Cabinet Office on press and public relations in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is her latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

The Prime Minister: Expenditure on press and public relations by the Cabinet Office was:

	£
1984-85	247,495
1985-86	232,980
1986-87	224,813
1987-88	215,925
1988-89	201,837

The latest estimate for 1989-90 is £205,650 and the budget for 1990-91 is £199,560. Similar information is not available for the years prior to 1984-85.

Statistical Divisions

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Prime Minister what are the latest figures for the number of staff presently employed, and the full complement of staff, including vacant posts, by grade, in the statistical divisions in her office; if she will differentiate between staff in statistical posts and staff in administrative posts; and if she will give the staffing complements by grade, and differentiated between statistical and administrative posts, proposed for 1990-91.

The Prime Minister: There is no statistical division within my office; there are no statisticians in post or on the staff complement; and there are no plans for the creation of such posts.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Prime Minister what are the latest figures for the number of staff presently employed,

and the full complement of staff, including vacant posts, by grade, in the statistical divisions in the Cabinet Office; if she will differentiate between staff in statistical posts and staff in administrative posts; and if she will give the staffing complements by grade, and differentiated between statistical and administrative posts, proposed for 1990-91.

The Prime Minister: Since 31 July 1989, when the Central Statistical Office became a separate department, the Cabinet Office has had no statistical divisions.

Advertising Expenditure

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Prime Minister what were the figures for the spending by her office on *(a)* television advertising, *(b)* radio advertising, *(c)* newspaper advertising and *(d)* other promotional material in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is her latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

The Prime Minister: My office has incurred no expenditure on advertising or promotional material, and there are no plans for any such expenditure in the remainder of this financial year or in 1990-91.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Prime Minister what were the figures for the spending by the Cabinet Office on *(a)* television advertising, *(b)* radio advertising, *(c)* newspaper advertising and *(d)* other promotional material in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is her latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

The Prime Minister: The Cabinet Office has not incurred and does not expect to incur any expenditure on promotional advertising on television, radio or in newspapers in the years 1979 to 1991. Information on other promotional material is not available for the years 1979 to 1987. Expenditure on such material in 1987-88 was £19,306; in 1988-89, £9,500 and the estimate for 1989-90 is £15,000; the budget for 1990-91 is £4,000.

Management Consultants

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Prime Minister what were the total fees paid out by the Cabinet Office to management consultants in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is her latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

The Prime Minister: The expenditure by the Cabinet Office (including from its creation on 1 October 1987, the Office of the Minister for the Civil Service) on management and computer consultancies in the financial years from 1983-84 is as follows:

	£
1983-84	152,000
1984-85	423,818
1985-86	329,334
1986-87	505,092
1987-88	417,778

The figures for each year since then, which exclude the cost of computer consultancies, are as follows:

	£
1988-89	70,608
1989-90	[1]51,500
1990-91	[2]79,000

[1] Estimate.
[2] Budget.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Prime Minister what were the total fees paid out by her office to management consultants in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is her latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

The Prime Minister: There has been no expenditure by my office on fees to management consultants since 1979-80 and none is planned for the remainder of this financial year, nor for 1990-91.

Privatisation

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Prime Minister what was the total sum paid out in fees to outside organisations in the furtherance of privatisation by the Cabinet Office in 1979-80 and in each subsequent year; and what is her estimate for 1990-91.

The Prime Minister: There has been no expenditure on fees to outside organisations in the furtherance of privatisation by the Cabinet Office and no expenditure is planned for 1990-91.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Prime Minister what was the total sum paid out in fees to outside organisations in the furtherance of privatisation by her office in 1979-80 and in each subsequent year; and what is her estimate for 1990-91.

The Prime Minister: There has been no expenditure by my office on fees to outside organisations in the furtherance of privatisation and none is planned for the remainder of 1989-90 or for 1990-91.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Company Accounts

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will introduce legislation to amend the Companies Acts to direct all large companies to disclose exit values of their assets.

Mr. Redwood: I assume that the hon. Member is referring to disclosure of net realisable values. I am not persuaded that the burdens that such a general requirement would impose on companies would be justified.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will introduce legislation to amend the Companies Acts to place upon company auditors the same duties for reporting fraud which are conferred upon auditors auditing businesses covered by the Financial Services Act.

Mr. Redwood: No. The Financial Services Act does not impose a duty upon auditors to report suspected fraud. It removes any obstacles there may be to an auditor reporting relevant matters to the regulatory authorities. This provision goes substantially beyond fraud and reflects the special features of the regulatory regime. In the case of companies in general, whether or not an auditor should report suspected fraud to management, the members of the company, or to third parties depends on the circumstances, as is explained in the newly published auditing guideline on the auditor's responsibility in relation to fraud, other irregularities and errors.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will introduce legislation to require auditors of all large companies to examine the chairman's report.

Mr. Redwood: No. Auditing guidelines already recommend auditors to review financial information in the chairman's report where it is published as part of, or in conjunction with, the annual report.

Accountancy Bodies

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will introduce measures to increase the accountability to the public of accountancy bodies set up by royal charter.

Mr. Redwood: No.

Sound Diffusion plc

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he will be in a position to publish his inspectors' report into Sound Diffusion plc.

Mr. Redwood: I cannot say. The inspectors' report has not yet been submitted.

Protection of Investors

Mr. David Shaw: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, pursuant to his answer of 6 March, *Official Report*, column *586*, what action he is taking to safeguard the interests of investors who placed moneys with companies owned or managed by Mr. Adrian Ward.

Mr. Redwood: This is a matter for the Securities and Investments Board.

Animal Experiments

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many experiments were carried out on animals in respect of cosmetics testing in *(a)* 1989, *(b)* 1988, *(c)* 1987, *(d)* 1986, *(e)* 1985, *(f)* 1980 and *(g)* 1975; if he has any figures readily available giving a breakdown in respect of species of animals involved; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The latest information is available in the Home Office report on the statistics of scientific procedures on living animals in Great Britain, 1988. Scientific procedures on animals to ensure the safety of cosmetics comprise only 0·5 per cent. of the total number of scientific procedures on animals.

National Engineering Laboratory

Mr. Ingram: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many staff were employed within each of the designated categories at the National Engineering Laboratory in each of the last 10 years; and how many are budgeted to be employed at the end of the current financial year.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The number of staff employed at the National Engineering Laboratory for each of the last 10 years broken down by category is as follows:

As at 1 April	*Non Industrial Staff*	*Industrial Staff*	*Total Staff*
1980	523·0	267·0	790·0
1981	495·0	246·0	741·0
1982	468·5	237·5	706·0
1983	456·5	226·5	683·0
1984	458·5	193·0	651·5
1985	461·0	185·0	646·0
1986	448·0	186·0	634·0
1987	463·0	168·0	631·0
1988	472·0	156·0	628·0
1989	431·0	145·0	576·0

The budget for the current financial year (1989-90) makes provision for a total of 550 staff as at 31 March 1990.

Mr. Ingram: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if a decision has been taken on the appointment for the new director of the National Engineering Laboratory; and if he will make a statement on the appointment.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The post of director of the National Engineering Laboratory will be replaced by that of a chief executive in preparation for the laboratory becoming a next steps agency. No decision has yet been taken on the appointment of a chief executive. The Secretary of State has no statement about the appointment at this time.

Mr. Ingram: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when the Minister responsible for the National Engineering Laboratory last visited the establishment; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: As Minister for Industry I visited the National Engineering Laboratory on 15 February 1990. Neither the Secretary of State nor I have a statement to make about the National Engineering Laboratory at this time.

Single European Market

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps have been and will be taken to ensure that inner cities benefit from the single European market of 1992; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Inner-city firms, like all other companies in the United Kingdom, benefit from the "European Open for Business" campaign, and from help available through the enterprise initiative. In addition, city action teams (CATs) and inner-city task forces are sponsoring projects linked to preparations for the single European market. These include "Skills Upgrade for 1992", a Doncaster task force project which informs small inner-city firms about EC regulations, funding and contacts, and a Tyne and Wear CAT project, single market training for small and medium-sized businesses in Tyne and Wear, Durham and Northumberland.

Inner-City Programmes

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which are the inner-city programmes his Department is carrying out; what non-Government organisations are taking part in such programmes; where each of these programmes is operating; and on what date each one was started.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The only programme carried out by my Department that is specifically targeted on inner cities is the inner-city task force initiative. A wide range of private and voluntary sector organisations, and local authorities, work with the task forces. A list of the dates on which the existing task forces were announced is as follows:

	Date
Leeds (Chapeltown/Harehills)	February 1986
Manchester (Moss Side and Hulme)	February 1986
Bristol	February 1986
Middlesbrough	February 1986
North Kensington	February 1986
North Peckham	February 1986
Coventry (Folkshill and Hillfields)	April 1987
Doncaster[1]	April 1987
Hartlepool	April 1987
Nottingham	April 1987
Rochdale[1]	April 1987
Spitalfields	April 1987
East Birmingham	June 1988
Deptford	March 1989
Liverpool (Granby/Toxteth)	March 1989
Bradford	March 1989
Derby[2]	February 1990
Wirral[2]	February 1990

[1] Task Forces to be closed in the autumn.
[2] Task Forces announced, but yet to be opened.

Company Sizes

Mr. Gill: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what are the comparable figures for the number of small, medium and large companies in the United Kingdom, Japan and West Germany.

Mr. Redwood *[holding answer 19 February 1990]:* Although some information is published by the individual countries' statistical services there are few sources in which international data are compiled in a comparable form. The most reliable surveys available have been carried out by the Statistical Office of the European Communities (SOEC) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Both studies include businesses which are not incorporated as well as companies and define size in terms of number of people employed. The available comparative data relate to manufacturing industry only. Inclusion of the service sector would be likely to raise the proportions employed in smaller companies still further in each country.

An SOEC report entitled "Structure and activity of industry: data by size of enterprises 1983" contains the following comparison between the United Kingdom and West Germany:

Distribution of number of enterprises and persons employed in manufacturing industry, 1983

	Number of persons employed					
	1 to 19	*20 to 99*	*100 to 499*	*500 and over*	*Undisclosed (20 and over)*	*Total*
United Kingdom						
Enterprises:						
Number (000s)	76·2	17·5	5·9	1·6	0·7	101·9
Percentage	74·8	17·2	5·8	1·5	0·7	100
Persons employed:						
Number (000s)	553	766	1,279	2,210	297	5,105
Percentage	10·8	15·0	25·1	43·3	5·8	100
West Germany						
Enterprises:						
Number (000s)	189·2	22·6	9·8		—	221·5
Percentage	85·4	10·2	4·4		—	100
Persons employed:						
Number (000s)	925	1,014	5,641		—	7,581
Percentage	12·2	13·4	74·4		—	100

The "OECD Employment Outlook", published in September 1985, provides a source of comparative data for the United Kingdom and Japan. Enterprises are defined in terms of company groups, so that the concentration of industry cannot be directly compared with the SOEC report. The OECD study presents size distributions by employment numbers but not by numbers of enterprises, and the absolute numbers are not stated.

Distribution of persons employed by size of enterprise in manufacturing industry

	Number of persons employed				
	1 to 29	*30 to 99*	*100 to 499*	*500 and over*	*Percentage total*
United Kingdom	20·3		13·4	66·3	100
Japan 1983[1]	27·8	19·3	19·6	33·3	100

[1] Wage earners and salaried employees only.

In the early '70s only 17·5 per cent. of Japanese employees in manufacturing worked for companies employing more than 1,000 people. However this proportion is based on individual places of business and not company groups and is therefore not directly comparable with figures shown in the table relating to the OECD study.

Cot Mattresses (Chemical Hazard)

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps his Department has taken to alert cot manufacturers to the possible dangers to young babies from chemicals used in fire retardant mattresses and any link with cot death syndrome.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: I have been asked to reply.

I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave the hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field) on 9 March at column *901*.

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he expects the results of the scientific assessment of the relationship between chemicals used in fire retardant mattresses and cot death syndrome to be available.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: I have been asked to reply. The group of independent experts has been asked by the chief medical officer to report as soon as possible.

DUCHY OF LANCASTER

Public Relations and Statistics

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what are the figures for *(a)* staff employed and *(b)* expenditure on (i) press and publicity and (ii) statistical work in his Department.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: There are no Duchy of Lancaster staff employed in, nor has there been expenditure on, press and publicity or statistical work.

Hospitality

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how much has been spent by his office on official hospitality in the financial years 1987-88, 1988-89 and 1989-90 to date.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: There has been nil expenditure on official hospitality by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster's office during the period in question.

LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Office Statistics

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Lord President of the Council (1) what are the latest figures for the number of staff presently employed, and the full complement of staff, including vacant posts in the press and public relations office of the Privy Council Office; and what is the proposed complement for 1990-91;

(2) what are the latest figures for the number of staff presently employed, and the full complement of staff, including vacant posts, by grade, in the statistical divisions in the Privy Council Office; if he will differentiate between staff in statistical posts and staff in administrative posts; and if he will give the staffing complements by grade, and differentiated between statistical and administrative posts, proposed for 1990-91;

(3) what was the total expenditure by the Privy Council Office on press and public relations in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91;

(4) what were the figures for the spending by the Privy Council Office on *(a)* television advertising, *(b)* radio advertising, *(c)* newspaper advertising and *(d)* other promotional material in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91;

(5) what were the total fees paid out by the Privy Council Office to management consultants in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The Privy Council Office has no staff, current expenditure or projected budgets specifically allocated to press and public relations or statistical work, and no expenditure is currently being incurred, or is proposed, in respect of advertising or the services of management consultants. Annual expenditure in the region of £3,000 is incurred in respect of the publication of Gazette notices.

DEFENCE

Footpath 43, Menwith with Darley

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he closed footpath 43 in the parish of Menwith with Darley; under what powers he acted; with which local authorities and bodies representing users of the footpath he consulted prior to acting; and what opportunity members of the public had to make representations.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Footpath 43 in the parish of Menwith with Darley was stopped up and reprovided in accordance with sections 16 and 17 of the Defence Act 1842 on 1 October 1985, after consultation with North Yorkshire county council. There is no provision in the Act for representations from members of the public.

HMS Endurance

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how old is HMS Endurance; what plans there are for its replacement; and what is the latest year planned for ordering a replacement.

Mr. Neubert: The hull of HMS Endurance is now 33 years old. She was converted to an ice patrol ship in 1967-68 and accepted into the Royal Navy in 1968. Her 1986 refit extended her life until at least the mid-1990s. A decision on her replacement is therefore not urgent.

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether HMS Endurance's services have been offered to the Natural Environment Research Council's programme for researching global warming.

Mr. Neubert: HMS Endurance contributes logistic support on an ad hoc basis to the programmes of the British Antarctic Survey, some of which are related to the Natural Environment Research Council's work on global climate change.

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether there are any plans to include HMS Endurance's facilities in the meteorological study on global warming.

Mr. Neubert: HMS Endurance, like all Royal Navy vessels, carries equipment and personnel capable of performing meteorological observations. Results of these observations are sent to the Meteorological Office and the use of them contributes to the marine climatological database.

Service Personnel (HIV Infection)

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many service men and women were identified as being HIV positive for each of the forces in 1989; what action was followed after diagnosis; whether any representations have subsequently been received concerning the military authorities' actions in these cases; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: It is not the practice to discuss individual medical cases. However, one member of the services was identified as HIV positive in 1989. There were no representations concerning this case.

Property Services Agency

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is his policy on putting out to tender the maintenance and minor works services currently carried out by the Property Services Agency for the armed services in Northern Ireland following the privatisation of the Property Services Agency in 1992.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: From 1 April 1990, the MOD will be "untied" from the PSA. Untying gives the MOD a number of new responsibilities, including choosing who should supply its works services. From that date, the MOD will be mounting a number of competitions for design and project management for major new works. We will also be testing the market, in a variety of locations, for the provision of property management services covering minor new works and certain maintenance tasks.

The first phases of market testing of property management cover sites in Great Britain; it is not currently planned to extend this early market testing to Northern Ireland.

The Government are reviewing whether any aspects of the current arrangements for works services in Northern Ireland are unsuitable for execution by the private sector and, if necessary, alternative arrangements will be made.

Statistical Divisions

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what are the latest figures for the number of staff presently employed, and the full complement of staff, including vacant posts, by grade, in the statistical divisions in his Department; if he will differentiate between staff in statistical posts and staff in administration posts; and if he will give the staffing complements by grade, and differentiated between statistical and administrative posts, proposed for 1990-91.

Mr. Alan Clark: The staff complements by grade in Ministry of Defence statistical divisions as at 1 March 1990 are as follows:

Grade	*Complement*	*Current vacancies*
Grade 3	—	0
Grade 4[1]	1·0	0
Grade 5—Chief Stat[1]	2·0	0
Grade 6[1]	1·0	0
Grade 7—Admin	—	0
Grade 7—Stat[1]	25·0	3·0
PSO	0	0
SSO	0	0
SEO	2·0	0
HEO—Admin	14·0	0
HEO—ADP	6·0	0
HSO	1·0	0
RO2	0	0
SO	0	0
EO—Admin	30·0	1·0
EO—ADP	17·0	1·0
AS/SAS[1]	8·0	3·0
AO	40·5	5·0
AA	9·0	0·5
SPS	0	0
PS	3·0	0
Reprographic Operator	0	0
SDP	0	0
DP	0	0
	159·5	13·5

[1] Statistical posts.

It is not anticipated that there will be any significant changes in staffing complements for 1990-91.

The differences between these figures and those provided for last year are largely accounted for by the transfer in January 1990 of a number of staff and their work to an area outside the defence statistical organisation. The staff and the work transferred were all administrative.

Public Relations

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what are the latest figures for the number of staff presently employed, and the full complement of staff, including vacant posts, in the press and public relations office of his Department; and what is the proposed complement for 1990-91.

Mr. Alan Clark: There is a total of 221 posts on the strength of the defence public relations staffs. These include staff in single service command headquarters and in central staffs in the MOD. Latest available figures show there to be 212 staff in post and nine vacancies. The proposed complement for 1990-91 is 220.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the total expenditure by his Department on press and public relations in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The last year for which figures are available is 1982-83. Figures for the period 1982-83 to 1988-89 are as follows:

	£ million
1982-83	5·1
1983-84	6·3
1984-85	6·8
1985-86	6·7
1986-87	7·3
1987-88	7·0
1988-89	7·1

Our estimated expenditure figure for 1989-90 is £7·8 million and for 1990-91 £8·4 million.

Figures for 1979-80, 1980-81 and 1981-82 are not readily available and could not be obtained without disproportionate expense. The figures provided include staff costs and expenditure on films, exhibitions, publications and equipment.

Privatisation

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the total sum paid out in fees to outside organisations in the furtherance of privatisation by his Department in 1979-80 and in each subsequent year; and what is his estimate for 1990-91.

Mr. Neubert: The fees paid out by my Department to outside organisations in respect of privatisation relate solely to the sale of Royal Ordnance plc in April 1987. These fees amounted to £1·9 million and were for work carried out between 1 January 1985 and completion of the sale.

Advertising Expenditure

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what were the figures for the spending by his Department on *(a)* television advertising, *(b)* radio advertising, *(c)* newspaper advertising and *(d)* other promotional material in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The information is not held centrally. I shall write to the hon. Member.

Management Consultants

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what were the total fees paid out by his Department to management consultants in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

Mr. Neubert: Fees paid to management consultants engaged centrally by the Ministry of Defence for the years 1984 to 1989 are as follows:

Financial year	*£ million*
1984-85	0·604
1985-86	1·787
1986-87	6·203
1987-88	5·140
1988-89	3·109
1989-90	[1]4·555
1990-91	[2]5·625

[1] Estimated expenditure.
[2] Budget provision.

Figures for earlier years cannot be produced without disproportionate effort.

Personnel (West Germany)

Mr. David Shaw: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many United Kingdom *(a)* military and *(b)* civilian personnel are employed, or stationed, in West Germany.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: A total of 64,294 service personnel and 1,817 MOD civilians are stationed in the Federal Republic of Germany (not including Berlin). The figure for service personnel covers all United Kingdom regular forces, male and female. Army personnel from BAOR on emergency tours in Northern Ireland are included in the figures, but personnel on short tours elsewhere are not.

Homosexuality

Mr. Strang: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence in each of the years 1987, 1988 and 1989, how many service men and women were administratively discharged from the Army, the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force as a result of their homosexuality or homosexual behaviour.

Mr. Archie Hamilton *[holding answer 6 March 1990]:* The information requested is as follows:

	Royal Navy	*Army*	*Royal Air Force*
1987	5	57	16
1988	2	46	15
1989	4	32	19

HEALTH

Hospitals (Red Alerts)

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many different types of red alert hospitals operate; and what each one represents.

Mr. Freeman: Red alert is a term used by some health authorities usually to indicate a situation where a hospital is able to accept only emergency admissions, for example, because of a flu epidemic. Whether to operate a red alert system and in what circumstances are matters for local determination.

Immunisation

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he has completed his study of the Peckham report on immunisation; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: Yes. Many of the recommendations made in the Peckham report were appropriate for immunisation services at local level, and they have the support of the Department of Health. Other recommendations relate to the national level, and the Health Education Authority and the Department are launching a national publicity campaign this autumn, which will be supported by new materials on immunisation to be sent to GPs and nurses involved in immunisation.

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what are the recommendations of the working party set up by the joint committee on vaccination and immunisation in connection with advising on the immunisation schedule; and whether he proposes that the schedule should apply nationally and uniformly.

Mr. Freeman: The joint committee on vaccination and immunisation, having considered the recent progress in immunisation uptake and factors which could hinder further improvements, has recommended that an accelerated schedule of primary immunisations (at age two, three and four months) should be implemented consistently in all district health authorities. Full details of this new schedule have already been sent to district immunisation co-ordinators and will be sent shortly to all doctors and nurses involved in immunisation, together with the most recent advice from the JCVI.

Child Record Cards

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will provide detailed information on the pilot study into parent-held child record cards.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: A number of health authorities have been experimenting successfully with parent-held child health records. A working party of the British Paediatric Association has been reviewing these local arrangements and has designed an exemplar national record. The Department is to discuss with the BPA the promotion of the record and the arrangements for making it available to individual health authorities. We support the project since it is a good way of involving parents in the health care of their children.

Nurses (Accommodation)

Mr. Shersby: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what advice he is giving to regional and district health authorities concerning the rates element of the board and lodging charges for residential accommodation for nurses; and if he will ensure that such charges are reduced to reflect the abolition of domestic rates when the collective community charge is implemented on 1 April.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The level of lodging charges is a matter for the nursing and midwifery staffs negotiating council. I understand that the management side hopes to raise the issue at the meeting of the council on 13 March.

Nursing Staff

Mr. Kennedy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to his reply of 7 February, *Official Report*, column *707*, regarding computer modelling of the supply of nursing staff, whether he will publish the results of any work carried out as a result of the computer model being made available to the National Health Service in 1989.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Health authorities use the computer model as a management tool in the continuing process of nurse manpower planning, specifically with reference to the implementation of Project 2000, and this should be reflected in their nurse manpower policies. It is for health authorities to determine whether to publish their conclusions in this area.

Statistical Divisions

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what are the latest figures for the number of staff presently employed, and the full complement of staff, including vacant posts, by grade, in the statistical divisions in his Department; if he will differentiate between staff in statistical posts and staff in administration posts; and if he will give the staffing complements by grade, and differentiated between statistical and administrative posts, proposed for 1990-91.

Mr. Freeman: The information requested, showing the number of staff at 1 March 1990, is shown in the table. A small increase in staff is expected in 1990-91 but exact details have not yet been determined. These figures are not comparable with earlier figures due to changes in the statistics division caused by the formation of separate Departments of Health and Social Security in April 1989.

DH Permanent Staff in Statistics Division (1 March 1990)

	Statistical	*Administrative*	*Vacancies*
Grade 3	1·0	—	—
Grade 5	5·0	—	—
Grade 7	25·5	—	1
Senior Assistant Statistician	6·5	—	—
Assistant Statistician	2·0	—	—
Senior Executive Officer	—	8	—
Higher Executive Officer	—	23	1
Executive Officer	—	41	4
Administrative Officer	—	58	4
Administrative Assistant	—	13	—
Personal Secretary	—	5	1
Total	40·0	148	11

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what are the latest figures for the number of staff presently employed, and the full complement of staff, including vacant posts, by grade, in the statistical divisions in the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys; if he will differentiate between staff in statistical posts and staff in administrative posts; and if he will give the staffing complements by grade, and differentiated between statistical and administrative posts, proposed for 1990-91.

Mr. Freeman: The information is shown in the table. It covers all the staff employed in the statistical divisions of the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys including the medical statistics and social survey divisions. It excludes staff employed in the finance, personnel and administration division and in the information technology division. Staff complements as such are no longer used since expenditure is controlled by financial rather than manpower limits. The planned staff figures for 1 October 1990 are therefore subject to change. The number of staff employed will increase over the next 12 months in the build-up to the 1991 census.

	Number in post (1 March 1990)	*Number planned to be in post (1 March 1990)*	*Number planned to be in post (1 October 1990)*
Statistical posts			
Grade 5 (Chief statistician)	3·0	3·0	3·0
Grade 6 (Statistician)	1·0	1·0	1·0
Grade 7 (Statistician)	12·5	12·5	12·5
Senior assistant statistician	4·0	5·0	5·0
Assistant statistician	5·0	4·0	3·0
Medical officer grades	2·5	2·5	2·5
Survey officer posts			
Grade 5 (Chief social survey officer 'A')	1·0	1·0	1·0
Grade 6 (Chief social survey officer 'B')	4·0	4·0	4·0
Grade 7 (Principal social survey officer)	12·0	12·0	13·0

	Number in post (1 March 1990)	Number planned to be in post (1 March 1990)	Number planned to be in post (1 October 1990)
Senior social survey officer	10·0	11·0	12·0
Social survey officer	4·5	5·5	9·0
Assistant social survey officer	10·0	8·0	10·0
Administrative posts			
Grade 6	3·0	3·0	4·0
Grade 7	12·0	12·0	12·0
Senior executive officer	23·5	20·0	20·0
Higher executive officer	59·5	64·0	78·0
Executive officer	111·0	115·0	138·0
Administration officer and others	446·5	463·5	554·0

Public Relations

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what are the latest figures for the number of staff presently employed, and the full complement of staff, including vacant posts, in the press and public relations office of the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys; and what is the proposed complement for 1990-91.

Mr. Freeman: The number of staff presently employed in the press and publicity section of the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys in 1989-90 and planned for 1990-91 is eight and nine respectively. There are no vacancies. The figures include five staff who are employed on a temporary basis to work on publicity activities for the 1991 census and an additional temporary post for 1990-91.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what are the latest figures for the number of staff presently employed and the full complement of staff, including vacant posts in the press and public relations office of his Department; and what is the proposed complement for 1990-91;

(2) what was the total expenditure by his Department on press and public relations in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: My Department has no section that can be separately identified as public relations. Functions which are commonly associated with press and public relations are carried out by the Department's information division.

The position on 1 March 1990 was:

Staff presently employed 52

Full complement of staff including vacant posts 57

Twenty-six of the staff presently employed are information officers. Disussions on the proposed complement for 1990-91 are not yet complete. Estimated expenditure for manpower and running costs in 1989-90 is £898,000. The budget for 1990-91 has not yet been agreed. Figures for 1979-80 to 1988-89 are not available in the form requested.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what was the total expenditure by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys on press and public relations in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

Mr. Freeman: The information requested is given in the table. The figures, in cash terms, include staff costs and expenditure on, or planned for, the census of population.

Expenditure (£000s) at cash prices

Year	Press and Public Relations
1979-80	125
1980-81	220
1981-82	250
1982-83	130
1983-84	145
1984-85	160
1985-86	165
1986-87	120
1987-88	145
1988-89	190
1989-90	300
[1]1990-91	600

[1] Estimate.

Advertising Expenditure

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what were the figures for the spending by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys on *(a)* television advertising, *(b)* radio advertising, *(c)* newspaper advertising and *(d)* other promotional material in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

Mr. Freeman: The information requested is given in the table. The figures in cash terms include expenditure on, or planned for, the census of population.

Expenditure (£000s) at cash prices

Year	(a) TV advertising (b) Radio advertising (c) Newspaper advertising	(d) Other promotional material
1979-80	Nil	90
1980-81	[1]180	140
1981-82	[1]270	170
1982-83	Nil	90
1983-84	Nil	100
1984-85	Nil	125
1985-86	Nil	125
1986-87	Nil	80
1987-88	Nil	100
1988-89	Nil	105
1989-90	Nil	180
1990-91 estimate	[1]530	320

[1] Census of Population only.

Management Consultants

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what were the total fees paid out by his Department to management consultants in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

Mr. Freeman: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave the hon. Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman) on 16 November 1989 at columns *431-32* in respect of payments up to and including 1988-89. The estimated expenditure for 1989-90 is £4,870,500. No decision has yet been reached on the 1990-91 budget.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what were the total fees paid out by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys to management consultants in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

Mr. Freeman: Figures are available only from 1984-85 onwards. They are:

	£
1984-85	13,000
1985-86	71,000
1986-87	89,000
1987-88	359,000
1988-89	884,000
[1]1989-90	830,000
[2]1990-91	830,000

[1] Estimate.
[2] Budget.

The figures from 1987-88 onwards largely reflect the cost of employing consultants from a variety of firms to undertake strategic management and information technology studies and to assist with subsequent implementation, in areas where the necessary skills and expertise are not available within the office.

Health Service Contracts

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will deposit copies of the "Working for Patients" implementation document on "Contracts for Health Services: Operating Contracts" in the Vote Office and similarly deposit all subsequent papers on publication.

Mr. Freeman: Yes. Copies have now been placed in the Vote Office.

Self-governing Hospitals

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what funds have been provided to the Mersey regional health authority and the health authorities within its region for carrying out studies to enable hospitals to apply for self-governing status;

(2) what has been the expenditure so far by his Department on projects designed to inform the implementation of the Government's proposals for the setting up of National Health Service hospital trusts; and what is his estimate of the likely expenditure on such projects during the next financial year.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Some work has been commissioned centrally to support the proposals for National Health Service trusts. The total cost of these projects was £181,600 in 1989-90. No resources have been allocated specifically to Mersey or other regions for spending on projects designed to inform the process of setting up NHS trusts. We have made no allocation for these purposes in respect of 1990-91.

Central Ordnance Depot, Donnington

Mr. Terry Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what inquiries are being made into whether there is any link between the number of deaths from cancer in Shropshire and the fire at the central ordnance depot at Donnington in 1983.

Mr. Freeman: The Department is making no inquiries and in the light of the information on the materials released by the fire, none are considered necessary. Monitoring the health of a local population is a matter for the director of public health.

Radioactive Implants

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will introduce legislation to require that persons fitted with medicinal radioactive implants are registered and carry a card.

Mr. Freeman: There are no plans to introduce statutory registration for persons fitted with medicinal radioactive implants. However, those persons fitted with nuclear-powered cardiac pacemakers are required to carry a bracelet and identity card.

Hepatitis B

Mrs. Rosie Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will give the latest figures for the number of people vaccinated against hepatitis B;

(2) if he will give the take-up figures of hepatitis B vaccine among each of the high-risk groups identified by the joint committee on vaccination and immunisation;

(3) if he will list those areas in which general practitioners may claim item-of-service payments for administering the hepatitis B vaccine;

(4) what guidance his Department has issued to general practitioners regarding vaccination against hepatitis B for the general public and high-risk groups;

(5) what information he has regarding the link between hepatitis B and liver cancer;

(6) what is his Department's estimate of the number of hepatitis B carriers in the population;

(7) what statistics his Department collects on the incidence and treatment of hepatitis B among the general population and high-risk groups;

(8) what steps his Department has taken to publicise the availability of hepatitis B vaccines to the general public and high-risk groups.

Mr. Freeman *[holding answer 9 March 1990]:* The Department holds no figures for the number of people vaccinated against hepatitis B either in total or amongst the high-risk groups as identified by the joint committee on vaccination and immunisation (JCVI). However, over 800,000 doses of the vaccine were distributed in 1989. No item-of-service fees are payable for administering hepatitis B vaccine.

Guidance and recommendations to general practitioners regarding hepatitis B vaccine is contained in the JCVI's memorandum "Immunisation against Infectious Disease", a new edition of which will be issued to all doctors shortly.

It is known that some sufferers of hepatitis B may go on to develop hepatocellular carcinoma. It is estimated that one in 500 of the general adult population may be carriers of hepatitis B surface antigenaemia.

Acute viral hepatitis is a notifiable disease and the public health laboratory service continues to monitor its incidence. Reports of cases to the PHLS had declined to just over 600 in 1989.

Useful information on hepatitis B is included in the Health Education Authority's (HEA) booklet "Guide to a Healthy Sex Life", and I understand that the HEA is currently reviewing this and other publications on sexually transmitted diseases.

Myeloid Leukaemia

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will update the list of the 20 areas with the highest incidence of myeloid leukaemia contained in his answer to the hon. Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) of 15 April 1986, *Official Report*, columns *371-72*.

Mr. Freeman *[pursuant to his reply, 19 February 1990, c. 543]:* The data requested are shown in the table, and have been updated to 1988:

Ranking of Local Authority Areas (Highest Twenty) for Myeloid Leukaemia United Kingdom, 1988

Area	*Observed deaths*	*Population*	*Crude rate*	*Expected deaths*	*Ratio of observed to expected*
1 Epsom and Ewell CD	9	67,500	13·33	2·930	3·07
2 South Staffordshire CD	10	108,100	9·25	3·524	2·84
3 Warwick CD	12	116,400	10·3	4·576	2·62
4 East Kilbride CD	7	81,686	8·56	2·677	2·61
5 Neath CD	7	65,200	10·73	2·838	2·47
6 North East Derbyshire CD	9	96,700	9·3	3·780	2·38
7 Kincardine and Deeside CD	4	48,910	8·17	1·727	2·32
8 Dinefwr CD	4	38,900	10·28	1·731	2·31
9 Stratford Upon Avon CD	10	106,800	9·36	4·385	2·28
10 Tonbridge CD	7	75,700	9·24	3·088	2·27
11 Crawley CD	7	84,400	8·29	3·126	2·24
12 Leominster CD	4	39,300	10·18	1·816	2·20
13 Mid Suffolk CD	7	77,600	9·02	3·210	2·18
14 Vale of White Horse CD[1]	9	112,300	8·01	4·181	2·15
15 Preseli Pembrokeshire CD	6	71,000	8·45	2·852	2·10
16 Brighton CD	14	149,200	9·38	6·908	2·03
17 Harlow CD	5	72,000	6·94	2·457	2·03
18 Llanelli CD	7	74,100	9·57	3·461	2·02
19 Cherwell CD	8	122,400	6·53	4·080	1·96
20 Delyn CD	5	65,100	7·68	2·548	1·96

Crude Rate per 100,000 population.
CD — county district.
[1] Harwell and Culham nuclear installations are situated within Vale of White Horse CD.
Areas with fewer than four observed deaths have been excluded.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Eastern Europe

69. **Mr. Barry Field:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much is being provided in 1990-91 in the form of overseas aid to assist the countries of eastern Europe.

Mrs. Chalker: In 1990-91 we expect to seek parliamentary approval in main estimates for £13·5 million to cover expenditure on Poland and Hungary under the know-how fund, and on an agricultural project in Poland. This expenditure is additional to the official United Kingdom aid programme. Supplementary estimate provision for 1990-91 and later years may be sought when the public expenditure implications of other commitments, such as the establishment of know-how funds for other countries in eastern Europe, are clearer.

Africa

70. **Mr. Pawsey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs by how much aid to African states has increased since 1987.

Mrs. Chalker: Britain's bilateral aid to Africa rose from £305 million in 1987 to £422 million in 1988. In the same period our multilateral aid programme (for example, our contributions to the World bank, the European development fund and the various UN agencies) rose from £523 million to £659 million, with over half these funds being destined ultimately for Africa. Figures for 1989 are not yet available.

Rehabilitation Courses

71. **Mr. Rowe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much support the Government provided for community-based rehabilitation courses and programmes in the last year for which he has figures; and how the support was deployed.

Mrs. Chalker: A list of projects funded by ODA in 1989-90, which focus on the needs of disabled people, was provided in the answer that my hon. Friend the Member for Warwickshire, North (Mr. Maude) gave my hon. Friend the Member for Exeter (Mr. Hannam) on 6 December 1989 at columns *231-32*. Many of these activities are community based or have a community-based component. In addition, nine overseas students studying on the diploma for teachers and planners of

community-based rehabilitation in developing countries at the Institute of Child Health in London have been financed this year from the overseas aid programme.

Overseas Aid

72. **Mr. Andrew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what proportion of gross domestic product the United Kingdom currently spends on overseas aid.

Mrs. Chalker: The latest available figure for United Kingdom net official development assistance expressed as a percentage of gross national product is 0·32 per cent. in 1988.

78. **Mr. Alan Williams:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he has any plans to increase the share of gross national product spent on official development assistance to developing countries.

Mrs. Chalker: As announced in Cm. 1002, the Government plan to increase the aid programme from £1,502 million in 1989-90 to £1,750 million in 1992-93. On the basis of the forecast for United Kingdom domestic inflation contained in the Autumn Statement published on 22 November 1989 this represents an increase of 4 per cent. in real terms. The Government accept in principle the United Nations 0·7 per cent. target for official development assistance as a proportion of gross national product but recognise that progress towards this target must depend on economic circumstances and other calls on resources.

Kenya

73. **Mr. Dykes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonweath Affairs whether the Minister for Overseas Development has recently visited Kenya.

Mrs. Chalker: I visited Kenya from 6 to 8 March.

Brazil

74. **Mr. Moss:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonweath Affairs how many forestry projects have been agreed with the Government of Brazil.

Mrs. Chalker: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Fylde (Mr. Jack) on 1 March at column *283*.

Tropical Forests

75. **Ms. Abbott:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonweath Affairs whether Her Majesty's Government will be proposing reforms to the tropical forestry action plan during the joint meeting between the European Community and the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries on 19 to 24 March.

Mrs. Chalker: I called for the reform of the tropical forestry action plan when I addressed the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation general conference in November. Following that conference the FAO commissioned an independent review of TFAP. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs met the review team on 6 March.

The meeting between the European Community (EC) and African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries on 19 to 24 March is a forum for representatives of the European and ACP Parliaments. Representatives of EC and ACP Governments meet on 28 and 29 March to discuss issues related to the Lome conventions. We have no plans to pursue reforms to the tropical forestry action plan at this meeting.

Vietnam

76. **Mr. Alton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonweath Affairs what discussions he has had with the United States Government regarding aid to Vietnam.

Mrs. Chalker: I refer the hon. Member to the answer my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary gave to the hon. Member for Bolton, South-East (Mr. Young) on 7 March.

Nicaragua

77. **Mr. Bowis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a further statement on aid to Nicaragua.

Mrs. Chalker: We are considering the possibility of a small bilateral technical co-operation programme to Nicaragua. In doing so we are taking account of the discussions that my hon. Friend the Member for Watford (Mr Garel-Jones) had with the President-elect during his visit to Managua last week.

However, central America is not a priority area for United Kingdom bilateral aid. The main channel for United Kingdom assistance to Nicaragua will continue to be through our contribution to EC aid. We shall seek to ensure that EC aid to Nicaragua is maintained, and possibly increased, once Senora Chamorro's democratically elected Government take office.

Tanzania

79. **Mr. Andrew Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what aid the United Kingdom currently gives to Tanzania.

Mrs. Chalker: In 1988 (the latest year for which firm figures are available) the cost of our bilateral aid amounted to £33·4 million. During my visit to Tanzania earlier this month I increased our latest pledge of balance of payments support to £17·5 million, for spending by the end of financial year 1990-91. All our bilateral aid to Tanzania is on grant terms.

In addition to our bilateral aid we contribute through multilateral agencies, including the EC. Tanzania has been allocated 169 million ecu (about £125 million) under Lome III for the period 1985-90, of which our share is around £20 million.

81. **Mr. Raison:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the Minister for Overseas Development holds regular discussions with the Government of Tanzania.

Mrs. Chalker: I have just reurned from a full and useful visit to Tanzania, during which I renewed the regular discussions which I and my predecessors have maintained with the Tanzanian Government.

Ethiopia

80. **Mr. Murphy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he has any further information on food aid distribution to famine areas of Ethiopia.

Mrs. Chalker: The recent capture of the port of Massawa by the Eritrean People's Liberation Front is a serious setback to the relief effort and alternative means of delivering relief supplies to the hungry via the port of Assab are under urgent consideration by donors. The recent statement by the Government of Ethiopia that they will permit local Church organisations to open a relief corridor from the port of Assab into Tigray is a welcome step forward. It is vital that all parties to the conflict allow this relief operation to proceed without hindrance.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what response his Department has made to the recent proposal for free passage of relief aid by the Tigray People's Liberation Front; and if he will raise this matter at his next meeting with the United Nations.

Mrs. Chalker: This proposal was made in response to a plan, agreed between the Ethiopian Government and a local Church group but rejected by the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front, for distribution of relief supplies within Tigray. The plan has since been abandoned as a result of the capture of the port of Massawa by the Eritrean People's Liberation Front and other means of getting food to the hungry are under urgent consideration by donors.

I returned from Ethiopia yesterday. Following discussions there I am hopeful that arrangements made with the agreement of both the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front and the Government of Ethiopia will allow relief food supplies to cross into Wello and Tigray by what is known as the southern route and that the first convoy will leave this week. I have discussed arrangements in detail with the UN Secretary-General's special representative and other UN officials who are closely involved in Addis Ababa, as well as with the leaders of the joint relief partnership and President Mengistu and members of the Government of Ethiopia.

South Africa

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he plans to increase overseas aid to South Africa in the light of political developments.

Mrs. Chalker: I welcome the recent political developments in South Africa. We are currently reviewing our aid programme for black South Africans and I expect to make an announcement shortly.

Technical Training and Education

Mr. Speller: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what proposals for technical training and educational aid he has for Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone and the Gambia.

Mrs. Chalker: We will maintain our substantial programmes of training in Britain for each of the four countries. We are also funding projects in each country for technical training and education.

Uganda

Mr. William Powell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what current development assistance Britain provides to Uganda; and whether he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: In 1988, the latest year for which firm figures are available, we provided £28·6 million in bilateral aid to Uganda, in addition to our share of assistance from multilateral agencies. During my visit to Uganda last week, I announced that the £10 million balance of payments assistance pledged in 1989 in support of Uganda's economic recovery programme would be increased to £15 million. This brings our total commitments since 1986 to over £155 million, including £53 million in balance of payments support.

Ivory

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the consequences for Her Majesty's Government-funded elephant conservation schemes in Africa arising out of the decisions to allow the Hong Kong ivory stocks to be traded.

Mrs. Chalker: I do not expect the decision to have an effect on any of the conservation schemes funded by Her Majesty's Government.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Local Offices

Ms. Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many people were refused *(a)* community care grants, *(b)* budgeting loans and *(c)* crisis loans, listed separately, on the grounds that there were insufficient funds/priority too low, by his offices in Redcar, Eston, Middlesbrough, Stockton and Hartlepool, during the period April 1988 to March 1989, and during the period April 1989 to December 1989.

Mr. Scott: The information given in the table represents the number of processed applications which were refused on grounds of insufficient priority. The number of people refused or awarded payments from the social fund is not collected. Individuals can make more than one application during each accounting period.

Social fund: refusals of applications on grounds of insufficient priority

	Budgeting Loans	*Crisis Loans*	*Community Care grants*
April 1988—March 1989			
Redcar	402	2	162
Eston	925	4	8
Middlesbrough	1,596	4	124
Stockton	885	0	17
Hartlepool	583	0	25
April 1989—December 1989			
Redcar	384	1	134
Eston	677	0	22
Middlesbrough	1,320	1	538
Stockton	1,218	0	306
Hartlepool	617	1	41

Ms. Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what was *(a)* the spending profile and *(b)* the

actual spend in respect of (i) community care grants and (ii) loans, listed separately, for each of his offices in Redcar, Eston, Middlesbrough, Stockton and Hartlepool, for the period April to December 1989, inclusive.

Mr. Scott: The information given in the table represents the spending profile set at the start of this financial year for each office specified. The profile is adjusted at the end of each month to take account of actual expenditure and can be adjusted at any time to take account of local circumstances. Information for actual spending is in the Library.

	Percentage community care grants	*Percentage loans*
Redcar		
April	7·60	7·60
May	7·80	7·80
June	7·80	7·80
July	8·30	8·30
August	6·70	6·70
September	7·00	7·00
October	8·90	8·90
November	12·50	12·50
December	9·00	9·00
January	6·60	6·60
February	8·60	8·60
March	9·20	9·20
Eston		
April	8·30	8·30
May	8·30	8·30
June	8·30	8·30
July	8·30	8·30
August	8·30	8·30
September	8·30	8·30
October	8·30	8·30
November	8·30	8·30
December	7·75	7·75
January	7·75	7·75
February	8·80	8·80
March	9·30	9·30
Middlesbrough		
April	8·50	8·50
May	8·50	8·50
June	9·00	9·00
July	8·50	8·50
August	7·50	7·50
September	8·00	8·00
October	8·50	8·50
November	9·00	9·00
December	7·00	7·00
January	7·50	7·50
February	9·00	9·00
March	9·00	9·00
Stockton		
April	8·32	8·32
May	8·32	8·32
June	8·32	8·32
July	8·32	8·32
August	8·32	8·32
September	8·21	8·21
October	8·95	8·95
November	8·96	8·96
December	7·45	7·45
January	7·82	7·82
February	8·69	8·69
March	8·32	8·32
Hartlepool		
April	8·67	8·58
May	8·33	8·33
June	8·33	8·33
July	8·33	8·33
August	8·33	8·33
September	8·02	8·02
October	8·88	8·88
November	8·89	8·89
December	7·75	7·75
January	7·38	7·38
February	8·62	8·62
March	8·47	8·56

Community Charge

Mr. Riddick: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is his Department's estimate of the cost in a full year in relation to the capital thresholds above which no community charge rebate is allowed of *(a)* doubling the threshold to £16,000 for a married couple, *(b)* abolishing the capital thresholds altogether and *(c)* abolishing the capital thresholds for pensioners only, so that, in the latter two cases, income is the only criterion for qualification for community charge rebate.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Information is not available to enable a precise answer to be given to my hon. Friend's question. It seems probable that doubling the upper capital limit for community charge benefit to £16,000 for a married couple would cost about £10 million. For answers to parts *(b)* and *(c)* I refer my hon. Friend to my replies to my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow) on 22 February at column *896* and 2 March at column *367*.

Disability

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security whether his Department has commissioned any research about the care needs and care costs of disabled people aged over 65 years.

Mr. Scott: The Government commissioned the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys (OPCS) to carry out major surveys of disability in Great Britain between 1985 and 1988. Two of these covered disabled adults in private households and communal establishments, and they provide information about the extra costs of home services for people aged over 65 and the extra costs incurred by those with personal care disabilities. The six OPCS reports of the surveys' findings are in the Library. A follow-up study to the surveys in the family expenditure survey has been carried out to compare the actual spending of disabled and non-disabled people, and the results of that study will be published in the next few months. A number of studies of the care needs of people in residential care and nursing homes have been carried out by the social policy research unit at York university. The findings are published in "Public Support for Private Residential Care", a copy of which is in the Library.

1. Volumes 1-6 of the "OPCS Surveys of Disability in Great Britain". London HMSO 1989—in particular volumes 2 and 4.
2. Bradshaw J. R. and Gibbs I. "Public Support for Private Residential Care". Avebury Gower 1988.

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will provide a table showing a regional breakdown of the numbers of people claiming disability benefits as a percentage of all claimants and as a percentage of the general population.

Mr. Scott: Attendance allowance, invalid care allowance and mobility allowance are administered centrally, and a regional breakdown of claimants is not available. The regional breakdown for severe disablement allowance, as at April 1988, is in the table:

Region	*Number of claimants*	*Percentage of all claimants*	*Percentage of general population*
North	18,200	7	0·59
Yorkshire and Humberside	25,200	10	0·51
East Midlands	17,100	6	0·43
East Anglia	7,500	3	0·37
South East	63,600	24	0·37
South West	21,900	8	0·47
West Midlands	20,600	8	0·40
North West	37,000	14	0·58
Scotland	32,400	12	0·64
Wales	19,800	8	0·69

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Battersea (Mr. Bowis), *Official Report*, 26 February, column *59*, if he will provide a breakdown at 1990 prices of *(a)* the weekly benefit entitlement when not working of a single disabled person and *(b)* the net weekly income of a single disabled person with earnings of (i) £5, (ii) £10, (iii) £15, (iv) £20, (v) £30, (vi) £40 and (vii) £50 after housing costs, on the assumption of the introduction of the disability employment credit, planned for introduction in April 1992.

Mr. Scott: The detailed arrangements for the disability employment credit are under consideration. No decision has yet been taken on the thresholds for entitlement to the benefit.

Mr. Pendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what are the numbers of *(a)* single people receiving the severe disability premium as at 11 April 1988, 10 April 1989 and 9 October 1989 and *(b)* members of a couple receiving the severe disability premium as at 11 April 1988, 10 April 1989, and 9 October 1989.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The information is not available in the form requested. However, the latest annual statistical inquiry shows that, at May 1988, 28,184 income support claims included the lower rate of the severe disability premium, paid to single people and to couples of whom one member qualifies for the premium, and 6,585 income support claims included the higher rate of this premium, paid where both members of a couple qualify.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security whether the proposed disability employment credit will be available to those disabled people who are able to work but have savings in excess of £6,000.

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if the proposed disability employment credit will provide employment opportunities for those disabled people who are capable of working but are not able to work more than 24 hours per week.

Mr. Scott: The detailed arrangements for the disability employment credit are under consideration. No decisions have yet been taken on an hours limit or capital rule for the benefit.

Residential Care

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) what is the number, and annual cost in benefits, of elderly persons in private nursing homes registered with district health authorities, by metropolitan district and district in the north-west of England;

(2) what is the number, and annual cost in benefits, of elderly persons in private residential homes, registered with appropriate local councils by metropolitan district and district in the north-west of England.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Information in the form requested is not available.

Mr. Andrew Bowden: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is his best estimate of the number of people in private or voluntary residential or nursing home care who will be funded through preserved income support (i) when the new system of funding to be implemented under proposals in the National Health Service and Community Care Bill first comes into effect and (ii) in each of the subsequent 10 years.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Information about expected numbers of income support claimants as well as expenditure is published in the public expenditure White Paper (Cm 1014). It has never been the practice to make separate forecasts about any individual group within the planning totals.

Occupational Deafness

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he has any plans to increase the scope of occupations qualifying for disablement benefit for the industrial disease of occupational deafness, to include damage to the nerve endings in the inner ear caused by high pitched screeches due to worn machinery in the tin-plate industry.

Mr. Scott: No.

Correspondence

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security when he will reply to the hon. Member for Rugby and Kenilworth's letter of 28 November 1989 about Mr. and Mrs. Griffin of Rugby.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: My noble Friend Lord Henley has replied to my hon. Friend.

Income Support

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security, by region, how many 16 and 17-year-olds had made applications for income support on grounds of extreme hardship; how many had been granted at 10 November 1989, 8 December 1989, 5 January 1990 and 9 February 1990; and how many at the same dates had been granted income support on grounds of being within exempted categories, shown by category.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The cumulative totals of the number of 16 and 17-year-olds who had made an application for income support on the grounds of severe hardship and the number granted benefit on this basis at 10 November 1989, 8 December 1989, 5 January 1990 and 9 February 1990 are in table A.

Figures for the number of 16 and 17-year-olds granted income support on the grounds of being within exempted categories are collected on a monthly basis and are, therefore, not available for the particular dates requested.

Table B shows the number of awards, by category, for each of the months ended 31 October 1989, 30 November 1989, 31 December 1989 and 31 January 1990.

Table A

Cumulative totals of applications for income support from 16 and 17-year-olds on the ground of severe hardship and of directions given to enable awards to be made

Period ending	*London North*	*London South*	*Midlands*	*North East*	*North West*	*Wales and South West*	*Scotland*	*Great Britain*
10 November 1989								
Applications received	1,299	1,251	1,857	3,870	2,461	1,337	6,233	18,308
Directions given	806	797	1,248	2,580	1,565	846	4,262	12,104
8 December 1989								
Applications received	1,399	1,339	1,999	4,118	2,622	1,426	6,631	19,534
Directions given	862	853	1,340	2,745	1,661	898	4,522	12,881
5 January 1990								
Applications received	1,493	1,411	2,122	4,359	2,772	1,519	6,946	20,622
Directions given	922	895	1,419	2,903	1,750	960	4,742	13,591
9 February 1990								
Applications received	1,726	1,616	2,435	5,000	3,091	1,746	7,808	23,422
Directions given	1,064	1,037	1,615	3,346	1,945	1,116	5,389	15,512

Notes:

1. Based on 100 per cent. count of applications received.
2. Information relates to the number of applications received rather than to the number of individual young people involved. Some individuals may have received more than one direction.

Table B

16 and 17 year olds awarded income support

Regions	*London North*	*London South*	*Midlands*	*North East*	*North West*	*Wales and South West*	*Scotland*	*Great Britain*
Month ending 31 October 1989								
Eligible at any time	39	43	77	88	79	72	45	433
Eligible during CHB extension period	35	15	50	51	38	32	64	285
Eligible outside CHB extension period	11	8	30	38	30	41	24	182
Month ending 30 November 1989								
Eligible at any time	31	36	63	61	53	69	37	350
Eligible during CHB extension period	22	18	43	38	30	38	41	230
Eligible outside CHB extension period	1	13	33	39	22	34	31	173
Month ending 31 December 1989								
Eligible at any time	13	23	51	58	39	45	20	249
Eligible during CHB extension period	12	6	37	31	32	23	43	184
Eligible outside CHB extension period	3	2	29	31	20	25	23	133
Month ending 31 January 1990								
Eligible at any time	33	99	72	85	48	68	45	450
Eligible during CHB extension period	26	31	34	27	37	15	59	229
Eligible outside CHB extension period	8	9	30	38	38	45	21	1,898

Community Care Grants

Mrs. Wise: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security in how many social security offices community care grants for shoes are deemed to be of low priority in cases which in other respects meet the criterion for community care grant of having a particular disability which causes excessive wear and tear.

Mr. Scott: I regret that the information requested is not collected.

Public Relations

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what are the latest figures for the number of staff presently employed, and the full complement of staff, including vacant posts in the press and public relations office of his Department; and what is the proposed complement for 1990-91.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Functions which are currently associated with press and public relations are carried out by the Department's information division.

The latest information is that 79 staff are in post. In addition, there are seven vacancies. Of the total 19 are information officer grades. Discussions on the proposed staffing for 1990-91 are not yet complete.

The staffing figures for the current period are not comparable with previous years. Following reorganisation within the Department, information division acquired management responsibility for staff previously located in other divisions.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what was the total expenditure by his Department

on press and public relations in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Functions commonly associated with press and public relations are carried out by the Department's information division.

Information is not available in the form requested for the years 1979-80 and the following years to 1988-89.

Expenditure for the DSS information division following separation from the Department of Health for 1989-90 is as follows:

	£ million
Manpower	1·157
Running costs	0·07

Discussions on the proposed 1990-91 budgets for manpower and running costs for the information division are not complete.

Statistical Divisions

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what are the latest figures for the number of staff presently employed, and the full complement of staff, including vacant posts, by grade, in the statistical divisions in his Department; if he will differentiate between staff in statistical posts and staff in administrative posts; and if he will give the staffing complements by grade, and differentiated between statistical and administrative posts, proposed for 1990-91.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Staff in post and vancacies in the Department's statistical branches at 1 March 1990 are shown in the table. These figures are not strictly comparable with those for previous years because of reorganisation of the Department's analytical services. Final decisions on budgets for 1990-91 have not yet been made.

	Staff in post		*Vacancies*	
Grade	*Administrative*	*Statistical*	*Administrative*	*Statistical*
3	0·00	0·33	0·0	0
5	0·00	2·00	0·0	0
6	0·00	0·00	0·0	0
7	0·00	0·00	0·0	0
Senior Assistant Statistician	0·00	2·00	0·0	0
Assistant Statistician	0·00	4·00	0·0	0
Senior Executive Officer	0·00	0·00	0·0	0
Higher Executive Officer	9·00	0·00	0·0	0
Executive Officer	12·50	0·00	0·0	0
Administrative Officer	34·50	0·00	2·5	0
Aministrative Assistant	6·00	0·00	0·0	0
Senior Personal Secretary	0·00	0·00	0·0	0
Personal Secretary	2·33	0·00	0·0	0
Total	64·33	16·33	2·5	0

Privatisation

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what was the total sum paid out in fees to outside organisations in the furtherance of privatisation by his Department in 1979-80 and in each subsequent year; and what is his estimate for 1990-91.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: No such fees have been identified and no such expenditure is planned for 1990-91.

Advertising Expenditure

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what were the figures for the spending by his Department on *(a)* television advertising, *(b)* radio advertising, *(c)* newspaper advertising and *(d)* other promotional material in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: For information from 1979-80 to 1988-89, I refer the hon. Member to replies given to him on 19 December 1986 at columns *793-94*, on 14 January 1988 at column *402* and on 13 March 1989 at column *30*.

The total estimated outturn for publicity in 1989-90 is £16·3 million. Of this, £6·661 million has been committed for the purpose of advertising.

	£ million
Television	3·974
Press	1·567
Posters	1·120
Other material (promotion/information)	9·639

The estimate for the 1990-91 publicity budget is £14·89 million. Detailed decisions on media have not yet been made.

Management Consultants

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what were the total fees paid out by his Department to management consultants in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The estimated expenditure from 1984-85 onwards on fees and expenses for management consultants on social security matters is as follows:

Year	*£ million*
1984-85	0·959
1985-86	1·722
1986-87	0·976
1987-88	1·082
1988-89	1·203
1989-90	2·942
1990-91	2·854

The figures are approximate since expenditure up to and including the 1988-89 financial year is from a joint health and social security budget. In some cases expenditure has been apportioned where consultants have been engaged on both health and social security matters. The figures include some computer consultancy where this cannot be separately identified. The information for years prior to 1984-85 could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Fuel Payments

Mr. O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will make a statement on his policy on the treatment of cash in lieu of fuel payments as income in respect of housing benefits, following the recent tribunal decision in respect of an applicant in Bridgend.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: In the income-related benefits, the normal rule is for all forms of income to be taken into account. Regulations provide for certain types of income to be disregarded, in part or in full. Cash in lieu of concessionary fuel is not specified as disregardable income, and therefore is taken fully into account in the calculation of housing benefit and the other income-related benefits. Local authorities have no discretion in this matter. The decision made by a social security appeal tribunal in the Bridgend case is not binding on any other case, nor on the housing benefit scheme, since tribunals have no power to review local authorities' decisions.

Arthur Andersen (Party)

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will give the number of his Department's staff invited to the Arthur Andersen Consulting roll-out party on 8 February 1990, their departments and grades; and how much of the cost will be met by his Department.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Andersen Consulting decided to hold this party in recognition of the successful achievements during the past seven years in developing, with the Department of Social Security (DSS), the operational strategy computer systems. It wanted to mark these achievements with a joint disco party for its staff and those DSS staff, especially those in middle and junior grades, who had for several years been working long hours and under great pressure in developing the systems. There was no cost to DSS.

Social Fund

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security, pursuant to his answer of 1 March, *Official Report*, column *319* regarding advice to social fund officers on reviews of claims following the High Court judgment, what is the necessary advice on the question of reviews to which he referred.

Mr. Scott: We will shortly be issuing advice to social fund officers on their responsibilities for reviewing applications in accordance with the legislation and the directions. I shall send the hon. Member a copy.

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security, pursuant to his answer of 6 March, *Official Report*, column *584*, if he will inform the hon. Member for Oldham, West when he makes the information available in machine-readable form to the Library.

Mr. Scott: Yes.

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will indicate, out of total loan payments made available under the social fund, the sum written off as irrecoverable or for any other reason, in 1988-89, and hence the extra outlay provided at the start of the 1989-90 financial year in order to maintain loan payments at the previous level; and if he will give his estimate for the same purpose in the current financial year.

Mr. Scott *[holding answer 26 February 1990]:* During 1988-89 loan repayments to the value of £53,000 were treated as impracticable to pursue. This did not affect the amount available for loans in 1989-90. The corresponding amount in 1989-90 for the period to the end of January 1990 was £735,000; this sum includes loans made in 1988-89.

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what monetary amount has been deducted up to the end of January 1990 from income support in order to repay social fund loans *(a)* nationally, *(b)* regionally and *(c)* in each local Department of Social Security area.

Mr. Scott *[holding answer 7 March 1990]:* Provisional information in relation to national and regional data in the period April 1989 to January 1990 is given in the table. The other information requested is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Table:

Regions	*£ million*
North East	15·10
North West	13·87
Midlands	12·59
London North	9·11
London South	8·03
Wales and South West	8·41
Scotland	16·10
National	[1]83·22

[1] Figures do not sum due to rounding.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Pesticides

Sir Richard Body: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will discuss with the farming and agrochemical industries measures to reduce the use of pesticides in agricultural production and storage.

Mr. Maclean: The Government's policy is that the use of pesticides should be the minimum compatible with efficient food production. Government funding of related research and development amounts to some £18 million per annum and the results are published. A proposed code of practice containing advice on the safe use of pesticides on farms and holdings has been laid before Parliament.

Sir Richard Body: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what measures he is taking to ensure that food consumers are safe from exposure to pesticides used in food production and storage.

Mr. Maclean: No pesticide may be used in this country until it has been approved by Ministers in six Government Departments including my Department and the Department of Health. No pesticide is approved for use unless Ministers are satisfied that it presents no risk to

consumers. The approvals process is backed up by statutory residue levels, which apply to both imported and home-grown produce, and by monitoring carried out by the working party on pesticide residues. The results of monitoring are published.

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) what representations he has made to the EC on the off-label clearance scheme;

(2) what representations he has received about the outlawing of the off-label clearance scheme; and what effect this will have on small horticulture units in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Maclean: Talks on EC proposals for pesticide approvals are continuing in the Council working group. The United Kingdom Government are very aware of the need to protect off-label approvals and are pressing for acceptable wording. The National Farmers Union is being kept informed.

Veterinary Investigation Service

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what proportion of the work of the veterinary investigation service is undertaken for agricultural producers on a fee-paying basis; and what proportion fulfils public health functions.

Mr. Curry: The proportion of the work of the veterinary investigation service undertaken for agricultural producers on a fee-paying basis is 36·4 per cent.; that undertaken for public health functions is 25·2 per cent. and the remainder, 38·6 per cent. relates to statutory animal health programmes.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the annual cost of the veterinary investigation service; and what was the number of cases referred to each centre since 1985.

Mr. Curry: The running cost of the veterinary investigation service in the financial year 1988-89 was £5,256,226. The number of submissions to each veterinary investigation centre since 1985 is given in the table:

All submissions to Veterinary Investigation Centres in England and Wales 1985-89 (provisional)

Veterinary investigation centre	*1985*	*1986*	*1987*	*1988*	[1] *1989*
Aberystwyth	4,925	3,308	3,586	4,041	3,868
Bangor	4,287	4,024	4,472	4,975	5,515
Bristol	14,293	15,741	15,770	17,324	17,863
Cambridge	7,450	7,693	8,258	8,637	9,740
Cardiff	1,598	339	—	—	—
Carmarthen	7,296	7,828	7,886	7,488	9,181
Chester	3,714	818	—	—	—
Gloucester	7,738	3,599	—	—	—
Leeds	7,020	2,625	—	—	—
Lincoln	4,283	6,182	8,239	7,559	8,232
Newcastle	7,070	7,349	9,002	8,000	13,966
Northampton	3,194	1,266	—	—	—
Norwich	6,668	5,935	5,265	6,366	6,918
Penrith	9,148	9,407	9,234	11,165	10,535
Preston	4,320	8,562	10,048	11,166	10,172
Reading	5,732	5,868	5,847	5,774	7,624
Shrewsbury	8,244	9,380	9,663	7,520	11,207
Starcross	9,678	8,889	9,051	10,418	12,862
Sutton Bonington	7,018	7,143	7,641	8,667	10,381
Thirsk	6,620	6,583	6,427	9,576	10,173
Truro	4,267	4,203	5,032	6,421	7,615
Winchester	6,240	6,598	6,334	7,225	7,297
Worcester	7,761	8,282	8,944	7,607	7,681
Wye	4,128	3,652	3,208	3,739	4,368

[1] Figures for 1989 are provisional.

North Sea Dumping

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the companies to which his Department has granted permits to dump industrial liquid and flyash waste in the North sea.

Mr. Curry: The companies that currently hold licences under the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985 to dump liquid industrial waste and flyash in the North sea are as follows:

National Power
ICI Chemicals and Polymers Ltd.
Cleanaway Ltd. (licence to dispose of waste from Tate and Lyle Sugars)
Sterling Organics Ltd.
Allied Colloids Ltd.
Effluent Services Ltd. (three licences to dispose of waste from Orsynetics, Woolcombers Ltd. and Fine Organics Ltd.)
Chlor Chem Ltd.

Mr. Battle: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, further to his answer to the hon. Member for Wyre (Mr. Mans) of 22 February, *Official Report*, columns *898-99*, if he will specify the two wastes for which North sea dumping licences may have to be extended beyond the 1992 deadline for reasons of technical feasibility and the amounts involved.

Mr. Curry: We have announced that it is our intention that no liquid industrial wastes or flyash will be dumped at sea after the end of 1992. In two cases however it might not be technically feasible to meet this deadline. We will extend the licences for those last two wastes into 1993 only if absolutely necessary on technical grounds and for the shortest possible part of that year.

The wastes concerned are:

Sterling Organics—Aqueous residue from preparation of paracetamol; 42,000 tonnes per year.

ICI—Acid ammonium sulphate residue effluent from acrylics production; 165,000 tonnes per year.

Mr. Battle: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, further to his answer to the hon. Member for Wyre (Mr. Mans) of 22 February, *Official Report*, columns *898-99*, if he will list the nine wastes covered by the 1987 North sea declaration that are still dumped; the quantities involved of each waste and, in each case, when it is anticipated that these disposals at sea will end.

Mr. Curry: All licences for the industrial wastes covered by the 1987 North sea declaration will be withdrawn as soon as alternative methods of disposal are available. The anticipated timetable for termination of sea disposal is as follows. Quantities of waste are expressed as an annual licensed tonnage. Where a licence is withdrawn within a year a correspondingly lower tonnage will be involved.

	Tonnage
To be terminated by summer 1990:	
Orsynetics	
Salt solution manufacture of O tolyl biguanide exported for use in paint and soap manufacture	3,000
To be terminated within a year:	
Chlor Chem	
Acidic effluent from production of water treatment chemicals	1,000
Fine Organics	
Effluent from pharmaceutical production	8,000
Tate and Lyle Sugars	
Filtration sludge from sugar refining	33,000
Woolcombers	
Waste from washing wool	900
Allied Colloids	
Acid ammonium sulphate effluent from acrylics production	15,000
To be terminated by 1992:	
National Power	
Pulverised fuel ash	550,000
Sterling Organics	
Effluent from pharmaceutical manufacture	33,000
ICI Chemicals and Polymers Ltd.	
Acid ammonium sulphate effluent from acrylics production	165,000

For the last two wastes licences will be extended into 1993 only if absolutely necessary on technical grounds and for the shortest possible part of that year.

Liquid Egg

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what research his Department has commissioned into whether grade A hens' eggs derived from laying flocks naturally infected with salmonella enteritidis PT4, when broken out under hygienic conditions within 24 hours of being laid and frozen down immediately after being broken out, may cause the product so derived to be so heavily contaminated as to cause a liquid egg pasteurisation process to fail.

Mr. Maclean: It is very unusual for hens' eggs to be processed within 24 hours of being laid as most egg-processing plants take their raw materials from a wide area. The time taken to deliver eggs to a processing plant would enable any salmonella present to multiply and as I explained to my hon. Friend on 5 February only a moderate heat treatment can be applied to liquid egg during the pasteurisation process otherwise its functional properties are destroyed. For this reason, processing plants cannot accept raw product which is likely to be heavily contaminated with salmonella enteritidis PT4 and no specific research has therefore been commissioned in this area.

Mayonnaise

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what research his Department has commissioned into whether, in the course of preparation of home-made mayonnaise in a commercial kitchen, where other foods contaminated by salmonella enteritidis PT4 are present, it is possible to contaminate the mayonnaise during preparation or storage either directly or indirectly from those foods.

Mr. Curry: The contamination of one food by another is always a risk in any food preparation area, including a commercial kitchen. Appropriate safeguards should always be taken to prevent the entry of any contaminated foods into these areas particularly if cooked foods or foods which receive no cooking, such as mayonnaise, are being prepared.

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the experimental farms involved in his Department's research into bovine spongiform encephalopathy; what control methods for the cattle will be imposed; and if he will make a statement as to how the research will be carried out.

Mr. Curry: The following experimental husbandry farms are involved collaboratively with the central veterinary laboratory in research into BSE:

1. Studies of maternal transmission and its incidence
   - Boxworth
   - Gleadthorpe
   - Drayton
2. Studies to determine whether embryos derived from BSE-infected cows are infective for recipient dams and the progeny
   - High Mowthorpe
   - Redesdale

The animals used in both experiments, as well as those on all Ministry farms, will be subject to the same strict procedures that apply throughout Great Britain where BSE occurs or is suspected. In addition, the brains of all experimental animals that die or are culled at the end of these experiments will be examined histologically for evidence of lesions of BSE. The research is being carried out in accordance with recognised scientific procedures using the best scientific expertise available.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list by month for the last four years to date and by county, the number of cases of bovine spongiform encephalopathy that have been reported in the counties of Yorkshire and Humberside.

Mr. Maclean: BSE was made notifiable on 21 June 1988. Cases recorded before then are not therefore allocated by date of report but by other criteria, such as date of onset of clinical symptoms.

Date	North Yorkshire	South Yorkshire	West Yorkshire	Humberside	Total
March 1986	1	1	0	0	2
June 1987	1	0	0	0	1
July 1987	3	0	0	0	3
August 1987	1	0	0	0	1
September 1987	2	0	0	0	2
October 1987	2	0	0	0	2
November 1987	2	0	0	0	2
December 1987	2	0	0	0	2
January 1988	2	0	0	0	2
February 1988	2	0	1	0	3
March 1988	3	0	0	0	3
April 1988	3	0	0	0	3
June 1988	1	0	0	1	2
July 1988	10	1	1	0	12
August 1988	12	1	0	2	15
September 1988	15	1	4	2	22
October 1988	12	2	4	2	20
November 1988	16	0	1	0	17
December 1988	11	1	1	3	16
January 1989	14	0	0	3	17
February 1989	21	1	3	2	27
March 1989	21	0	0	4	25
April 1989	20	0	2	0	22
May 1989	15	1	4	7	27
June 1989	23	3	1	3	30
July 1989	24	0	1	2	27
August 1989	26	1	3	3	33
September 1989	30	0	3	1	34
October 1989	28	3	0	3	34
November 1989	26	2	4	3	35
December 1989	32	3	2	3	40
January 1990	35	5	8	6	54
February 1990	57	3	8	9	77
March 1990	7	0	1	6	14
Total	480	29	52	65	626

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list, by location and date, the number of cases of bovine spongiform encephalopathy diagnosed at slaughterhouses by his Department's health inspectors.

Mr. Maclean: Suspect cases of BSE occurring at slaughterhouses have, from 1989 onwards, been recorded on a quarterly basis for each region. Information for 1988 is available as a total for each region from 21 June, when BSE became notifiable, to the end of the year. It has been the Ministry's long-established practice not to disclose details of premises from which notifiable diseases have been reported.

1988

Region	Number reported	Number confirmed
Eastern	8	8
Midlands and Western	7	6
Northern	2	1
South East	3	3
South West	10	7
Wales	3	2
North Scotland	0	0
South Scotland	0	0

1989

Region	Quarter	Number reported	Number confirmed
Eastern	1	18	12
	2	14	11
	3	5	5
	4	14	13
Midlands and Western	1	1	0
	2	0	0
	3	3	2
	4	0	0
Northern	1	2	0
	2	3	2
	3	2	2
	4	2	2
South East	1	0	0
	2	0	0
	3	0	0
	4	0	0
South West	1	4	3
	2	8	5
	3	9	6
	4	6	6
Wales	1	1	1
	2	0	0
	3	1	1
	4	0	0
North Scotland	1	0	0
	2	0	0
	3	0	0
	4	0	0
South Scotland	1	0	0
	2	1	1
	3	1	1
	4	0	0

Food Prices

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) pursuant to the answer of 26 February to the hon. Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor), *Official Report*, column *69*, if he will express the figure of 1 to 1·5 per cent. on food prices as an average amount in pounds added to each family's food bill;

(2) pursuant to the reply given to the hon. Member for Southend, East, *Official Report*, 26 February, column *69*, if he will estimate what the additional cost would be in weekly cash terms for the average family's food bill if the present monetary gap associated with the green pound were eliminated.

Mr. Curry: The average effect is estimated to be about 60p per week per household.

Slaughtering (Infected Premises)

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will commission research to determine why premises on which birds have been compulsorily slaughtered have subsequently become reinfected; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maclean: To date there have been very few reports of reinfection on premises where birds have been compulsorily slaughtered and my Department does not plan at present to carry out the kind of research suggested. The assistance of my Department's veterinary investigation centres is available to veterinary practitioners should they wish to advise their clients on salmonella control in poultry or investigate possible causes of reinfection.

Spent Hens

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what current compensation is paid to an egg producer by his Ministry for a spent hen over 72 weeks of age; and what level of compensation was payable at the inception of the Zoonoses Order 1989.

Mr. Maclean: The present rate of compensation paid for a laying bird over 72 weeks of age is 34p. The rate at 1 March 1989, when the Zoonoses Order 1989 came into force, was 18p per bird.

Hens (Slaughter)

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many hens of all descriptions have been compulsorily slaughtered under the provisions of the Zoonoses Order 1989 and the Animal Health Act 1981.

Mr. Maclean: Up to 2 March 1990, a total of 1,126,547 birds have been compulsorily slaughtered under the Animal Health Act 1981 as applied by the Zoonoses Order 1989.

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the total value of payments to all contractors used to assist his Ministry in compulsorily slaughtering hens of all descriptions under the provisions of *(a)* the Zoonoses Order 1989 and *(b)* the Animal Health Act 1981.

Mr. Maclean: Up to 2 March 1990, £42,300 has been paid to contractors assisting in the compulsory slaughter of salmonella-infected flocks.

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will reconsider the policy of compulsory slaughter of chickens in the light of levels of employment in meat processing plants.

Mr. Maclean: The Government's measures to tackle salmonella are being kept under review.

Salmonella

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if any of the broiler flocks identified by his Department in the joint public health laboratory service/SVS salmonella update for January as being infected with salmonella have been compulsorily slaughtered.

Mr. Maclean: No broiler flocks have been compulsorily slaughtered.

Eggs

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food on what grounds he refuses to issue licences to farms which are subject to infected place notices under the Zoonoses Order 1989, to allow the sale of fresh, intact or frozen eggs to processors for pasteurisation.

Mr. Maclean: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply which I gave on 5 February, *Official Report*, column *499*.

Public Relations

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what was the total expenditure by his Department on press and public relations in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

Mr. Curry: The information required for the financial years 1979-80 to 1983-84 could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

The figures for subsequent years are as follows:

	£ million
1984-85	3·2
1985-86	3·5
1986-87	3·1
1987-88	0·6
1988-89	0·8
1989-90	1·1

Figures for the years 1984-85 to 1986-87 refer to the total cost of press, public relations and paid publicity which could be separated to show expenditure on press and public relations only at disproportionate cost. Figures for 1987-88 to 1989-90 relate to press and public relations alone. The estimated budget for press and public relations for 1990-91 is £1·2 million.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what are the latest figures for the number of staff presently employed and the full complement of staff, including vacant posts, in the press and public relations office of his Department; and what is the proposed complement for 1990-91.

Mr. Curry: The number of staff and complement in the press branch of the information division and related posts in the region is 26 and 29. The complement of staff is expected to be the same in 1990-91.

Statistical Divisions

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what are the latest figures for the number of staff presently employed, and the full complement of staff, including vacant posts, by grade, in the statistical divisions in his Department; if he will differentiate between staff in statistical posts and staff in administration posts; and if he will give the staffing complements by grade, and differentiated between statistical and administrative posts, proposed for 1990-91.

Mr. Curry: The information requested is as follows:

	Staff in post 1 March 1990	*Complement 1 March 1990*
Grade 5	2·0	2·0
Grade 7	11·0	11·0
Senior Assistant Statistician /Assistant Statistician	9·0	10·0
Administrative support staff	130·5	134·5

It is expected that the staffing complements for 1990-91 will be a few posts higher than at present.

Privatisation

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what was the total sum paid out in fees to outside organisations in the furtherance of privatisation by his Department in 1979-80 and in each subsequent year; and what is his estimate for 1990-91.

Mr. Curry: The Department has not paid any sums to outside organisations for this purpose in the period 1979-80 to date. We keep continually under review the contribution that the Department might make to the Government privatisation policy.

Advertising Expenditure

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what were the figures for the spending by his Department on *(a)* television advertising, *(b)* radio advertising, *(c)* newspaper advertising and *(d)* other promotional material in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

Mr. Curry: Expenditure by my Department in the financial year 1982-83 and each subsequent year is as follows:

	TV (a)	*Radio (b)*	*Press advertising (c)*	*Other promotional (d)*
1982-83	Nil	Nil	3,000	n/a
1983-84	Nil	Nil	27,000	n/a
1984-85	Nil	Nil	26,000	575,000
1985-86	Nil	Nil	29,000	656,000
1986-87	Nil	Nil	54,000	825,000
1987-88	Nil	Nil	12,000	693,000
1988-89	Nil	Nil	380,000	1,004,000
1989-90	Nil	Nil	116,000	2,372,000

n/a—Not available.

Figures for promotional advertising prior to 1982-83 are not available as the information for those years includes recruitment and other types of advertising. Information is not readily available to distinguish between expenditure on advertising in newspapers and that in the press generally. Separate figures for expenditure on other promotional material prior to 1984-85 are available only at disproportionate costs. The overall publicity budget for 1990-91 is estimated to be £2·4 million.

Irish Sea

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the amount of heavy metal contamination of fish in the Irish sea; and what assessment he has made of its ecological and direct health dangers.

Mr. Curry: Data on the heavy metal content of fish in the Irish sea collected by my Department's scientists as part of their regular monitoring of coastal waters are contained in "Aquatic Environment Monitoring Report" Nos. 16 and 17 which are available in the Library of the House. The conclusions in this report indicate that heavy metal contamination of fish in the Irish sea poses no ecological dangers.

The steering group on food surveillance produces regular reports on levels of contaminants in food, including fish, which are considered by the Department of Health's committee on toxicity of chemicals in food, consumer products and the environment. The results of these reports do not indicate that there is any risk to consumers as a result of eating fish.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what assessment he has made of the effect of sewage and industrial dumping on the level of phytoplankton, and implications for the ecosystem in the Irish sea.

Mr. Curry: There is no industrial waste dumping in the Irish sea. The Department's assessment is that disposals of sewage sludge in Liverpool bay do not affect levels of phytoplankton and in turn therefore there are no implications for the ecosystem of the Irish sea.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on his assessment of the effect of industrial radioactive and chemical pollution and waste disposal on the quantity and safety of fish caught in the Irish sea.

Mr. Curry: Data on radioactive discharges to the Irish sea and in seafood from the Irish sea which are collected and analysed by my Department's scientists are published on an annual basis in the "Aquatic Environment Monitoring Report" series, copies of which are available in the Library of the House.

In addition, the concentrations of a range of non-radioactive contaminants in fish caught around our shores including the Irish sea, are routinely monitored by my Department's scientists. The results of this monitoring are assessed by the interdepartmental steering group on food surveillance.

The data and assessments indicate that the levels of contamination monitored do not give any cause for concern from a human consumption standpoint and do not represent a significant risk to either marine life or its habitat.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the amount per year of radioactive waste placed on the Irish sea basin.

Mr. Curry: Radioactive waste is not disposed of by placing it on the Irish sea basin. Details of the radioactivity contained in low-level liquid radioactive waste discharged under authorisation from nuclear facilities bordering the Irish sea are published annually in the Ministry's "Aquatic Environment Monitoring Report" series, copies of which are available in the Library of the House.

During 1988 the amount of radioactivity contained in discharges to the Irish sea was:

	TBq
Tritium	1,843
Other beta activity	192
Alpha	2·5

Imported Mineral Waters

Mr. Kirkhope: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will publish the nitrate and sodium levels of imported mineral waters; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maclean: The Ministry does not keep records of the composition of individual brands of imported natural mineral waters.

However I have recently written to the Commission urging that in the interests of consumer information the chemical analysis of mineral water should be displayed on the bottle.

Poultry

Mr. Roy Hughes: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food why the registration fee levied on all poultry laying flock keepers who are required to register has not yet been determined.

Mr. Maclean: The Poultry Flocks, Hatcheries and Processed Animal Protein (Fees) Order 1990 was laid before the House on 9 March.

Mr. Roy Hughes: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food why the registration fee levied on all poultry flock keepers who are required to register will accrue to his Ministry.

Mr. Maclean : The registration of poultry laying flocks is being carried out by Agriculture Departments and so they will recover the associated costs.

Mr. Roy Hughes: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food why only larger flocks of poultry laying hens have to be registered.

Mr. Maclean: The resources for enforcing the salmonella legislation need to be concentrated particularly on flocks of 100 birds or more, which together supply over 98 per cent. of the eggs produced in this country. Flocks under this size are not required to be registered but the owners are subject to checks to ensure that they are meeting the salmonella testing requirements, which apply to all flocks from which eggs are sold for human consumption.

Mr. Roy Hughes: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether the Government will allocate any additional resources to enable local authorities to enforce the Poultry Laying Flocks (Testing and Registration Etc.) Order 1989.

Mr. Maclean: The resources needed for this work will be taken into account in future decisions on local authority funding.

Mr. Roy Hughes: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how successful the Poultry Laying Flocks (Testing and Registration Etc.) Order 1989 has been in providing a system of maintaining hens producing eggs for human consumption and in setting hygienic standards for handling and storage of eggs on farms.

Mr. Maclean: It is too early to judge the success of these new controls some of which came into effect last October, while the remainder become effective from 2 April 1990.

Mountain Spring Water (Cyprus)

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the type and extent of bacteria found in Cypriot mountain spring water.

Mr. Maclean: This information is not generally available. However, I understand that last year two brands of bottled water from Cyprus were removed from sale following action by port and environmental health officials on evidence of unsatisfactory microbiological purity.

Benzene

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what assessment he has made of the validity of the statements by Mme Denise Pepin from the Institute of Hydrology in Clermont-Ferrand that benzene was only one group of trace elements filtered out from the mineral water and that of Dr. John Fawell, toxicologist at the water research centre in Buckinghamshire that it was not possible for the benzene to be naturally occurring; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maclean: I assume the question refers to Perrier water. I have asked my officials to write to the EC Commission raising this and other questions concerned with its exploitation and labelling.

Management Consultants

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what were the total fees paid out by his Department to management consultants in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

Mr. Curry: The total fees paid out by my Department to management consultants, excluding computer consultants, for 1984-85 to 1988-89, the estimated expenditure in 1989-90 and provision for 1990-91 are given in the table:

	£
1984-85	27,110
1985-86	174,724
1986-87	135,279
1987-88	44,015
1988-89	162,114
[1]1989-90	143,175
[2]1990-91	123,198

[1] Estimate.
[2] Provision.

Information for earlier years is not available except at disproportionate cost.

Lindane

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, pursuant to the answer of 6 March, *Official Report*, columns *559-60*, what levels of lindane have been detected; and what level is regarded as posing a threat to marine life.

Mr. Curry: Scientists from my Department conducted a survey of the concentrations of lindane in the waters of the English Channel in November last year. The concentrations of lindane found were 0·13 to 0·65 ng/l. This compares with 1 to 4 ng/l reported by scientists from the Federal Republic of Germany for the North sea in 1986, when the highest concentrations were found in the German Bight. The safe level for marine life set by United Kingdom authorities is 10 ng/l and that set by the European Community is 20 ng/l.

Institute of Food Research

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many projects are presently being undertaken at the Bristol laboratory of the Institute of Food Research; how many are to be transferred to either Reading or Norwich; and how many of these are related to food safety.

Mr. Maclean: I refer the hon. Member to the reply that I gave to the hon. Member for South Shields (Dr. Clark) on 19 February 1990, *Official Report*, column *576*.

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what assessment he has made of the implications for food safety, in respect of microwaves, of the decision to close the Bristol laboratory of the Institute of Food Research.

Mr. Maclean: There are no implications for food safety, in respect of microwaves, of this closure, as there are facilities elsewhere with the capability to carry out research in this area. This will be evident from the answer which I gave on 13 December 1989, *Official Report*, column *694*.

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what facilities will exist, following the closure of the Bristol laboratory of the Institute of Food Research, capable of monitoring the safety of novel food processes on a scale appropriate to industrial conditions.

Mr. Maclean: It is for the industry to establish the safety of any novel food process. The research associations and institutes of higher education have appropriate facilities in addition to those of industry.

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many representations he has received *(a)* in favour of and *(b)* against the projected closure of the Bristol laboratory of the Institute of Food Research; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maclean: We have received many representations against the proposed closure of the Bristol laboratory. Most of them were essentially worried about the consequences for food safety R and D. I can assure the hon. Member that the closure will not affect the Government's continuing commitment to address and resolve food safety and hygiene issues of concern to taxpayers, consumers, producers and industry.

Indeed the Government are spending more money—£11·5 million in total—this year on R and D into food safety. Consolidation of the work of the Institute of Food Research at Norwich and Reading will allow greater emphasis to be placed on the basic and molecular sciences, especially in key areas such as food safety where major programmes will be further strengthened and expanded.

Gold Sinny Wrasse

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what research is currently being undertaken by his Department into the use of the gold sinny wrasse as a substitute for pesticide use in fish farming.

Mr. Lang: I have been asked to reply.

Control of sea lice infestation is mainly a problem for marine salmon farms all but a few of which, in the United Kingdom, are located in Scotland.

The possible use of gold sinny wrasse to control sea lice is being investigated in trials by the Institute of Fishery Technology Research in Norway and in Scotland by the Sea Fish Industry Authority's sea farming unit in conjunction with the salmon farming industry.

A full evaluation of the Sea Fish Industry Authority's initial trials is not expected until the end of the year. Preliminary results including those from small-scale field trials with wrasse taken from the wild suggest that numbers of sea lice on farmed salmon are reduced in enclosures shared by wrasse. The viability of this method for large-scale and long-term control of sea lice is uncertain as yet and more work will be needed before commercial viability can be assessed.

Although the work is not being undertaken directly at the hands of Fisheries Departments, the results will be of considerable interest in relation to the investigation of other possible alternative controls on sea lice. DAFS scientists are co-ordinating a large-scale project, part funded by the European Communities research programme into possible development of a vaccine treatment. Other work is being undertaken with industry support, for example, the institute of aquaculture, university of Stirling has been commissioned by the Scottish Salmon Growers' Association to investigate alternative treatment methods. It is not possible to say when positive results or practical methods of treatment might emerge from these investigations.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Director of Public Prosecutions

56. **Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Attorney-General if he will make a statement on the content of his most recent discussions with the Director of Public Prosecutions.

The Attorney-General: I frequently meet the Director of Public Prosecutions to discuss matters of departmental interest, but I do not publish the contents of our discussions.

59. **Mr. Winnick:** To ask the Attorney-General when he last met the Director of Public Prosecutions; and what subjects were discussed.

61. **Mr. Janner:** To ask the Attorney-General when he last met the Director of Public Prosecutions; and what matters were discussed.

The Attorney-General: I last met the Director of Public Prosecutions on Monday 26 February 1990 when we discussed matters of departmental interest.

Crown Prosecution Service

60. **Mr. John Marshall:** To ask the Attorney-General if he will make a further statement about the operation of the Crown prosecution service.

The Attorney-General: The Crown prosecution service continues vigorously to pursue the objectives detailed in the DPP's annual report to Parliament presented on 28 July 1989.

House of Fraser

62. **Mr. Teddy Taylor:** To ask the Attorney-General what advice he has received from the serious fraud squad following its inquiries into the implications of the issues raised in the House of Fraser report; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: I refer to the written answer I gave my hon. Friend the Member for Nottingham, South (Mr. Brandon-Bravo) on 1 March.

Statistical Divisions

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Attorney-General what are the latest figures for the number of staff presently employed, and the full complement of staff, including vacant posts, by grade, in the statistical divisions in the Lord Chancellor's Department; if he will differentiate between staff in statistical posts and staff in administrative posts; and if he will give the staffing complements by grade, and differentiated between statistical and administrative posts, proposed for 1990-91.

The Attorney-General: The number of staff by grade presently employed in the statistics branch of the Lord Chancellor's Department, together with the full complement, are as follows. No changes in complement are proposed for 1990-91.

Grade of staff	*In post March 1990*	*Complement 1989-90*
Grade 7/Statistician	1	1
Assistant/Senior Assistant Statistician	1	1
Higher Executive Officer	1	1
Executive Officer	2	2
Administrative Officer	4	4
Administrative Assistant	3	3

Public Relations

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Attorney-General what are the latest figures for the number of staff presently employed, and the full complement of staff, including vacant posts, in the press and public relations office of the Lord Chancellor's Department; and what is the proposed complement for 1990-91.

The Attorney-General: At present there are six permanent staff employed in the press office of the Lord Chancellor's Department and one on secondment for six months. There are no vacancies at present and no current plans to increase the complement.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Attorney-General what was the total expenditure by the Lord Chancellor's Department on press and public relations in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

The Attorney-General: The estimated 1989-90 expenditure by the Lord Chancellor's Department on press and public relations is £35,000 excluding staff costs. The budget for 1990-91 is £45,000.

Total expenditure excluding staff costs is:

	£
1984-85	5,180
1985-86	13,253
1986-87	23,282
1987-88	34,500
1988-89	34,159

The amounts spent for the previous years can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Advertising Expenditure

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Attorney-General what were the figures for the spending by the Lord Chancellor's Department on *(a)* television advertising, *(b)* radio advertising, *(c)* newspaper advertising and *(d)* other promotional material in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

The Attorney-General: The figures for the Lord Chancellor's Department, excluding staff costs, are as follows:

	1988-89 Actual £	*1989-90 Forecast* £	*1990-91 Forecast* £
Television advertising	Nil	Nil	Nil
Radio advertising	Nil	Nil	Nil
Newspaper advertising	15,000	15,000	16,000
Other promotional material	32,500	35,000	45,000

The breakdown of the amounts spent on respective areas and the amounts spent for the previous years can be obtained only at disproportionate cost, but the total expenditure including staff costs was:

	£
1984-85	135,730
1985-86	176,613
1986-87	148,020
1987-88	137,001

Management Consultants

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Attorney-General what were the total fees paid out by the Lord Chancellor's Department to management consultants in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

The Attorney-General: On the information available, the cost to the Lord Chancellor's Department of employing management consultants for each financial year from 1984-85 to date is as follows:

	£
1984-85	Nil
1985-86	221,000
1986-87	473,837
1987-88	134,255
1988-89	205,882
1989-90	178,500
1990-91	[1]190,000

[1] forecast

The figures exclude computer consultancy. Figures for 1979-80 to 1983-84 could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Crown Court, Barrow-in-Furness

Mr. Franks: To ask the Attorney-General what plans he has to improve facilities at the Crown court in Barrow-in-Furness.

The Attorney-General: The Crown court at Barrow-in-Furness sits only some 33 days per year and uses the magistrates court's premises. The magistrates court building is the responsibility of the magistrates courts committee and any improvement to the facilities is primarily a matter for it. There is a proposal to replace this building in the next few years, and therefore, there are no plans to make improvements to the facilities.

Bailiffs

Mr. Nellist: To ask the Attorney-General what information he has as to the number of firms in (i) England, (ii) each English region and (iii) each district council area of Wales of certificated bailiffs; and how many operatives they employ.

The Attorney-General: The Lord Chancellor's Department is not responsible for the employment of certificated bailiffs and the information sought is not kept. Each county court is, however, required to exhibit a list of bailiffs who have been granted a certificate to levy distress for rent by a judge of that court.

ENVIRONMENT

Crown Suppliers

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what advice is made available by the TCS privatisation unit on compliance with European Economic Community directives on procurement.

Mr. Chope: Guidance on compliance with these directives is the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The Crown Suppliers privatisation unit takes account of Treasury guidance when advising Departments about the implications of privatisation of the Crown Suppliers.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps have been taken to determine whether guarantees in relation to TCS work accord with EEC and GATT directives.

Mr. Chope: All Departments have been made aware by Her Majesty's Treasury of the requirements of the EC directives and GATT agreement on Government procurement. My Department will comply with those requirements in any agreement which it has or may enter into with the Crown Suppliers, involving undertakings about future business levels for a period.

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the total value of contracts that the Crown Suppliers has won through tender competition for suppliers to the private sector.

Mr. Chope: Total sales by the Crown Suppliers to the private sector from April to December 1989 were to the value of £748,000, of which £118,000 was awarded through tenders.

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he anticipates that the audit of the 1989 trading results of the Crown Suppliers will be complete; and who will undertake that audit.

Mr. Chope: The audit of the 1989 trading results of the Crown Suppliers will be undertaken by the National Audit Office. Completion of the audit is planned for May 1990.

South Yorkshire Fire Authority

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what discussions he has had with the South Yorkshire fire and civil defence authority over its financial situation; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment carefully considered the representations made by the authority on his proposals for the 1990-91 local authority grant settlement before taking final decisions on the settlement. My right hon. and noble Friend the Minister of State, Home Office, subsequently met a delegation from the authority to discuss its financial situation.

Housing (London)

Miss Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what was the number of housing association units for rent approved by the Housing Corporation within the London boroughs, under its block three (new) programme in each of the years 1985-86, 1987-88 and 1988-89, with figures to be apportioned between newly built and rehabilitated units and with hostel and shared housing bedspaces to be itemised separately;

(2) what was the number of units for rent within the London boroughs completed by housing associations, where funding was through housing association grant dispensed by the Housing Corporation in each of the years 1985-86, 1986-87, 1987-88 and 1988-89, with figures to be apportioned between newly built and rehabilitated units and with hostel and shared housing bedspaces to be itemised separately.

Mr. Chope: This information is not held by the Department but by the Housing Corporation. I have therefore asked the Housing Corporation to respond to the hon. Member direct.

Miss Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what were the total numbers of housing association homes for rent completed by housing associations within the London boroughs, excluding units already owned by associations that received housing

association grant for major repairs, where the primary funding source was local authority housing association grant for each of the years 1985-86, 1986-87, 1987-88 and 1988-89, with figures to be apportioned between newly built and rehabilitated units and with hostel and shared housing bedspaces to be itemised separately;

(2) what were the total numbers of housing association units for rent within the London boroughs that were approved by his Department for housing association grant, block three, where the funding authority was a local authority not the Housing Corporation, for each of the years 1985-86, 1986-87, 1987-88 and 1988-89, with figures to be apportioned between newly built and rehabilitated units with hostel and shared housing bedspaces to be itemised separately.

Mr. Chope: The detailed information requested is not available. Total numbers of housing association dwellings funded by English local authorities are published in table 2.26 of the quarterly HMSO publication "Housing and Construction Statistics Part 2", which is in the Library.

Housing

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will provide in the *Official Report* figures consistent with tables 8.1 and 8.2 of Cm. 1008 for the years 1984-85 to 1989-90 but broken down on the same basis as table 9.1 of Cm. 609.

Mr. Chope: The figures are as follows:

Department of the Environment—Housing

£ million, cash

	1984-85 outturn	*1985-86 outturn*	*1986-87 outturn*	*1987-88 outturn*	*1988-89 outturn*	*1989-90 estimated outturn*
Gross capital expenditure						
Central Government						
Housing Corporation						
Support to private sector						
Provision for rent by Housing Associations	516	514	567	590	673	634
Housing Association low cost home ownership	181	197	148	161	118	184
Housing Association Grant via local authorities						
Support to private sector						
Provision for rent	130	108	117	106	146	143
Home ownership	5	3	3	17	23	20
Other central government						
Support to private sector						
Home ownership	7	4	3	3	2	2
Local authorities						
Public sector provision						
Renovation	1,280	1,312	1,512	1,731	1,901	2,425
Provision for rent	792	704	612	625	675	605
Support to private sector						
Renovation and clearance	891	608	543	560	528	500
Provision for rent by Housing Associations	13	9	19	29	−35	−2
Home ownership (including local authority sponsored Housing Association low cost home ownership)	78	58	78	83	94	104
Public corporations:						
New Towns						
Public sector provision						
Renovation	23	9	8	6	7	6
Provision for rent	18	7	8	6	1	0
Support to private sector						
Home ownership	40	39	23	39	38	32
Total public sector provision	2,113	2,033	2,140	2,368	2,584	3,036
Total support to private sector	1,860	1,540	1,500	1,588	1,587	1,618
Total renovation	2,194	1,929	2,063	2,296	2,436	2,931
Total provision for rent	1,468	1,342	1,323	1,356	1,460	1,380
Total home ownership	310	301	255	303	275	343
Total Housing Corporation	697	711	715	752	791	818
Total HAG via local authorities	134	110	120	122	169	163
Total other central government	7	4	3	3	2	2
Total local authorities	3,053	2,691	2,764	3,028	3,163	3,632
Total New Towns	81	56	40	50	46	38
TOTAL GROSS CAPITAL EXPENDITURE	3,973	3,573	3,641	3,955	4,171	4,654
Capital receipts:						
Housing Corporation	−87	−105	−132	−124	−142	−124
Other central government	−1	−2	−2	−4	−2	−2
Local authorities	−1,628	−1,617	−1,899	−2,248	−3,219	−3,300
New Towns	−88	−64	−98	−143	−226	−216
TOTAL CAPITAL RECEIPTS	−1,804	−1,787	−2,131	−2,519	−3,589	−3,642
Net capital expenditure						

	1984-85 outturn	1985-86 outturn	1986-87 outturn	1987-88 outturn	1988-89 outturn	1989-90 estimated outturn
Housing Corporation	610	606	583	628	649	694
Housing Association Grant via local authorities	134	110	120	122	169	163
Other central Government	6	3	1	−1	1	0
Local authorities	1,425	1,074	864	780	−56	332
New Towns	−7	−8	−58	−93	−180	−178
TOTAL NET CAPITAL EXPENDITURE	2,169	1,786	1,509	1,436	582	1,012
Current expenditure						
Central Government						
Subsidies to:						
Housing associations	20	25	29	36	38	55
Local authorities	342	409	534	473	472	571
Housing Corporation and central Government, current	32	35	38	44	47	53
Local authorities						
Subsidies to revenue deficits on local authority housing for rent	440	451	422	477	441	468
Other current	144	166	187	227	192	211
Public corporations						
Subsidies to New Towns	119	90	85	83	78	71
TOTAL CURRENT EXPENDITURE	1,098	1,176	1,296	1,340	1,269	1,429
Housing Action Trusts—EFL						
TOTAL DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT—HOUSING	3,267	2,962	2,806	2,777	1,852	2,441

The footnotes to table 9.1 of Cm 609 apply also to this table.

Since the publication of Cm 1008 planned gross capital expenditure by the Housing Corporation in 1989-90 has been increased by £120 million. The effect is not shown in the tables.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will tabulate the amounts of each of the components in the standard spending assessments of each London borough, together with the respective totals.

Mr. Chope: The amounts are listed in the table:

1990-91 Standard spending assessments

£ million

	Education	Personal Social services	Highway maintenance	All other services	Capital financing	Total
Camden	52·762	33·809	5·078	47·006	12·609	151·265
Greenwich	82·257	25·451	7·356	24·933	13·023	153·020
Hackney	91·828	45·074	5·287	47·003	16·297	205·490
Hammersmith and Fulham	45·602	32·215	4·262	37·717	12·563	132·360
Islington	64·211	34·146	4·222	42·762	12·831	158·172
Kensington and Chelsea	29·783	23·497	4·112	30·189	11·000	98·581
Lambeth	105·484	57·262	6·656	53·122	17·709	240·232
Lewisham	86·010	35·035	6·662	33·144	13·434	174·285
Southwark	85·168	40·813	6·653	43·907	16·653	193·194
Tower Hamlets	91·292	32·414	4·612	33·654	17·613	179·585
Wandsworth	84·149	43·829	6·714	49·241	18·782	202·715
Westminster	44·456	34·161	8·241	68·772	16·578	172·208
Barking and Dagenham	48·338	14·943	4·290	15·574	5·935	89·080
Barnet	88·054	23·237	7·946	28·904	11·859	160·000
Bexley	67·800	13·412	6·230	16·860	12·048	116·350
Brent	108·138	35·191	7·149	47·924	16·380	214·782
Bromley	79·378	20·353	9·558	20·446	11·879	141·615
Croydon	102·781	27·523	10·111	34·768	14·957	190·140
Ealing	100·586	30·872	8·367	46·396	16·323	202·545
Enfield	88·524	21·500	7·407	26·255	15·982	159·669
Haringey	79·308	32·528	4·957	35·439	14·640	166·872
Harrow	65·387	13·080	5·612	18·333	13·338	115·750
Havering	71·015	13·710	6·588	14·861	11·130	117·305
Hillingdon	69·110	16·047	7·870	17·600	15·241	125·868
Hounslow	68·774	18·643	5·571	21·846	10·112	124·945
Kingston-upon-Thames	36·275	10·989	4·251	12·707	8·686	72·908

	Education	Personal Social services	Highway maintenance	All other services	Capital financing	Total
Merton	47·164	15·345	5·192	17·366	12·510	97·577
Newham	98·510	31·636	6·008	41·619	17·571	195·344
Redbridge	71·225	17·082	6·278	23·379	11·167	129·131
Richmond-upon-Thames	35·997	13·677	4·724	14·686	6·956	76·039
Sutton	47·633	12·233	5·525	14·173	8·681	88·245
Waltham Forest	81·744	27·274	5·808	30·898	14·935	160·660

Mrs. Peacock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what provisions govern the eligibility of student nurses for community charge relief at the student rate; and what proportion of student nurses will pay at the student rate in 1990-91.

Mr. Chope: The eligibility criteria for the student relief are set out in the Personal Community Charge (Students) Regulations 1989 (S.I. 1989/443). They provide that students on undergraduate nursing courses and those undertaking Project 2000 training will be eligible for the student relief. No precise estimate can be made of the numbers involved. However I understand that, by 1 April 1990, Project 2000 schemes will be in operation at 13 of the 86 nursing schools in England. Over the next few years the scheme will be extended to cover all pre-registration nursing trainees receiving their training in schools of nursing.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, further to his written reply dated 14 February, *Official Report*, column *222*, concerning the amount of poll tax payable in 1990-91 per adult for each region, and so on whether he will provide in each case an estimate of the number of adults, excluding ratepayers' spouses, who do not currently pay rates.

Mr. Chope *[holding answer 26 February 1990]:* The available information is shown in the table. This is based on data taken from the family expenditure survey and shows the estimated number of adults in each region who are not the head of household or their spouse.

	Thousands
Northern	380
Yorkshire and Humberside	510
North West	760
East Midlands	430
West Midlands	630
East Anglia	230
Greater London	800
Remainder of South East	1,100
South West	530
Total England	5,400

Numbers may not add due to rounding.

Council Houses

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how much local authorities spend on former council houses they no longer own; and when he anticipates local authorities being free of debt on these former assets.

Mr. Chope: Local authorities in England spent £110 million up to 31 March 1989 on reinstatement grants under part XVI of the Housing Act 1985. Information is not available on how much authorities pay in home improvement grants on former council houses. Authorities generally manage their debt on a collective basis and it is, therefore, impossible to attribute a specific amount of outstanding debt to specific former assets. Outstanding debt in authorities' housing revenue accounts, however, is taken into account in the assessment of housing subsidy.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the average price of council houses sold during the period 1985 to the end of 1989.

Mr. Chope: The average discounted selling price for local authority and new town sales in England between January 1985 and December 1989 was £16,200.

Housing Corporation

Ms. Primarolo: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether the Housing Corporation has given the south-west housing associations permission to bring money forward from 1990-91 into the current financial year to pay urgent bills.

Mr. Chope: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State announced on 30 January 1990, *Official Report*, column *175*, that the capital resources available to the Housing Corporation in 1989-90 would be increased by £120 million, with a corresponding reduction in 1990-91, to reflect a greater speeding up of housing schemes by housing associations than had been forecast. This will enable the Housing Corporation to meet equitably the inescapable commitments of housing associations across all regions for the rest of the financial year.

Residential Property (Greater London)

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what estimate he has made of the percentage change in the price of residential properties in Greater London following the limiting of Miras to one per dwelling.

Mr. Chope: The rules giving mortgage interest tax relief were changed from 1 August 1988; changes in mix-adjusted house prices in Greater London from the third quarter of 1988 are as follows:

	Percentage change on previous quarter
1988	
July-September	7
October-December	7
1989	
January-March	−4
April-June	5
July-September	−1
October-December	−3

Radioactive Waste

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment why, in table 3-11 of the United Kingdom radioactive waste inventory (DOE/RW 188.061), substantial low-level waste arisings are included with the figures for committed sources.

Mr. Trippier: I presume that the hon. Member refers to the table on page 3-11 which gives this information. These low-level waste arisings are those from the operation and decommissioning of plant currently in existence, under construction or required in future for currently approved programmes.

Property Services Agency

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many staff of the Property Services Agency were serving abroad on 1 February; in which countries they were stationed; and whether they will be given the opportunity to return to the United Kingdom before privatisation.

Mr. Chope: At 1 February 1990 the numbers of civil servants in the Property Services Agency serving abroad were:

	Non-industrial	*Industrial*
Germany	274	5
Cyprus	53	20
Gibraltar	49	4
Hong Kong	12	—
Ascension	6	4
Belize	10	12
Bermuda	1	—
Falkland Islands	20	—
Canada	2	—
United States of America	1	—
	428	45

Up to privatisation, staff serving abroad will be expected to serve out their tours in the normal way.

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what number of Property Services Agency staff have been told that they cannot accept or apply for Civil Service posts outside the Property Services Agency.

Mr. Chope: None, but all staff are aware that their release will depend on whether they need to be replaced and if so when a suitable replacement can be found.

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the number of consultants and contractors who failed the Property Services Agency's security clearance tests in 1987, 1988 and 1989.

Mr. Chope: It is not the practice to give detailed information about security vetting.

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether the staff of the Property Services Agency will lose their civil servant status following their transfer to the proposed Government-owned company.

Mr. Chope: Yes.

Property Holdings

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what number of staff Property Holdings will have on 1 April, in the following groups: *(a)* P and T, *(b)* AEG and *(c)* support.

Mr. Chope: It is anticipated that at 1 April 1990 the non-industrial staff numbers in Property Holdings will be:

	Number
P and T	160
AEG	470
Support	40

PSA and Crown Suppliers

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has made any statement to the staff of the Property Services Agency or TCS about their future since he became Secretary of State.

Mr. Chope: My right hon. Friend's speeches in the debates on the Second and Third Readings of the Property Services Agency and Crown Suppliers Bill included statements about the future prospects for the staff of TCS and the agency.

Interdepartmental Dispatch Service

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will require new employees of the interdepartmental dispatch service to be security cleared following privatisation.

Mr. Chope: The existing requirements in relation to the security clearance of IDS staff engaged in the carriage of Government mail will continue after privatisation.

Statistical Divisions

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what are the latest figures for the number of staff presently employed, and the full complement of staff, including vacant posts, by grade, in the statistical divisions in his Department; if he will differentiate between staff in statistical posts and staff in administration posts; and if he will give the staffing complements by grade, and differentiated between statistical and administrative posts, proposed for 1990-91.

Mr. Chris Patten: The numbers and grades of staff and complement in the statistical divisions[1] of DOE(C), at 1 March 1990 are as follows:

	Staff in post as at 1 March 1990	*Complement*
Chief Statistician	5	5
Statistician	17	17
Senior Assistant Statistician	6	6
Assistant Statistician	3	3
G7	1	2
SEO	4	3
HEO	13·5	13
EO	29	29
AO	32	36
AA	6·5	13
Secretary/Typist	4	4
Total	121	131

[1] The statistical divisions, in DOE(C) comprise Housing data statistics, Construction Industry Statistics, Finance Local Authority Statistics, Land and General Statistics and Environmental Protection Statistics.

There are also statisticians employed throughout the Department in posts of a largely administrative nature; these numbered 11 at 1 March 1990. Complements for 1990-91 have not yet been finalised.

Public Relations

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what are the latest figures for the number of staff presently employed, and the full complement of staff, including vacant posts, in the press and public relations office of his Department; and what is the proposed complement for 1990-91.

Mr. Chris Patten: On 1 March there were 44 staff employed in the information directorate of my Department (including PSA), against a complement of 47. The proposed complement for 1990-91 is 48.

Privatisation

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the total sum paid out in fees to outside organisations in the furtherance of privatisation by his Department in 1979-80 and in each subsequent year; and what is his estimate for 1990-91.

Mr. Chris Patten: Following is the information for water privatisation advisers:

	£ million
1986-87	1·1
1987-88	0·6
1988-89	5·1
1989-90[1]	23·0

[1] Forecast outturn.

Expenditure relating to the privatisation of the Crown Suppliers was £40,000 in 1988-89 and is estimated to be £280,000 for 1989-90.

No expenditure was incurred on privatisation advisers prior to 1986-87. Final decisions have not yet been made about costs to be incurred in 1990-91.

Management Consultants

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what were the total fees paid out by his Department to management consultants in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

Mr. Chris Patten: Information relating to the financial years 1979-80 and 1984-85 inclusive is not readily available and cannot be obtained without disproportionate cost. Final decisions have not yet been made about costs to be incurred in 1990-91.

Following is the information relating to the remaining financial years for my Department including PSA:

	£ million
1985-86	4·3
1986-87	5·0
1987-88	5·3
1988-89	8·4
1989-90[1]	16·4

[1] Forecast outturn.

Waste Imports

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give *(a)* figures for (i) the amount of waste controlled by the transfrontier shipment regulations and (ii) the amount of waste not controlled by the transfrontier shipment regulations imported into the United Kingdom between 31 October 1988 and 30 October 1989 and *(b)* details of the wastes not controlled by the transfrontier shipment regulations; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: A total of 36,789 tonnes of waste was imported into England and Wales under the Transfrontier Shipment of Hazardous Waste Regulations 1988, between 31 October 1988 and 30 October 1989. Information is not held centrally on the quantities or types of imported waste that are not controlled by the transfrontier regulations.

Palace of Westminster (Hairdressing)

Mrs. Fyfe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what progress has been made on the provision in the Palace of Westminster of hairdressing facilities for hon. Ladies and female staff; and when he expects the facility to become available.

Mr. Chope: I am not aware of having received any request from the House authorities to consider converting accommodation for use as hairdressing facilities.

Demolition

Mr. Dykes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if, pursuant to his statement of 2 March, *Official Report*, columns 531-34, he will set out the options he is considering with regard to meeting the objectives of residential planning demolition restraint.

Mr. Michael Spicer: As I indicated to the House on 2 March, I intend shortly to issue a consultation paper about whether the demolition of dwellinghouses should be brought within planning control. It will set out the issue and invite views on the scale of the problem nationwide. I expect the paper to seek comments on the following options:

(a) designation of more conservation areas;
(b) designation of local or special development areas;
(c) a system of prior notification of demolition of residential property;
(d) a code of practice for housebuilders;
(e) further policy advice from my Department;
(f) require planning permission to be obtained before demolishing any dwellinghouse.

Maintenance

Mr. Terry Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when the cash-limited amount for minor maintenance work charged to class XX, vote 18, subhead G (maintenance and other operating costs) for 1989-90 was exhausted.

Mr. Chope: Funds are still available, but, in order to stay within the provision voted by Parliament, it is necessary to consider priorities with particular care during the rest of the financial year.

Water Filters

Mr. Kirkhope: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what harmful bacteria have been identified as generally present in a carbon water filter.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: Carbon filters absorb organic matter present in water and also promote the decomposition of chlorine. Therefore, a carbon filter can support the development of a wide range of bacteria by providing nutrients for growth and by protecting bacteria from the disinfectant action of chlorine.

The following potentially harmful species of bacteria have been detected in carbon water filters:

Pseudomonas Aeruginosa, Aeromonas Hydrophilla, Klebsiella.

These species are all known to be opportunistic pathogens and as such as potentially harmful to the very young, the elderly and immuno-compromised patients.

Kleinwort Benson

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment on how many occasions and for what purpose his Department has commissioned work from Kleinwort Benson since July 1988.

Mr. Chris Patten: I am not aware that my Department has placed any commission with Kleinwort Benson since July 1988.

Fridge Bank

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will consider supporting a national fridge bank scheme as a way of reducing chlorofluorocarbons by removing old and unwanted fridges.

Mr. Trippier: We have commissioned a technical report by Coopers and Lybrand which deals with the problem of the existing stock of chlorofluorocarbons. We will consider whether any new initiatives are appropriate in the light of that report.

Rating Reform

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list all those regulations governing the introduction of the community charge and the uniform business rate which have yet to be *(a)* laid before the House and *(b)* debated by the House.

Mr. David Hunt *[holding answer 9 March 1990]:* The regulations still to be laid before the House are as follows:

The Community Charge

1. Amendments to the administration and enforcement regulations.
2. Make up of the general fund.
3. Arrangements for netting of RSG and redistributed NNDR payments to local authorities and NNDR contributions from local authorities.
4. The form of the bills to be used when an authority is charge capped.
5. Adjustments to rates recoverable or written off after 1 April 1990 relating to earlier years.
6. Exemption of 18-19 year olds still at school.

National Non-Domestic Rates

7. Valuation of caravan sites, universities and polytechnics.
8. Alteration of lists—appeals against rateable values and Valuation and Community Charge Tribunals procedures for NNDR.
9. Savings from General Rate Act 1967 and related provisions.
10. Repeals and Consequential amendments.
11. Payment of interest on overpaid rates.
12. Transitional arrangements: additional rules to deal with special cases.
13. Rateable Values of Utilities: National Power plc and nuclear power stations. (Subject to an Affirmative Resolution).

The last debate which covered affirmative regulations and regulations subject to negative resolutions that had been prayed against took place in the House on 20 December 1989. On 18 January 1990 the House approved the report giving effect to the 1990-91 grant settlement.

Industrial Waste

Mrs. Rosie Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what measures his Department has taken to provide incentives for companies to reduce pollutant output and to penalise those who fail to comply with current regulations governing the output of industrial waste.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory *[holding answer 9 March 1990]:* Companies whose processes pollute the environment are expected to meet the full costs of the measures which the regulatory authorities require them to take in order to control the level of their emissions or discharges. Failure to comply is punishable by law, and offenders may face unlimited fines in the higher courts under provisions contained in the new Environmental Protection Bill.

Chemical Waste

Mrs. Rosie Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps his Department has taken to oblige the dumpers of chemical waste to prove its safety before dumping is permitted.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory *[holding answer 9 March 1990]:* Under the Control of Pollution Act 1974, chemical waste must be disposed of to suitably licensed, land-based facilities. In granting the licence, the waste disposal authority must be satisfied that the proposed activities will not endanger public health or pollute water. Disposals of wastes at sea are licensed by the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food only where there are suitable land-based facilities, and where the materials involved will not have an adverse effect upon the marine environment.

North Sea Dumping

Mr. Mans: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps he is taking to ensure that the ministerial declaration made at the second international North sea conference concerning the reduction of inputs of dangerous substances to rivers and estuaries is achieved; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chris Patten *[pursuant to his reply, 7 March 1990, c.734.]:* I represented the Government at the third North sea conference in The Hague on 7 and 8 March. This was a constructive conference, as a result of which the North sea will be a cleaner and more wholesome sea. The United Kingdom was able to make a positive contribution to the outcome. The main features of the final declaration were as follows.

We confirmed our intention to end the dumping of industrial waste by the end of 1992, and to end dumping of sewage sludge by the end of 1998. We agreed on a strengthened approach to the reduction of nutrient inputs. In this, the decision that I announced before the conference to treat all sewage discharges made a significant contribution.

Our agreement on a harmonised approach to the control of dangerous substances is a most important step forward. It addresses the most serious source of contamination of the North sea, namely rivers. The commitment to reduce still further the impact of certain substances, to both air and water, underlines the urgency of our approach to this central problem.

We agreed to phase out and destroy all PCBs by 1999 at the latest. We made clear our fundamental objection to the long-term storage of PCBs, which is environmentally dangerous. Destruction is essential and I am particularly pleased that we pledged ourselves to provide sufficient destruction facilities for each country to destroy its own waste.

Finally, I should like to single out the agreement on wildlife, a topic which previously has been neglected. The agreement provides for action to protect and conserve wildlife, especially dophins and porpoises, and habitats. It will serve as a platform on which to build more extensive and ambitious proposals in the years to come.

The efforts of all signatories must now be directed towards the implementation of the final declaration. The United Kingdom will produce an implementation plan within three months.

A copy of the final declaration is being deposited in the Library.

Irish Sea

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if Her Majesty's Government have any plans to increase funding for monitoring radioactive sewage and chemical waste dumping into the Irish sea and research into the environmental implications.

Mr. Curry: I have been asked to reply.

My Department undertakes a substantial programme of environmental monitoring and research covering the

Irish sea. We have no current plans to increase the resources committed to this work but the programme is kept under continuous review.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a comparative study of levels of radiation in the Irish sea and in other seas.

Mr. Curry: I have been asked to reply.

We have no plans to do so. Such a study has been carried out by the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority. The results were published in July last year as "The Radioactivity of the Sea", by M. I. Walker and K. S. B. Rose, AERE R 13365.

Flood Prevention

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what changes have been made by the National Rivers Authority on finance available for flood prevention; and if he will list these areas by area.

Mr. Curry *[holding answer 5 March 1990]:* I have been asked to reply.

The flood defence expenditure of the National Rivers Authority is primarily funded by means of grants towards capital expenditure from my Department and the Welsh Office and by levies on local authorities. The table provides estimates for 1989-90 and 1990-91 by flood defence district:

£'000

Flood Defence Districts	*1989-90 Total (Maintenance and capital)*	*1990-91 Total (Maintenance and capital)*
Northumbria	2,028	2,613
North West	15,212	17,338
Severn Trent	16,588	21,125
South West	5,972	7,122
Thames	46,882	50,255
Yorkshire	13,060	14,081
Anglian	42,231	46,742
Southern	17,207	18,776
Wessex	9,370	10,805
Welsh	9,164	9,939
Total	177,714	198,796

SCOTLAND

Law Reform

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland by what means he will determine whether prospective members of the Scottish Conveyancing and Confirmation Practitioners Board possess each of the required attributes prescribed in paragraph 4 of schedule 1 of the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill; and whether prospective members will be required to sit an examination or other written test.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: There will be no examination or written test for prospective members of the Scottish Conveyancing and Confirmation Practitioners Board. The membership will be selected with regard to the areas of expertise or knowledge set out in paragraph 4 of schedule 1.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many staff will be employed in each of the first five years of operation by the Scottish Conveyancing and Confirmation Practitioners Board in terms of paragraph 8 of schedule 12 of the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill; and what is the estimate of the total remuneration to be paid to them including employers' national insurance contributions, taxation, pensions and allowances.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Such matters will be for the board to determine.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will ensure that there is always a certain minimum number of qualified solicitors on the Scottish Conveyancing and Confirmation Practitioners Board.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I do not propose any such permanent quotas, although I fully expect solicitors to be represented in the initial appointments.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what bodies he proposes to consult prior to making appointments to the Scottish Conveyancing and Confirmation Practitioners Board.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: At the least I expect to consult bodies representing the interests referred to in schedule 1, paragraph 4 of the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is his estimate of the amount of funds the Scottish Conveyancing and Confirmation Practitioners Board will be required to establish and maintain in terms of paragraph 16 of schedule 1 of the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: This will be a matter for the board.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what revenue the Scottish Conveyancing and Confirmation Practitioners Board will be entitled to receive and from what sources; what is the estimate of the annual revenue of the board at the end of each of the first five years of operation; and what is his estimate of the total expenditure of the board in each of the first five years of operation.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I refer the hon. Member to clause 14(2) and schedule 1, paragraph 11(2) (c) of the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill as regards sources of revenue. It is not yet possible to forecast the revenue and expenditure of the board.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he anticipates that the Scottish Conveyancing and Confirmation Practitioners Board will be established.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Subject to proceedings on the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill, during 1991.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many responses he has received to the proposals for multi-disciplinary practices.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Edinburgh, South (Mr. Griffiths) on 26 February 1990.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) how many times and on what dates he has met representatives of the Law Society of Scotland with regard to part II of the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill; and if he has sought their detailed views with regard to clause 15(5) and clause 15(9) thereof;

(2) when he last met with members of the Scottish Law Society to discuss legal reform; and on how many occasions since he has met with representatives of the Scottish Law Society.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Edinburgh, South on 26 February 1990. I am aware of views expressed by the Law Society on the subsections referred to, notably that the powers there should be duties.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will confer upon the Scottish Conveyancing and Confirmation Practitioners Board powers to suspend the business of any qualified conveyancer, prior to such person having been formally found guilty of professional misconduct.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Such a situation would not arise since the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill does not provide for a qualified conveyancer, as such, to offer conveyancing services.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) if he will make it his policy to publish prior to the commencement of the Committee stage of the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill a code of conduct to govern the manner in which conveyancing practitioners conduct the provision of conveyancing services, and the matters referred to in paragraphs (b) to (e) inclusive of clause 15(9) of the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill;

(2) when he first drafted a code of conduct to apply to persons other than solicitors permitted to carry out conveyancing services.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: An annex showing what a code of conduct on conveyancing might provide for was published in my right hon. and learned Friend's consultation paper, "The Legal Profession in Scotland", in March 1989. There is room for further refinement of what the code should contain before any attempt is made to draft regulations—a process on which I do not propose to embark before the Bill is enacted.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if the public will be entitled to inspect the register of confirmation practitioners to be set up in terms of clause 17(1) of the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill, any conditions attached against the applicant's name in the register in terms of clause 17(5)(a) of said Bill.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Yes.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if there are to be conferred upon the Scottish Conveyancing and Confirmation Practitioners Board disciplinary powers analogous to those possessed by the Scottish solicitors disciplinary tribunal.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: There are many parallels between the disciplinary powers proposed for the board and those of the Scottish solicitors disciplinary tribunal.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if there are to be conferred upon the Scottish Conveyancing and Confirmation Practitioners Board powers to levy fines.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: This question is under consideration.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what consultations he has had with the Director General of Fair Trading on regulations referred to in clause 15(5) and clause 15(9) of the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill; and whether these and other regulations under the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill will be available before the Bill passes through Committee stage in the House.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The making of regulations under the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) (Bill) and consultation on their terms is dependent on the passage of the Bill.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what disciplinary powers are to be conferred upon the Scottish Conveyancing and Confirmation Practitioners Board, other than suspension or revocation of registration.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I refer the hon. Member to clause 18(3) of the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what guidance he will give to the Scottish Conveyancing and Confirmation Practitioners Board with regard to *(a)* educational qualifications and *(b)* practical training necessary before any person applying for registration as a qualified conveyancer has his application granted.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Responsibility for rules on these matters will be with the board, subject to the approval of the Secretary of State. The board will be able to seek whatever guidance it requires.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the estimated salary to be paid to *(a)* the chairman and *(b)* the members of the proposed Scottish Conveyancing and Confirmation Practitioners Board in its first year of operation.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: These matters have not been decided.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the estimated total annual cost from public funds of the proposed Scottish Conveyancing and Confirmation Practitioners Board to be set up in accordance with clause 14 of the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill, for each of the first five years of its operation.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: This will depend on how quickly the board becomes self-financing.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what response he received to the consultation paper, "The Legal Profession in Scotland", from the Society of Scottish Conservative Lawyers.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: My right hon. and learned Friend received one response from the Society of Scottish Conservative Lawyers, dealing with solicitors' rights of audience before the Court of Session and the House of Lords.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what research he has initiated into the impact upon the provision of legal aid services in Scotland of the proposals contained in the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill to allow non-solicitors to carry out conveyancing services.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: None. The Scottish Home and Health Department has however commissioned a study of the geographical distribution and accessibility of solicitors' offices in Scotland. This work should provide the basis for a follow-up study after the proposals contained in the Bill have been implemented.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) what research was carried out to assess how the fees charged by solicitors for conveyancing services varied as from region to region; and what research was carried out prior to the publication of the paper, "The Legal Profession in Scotland", with regard to the downward effect on the level of fees of the abolition of scale fees and permission to advertise;

(2) what market research the Government carried out prior to publication of the paper, "The Legal Profession in Scotland" and what market research has been carried out as to the level of fees charged by solicitors in Scotland for conveyancing services.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: A research project is currently under way to compare fees charged for conveyancing before and after the abolition of scale fees in 1985. A further project nearing completion has examined the impact of advertising by solicitors on their fee-charging practices. Both projects use data drawn from a number of market areas of different sizes throughout Scotland.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what steps will be taken to ensure that solicitors undertaking work under the legal aid schemes compete on level terms with non-solicitors solely undertaking conveyancing and confirmation services.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Hardly any legal aid expenditure is on conveyancing and confirmation but I intend that clients should have the same access to legal advice and assistance for such matters whether they use a solicitor or an appropriate practitioner. The basis of remuneration will also be the same.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether premises have been identified to be used by the proposed Scottish Conveyancing and Confirmation Practitioners Board.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: No.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether the public will be entitled to inspect the register of conveyancing practitioners referred to in clause 15 of the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Yes.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether, under clause 19 of the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill, qualified conveyancers and other non-solicitors will be empowered to carry out conveyancing services and be entitled to carry out commercial conveyancing.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: No.

Leukaemia

Mr. McFall: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) what action he has taken following the publication of the Gardner report into leukaemia and pre-conceptual radiation at Sellafield;

(2) what plans he has in the light of the Gardner report suggesting a direct link between parental exposure to radiation at nuclear installations and childhood leukaemia to establish further case control studies along the lines of Gardner in Scotland;

(3) when the results of the case control study at Dounreay into possible leukaemia clusters will be published.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The results of the case control study at Dounreay are expected by the summer. The Committee on Medical Aspects of Radiation in the Environment is currently assessing the evidence relating to leukaemia incidence around all the other Scottish nuclear sites and Scotland as a whole.

Statistical Divisions

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what are the latest figures for the number of staff presently employed, and the full complement of staff, including vacant posts, by grade, in the statistical divisions in his Department; if he will differentiate between staff in statistical posts and staff in administrative posts; and if he will give the staffing complements by grade, and differentiated between statistical and administrative posts, proposed for 1990-91.

Mr. Rifkind: The figures for the Scottish Office are:

	Staff in post at 1 March 1990	*Vacant Posts*	*Proposed staff 1990-91*
Professional Grades:			
Grade 5	2	—	2
Grade 7	16	—	16
Asst/Senior Asst Statistician	10	3	13
Administrative Grades:			
Higher Executive Officer	10	—	10
Executive Officer	23	—	23
Administrative Officer	46	—	46
Administrative Assistant	16	3	18
Personal Secretary	2	—	2
Total	125	6	130

Public Relations

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what are the latest figures for the number of staff presently employed, and the full complement of staff, including vacant posts in the press and public relations office of his Department; and what is the proposed complement for 1990-91.

Mr. Rifkind: At 1 March 1990 the number of staff employed in the information officer grades in the Scottish information office was 31½. At that date there were no vacancies.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the total expenditure by his Department on press and public relations in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

Mr. Rifkind: The running costs of the Scottish information office for each year from 1985-86 are as follows:

	£ million
1985-86	0·9
1986-87	1·0
1987-88	1·1
1988-89	1·2
[1]1989-90	1·4
[2]1990-91	1·6

[1] Estimated outturn.
[2] Plans.

These figures exclude expenditure on information campaigns.

Directly comparable figures for years prior to the introduction of new Scottish Office budgetary arrangements in 1985-86 are not available.

Privatisation

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the total sum paid out in fees to outside organisations in the furtherance of privatisation by his Department in 1979-80 and in each subsequent year; and what is his estimate for 1990-91.

Mr. Rifkind: No expenditure was incurred between the years 1979-80 and 1986-87 inclusive. Expenditure since then has been:

	£
1987-88	615,648
1988-89	2,314,775
[1]1989-90	5,205,000

[1] Estimated outturn.

The provision for 1990-91 will be contained in the supply estimates to be published on 20 March.

Advertising Expenditure

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what were the figures for the spending by his Department on *(a)* television advertising, *(b)* radio advertising, *(c)* newspaper advertising and *(d)* other promotional materials in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

Mr. Rifkind: The latest estimates of expenditure by the Scottish Office in the current financial year on television; radio; newspaper advertising; and printed and other material are £957,000, £73,000, £1,080,000 and £913,000 respectively. The corresponding figures for 1988-89 were £591,000, £36,000, £422,000 and £1,064,000 respectively.

Prior to 1988-89 an analysis of expenditure was not maintained in the form requested. Total expenditure on information publicity for 1979-80 and subsequent years to 1988-89 was:

	£
1979-80	263,000
1980-81	362,000
1981-82	393,000
1982-83	386,000
1983-84	360,000
1984-85	704,000
1985-86	677,000
1986-87	857,000
1987-88	1,094,000

Proposed provision for expenditure by the Scottish Office on information campaigns in 1990-91 is £2·5 million. Detailed decisions on expenditure by media have not yet been taken. None of these figures includes the running costs of the Scottish information office.

Management Consultants

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what were the total fees paid out by his Department to management consultants in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

Mr. Rifkind: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer which I gave him on 13 March 1989 at column *35*. Additional information is as follows:

	£
[1]1988-89	1,162,108
[2]1989-90	289,276
[2]1990-91	408,000

[1] Out-turn.
[2] Estimated figure.

Caledonian MacBrayne

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what are the names of the chairman and directors of Caledonian MacBrayne; what are their periods of office and their annual remuneration; and what were the organisations, voluntary associations and political parties from which they were recruited, selected or appointed to their posts.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The names of those who have accepted the Secretary of State's invitation to form the new board of Caledonian MacBrayne Limited, along with relevant initial periods of appointment, are shown in the table:

(Chairman)	A. J. Struthers	3 years
(Chief Executive)	C. S. Paterson	—
	W. G. Cochrane	3 years
	A. Gilchrist	2 years
	K. H. MacKenzie	3 years
	G. MacLeod	2 years
	D. Martin	3 years
	Mrs. E. Sillars	3 years

The chairman will be paid £15,000 per annum and all board members will be paid £4,500 per annum. In considering appointments to the board, the Secretary of State took care to strike a balance between commercial expertise and first-hand knowledge both of the islands which the company's vessels serve and of the needs of the

company's customers. No one has been invited to join the board on the basis of links with any organisation, voluntary association or political party. All appointments were made on merit.

New Towns

Mr. Norman Hogg: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many complaints he has received against Cumbernauld and Kilsyth district council's administration of grants for the improvement or modernisation of private homes in Cumbernauld new town in each of the past three years.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: No complaints have been received during the past three years.

Mr. Norman Hogg: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many complaints he has received against Cumbernauld and Kilsyth district council's administration of capital consents for the refurbishment of council houses in Cumbernauld new town in each of the past three years.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: In the past two financial years and in the current financial year to date, I have received one letter of complaint.

Mr. Norman Hogg: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what are the salaries paid annually to the chairman, vice-chairman and board members of Cumbernauld development corporation.

Mr. Lang: The levels of remuneration of the chairman, deputy chairman and members of Cumbernauld development corporation in the 1989-90 financial year are as follows:

	£
Chairman	17,172
Deputy chairman	7,804
Members	3,525

Mr. Norman Hogg: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) if the salaries paid to the chairmen, deputy chairmen, and board members of new town development corporations are intended solely as payment for attendance at board meetings; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what are the duties and responsibilities of persons appointed to serve on the boards of new town development corporations; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: Salaries paid to the chairman, deputy chairman and board members of new town development corporations are not intended solely as payment for attendance at board meetings.

The task of a new town development corporation is to undertake the planning and development of the new town; to provide the wide range of facilities required, including housing, industrial and commercial development; and to co-ordinate action with the local authorities responsible for various services. Board members are appointed on a part-time basis under the provisions of the New Towns (Scotland) Act 1968 and receive remuneration in accordance with the provisions of the Act. Their duties involve attendance at corporation meetings, which are normally held monthly, and such other tasks, for example as chairman or member of internal committees or as representatives of the corporation in public as may from time to time be required. Most board members participate willingly in a range of such tasks.

Waste Disposal

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the estimated cost to each local authority of providing alternative methods of sewage and waste disposal when the ban on dumping such waste at sea is enforced; if he will provide these funds to secure an immediate ban; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: In Scotland, there are no licences in force for dumping of industrial waste at sea and none will be issued. The only current licences issued in Scotland are for dumping of sewage sludge at sea by local authorities. The announcement by my right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food on 5 March 1990 that dumping of sewage sludge at sea is to be phased out by the end of 1998 affects two sewerage authorities, Strathclyde and Lothian. These authorities will now be required to find alternative land-based disposal routes and their preliminary assessments indicate that the capital cost of incineration as an alternative to sea disposal might be about £52 million in Strathclyde and about £12 million in Lothian. As new disposal facilities will take time to design, obtain planning permission, and construct, an immediate ban on sea disposal would not be practicable.

Junior Hospital Doctors

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what currently are the hours of work of junior hospital doctors in each regional health authority area in Scotland; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Information on the hours actually worked by junior hospital doctors is not available centrally. The Scottish Home and Health Department asked health boards in January 1989 to review all junior doctors' rota commitments with a view to eliminating those which required doctors to be on duty more often than one night and one weekend in three. Reports on the outcome of this exercise are currently being evaluated.

Geese

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many and what types of geese have been killed on Islay since April 1988.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The numbers of Greenland white-fronted and Barnacle geese reported as killed were six and 752 respectively. Figures for the 1989-90 season will not be available until after 31 May this year.

Dementia

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many cases of dementia in any form there were in *(a)* Scotland, *(b)* Strathclyde and *(c)* Greater Glasgow for each year since 1979.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 9 March 1990]:* The information requested is not available.

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many people suffering from dementia were living in public institutions, for each year since 1979 in *(a)* Greater Glasgow, *(b)* Strathclyde and *(c)* Scotland.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 9 March 1990]:* The number of people resident in mental handicap or mental illness hospitals and units on 31 December in each year with a diagnosis of dementia is as follows:

	Greater Glasgow	*Strathclyde*	*Scotland*
1979	824	1,493	4,197
1980	869	1,588	4,407
1981	882	1,651	4,554
1982	934	1,710	4,821
1983	989	1,843	5,112
1984	1,010	1,873	5,102
1985	1,019	1,907	5,481
1986	1,092	2,030	5,886
1987	1,113	2,058	5,972
[1]1988	1,135	2,027	6,001
[1]1989	1,135	2,032	6,050

[1] Provisional.

The number of mentally confused [1] persons resident in local authority homes on 31 March in each year is as follows:

	Greater Glasgow	*Strathclyde*	*Scotland*
1979	—	—	—
1980	—	445	1,383
1981	—	547	1,573
1982	—	615	1,446
1983	433	768	1,582
1984	417	813	1,650
1985	393	815	1,760
1986	420	907	1,864
1987	509	1,067	2,136
1988	537	1,110	2,428

[1] The term "confused" in this context refers almost entirely to the elderly suffering from dementia, but could include some people with other conditions.

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what studies his Department has carried out or sponsored about the problem of dementia in Scotland since 1979.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 9 March 1990]:* The chief scientist office of the Scottish Office has, since 1979, sponsored the following studies on dementia:

An image analysing computer study of human cerebral cortex with special reference to parenthymatous senile dementia.

An investigation into the effectiveness of a reality orientation programme in a psychogeriatric day hospital.

A study of some problems associated with the evaluation of a psychogeriatric day hospital.

Changes in the cell population of the cerebral cortex in old age and senile dementia investigated by automated image-analysis.

A comparative community study of dementia in the elderly

An evaluation of two approaches to the care of the elderly patient with dementia in a psychiatric hospital: a high stimulation environment compared to a traditional environment.

A search for pre-clinical Alzheimer's Disease: a quantitive study of neurofibrillary tangle formation nerve cell loss and aluminium accumulation in an unselected necropsy population.

Workshop on Psychometric Assessment of Dementia.

The electrophysiology of Dementia.

Evaluation of Proton NMR Imaging as a diagnostic and localising instrument in pre-senile dementias.

The role of G proteins in dementia of the Alzheimer type.

Diagnosis of dementia: A comparative study of electrophysiological and brain imaging.

Brain Mapping in dementia and related brain diseases.

Heart Disease

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many patients suffering from heart diseases were hospitalised in *(a)* Greater Glasgow, *(b)* Strathclyde and *(c)* Scotland for each year since 1975.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 9 March 1990]:* The table shows the number of patients in Greater Glasgow, Strathclyde and Scotland hospitalised through heart disease between 1975 and 1988:

Year of discharge	*Heart Disease*			*All conditions*
	Greater Glasgow	*Strathclyde*	*Scotland*	*Scotland*
1975	11,194	18,284	38,447	544,972
1976	11,230	19,063	39,405	578,001
1977	11,159	19,382	40,178	576,883
1978	11,218	19,309	40,525	574,803
1979	10,720	18,895	39,446	568,555
1980	11,220	20,299	42,313	583,192
1981	12,074	21,788	46,127	618,038
1982	12,078	21,623	47,917	565,598
1983	12,405	22,629	50,053	636,081
1984	14,133	24,657	52,647	654,715
1985	15,491	26,092	56,126	669,759
1986	16,630	28,018	57,841	677,901
1987	17,183	28,501	60,338	695,956
1988	18,088	29,994	63,417	720,350

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many people died from heart diseases in *(a)* Greater Glasgow, *(b)* Strathclyde and *(c)* Scotland for each year since 1975.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 9 March 1990]:* The information requested is as follows:

Deaths from Heart Disease[1] 1975-1988

Year	*Greater Glasgow*	*Strathclyde*	*Scotland*
1975	4,572	10,071	21,277
1976	4,820	10,773	22,053
1977	4,565	10,332	21,700
1978	4,863	10,951	22,601
1979	4,808	11,010	22,870
1980	4,510	10,501	21,768
1981	4,539	10,583	22,101
1982	4,592	10,806	22,377
1983	4,459	10,363	21,853
1984	4,361	10,066	21,342
1985	4,298	10,267	22,021
1986	4,229	10,021	21,105
1987	4,240	9,951	21,193
1988	4,127	9,499	20,704

[1] Rubrics 390-429 in the International Classification of Diseases (ICD).

Note: 1975-1978 figures (ICD 8th Revision) are not strictly comparable to 1979-1988 figures (ICD 9th Revision) because of changes in the classifications.

Factory Shortages, Strathclyde

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what action he is taking to solve the problem of factory shortages in Strathclyde.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 9 March 1990]:* The growth in economic activity in Scotland has inevitably led to increased demand for factory space. The Government recognise that the private sector cannot always meet this need. To this end they continue to make funds available to a range of bodies, including local authorities, new town development corporations and the Scottish Development Agency. Since April 1986, the agency alone has spent over £40 million under its factory building programme.

In the current year the three Strathclyde new towns are expected to spend around £26 million on new factory construction and over £4 million on rehabilitation of existing units. An additional £5 million has been made available to local authorities specifically to help meet the demand for small factory units and industrial workshops, just over half of which went to Strathclyde.

Eye and Dental Health

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is for each year since 1975, and in 1990 moneys, the National Health Service expenditure for the treatment of eye-related and dental diseases in Scotland.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 9 March 1990]:* The information is not available centrally.

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what steps he is taking to encourage people in Scotland to have regular *(a)* eye and *(b)* dental tests.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 9 March 1990]:* The Government joined with the ophthalmic profession in a national eye awareness campaign to promote the benefits of eye care to the consumer. A series of newspaper and television advertisements ran from May to December 1989.

Awareness of the need to visit a dentist is stimulated by on-going health board campaigns and initiatives promoted generally through the community dental service. Further encouragement to have regular dental checks will be provided by the new contract for general dental practitioners.

Mental Health

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is, for each year since 1975, the amount of public funds provided for research on mental health in Scotland.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 9 March 1990]:* Funding awarded by the Scottish Home and Health Department and the Scottish Education Department for research into mental handicap and illness is as follows:

	£
1975	—
1976	25,980
1977	59,711
1978	66,703
1979	61,563
1980	277,216
1981	53,769
1982	28,700
1983	103,937
1984	98,608
1985	209,160
1986	393,514
1987	105,260
1988	175,103
1989	267,730

Community Care

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is, for each year since 1975, the total amount of public funds provided for community care or similar projects in Scotland, in 1990 moneys.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 9 March 1990]:* I regret that the information is not available in the form requested. Community care extends over a wide range of different services and expenditure on it is not separately classified as such.

Pre-school Education

Mr. Rathbone: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will review the availability and quality of pre-school education in Scotland; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 9 March 1990]:* It is for local authorities to decide on the extent and nature of pre-school education they provide. However, the number of children attending local authority nursery schools in Scotland has risen from 31,770 in 1979 to 40,855 in 1988, an increase of 28 per cent., while over the same period allowance for nursery education as part of overall provision for local authority current expenditure for education has increased from £13·5 million to £35·5 million. So far as the quality of education is concerned, I await the conclusions of the committee of inquiry into the educational experience of the under-fives chaired by my hon. Friend the Minister of State, Department of Education and Science, and will consider carefully their relevance to Scotland.

TRANSPORT

South Circular

14. **Mr. Fraser:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement about the progress of his consideration of proposals for the south circular road.

Mr. Parkinson: The several thousand responses received on the south circular assessment study are currently being collated and analysed. Decisions on the way forward will be announced as soon as possible.

Channel Tunnel

15. **Mr. Teddy Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement of the implications for transport policy should the Channel tunnel not be completed.

Mr. Portillo: I am confident that the Channel tunnel will be completed and see no point in speculating otherwise.

26. **Mr. Gow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much public money will be spent on the rail link with the Channel Tunnel and the provision of new rolling stock; and when he expects to make a journey through the tunnel on a train.

Mr. Portillo: British Rail is planning to spend over £1 billion on trains, station and maintenance facilities and track and signalling improvements, so that a full international passenger and freight service can begin on the day that the Channel tunnel opens. The holder of my office could expect to make a journey in June 1993.

Road Accidents, Worcestershire

16. **Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many fatal road accidents there were in the county of Worcestershire during 1989; and what was the comparable figure for *(a)* 1979 and *(b)* 1984.

Mr. Atkins: In 1988, the latest complete year for which figures are available, there were 72 fatal accidents in Hereford and Worcester. The comparable figures for 1979 and 1984 were 85 and 72 fatal accidents, respectively.

Vehicle Excise Evasion

17. **Mr. David Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has as to the amount of revenue likely to be lost in 1989-90 as a result of vehicle excise evasion.

Mr. Atkins: A roadside survey carried out by the Department in June 1989 estimated the revenue loss through evasion of vehicle excise duty throughout Great Britain in 1989-90 was £103 million, or 3·5 per cent. of revenue due.

Further details can be obtained from the transport statistics report "Vehicle Excise Duty Evasion in Great Britain in 1989-90" which is available in the House of Commons Library.

Regional Airports

18. **Mr. Bellingham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what percentage of air passengers currently use regional airports.

Mr. McLoughlin: This information is collected by the Civil Aviation Authority. I understand that in the year ending October 1989, 33·8 per cent. of terminal passengers at United Kingdom airports used regional airports.

London Assessment Studies

19. **Mr. Bowis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received by 28 February on the London assessment studies.

Mr. Atkins: The many comments received by that date are currently being collated and analysed.

25. **Mr. Cox:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he will announce the results of the consultation process for the London assessment studies.

32. **Mr. Chris Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he will announce the results of the consultation process for the London assessment studies.

Mr. Atkins: As soon as possible.

London Underground

20. **Mr. John Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement about the future investment in London Underground.

Mr. Portillo: London Underground Limited plans to invest £1·7 billion over the next three years—more than double the level of investment over the last three years. Its plans include major projects such as the extension of the Jubilee line and the 85 new trains for the Central line. The plans also include a host of more modest investment proposals, all designed to make London's underground system safer, more reliable and less congested.

43. **Mr. Carrington:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans his Department has to increase funding to allow increased capacity in London Underground stations.

Mr. Portillo: The grant to London Regional Transport will rise from £287 million this year to £672 million in 1992-93. This will, among other things, enable London Underground to invest over £200 million over the next three years in increasing the capacity of the most congested stations, including Victoria, Waterloo, King's Cross, Tottenham Court Road, Holborn and Angel. Schemes have been drawn up for 20 stations and more are in preparation.

Transport Planning, London

21. **Mr. Cyril D. Townsend:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what new proposals the Government are putting forward to achieve better transport planning and co-ordination between the 32 London boroughs and the City of London.

Mr. Atkins: The discussion document, "Traffic in London", published by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State on 14 December 1989, includes proposals for new traffic management guidance for London and a London traffic director, who could ensure the coherent development and operation of a priority "red route" network for London and the co-ordination of a London-wide parking strategy. The responses to public consultation on the proposals are being assessed.

Railway Services (Midlands)

22. **Mr. Snape:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if, when he next meets the chairman of British Rail, he will discuss proposals for investment in railway passenger services in the midlands.

Mr. Portillo: Whenever my right hon. Friend and I meet the chairman of BR, we discuss a wide range of issues.

British Rail

23. **Mr. Foulkes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he last met the chairman of British Rail; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. Parkinson: I last met the chairman of British Rail on 13 February when we discussed a number of matters of mutual interest.

29. **Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he next plans to meet the chairman of British Rail, and what matters he plans to discuss.

42. **Mr. Andrew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he next plans to meet the chairman of British Rail; and what matters he plans to discuss.

Mr. Portillo: My right hon. Friend next plans to meet the chairman of British Rail on 15 March to discuss a variety of matters.

31. **Ms. Mowlam:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he last met the chairman of British Rail; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. Portillo: My right hon. Friend last met the chairman of British Rail on 13 February when they discussed a variety of railway issues.

51. **Dr. Woodcock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the percentage change in train miles per member of staff of BR since 1983.

Mr. Portillo: Train miles per member of BR staff totalled 2,123 in 1988-89, an increase of 26 per cent. since 1983.

Air Transport Liberalisation

24. **Mr. Ian Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress is being made towards the liberalisation of European air routes.

Mr. McLoughlin: In September 1989 the European Commission published its proposals for a second stage of air transport liberalisation. EC Transport Ministers discussed them formally for the first time in December 1989, reaching agreement in principle on a number of key areas. Discussions are taking place on the detail of the proposals, with a deadline for agreement of 30 June.

35. **Mr. Brazier:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects the second stage of the air transport liberalisation policy to be adopted.

Mr. McLoughlin: The Council of Ministers has decided that the second stage of liberalisation will be adopted by the end of June this year.

Road Safety

27. **Dr. Reid:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much of the recently announced £5·7 billion additional expenditure on roads has been earmarked for road safety measures; and if he will make a statement.

28. **Mr. Terry Davis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much of the recently announced £5·7 billion additional expenditure on roads has been earmarked for road safety measures; and if he will make a statement.

52. **Mr. Fisher:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much of the recently announced £5·7 billion expenditure on roads has been earmarked for road safety measures; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Atkins: Safety is a central objective and integral part of the trunk road programme. It is not an optional extra whose costs can be separately identified. Details of the contribution of the programme to road safety are contained in section 6 of the report "Trunk Roads, England—Into the 1990s".

Aviation Talks

30. **Mr. David Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the current position on the aviation bilateral discussions between the United Kingdom and the United States of America; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Parkinson: We met in Washington on 11 January. We discussed a variety of topics. Prominent were the prospects for liberalising the United Kingdom-United States aviation market, and arrangements for new United States airline services to regional airports. These discussions are now being carried forward. Indeed, I have spoken to Mr. Skinner in the past week.

Dial-a-Ride, London

33. **Mr. Summerson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will give the funding figures for London dial-a-ride for 1985-86 and for 1991.

Mr. Portillo: Under the GLC, funding for the London dial-a-ride service in 1985-86 was £4·2 million. In 1990-91 the Government will provide £8·27 million. This is a real increase of 50 per cent., and underlines the Government's commitment to the success of the London dial-a-ride service.

Commuters

34. **Dr. Michael Clark:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he is taking to encourage commuters to travel by rail rather than by road.

Mr. Portillo: Each mode of transport should perform the role to which it is best suited as efficiently as possible. Rail offers the best means of moving large numbers of commuters into central London each day. A total of £1·2 billion is to be invested in Network SouthEast over the next three years to improve existing services and to cater for growth in demand. Over the same period, £1·7 billion is to be invested in London Underground to modernise the system, increase capacity and improve quality. The job of the Government is to balance the needs of each mode of transport and enable improvements to be made where they are necessary. It is for the commuter to choose how he or she wishes to travel to work.

Rail Europe

35. **Mr. Rowe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he or his officials last met representatives of Rail Europe; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. Portillo: Officials of my Department met proponents of this project last September and are due to do so again later this week.

Immersion Suits

37. **Dr. Godman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent representations he has received concerning the carriage of immersion suits as items of essential life-saving equipment on United Kingdom-registered fishing vessels; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. McLoughlin: No recent representations about the carriage of immersion suits on fishing vessels have been received.

British Rail Property (Trespass)

38. **Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will discuss with the chairman of British Rail incidents of trespass by hunts on British Rail property.

Mr. Portillo: No. These are matters for British Rail and the British Transport police.

Roads Expenditure

39. **Mr. Hardy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will match expenditure upon major trunk routes with that devoted to other roads in order to avoid the transfer of congestion from one to the other.

Mr. Atkins: Local highway authorities are responsible for expenditure on non-trunk roads. In 1990-91 the Government will be assisting with transport supplementary grant of £233 million, nearly 15 per cent. more than for the current year. But traffic growth is twice as fast on national roads as on local roads, and the most pressing problem is congestion on major trunk routes. Planned improvements to trunk roads will also help to relieve pressure on the local road network.

Network SouthEast

40. **Mr. Leighton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he will next meet the chairman of British Rail to discuss Network SouthEast.

Mr. Portillo: My right hon. Friend is next due to meet Sir Robert on 15 March. A variety of topics will be discussed.

53. **Mr. Livingstone:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he last met the chairman of British Rail to discuss recent developments on British Rail's Network SouthEast services; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: My right hon. Friend has regular meetings with Sir Robert, at which a variety of matters are discussed.

Traffic Congestion, London

41. **Mr. Spearing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what analysis he, or any other body, has made concerning the factors determining or influencing major incidents of traffic congestion in central London.

Mr. Atkins: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to him of 11 December last (*Official Report*, column *487*). The joint Metropolitan police traffic control systems unit working party is expected to report in the summer. It has been asked to consider whether it will be worth while to collect information about the causes of major incidents of traffic congestion in central London.

London Roads

44. **Mr. Harry Greenway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what measures his Department is taking to make roads in London more environmentally appropriate.

Mr. Atkins: The recent report, "Trunk Roads, England —Into the 1990s", detailed measures which this Government are taking to enhance the environment of trunk roads, including the allocation of extra resources for landscaping works and planting in urban schemes. A good example on an existing trunk road in London is to be found in my hon. Friend's constituency, where six miles of the A40 Western avenue is being landscaped and improved at a cost of over £640,000.

Another initiative to be launched shortly is the "Eastgate Project", the object of which is to raise funds from City institutions, docklands businesses and others for environmental improvements along the corridor of the A13 trunk road in Tower Hamlets. This largely privately funded project is designed to complement the borough council's own scheme of terrace refurbishments as well as the programme of road improvements to the A13 itself.

Road Construction

45. **Mr. Irvine:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many road schemes are included in his expanded road construction programme for the next three years.

Mr. Atkins: The national roads programme, announced recently in "Trunk Roads, England—Into the 1990s," includes 45 schemes under construction and over 500 in preparation.

54. **Mr. Ashton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many miles of motorway have had their construction started since 1981; and how many miles have been started since.

Mr. Atkins: A total of 235 miles of new or widened motorway have been completed since April 1981. Seventy-one miles are currently under construction.

A303

46. **Sir Peter Emery:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport by what year he intends to have the whole of the A303 road from London to Exeter dual carriageway.

Mr. Atkins: Most of the route will have been improved to dual carriageway standard by the end of the decade. Further improvement schemes may be identified by the study into the needs of the A30/A303 route which was announced in May 1989.

M1

47. **Mr. Madel:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how long he expects the repairs on the M1 between junctions 8 and 9 to take to complete; when this section of the M1 was last subject to such major repairs; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Atkins: These works commenced on 5 March and are expected to last eight weeks. This particular section of the M1 was last subject to major repairs in 1974. The works are being carried out under a lane rental contract in order to minimise the period of operation.

Air Congestion

48. **Mr. Amos:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps his Department is taking to relieve air congestion.

Mr. McLoughlin: The Civil Aviation Authority is responsible for the provision of air traffic control services in the United Kingdom. The Government have approved a substantial increase in the authority's investment programme for air traffic control systems; the authority plans to spend some £600 million over the next 10 years. In addition, the authority has increased the recruitment of air traffic controllers from 80 in 1988 to 200 last year; this figure is planned to rise to 240 a year from 1991 onwards.

Internationally, the Government have launched several initiatives to promote harmonisation and progressive integration of European air traffic control systems in order to increase airspace capacity.

Mersey Tunnel

49. **Mr. Wareing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent representations he has received about the level of Mersey tunnel tolls; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Atkins: None.

Road Casualties

50. **Mr. Day:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress he is making towards reducing road casualties by one third by the year 2000.

Mr. Atkins: A copy of the report "Road Casualty Reduction", which records progress for 1988-89, is in the Library. Improving road safety is one of our top priorities. We are working with local authorities, the police and all others involved to tackle the key problems identified in the road safety review and, above all, to encourage a sensible and responsible attitude among all road users.

Toxic Cargoes (Loss at Sea)

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what research his Department has undertaken on the corrosive effects of seawater on metal containers applicable to the containment life of the container of lindane lost in the English Channel in 1989.

Mr. McLoughlin: The lindane was contained in plastic-lined fibreboard drums which were then stowed in a standard freight container. There is ample information on the errosive effects of seawater on metals. In the case of plastic-lined fibreboard drums and other packaging materials international research under the aegis of the IMO is currently being undertaken and interim results are expected by the end of the year.

Catalytic Converters

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he has conducted a cost-benefit analysis of the fitting of catalytic converters to new and existing cars.

Mr. Atkins: New cars could cost 5 per cent. to 10 per cent. more though this will depend on manufacturers' design solutions. For the vast majority of existing cars on the road, fitting a catalyst is not a practicable proposition. Their fuelling systems would not be sufficiently accurate and there would be problems in finding space for the catalyst under the bonnet or floor.

Work to estimate the value of the environmental benefits from catalysts forms part of the Department of the Environment's 1990-91 research programme.

Statistical Divisions

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what are the latest figures for the number of staff presently employed and the full complement of staff, including vacant posts, by grade, in the statistical divisions in his Department; if he will differentiate between staff in statistical posts and staff in administrative posts; and if he will give the staffing complements by grade, and differentiated between statistical and administrative posts, proposed for 1990-91.

Mr. Atkins: The table gives data for the permanent staff in the directorate of statistics in the Department of Transport on 12 March 1990 and current complement. Statistical posts filled by members of the statistician group are shown at the top of the table. Two of the grade 7 statisticians work part time. There are also two members of the group in statistical posts elsewhere in the Department. The directorate also employs casual staff including currently three with statistical qualifications working in statistician group posts.

The current bid for staffing in 1990-91 does not propose any change to the complement given in the table.

	Staff in post (12 March 1990)	*Current complement*
Statistician group		
Director of statistics (Grade 3)	1	1
Chief statistician (Grade 5)	4	4
Statistician (Grade 6)	1	1
Statistician (Grade 7)	[1]21	23
(Senior) Assistant statistician	3	8
Sub-total	30	37
Other staff		
Principal scientific officer (Grade 7)	1	—
Higher P and TO (PTOII)	2	2
P and TO (PTOIII)	1	2
Senior executive officer	1	—
Higher executive officer	11	11
Executive officer	30	31
Graphics officer	1	1
Administrative officer	24	25
Administrative assistant	3	4
(Senior) Personal secretary	3	5
Sub-total	77	81
GRAND TOTAL	107	118

[1] Including one Economic Adviser blocking a statistician post.

Urban Transport Systems (EC)

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what information he has regarding revenue subsidies provided for urban transport systems in EEC capital cities.

Mr. Portillo: I have no information of this nature: because different transport operators use different accounting techniques, there is no consistent basis on which to assess what subsidy is being paid and whether it is revenue or other subsidy.

Docklands Light Railway

Mr. Amos: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will meet the chairman of London Regional Transport to discuss the reliability of the docklands light railway; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo *[holding answer 9 March 1990]:* The performance of the docklands light railway is a regular topic of discussion between the chairman of LRT, the chairman of the DLR and me.

EMPLOYMENT

Employment Training

Mr. Blair: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment in respect of the last period for which figures are available how many people on employment training completed their anticipated course.

Mr. Nicholls: To end of September 1989, the latest date for which information is available, 33 per cent. of those who left employment training had completed their planned training. People leave employment training for a variety of reasons. These include entering jobs, self-employment and other training or further education.

Social Charter

Mr. Anderson: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether it is the Government's intention to provide an annual report on the implementation of the social charter.

Mr. Eggar: No. The United Kingdom Government were unable to support the proposal for a charter of fundamental social rights of workers at the European Council meeting in December 1989 in Strasbourg, and there is therefore no requirement for the Government to provide reports on the application of the charter in the United Kingdom.

Wages Councils

Mr. McAvoy: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he has any plans to abolish the wages councils.

Mr. Nicholls: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply given by my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State to my hon. Friend the Member for Erith and Crayford (Mr. Evennett) on 6 March, *Official Report*, column *543*.

Action Credit

Ms. Primarolo: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list the five national sites being chosen for the launch of action credit as an employment service option for the long-term unemployed.

Mr. Nicholls: Research into the viability of extending action credit to long-term unemployed people is being carried out in five employment service areas—Inner London West; West Kent and East Sussex; Renfrew, Dumbarton and Argyll; Lancashire North; and Coventry and Warwickshire.

Benefit Claimants

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment at each appropriate quarterly date over the most recent three years, what was the flow of new quarterly attender claimants; and at the same dates, what was the stock of new quarterly attender claimants.

Mr. Nicholls: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave her on 25 October 1989, *Official Report*, column *500*.

The figures for the last two quarters are as follows:

	Figures
October 1989	159,927
January 1990	144,090

Fast Food Industry

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the average wage paid to young persons employed in the fast food industry; and what is the average number of hours worked by young persons in that industry.

Mr. Nicholls: The information is not available.

Government Training Programmes

Mr. Ralph Howell: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what information he has on the numbers of people on Government training programmes in *(a)* the United Kingdom, *(b)* other European Community countries, *(c)* the United States of America and *(d)* Japan and on the costs of these programmes.

Mr. Nicholls: Comparable statistics on the numbers of people on training schemes and the cost of such schemes are not available for the countries listed. The Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development has published estimates of public spending on labour market programmes in chapter 3 of the OECD "Employment Outlook," September 1988, and note A of the OECD "Employment Outlook", July 1989.

Pesticides

Sir Richard Body: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what arrangements exist to monitor those working in food-packaging premises for exposure to pesticides.

Mr. Nicholls: The Food and Environment Protection Act 1985, the Control of Pesticides Regulations 1986, the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 1988 and the general requirements of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 apply to exposure to pesticides in the food-packaging industry. Inspectors from the Health and Safety Executive are responsible for enforcing this legislation at such premises.

Sir Richard Body: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make arrangements for the routine testing of farmers and farm workers for acetinecholine levels where they regularly use pesticides in the course of their work.

Mr. Nicholls: The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations apply to pesticides including those which contain anticholinesterase compounds.

Under the regulations employers of workers who are exposed to such compounds regularly during the course of their work are required to arrange routine health surveillance where appropriate.

Labour Statistics

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many unemployed claimants since 9 October 1989 for each region and for Great Britain as a whole have been *(a)* issued with warning letters for not actively seeking work, *(b)* had their claims referred to an adjudication officer for not actively seeking work, *(c)* had their claims (i) allowed or (ii) disallowed and *(d)* have been referred to an adjudication officer for refusing suitable employment; and how many of those in *(d)* have had their benefit disqualified.

Mr. Eggar: The table shows the statistical information for the period 9 October 1989 to 26 January 1990 on questions of "actively seeking employment" and "refusal of employment":

Actively Seeking Referrals and Disallowances, Refusal of Employment Referrals and Disqualifications
Period 9 October 1989—26 January 1990

Regions	Claimants issued warning letters	Actively Seeking Employment: Claims referred to Adjudication Officer	Allowed	Disallowed	Refusal of Employment: Claims Referred to Adjudication Officer	Not disqualified	Disqualified
Northern	663	99	12	32	25	5	12
Yorkshire and Humberside	661	98	16	30	79	10	7
East Midlands and Eastern	823	117	39	25	146	45	41
London and South East	4,050	661	120	125	818	77	123
South West	634	143	20	37	62	15	10
Wales	892	146	22	27	76	11	18
West Midlands	908	157	44	59	137	25	19
North West	1,297	141	34	42	71	14	11
Scotland	1,469	180	47	45	50	15	5
National	11,397	1,742	354	422	1,464	217	246

Mr. Denzil Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what percentage, in the latest available year, of the working population of the United Kingdom was self-employed.

Mr. Nicholls: In September 1989, the latest date for which information is available, self-employed people represented 11·4 per cent. of the work force.

Advertising Expenditure

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what were the figures for the spending by his Department on *(a)* television advertising, *(b)* radio advertising, *(c)* newspaper advertising and *(d)* other promotional material in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

Mr. Eggar: Expenditure on advertising and promotional material by the Department of Employment from 1979-80 to 1985-86 was as follows:

	£
1979-80	70,000
1980-81	320,000
1981-82	400,000
1982-83	360,000
1983-84	500,000
1984-85	320,000
1985-86	1,220,000

Figures for television, radio and newspaper advertising and other promotional material are not available separately.

The figures for 1986-87, 1987-88, 1988-89 and 1989-90 (latest estimate) are as follows:

	Television £ million	Press/Radio £ million	Other promotional £ million
1986-87	9·3	3·0	4·1
1987-88	3·3	0·8	2·8
1988-89	2·1	2·3	1·3
1989-90	0·9	0·9	1·0

The information on the Department's publicity budget for 1990-91 will be found in table 6.31 on page 29 of chapter VI of the public expenditure White Paper published in January 1990. Detailed decisions on expenditure by media group have not yet been taken.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what were the figures for the spending by the Training Agency on *(a)* television advertising, *(b)* radio advertising, *(c)* newspaper advertising and *(d)* other promotional material in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

Mr. Eggar: The information requested is given in the table:

	Television (£)	Radio (£)	Press (£)	Other (£)	Total (£)
Actual					
1979-80	n/a	n/a	—	—	—
1980-81	424,102	4,127	2,496,440	2,588,540	5,513,209
1981-82	—	62,896	1,814,935	2,784,279	4,662,110
1982-83	—	89,654	2,984,230	3,222,031	6,295,915
1983-84	1,479,748	17,434	764,409	2,670,666	4,932,257
1984-85	944,975	3,477	717,057	4,473,283	6,138,792
1985-86	9,676,257	311,537	1,867,286	5,111,180	16,966,260
1986-87	15,624,000	258,631	6,927,370	12,124,000	34,934,001
1987-88	17,321,000	26,841	6,950,159	11,647,000	35,945,000
1988-89	12,569,000	n/a	5,502,000	12,449,000	30,520,000

	Television (£)	Radio (£)	Press (£)	Other (£)	Total (£)
Estimate					
1989-90	8,610,000	56,000	6,164,000	12,492,000	27,322,000

n/a—Not available.

Detailed decisions on expenditure for 1990-91 as requested have not yet been taken.

Public Relations

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment (1) what was the total expenditure by his Department on press and public relations in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91;

(2) what was the total expenditure by the Training Agency on press and public relations in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and the budget for 1990-91.

Mr. Eggar: *(a)* The information requested is given in the table:

Year Actual	Expenditure (£'000)
1979-80	n/a
1980-81	n/a
1981-82	n/a
1982-83	n/a
1983-84	n/a
1984-85	n/a
1985-86	n/a
1986-87	1·080
1987-88	1·014
1988-89	3·185
Estimated	
1989-90	3·331

Figures for 1986-87 and 1987-88 are for DE information division only. Figures for TA are not available.

Figures for 1988-89 and 1989-90 represent total expenditure separately incurred by DE information division and TA information services branch; the two merged in November 1989.

(b) Expenditure levels for 1990-91 are in the process of being set.

Privatisation

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the total sum paid out in fees to outside organisations in the furtherance of privatisation by the Training Agency in 1979-80 and in each subsequent year; and what is his estimate for 1990-91.

Mr. Eggar: The only fees paid to outside organisations in the furtherance of privatisation by the Training Agency (and in respect of its training functions carried out by its predecessors the Training Commission and the Manpower Services Commission) have been those in respect of the privatisation of the Skills Training Agency (STA). These are:

	£'000
1988-89	132
1989-90	[1]287

[1] Estimated.

These figures are exclusive of expenses plus VAT. The supply estimate 1990-91 to be published on Budget day will contain estimates for the privatisation of STA and the expenses involved in 1990-91.

Management Consultants

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what were the total fees paid out by the Training Agency to management consultants in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

Mr. Nicholls: Expenditure by the Training Agency (and its predecessors, the Training Commission, and the Manpower Services Commission) on management consultancy for the years 1984-85 to 1988-89 was as follows:

	£ thousand
1984-85	128
1985-86	191
1986-87	403
1987-88	238
1988-89	215

The estimated outturn for the current year, that is, 1989-90 is around £28,000. The budget for 1990-91 is £79,000. Information for the periods 1979-80 to 1983-84 could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Offshore Working

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what information he has on *(a)* the numbers of people on employment training working offshore on the United Kingdom continental shelf, *(b)* the percentage of such people offered full-time employment by offshore contractors and *(c)* the average length of time spent by such people offshore; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: The information requested is not available.

Skill Centres

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will take steps to ensure that Astra Training Services Limited will provide special facilities for the training of people with disabilities and learning difficulties throughout the 47 skill centres it has recently purchased.

Mr. Eggar: As a provider of Government-sponsored training programmes, Astra Training Services Limited will be required to promote equality of opportunity between all individuals in access to, treatment on and outcome from the training it offers.

Disabled Workers

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether his Department has details of the hours worked by disabled people who, because of their disability, are unable to work full time but do work part time.

Mr. Eggar: I regret that information on the hours worked by registered people with disabilities is not

available. The study commissioned by my Department, of all people with disabilities in the labour market, will provide comprehensive information about their numbers and characteristics.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the reasons for the delay in publishing his internal reviews on employment services for people with disabilities.

Mr. Eggar: The preparation of the consultative document which will give the results of the review is almost complete. It will be published as soon as account can be taken in it of the results of the survey of people with disabilities in the labour market which my Department has commissioned. We currently anticipate that this will be during the course of June 1990.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if, pursuant to his answers of 30 November 1989, *Official Report*, columns *381-82*, and 14 February, *Official Report*, column *152*, he will make a statement on the publication of his Department's survey of the employment of economically active people with vocational handicaps.

Mr. Eggar: The fieldwork has been completed on the survey of people with disabilities in the labour market which my Department has commissioned. The results are expected to be available shortly.

Sheltered Placements

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether the number of places under the sheltered placement scheme will continue to be increased, as stated in chapter 7 of "The Government's Expenditure Plans 1989-90 to 1991-92"; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many new places will be made available under the sheltered placement scheme during the 1990-91 financial year; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: The Government have confirmed in chapter 6 of "The Government's Expenditure Plans 1990-91 to 1992-93" (Cm 1006), published in January 1990, their commitment to the sheltered placement scheme. In 1990-91 the Government are making available to the sheltered employment programme an additional £4·2 million to the money available in the current financial year.

I have decided to direct the additional funds available for next year towards meeting the costs incurred by sponsors rather than to increase the number of places on the programme.

It is intended to increase the annual grant ceiling per place for voluntary bodies by 6 per cent. to £3,480 and the grant to local authorities by 5 per cent. to £2,730. There will, therefore, be no new SPS places available during 1990-91, but previous patterns of turnover indicate that some 1,000 existing places nationally are likely to become vacant to allow new entrants to join the programme.

The employment service is notifying sponsors of these arrangements.

"Action for Jobs"

Mr. Terry Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how much of the expenditure on "Action for Jobs" printed material in 1988-89 was spent through the Central Office of Information.

Mr. Eggar: All the expenditure on "Action for Jobs" printed material in 1988-89 was spent through the Central Office of Information.

Child Care

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he will make it his policy to make the provision of child care facilities one of the stringent criteria for an organisation to satisfy before securing approved training organisation status.

Mr. Nicholls *[holding answer 5 March 1990]:* No. To make the provision of child care facilities a separate criterion from the existing criteria would not be appropriate. The criteria for approved status for training providers cover general themes, such as equal opportunities, rather than prescribing particular actions to implement them.

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 13 March 1990

HOME DEPARTMENT

Civil Emergencies

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will identify the costs to his Department in 1989-90 to date allocated for 1990-91 of *(a)* maintaining the civil emergencies secretariat, *(b)* the employment of a civil emergency adviser and associated costs, *(c)* commissioned work by outside bodies relating to civil emergency planning and *(d)* other expenditure relating to civil emergency planning.

Mr. John Patten: The costs are as follows:

	1989-90 £	*1990-91* £
Civil Emergencies Adviser and Secretariat	60,000	107,000
Travel and subsistence for Adviser and Secretariat	[1]3,500	16,500
Emergency Planning College Civil Emergencies Tutorial Group[2]	38,000	159,000

[1] Estimated outturn.
[2] Includes travel and subsistence.

No costs have been incurred for work undertaken by outside bodies. Other expenditure relating to civil emergency planning is incurred by the police staff college and the fire service college and other Home Office departments, but figures could not be broken down without disproportionate cost.

Civil Emergency Adviser (Meetings)

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will place in the Library a copy of the itinerary of conferences and meetings with outside bodies which his Department's civil emergency adviser has attended, or agreed to attend, in 1990;

(2) if he will make it his policy to send his Department's civil emergency adviser, Mr. David Brook, to the conference for local authorities on disaster planning for the 1990s to be held on 15 March.

Mr. John Patten: The functions of the civil emergencies adviser were set out by my right hon. Friend the Member for Witney (Mr. Hurd) in answer to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Broxtowe (Mr. Lester) on 15 June 1989 at columns *514-15*; it is for Mr. Brook as civil emergencies adviser to determine how best to fulfil that remit.

Housing, Greater Manchester

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many houses are in the ownership of his Department in each district in Greater Manchester; and what percentage of these are empty.

Mr. Waddington: The information is as follows:

District	*Number of houses*	*Percentage empty*
Bolton	—	—
Bury	—	—
Manchester	49	18
Oldham	—	—
Rochdale	4	0
Salford	—	—
Stockport	—	—
Tameside	—	—
Trafford	—	—
Wigan	27	89

Twenty-one surplus empty houses in Wigan and four in Manchester will shortly be placed on the open market for sale.

Arson

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what progress has been made in regard to the investigations into the arson campaign in Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: I understand from the chief constable of North Wales police that a special squad was set up at Bangor in March 1988 to investigate these offences. Effective liaison has been established between all the forces concerned and police inquiries are continuing as a matter of priority.

Pop Concerts

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many applications have been made to local authorities during each of the past five years for which records are available for licences to hold pop concerts; and how many and what percentage have been refused.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: This information is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Crowd Safety

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department with what agencies he is, or his officials are, in consultation concerning what further guidance should be issued to local authorities about crowd safety at public musical entertainments; when such consultations will be concluded; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The Home Office is consulting the Health and Safety Executive, the Association of Chief Police Officers and the Association of District Councils about this issue. The recent announcement from the Health and Safety Commission explained that work has been commissioned to produce new guidance on safety at pop concerts, but it is too early to predict when this will be available, bearing in mind the many factors involved.

Non-English Speaking Prisoners

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the policy of his Department on informing inmates in prisons in England and Wales who do not speak or understand English as to the rules existing in prison; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: All prisoners, when they are first received into prisons, are provided with an information booklet

which they are allowed to keep in their possession during their sentence. There are versions of this booklet in English and 12 other languages.

If a prisoner cannot for any reason understand this written information, the governor will arrange for an oral explanation using interpreting facilities where necessary.

Incitement to Murder

Mr. Winnick: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he has any plans to strengthen present legislation on incitement to murder; and if he will make a statement;

(2) how many prosecutions have taken place in the last 12 months for incitement to murder; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten *[holding answer 15 February 1990]:* We have no present plans to change the law on incitement to murder, but we keep it under review.

In 1988 there were 30 prosecutions under section 4 of the Offences Against the Person Act 1861 and section 1 of the Criminal Law Act 1977: together, these provisions make it an offence to solicit or propose to another to commit murder or to conspire to do so. Figures are not kept separately for each provision. There were also 1,030 prosecutions under section 16 of the 1861 Act, which makes it an offence to make threats to kill with intention that the recipient of those threats should fear that they will be carried out. Information for 1989 will not be available until autumn 1990.

Security Service Tribunal

Mr. Allason: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many complaints have been received by the Security Service Tribunal since 18 December 1989; and how many have been rejected because they referred to events prior to that date.

Mr. Waddington: The Security Service Tribunal operates independently under the provisions of the Security Service Act 1989. I do not propose to make available details of its work. It will be for the Security Service Commissioner to decide in consultation with the tribunal what information might be included about the tribunal in his annual report to my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Electricity Tariffs

Sir Michael McNair-Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement about electricity tariffs in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Brooke: The Government have decided to end the tariff subsidy arrangement whereby electricity tariffs in Northern Ireland are linked to the highest in England and Wales. This decision, which will have effect from 1 April, follows a detailed review of existing tariff policy. The review concluded that, on the basis of oil price projections, the tariff link arrangements are no longer appropriate. The review recommended that NIE should, therefore, return to setting its tariffs on the basis of its own costs rather than by reference to the tariffs of area boards in England and Wales. It is clear, moreover, that the privatisation of the electricity supply industry in England and Wales and the decision to privatise NIE also have made the link less appropriate.

For the future, NIE's tariffs will have to be based on the economic price of producing and delivering electricity in Northern Ireland. In the year beginning 1 April 1990, a tariff increase of around 8 per cent. on average would, in the Government's view, be consistent with that objective.

I expect to receive within the next week or so NIE's detailed proposals for the different categories of consumer. When agreement is reached on these, NIE will make a full announcement.

Civil Service

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) if he will publish a table in the *Official Report* showing the Government establishments in *(a)* the Coleraine council area, *(b)* the Magherafelt council area, *(c)* the Larne council area, *(d)* the Carrickfergus council area and *(e)* the Strabane council area, in which civil servants are employed at present, five years and 10 years ago, together with his projections for the next three years of the number of such employees in each establishment;

(2) if he will publish a table in the *Official Report* to show the Government establishments in the *(a)* Omagh council area, *(b)* Moyle council area, *(c)* Ballymoney council area, *(d)* Fermanagh council area and *(e)* Craigavon council area, in which civil servants are employed at present, five years and 10 years ago, together with his projections for the next three years of the number of such employees in each establishment;

(3) if he will publish a table in the *Official Report* to show the Government establishments in the *(a)* Dungannon council area, *(b)* Banbridge council area, *(c)* Armagh council area, *(d)* Ballymena council area and *(e)* Antrim council area, in which civil servants are employed at present, five years and 10 years ago, together with his projections for the next three years of the number of such employees in each establishment;

(4) if he will publish a table in the *Official Report* to show the Government establishments in the *(a)* Belfast council area, *(b)* Ards council area, *(c)* Castlereagh council area, *(d)* Down council area and *(e)* Lisburn council area, in which civil servants are employed at present, five years and 10 years ago, together with his projections for the next three years of the number of such employees in each establishment;

(5) if he will publish a table in the *Official Report* to show the Government establishments in *(a)* the Londonerry council area, *(b)* the Newtonabbey council area, *(c)* the Cookstown district council area, *(d)* the North Down district council area, *(e)* the Limavady council area and *(f)* the Newry and Mourne council area in which civil servants are employed at present, five years and 10 years ago, together with his projections for the next three years of the number of such employees in each establishment at each period.

Mr. Cope *[holding answer 27 February 1990]:* Information in the form requested is not readily available and could be compiled only at disproportionate cost. However, the table lists the total number of Northern Ireland civil servants employed in each district council area in Northern Ireland at present and five years ago. Given

the extent of change, firm projections of numbers in district council areas cannot be provided for the next three years.

Northern Ireland civil service

District council area	*Staff in post*	
	1985	*1990*
Coleraine	892	816
Magherafelt	169	209
Larne	185	189
Carrickfergus	153	245
Strabane	194	175
Omagh	1,061	1,080
Moyle	67	55
Ballymoney	145	164
Fermanagh	845	716
Craigavon	987	1,041
Dungannon	271	265
Banbridge	207	209
Armagh	916	832
Ballymena	907	914
Antrim	471	493
Belfast	14,167	14,763
Ards	267	239
Castlereagh	357	866
Down	728	815
Lisburn	863	805
Derry	1,065	1,117
Newtownabbey	328	279
Cookstown	389	375
North Down	969	1,018
Limavady	220	242
Newry and Mourne	647	520

ENERGY

Severn Barrage

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on the Government's position, from energy, environmental and financial aspects, on the Severn tidal barrage.

Mr. Wakeham: A Severn tidal barrage is by far the largest single renewable energy project which could be built in the United Kingdom. Its average annual output would be some 17 Twh, which constitutes 7 per cent. of present electrical energy consumption in England and Wales. Before a Severn tidal barrage could go ahead, a full environmental impact assessment would need to be completed.

Over the next two years some further work on the Severn barrage will be undertaken. This will include some site specific environmental work and a study of the financing issues for a barrage. The Department is presently funding generic tidal R and D in support of site specific work on the Severn, Mersey and other estuaries. The total cost of generic environmental studies completed since 1986 and currently under way amounts to £1 million.

British Gas

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will list all the organisations which advised his Department on any aspect of the privatisation of British Gas giving in each case the dates of their involvement and in each case the aspect on which they advised.

Mr. Wakeham: The lead organisations and the role they played during privatisation of British Gas plc are listed in the table. The dates of their involvement are not readily available.

	Organisation
Merchant Banks	N M Rothschild & Sons Ltd Goldman, Sachs & Co (US)* Wood Gundy Inc (Canada)* Swiss Bank Corporation International Ltd (Europe)* Nomura International Ltd (Japan)*
Brokers	Cazenove & Co
Underwriters	N M Rothschild & Sons Ltd Kleinwort Benson Ltd Barclays de Zoete Wedd Ltd Barings Brothers & Co Ltd Charterhouse Bank Ltd County Ltd Robert Fleming & Co Ltd Hambros Bank Ltd Hill Samuel & Co Ltd Lazard Brothers & Co Ltd Lloyds Merchant Bank Ltd Samuel Montagu & Co Ltd Morgan Grenfell & Co Ltd J Henry Schroder Wagg & Co Ltd S G Warburg & Co Ltd
Solicitor	Slaughter and May
Tax and Accountancy	Touche Ross & Co
Multiple Applicant Investigator	Touche Ross & Co
Reporting Accountants	Price Waterhouse
Public Relations Advisers	Dewe Rogerson*
Advertising Agents	Young and Rubicam Ltd*

	Organisation
Reporting Petroleum Consultants	ERC Energy Resource Consultants Ltd
Lead Receiving Bank	National Westminster Bank plc
Printers	Burrup, Mathieson & Co Ltd

*Also advised British Gas Corporation

WALES

Flooding

Mr. Gwilym Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he has anything to add to his announcement on 1 March about Government help for the victims of the recent flooding in the area of Towyn.

Mr. Peter Walker: Yes. I am pleased to say that the Government have decided to increase the donation to £150,000. As I made clear on 1 March, parliamentary approval for this expenditure will be sought by means of a summer supplementary estimate. Pending this approval, the contribution will be met by a repayable advance from the contingencies fund.

Cancers

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on the information available to him on trends during the past six years in the incidence of leukaemia, lung cancer, colon cancer and stomach cancer *(a)* in Wales generally and *(b)* in each district in Wales.

Mr. Grist: The most recently available information on the incidence rates for these illnesses is presented in the Welsh Office publication "Cancer Registration in Wales, 1974-84"; a copy of which is in the Library.

Channel Tunnel

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he will respond to the Welsh Affairs Committee report "The Channel Tunnel: Implications for Wales" published on 21 June 1989.

Mr. Peter Walker *[pursuant to the reply, 22 February 1990, c. 861.]:* I am pleased to announce that the response has been published today.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Bluecoat School, Liverpool

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he now expects to make a decision on the application by Bluecoat school, Liverpool 15, to increase its entry from three forms to four forms.

Mr. Alan Howarth: My right hon. Friend still has the matter under active consideration and will come to a decision as quickly as is compatible with a full and careful consideration of all the issues involved.

Capital Allocation, Buckinghamshire

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he expects to be able to provide Buckinghamshire county council with a detailed breakdown of the capital allocation for Buckinghamshire for 1989-90 and 1990-91, showing the amounts attributed to each project as agreed at his meeting with the chairman of Buckinghamshire county council on 5 February.

Mr. Alan Howarth: I shall be writing to the chairman of Buckinghamshire county council shortly about allocations made to Buckinghamshire LEA. I shall send a copy to my hon. Friend.

Fun Eating at School Today

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science which local education authorities in the seven counties of south-west England have joined in FEAST—fun eating at school today.

Mr. Alan Howarth: The information requested is as follows:

Avon	Gloucestershire
Cornwall	Somerset
Devon	Wiltshire

Local Management (Ealing)

Sir George Young: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he plans to respond to the proposals from the London borough of Ealing for local management of schools.

Mrs. Rumbold: The scheme for local management of schools submitted by the London borough of Ealing was approved by my right hon. Friend, with certain modifications, on 1 March.

University of Wales

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what, over the last five years for which figures are available, have been the proportions of University Grants Committee-Universities Funding Council grants to universities in the United Kingdom allocated to the university of Wales.

Mr. Jackson *[pursuant to his reply, 5 March 1990, c. 396]:* Total University Grants Committee-Universities Funding Council grants received by the university of Wales were as follows:

Academic year	*Wales (£ million)*	*All Great Britain (£ million)*	*Wales as a percentage of total*
1984-85	76·45	1,258·0	6.08
1985-86	76.57	1,312·0	5·84
1986-87	80·61	1,367·0	5·90
1987-88	91·99	1,482·3	6·21
1988-89	93·07	1,619·6	5·75

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Gibraltar

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has any proposals to give Gibraltar total independence.

Mr. Maude: No.

UNESCO

Mr. Atkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the decision on whether to rejoin UNESCO.

Mr. Maude: We are currently looking at the question of United Kingdom membership of UNESCO. As part of the process we have consulted a large number of bodies with an interest in UNESCO activities. We are now assessing their replies. Before reaching a final decision we will also take account of the forthcoming report by the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Chad

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Chadian Government concerning human rights in Chad.

Mr. Waldegrave: We have not yet made any representation to the Chadian Government on human rights abuses. The Amnesty International report of 7 March has just been received and will be given careful consideration.

Nuclear Tests

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what are the implications of the decision of the Soviet Union to move its nuclear warhead-testing site to Novaya Zemlya for Her Majesty's Government's policy on a verifiable nuclear test ban.

Mr. Waldegrave: None.

Law of the Sea Convention

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he expects the United Kingdom to sign the third United Nations conference on the law of the sea treaty; and what reasons the Government have for delaying their signature.

Mr. Waldegrave: The United Kingdom has not signed the United Nations law of the sea convention because the deep sea bed mining regime for which it provides is unacceptable to us. Nevertheless, we participate in the preparatory commission in the hope that within the long period before mining can start a regime acceptable to all can be achieved. We see many of the other parts of UNLOSC as valuable and as reflecting current state practice.

Namibia

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement about Britain's help with military training for Namibia.

Mr. Waldegrave: In response to a request from the president-elect, we sent a fact-finding team to Namibia in January to assess the requirements for establishing and training an army after independence. I am glad to tell the House that, following discussions with the future Government of Namibia, we have agreed to help with military training for the new Namibian defence force under the United Kingdom military training assistance scheme. We shall be assisting in the establishment of a Defence Ministry and the creation of a Namibian defence force able to carry out the tasks placed on it and sustainable in resource terms. The advance party of our military training team arrived in Namibia today, 13 March, and will start work immediately. The main body of the training team is due to arrive shortly after independence. I believe that this assistance and other help, which we as friends of Namibia are providing, are important in helping Namibia to establish itself successfully as an independent country and as the newest member of the Commonwealth.

TRANSPORT

Railway Inspectorate

86. **Mr. Dunnachie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received calling for the railway inspectorate to become the responsibility of the Health and Safety Executive; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: I am aware of only two representations since the beginning of this year, one in favour and one against such a move.

As my right hon. Friend said in response to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Romsey and Waterside (Mr. Colvin) on 27 February, *Official Report*, column *143*, the chairman of the Health and Safety Commission has agreed to discussions on the possible transfer of the railway inspectorate to the Health and Safety Executive.

Jubilee Line

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how much British Gas is expected to contribute to the cost of constructing the Jubilee line extension;

(2) how much British Urban Developments plc is expected to contribute to the construction of the Jubilee line extension.

Mr. Portillo: Agreement has been reached with British Gas on behalf of its joint development on the Greenwich peninsula. It will contribute towards the cost of the Jubilee line extension cash and benefits in kind that have been evaluated by the Department and its advisers as having a present value of more than £25 million in September 1989 prices.

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much the construction of the Jubilee line extension is expected to cost if built at current Underground gauge; and how much it would cost if built to BR gauge.

Mr. Portillo: The cost of building the Jubilee line extension via Greenwich is estimated at about £1,030

million at September 1989 prices. This assumes the building and equipment of the extension to current LUL gauge and specifications. No estimate has been made of the additional costs if the extension were built to BR gauge and specifications, but they would certainly be considerably greater.

Debris on Railway Land

Mr. Tredinnick: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he will discuss with the chairman of British Rail at their next meeting the amount of debris on railway land to the west of the M1/A406 junction.

Mr. Portillo: The condition of railway land is a matter for the British Railways Board, so I would recommend my hon. Friend to pursue the matter directly with the chairman, who, I am sure, will wish to investigate the complaint.

Railway Staff (Fatalities)

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list by region and by year for the last 10 years the number of railway staff who have been killed during their work.

Mr. Portillo: The following details, which cover all railways, are for the period 1979-88; figures for 1989 are not available. I am unable to provide a regional breakdown for the years before 1984.

	British Rail								
Year	[1]*AR*	[1]*ER*	[1]*LMR*	*ScR*	*SR*	*WR*	*LUL*	*Other*	*Total*
1979	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	43
1980	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	32
1981	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	27
1982	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	27
1983	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	28
1984	—	5	10	4	1	1	3	1	25
1985	—	4	11	3	1	4	1	1	25
1986	—	0	6	4	4	1	1	0	16
1987	—	6	3	1	5	1	0	0	16
1988	0	4	5	1	4	2	0	0	16

Notes:
AR Anglia Region
ER Eastern Region
LMR London Midland Region
SCR Scottish Region
SR Southern Region
WR Western Region
LUL London Underground Limited
[1]Prior to 1988 the returns for Anglia Region were included with those for Eastern Region.

Vehicle Insurance

Mr. French: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is his estimate of the number of vehicles being driven without third party insurance cover.

Mr. Atkins: In 1988, the most recent year for which figures are available, there were 208,568 findings of guilt by magistrates courts in England and Wales for using a motor vehicle uninsured against third party risks. I am not aware of any reliable estimate of the number of vehicles actually being used without insurance.

Heavy Goods Vehicles

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the present number of heavy goods vehicles taxed at the 38-tonne limit; and what was the number of such vehicles registered in the past five years.

Mr. Atkins: The number of heavy goods vehicles licensed at the maximum gross vehicle weight was 58,094 as at the end of December 1989. Figures for the previous five years are as follows:

	Number
1988	50,453
1987	39,928
1986	32,967
1985	26,309
1984	19,071

Crash Barriers

Mr. Bradley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to make the crash barriers along Britain's motorways of sufficient height to eliminate the glare from oncoming cars at night.

Mr. Atkins: The purpose of central reserve safety fences is to mitigate the risks and consequences of errant cars crossing into the opposite carriageway. Their ability to reduce or eliminate glare on most of the motorway network is incidental.

A trial involving the provision of an anti-dazzle screen on top of the safety fence has been carried out on 19 km of the M6 between junctions 2 and 4. The evaluation showed that while it further reduced or eliminated glare there was no significant effect on accidents. Nonetheless, where glare has been or is identified as a serious problem because of the alignment of a particular stretch of motorway, the Department erects such a screen if it is justified on safety and financial grounds.

Railway Tracks (Chemicals)

Mr. Colvin: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he plans to take to limit the use of the chemical Atrazine by British Rail on railway tracks.

Mr. Portillo: I understand that the use of herbicides containing Atrazine is an effective way of preventing weed growth on the railway tracks. British Rail regularly review

the methods used by other railway organisations and conduct trials with other methods, but has not found any other as effective.

Regional Expenditure

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what was the regional distribution of spending by his Department over the three most recent financial years.

Mr. Atkins *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* Two thirds of the Department of Transport's own expenditure on transport is spent on the national roads system; that expenditure can be broken down between the Department's own administrative regions, as shown in table 1·20 of "Transport Statistics Great Britain". Transport supplementary grant, though paid to local authorities rather than regions, can be broken down according to the geographical location of those authorities in DTp regions. Statistics for the three most recent available financial years are shown in the table.

The balance of central Government expenditure, as shown in table 7·1 chapter 7 of the "Government's Expenditure Plans 1990-91 to 1992-93" (CM 1007) is neither planned nor controlled on a regional basis, so a comparable breakdown cannot be made.

Regional expenditure on motorway and trunk roads by DTp region

	1985-86 £ million	*1986-87 £ million*	*1987-88 £ million*
Northern	24·0	24·5	53·1
Yorkshire and Humberside	47·6	65·1	83·1
North West	54·1	83·4	88·9
West Midlands	117·1	122·5	116·1
East Midlands	73·4	72·9	65·2
Eastern	197·2	171·2	118·6
South West	47·0	64·5	98·2
South East	136·0	86·3	183·8
London	43·8	60·3	82·2

Notes:
1. Figures include some estimates.
2. Sum of figures, for England, differ from those voted in the Supply Estimates because of differences in sources.

Transport supplementary grant by DTp region

	1986-87 £ million	*1987-88 £ million*	*1988-89 £ million*
Northern	9·76	10·70	12·24
Yorkshire and Humberside	14·46	14·69	12·91
North West	23·31	24·28	15·15
West Midlands	17·21	18·72	21·30
East Midlands	12·93	13·13	12·03
Eastern	5·27	7·52	6·15
South West	14·31	15·68	19·05
South East	34·49	36·45	40·37
London	32·27	38·78	41·78

Public Relations

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what are the latest figures for the number of staff presently employed, and the full complement of staff, including vacant posts, in the press and public relations office of his Department; and what is the proposed complement for 1990-91.

Mr. Atkins *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* The Department has a current complement, within its information division, of 16 posts for press and public relations, with no vacancies. The proposed complement for 1990-91 is 16.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what was the total expenditure by his Department on press and public relations in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

Mr. Atkins *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* The total expenditure on the Department's press and public relations office since 1984-85 is as follows:

	£
1984-85	339,426
1985-86	354,393
1986-87	363,446
1987-88	389,473
1988-89	437,950
[1]1989-90	451,214
[2]1990-91	480,000

[1] estimate
[2] budget

These figures cover the overall costs of running the press office, calculated using HM Treasury simplified ready reckoner for staff and other costs. Before 1984-85 the information division was a common service of the Departments of Transport and of the Environment and the Property Services Agency.

Privatisation

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what was the total sum paid out in fees to outside organisations in the furtherance of privatisation by his Department in 1979-80 and in each subsequent year; and what is his estimate for 1990-91.

Mr. Atkins *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* The information is as follows:

The sums involved are as follows:

£000s

Privatisation	*1981-82*	*1982-83*	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*	*1987-88*	*1988-89*	*[1]1989-90*	*[1]1990-91*
Sales of Shares in National Freight Corporation	151	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sale of Shares in Associated British Ports	—	1,809	260	1,494	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sale of Shares in British Airways plc	—	—	50	1,012	674	20,804	11,364	72	570	3
Sale of Shares in BAA plc	—	—	—	—	—	564	41,149	3,095	17	1,500

Privatisation	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	[1]1989-90	[1]1990-91
Sale of National Bus Company Operations	—	—	—	—	—	635	324	139	38	15
British Rail Privatisation Study (Consultants' Fees)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	94	542	270

[1] Estimate.
No expenditure was incurred before 1981-82.

Advertising Expenditure

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what were the figures for the spending by his Department on *(a)* television advertising, *(b)* radio advertising, *(c)* newspaper advertising and *(d)* other promotional material in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

Mr. Atkins *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* The spending by my Department on *(a)* television advertising, *(b)* radio advertising, *(c)* newspaper advertising and *(d)* other promotional material in 1979-80 and in each following year is as follows:

	Television £'000s	Radio £'000s	Newspaper £'000s	Other £'000s
1979-80	4,141	62	105	1,532
1980-81	3,502	336	129	1,737
1981-82	3,615	6	410	1,457
1982-83	2,319	98	816	1,415
1983-84	4,655	22	334	1,488
1984-85	1,723	207	476	2,873
1985-86	70	858	834	4,026
1986-87	72	520	738	4,489
1987-88	2,310	50	140	3,010
1988-89	1,867	110	365	3,367
1989-90	1,930	113	332	3,189

Detailed decisions have not yet been taken on expenditure by media for 1990-91, but the overall figure is expected to be £6·6 million.

A2

Mr. David Shaw: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the likely timetable for implementation of the proposal to dual the A2 road between Lydden and Dover.

Mr. Atkins *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* It is too early to forecast the timing of construction of the A2 Lydden (B2060)-Dover improvement scheme which has only just entered the national trunk road programme. Detailed programmes have not yet been prepared. Meanwhile the roads report, "Trunk Roads, England—Into The 1990s", shows "Preferred Route" as the next key preparation stage, with a target date of 1993. This would be followed by detailed design work, leading to publication of formal draft order proposals under the Highways Act.

The first step will be the appointment of design agents to work up options.

M1

Mr. Marlow: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to his answer of 1 March, *Official Report*, columns *279-80*, what are the peak hours on the M1 between junctions 6 and 12.

Mr. Atkins *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* Peak hours are 0700 to 1000 southbound and 1630 to 1900 hours northbound on most weekdays, Friday afternoons in both directions and Sunday evenings southbound.

Palmer Report

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when the leaflet explaining the role of the traffic commissioners and the traffic area offices promised following the Palmer report will be available; and if he will place a copy in the Library.

Mr. Atkins *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* The Palmer report recommended that the Bus and Coach Council should be asked to draw up a code of practice on complaints from passengers, covering in particular the provision of suitable notices notifying passengers where complaints should be addressed. The Bus and Coach Council has agreed to undertake this task, in association with my Department, and work is due to begin on it shortly. I will place a copy of the code of practice in the Library when it is ready.

Kleinwort Benson

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport on how many occasions and for what purpose his Department has commissioned work from Kleinwort Benson since July 1988.

Mr. Atkins *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* None.

Badgers

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what consideration is given to resident badger populations when *(a)* designing and *(b)* constructing new roads.

Mr. Atkins *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* We aim, where possible, to design trunk roads to avoid interfering with badgers. Where setts or runs may be affected, advice is obtained from the Nature Conservancy Council and local wildlife trusts about steps to be taken to move the badgers or maintain their runs. Badger-proof fencing alongside the road and badger tunnels under the carriageway are provided where appropriate. There are examples on the M3, M25 and M40.

Badgers in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are the responsibility of the respective Secretary of State.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Pensioners (Incomes)

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what are the latest figures of average mean household income in Britain for retired people; what are

the latest comparable figures for each European Community state; and whether he will launch a survey to calculate costs facing pensioners as against those in full employment.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Analysis of data in the 1987 family expenditure survey shows that the average pensioners' total net income in 1987 was £99·90 a week[1]. There are no comparable figures available for other European Community states. We do not see a need for a survey along the lines proposed.

Footnote: Family Expenditure Survey.
[1]This refers to pensioner tax units.

Pensions

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) what is his estimate of the cost of paying full retirement pension regardless of contribution record to persons who were excepted from liability to pay non-employed contributions to the original national insurance scheme;

(2) what is his estimate of the number of men and women who are excepted from liability to pay non-employed contributions to the national insurance scheme from 1948, who, as a result of this are now receiving a reduced retirement pension.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: I regret that the information requested could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Child Benefit

Ms. Primarolo: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what would be the rate of child benefit at the present time if it had been uprated with inflation since 1987.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The rate would be £8.

Unclaimed Benefit

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what estimate he has made of the amount saved by his Department in respect of unclaimed benefit in the last financial year.

Mr. Scott: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Moray (Mrs. Ewing) on 7 December 1989 at column *342*. Information is available only for income-related benefits.

Disabled People

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what assessment he has made of the advantages that will accrue to people with disabilities in 1992 on completion of the single market in relation to any benefits, goods or services they receive in respect of their disabilities; if he will list them; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: The United Kingdom is currently included in the European Communities' second action programme in favour of disabled people called HELIOS. A major component is the development of "Handynet", a multilingual, multinational computerised database of information for people with disabilities. The first module "Handyaids" is expected to have beneficial effects by stimulating consumption production and competition. This should give rise to economies of scale, leading to a reduction in the price of products and improving their quality.

As for social security, the completion of the internal market will not in itself have any effect on the situation of people with disabilities in the United Kingdom.

Invalidity Benefit

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many people are in receipt of invalidity benefit; and how many of those are also in receipt of income support.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: At April 1988, the latest date for which information is available, there were 1,047,500 people in receipt of invalidity benefit. Information for income support is not available for precisely the same period, but in May 1988 there were 101,705 people in receipt of both benefits.

Disability Allowance

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will make it his policy that, following the introduction of the disability allowance, children under two years with attendance needs will qualify for attendance allowance after a three-month waiting period.

Mr. Scott: Yes.

Family Credit

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is the uptake of family credit in *(a)* the Liverpool area and *(b)* other areas in the north-west.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The latest available information about the families receiving family credit who, at the time their award was made, were living in the areas concerned is as follows:

(a) In the areas covered by the local social security offices in Liverpool—5,600;
(b) In the areas covered by all the local social security offices in the Department of Social Security's North Western Region—56,000.

Information about the total number of families eligible for family credit can be obtained only for Great Britain, and only retrospectively, from the family expenditure survey data.

National Insurance

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what percentage of national insurance contributors are currently benefiting from the existence of the ceiling on contributions.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: It is estimated that approximately 16 per cent. of contributors have earnings in excess of the upper earnings limit for class 1 primary national insurance contributions.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many employers have been tried and found guilty of fraud in respect of national insurance contributions over the last 10 years; and what was the sentence in each case.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard *[holding answer 8 March 1990]:* In the last five years, the number of employers against

whom either civil or criminal proceedings have been taken by DSS in respect of non-payment of national insurance contributions is as follows:

Year	*Number of cases*
1984-85	2,896
1985-86	1,272
1986-87	1,523
1987-88	1,264
1988-89	1,528

Information for earlier years is not available. It is not possible to identify the number of these cases involving fraud.

PRIME MINISTER

Conservation

Q24. **Mr. Boswell:** To ask the Prime Minister what recent representations she has received relating to Government action to conserve biodiversity.

The Prime Minister: I receive many representations on a wide range of subjects concerned with the environment. These include the need to conserve biodiversity, particularly in tropical forests. The further £100 million which we have allocated over the next three years to tropical forestry activities will contribute to the maintenance of biological diversity. In my speech to the United Nations General Assembly last November I indicated my support for a global convention on the environment which would help to conserve biodiversity.

Demersal Fisheries

Q135. **Dr. Godman:** To ask the Prime Minister what recent representations Her Majesty's Government have received regarding proposals to reduce fishing effort in the North sea demersal fisheries from 1 March 1990.

The Prime Minister: My right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland have consulted representatives of the fishing industry about the measures necessary to reduce fishing for North sea haddock in 1990 by 30 per cent. and they have taken careful account of the representations that they have received. The decision on the necessary measures was announced on 8 March at column *855*.

Exchange Rate Mechanism

Q182. **Mr. Latham:** To ask the Prime Minister what progress is being made towards fulfilling the Government's conditions for joining the exchange rate mechanism of the European monetary system; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: There has been significant progress on capital liberalisation, in competition policy and liberalisation of financial services, but further important decisions have yet to be taken. Further progress is needed to get inflation down.

London Assessment Studies

Q218. **Mr. Cox:** To ask the Prime Minister what has been the number of letters sent to her by London residents *(a)* supporting and *(b)* opposing the London assessment studies; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: I have received several letters from residents of various parts of London. I have passed them on to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport, who will consider them alongside the other comments he has received.

Polish Borders

Mr. Allen: To ask the Prime Minister what is her policy on the use of Her Majesty's Government's armed services to guarantee the existing borders of Poland.

The Prime Minister: We have no such policy. We are committed to fulfil Britain's collective defence obligations arising from the North Atlantic and modified Brussels treaties within the areas covered by these treaties. We are also committed to the principles set out in the 1975 Helsinki Final Act, including the inviolability of frontiers. The question of Poland's borders needs to be finally settled by a binding treaty instrument. We welcome the Federal German Government's intention to reaffirm the inviolability of Poland's borders.

South Africa

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Prime Minister how many representations she has received from British investors in South Africa supporting the lifting of sanctions.

The Prime Minister: A number.

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Prime Minister if she has received any communications from President de Klerk following the release of Nelson Mandela.

The Prime Minister: We are in frequent contact with the South African Government at all levels on a wide range of issues, both here and through Her Majesty's ambassador.

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Prime Minister if she will seek to persuade the South African Government to allow the free flow of funds from outside South Africa to the United Democratic Front.

The Prime Minister: I understand that there are no impediments to the flow of funds from outside South Africa to the United Democratic Front.

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Prime Minister what methods it is her policy to use to facilitate the abolition of apartheid in South Africa; and if she will make a further statement.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs to my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Burton (Mr. Lawrence) on 7 March at column *692*.

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Prime Minister what representations the Government has made to South Africa about its activities in Mozambique; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: The South African Government have publicly declared that neither they nor the South

African defence force are providing support for Renamo and that South Africa is committed to a policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of other states. The South African Government are in no doubt of our views about the territorial integrity of neighbouring states.

Engagements

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 13 March.

Mr. Rathbone: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 13 March.

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 13 March.

The Prime Minister: This morning I had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House, I shall be having further meetings later today. This evening I hope to have an Audience of Her Majesty the Queen.

SCOTLAND

Loch Lomond

Mr. McFall: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what plans he has to confer on the Loch Lomond area the status of a national park.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: There no such plans at present. The designation of the area as a regional park was confirmed by the Secretary of State in April 1988 and it would therefore be appropriate to allow this new arrangement to be developed.

The Government will however carefully consider any proposals from the Countryside Commission for Scotland following its review of the management of popular mountain areas.

Community Charge

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will estimate the number of people in Scotland who have had their property confiscated as a result of not paying the community charge.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Information as to the number of poindings and warrant sales undertaken in respect of community charge arrears is not held centrally.

Student Finance

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many students will be grant or loan funded by the Scottish Office in 1990-91 as against 1989-90.

Mr. Lang: For session 1990-91, the estimated number of students who will be assisted by the Scottish Education Department is 66,000. The latest available figure for session 1989-90 is 66,024. The number of eligible students who will take advantage of the loans facility in session 1990-91 is estimated at 52,600.

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what will be the expenditure by the Scottish Office in 1990-91 *(a)* on student grants and *(b)* on student loans.

Mr. Lang: The information is as follows:
(a) £163·6 million
(b) £15·7 million

Self-governing Schools

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much has been allocated in the Scottish Office budget for 1990-91 to meet the cost of balloting parents and preparing proposals for self-governing status in schools, and for transitional and special purpose grants to any schools which become self-governing in 1990-91.

Mr. Lang: Forecast expenditure of £300,000 has been included in financial plans for 1990-91. Actual provision will be published in the supply estimates for 1990-91 to be laid before the House shortly.

Assisted Places

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what will be the cost of the assisted places scheme in 1990-91; and what it was in 1989-90.

Mr. Lang: The estimated cost of the scheme in the current school year is £6·8 million. Planned expenditure in the 1990-91 school year is £7·8 million.

Red Deer Commission

Mr. Maclennan: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations he has received concerning the funding of the Red Deer Commission; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The report of the Agriculture Committee on land use and forestry recommended that the commission should be given the powers and resources necessary to achieve a programmed reduction in the open hill population of red deer. The Government's response to the Committee's report is currently being considered.

My right hon. and learned Friend has also recently received the Red Deer Commission's annual report for 1988, which comments on the resources available to the commission. The annual budget for the commission's work is determined within the normal public expenditure procedures.

Heart Disease

Mr. Bill Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has received the report of the management consultants who were appointed to review health education in Scotland; and if he will make a statement on the position of coronary heart disease prevention in Scotland.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Touche Ross Management Consultants submitted their report on health education in Scotland on 21 December. A copy of their report has been placed in the Library.

The consultants have produced a comprehensive study and detailed recommendations which will require careful consideration. In the light of their proposals, the Government intend to take the following steps:

A national policy statement on health education in Scotland with a positive orientation towards health promotion will be prepared and, following consultation, will be widely disseminated;

The statement will provide guidance on approaches to health education appropriate to Scottish needs and circumstances; and it will provide guidance on the relationship between a general positive life styles approach and more specifically targeted approaches;

Powers will be sought in the National Health Service and Community Care Bill, enabling a new national health education organisation to be established. It is envisaged that the new organisation, which will replace the Scottish Health Education Group, will come into operation on 1 April 1991;

The new health education organisation will operate within the framework of the national policy statement and on the basis of policy guidance from the Scottish Home and Health Department;

The organisation will take steps to improve the publication and supply of health education material to health boards and other interested groups;

Health boards will be required to develop a strategy for health education within guidelines set by the national policy statement;

Liaison between the national organisation and health boards will be improved by the establishment of a formal liaison group;

The national organisation will commission research to establish the cost-effectiveness of health education/promotion programmes.

The Scottish Health Education Group will continue its activities in the meantime and provide the main staffing and expertise of the new organisation.

A study on coronary heart disease in Scotland undertaken by a working group of the Scottish Health Service Planning Council on Prevention and Health Promotion has also been completed and a copy of the group's report has been placed in the Library.

The group has confirmed the serious incidence of coronary heart disease in Scotland and advised that the general positive life styles approach, already adopted in Scotland, is the most effective means of preventing coronary heart disease. It recommends, however, that this general approach should be presented more aggressively than at present and should be reinforced by an approach which targets health education at individuals most at risk, principally through the primary care sector.

The prevention of coronary heart disease will be one of the specific subjects that will be addressed in the Government's national policy statement and in the remit given to the new health education body. The details of the proposed individual approach will be carefully examined and taken into account in the continuing development of our approach to coronary heart disease prevention.

The Government acknowledge the capable work of Touche Ross Management Consultants and the Scottish Health Service Planning Council Working Group on Prevention and Health Promotion and believe that the strategy outlined in this answer, which is based on their conclusions, will enable health education generally, and coronary heart disease in particular, to be tackled more effectively in Scotland.

City Technology Academies

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much was or is planned to be spent on city technology academies in 1988-89, 1989-90 and 1990-91.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* There was no expenditure on technology academies in 1988-89. In the current financial year, following the appointment of a project director in March 1989, around £100,000 has so far been spent, on salary costs, professional fees for site assessments and so on, and travel and office costs. Planned expenditure for 1990-91 is £3·3 million.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Negligence

Mr. Lawrence: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer in what circumstances the Treasury indemnifies private undertakings for their negligence; and if he will list the undertakings so protected.

Mr. Norman Lamont: As a general rule the Government do not indemnify private undertakings for their negligence.

However, my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Health and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales have, with the agreement of the Treasury, issued to certain water undertakers (i) statutory indemnities under section 172 of the Water Act 1989 and (ii) non-statutory indemnities in accordance with minutes laid before Parliament on 23 November 1989. These indemnities cover liabilities incurred by the water undertakers concerned in connection with the addition of fluoride to the water they supply. The indemnities specifically exclude any liabilities, costs, expenses or expenditure incurred in respect of any criminal proceedings.

European Investment Bank

Mr. Allen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer at what interest rate and for what amount the loan was given by the European Investment Bank in respect of the Channel tunnel; and when it will be fully paid back.

Mr. Ryder: The European Investment Bank approved a loan of £1 billion in 1987 in respect of the Channel tunnel. The loan will primarily be at fixed interest rates and for a range of maturities of up to 25 years. The terms will reflect prevailing market conditions. Because the loan will be drawn down through a series of finance contracts phased over seven years, and not all the loan has been drawn yet, it is impossible to say at this stage when the loan will be fully paid back.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if the Government have underwritten or offered guarantees on the European Investment Bank's loans to the Channel tunnel promoters.

Mr. Ryder: No.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will name the United Kingdom representative directors on the European Investment Bank board and the number of meetings each has attended in each of the years they have been directors.

Mr. Ryder: The United Kingdom has three full-time representative directors on the European Investment Bank board—Mr. H. P. Evans from Her Majesty's Treasury, Miss E. Llewellyn-Smith from the Department of Trade and Industry and Mr. A. J. O. Ritchie from the Union Discount Co. plc. The number of meetings each has attended in each of the years they have been directors is:

	Years	*Attendance*
Mr. H. P. Evans	1989	2 meetings
Appointed in October 1989	1990	1 meeting
Miss E. Llewellyn-Smith	1987	4 meetings

	Years	Attendance
Appointed in May 1987	1988	9 meetings
	1989	8 meetings
	1990	2 meetings
Mr. A. J. Ritchie	1986	1 meeting
Appointed October 1986	1987	7 meetings
	1988	9 meetings
	1989	7 meetings
	1990	2 meetings

Mr. Allen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what loans or guarantees were given to United Kingdom projects by the European Investment Bank since 1979, with the amount in each case.

Mr. Ryder: The total amount of loans given by the European Investment Bank to United Kingdom projects in each year since 1979 is as follows:

	£ million
1979	553·3
1980	417·3
1981	139·5
1982	273·8
1983	410·7
1984	547·0
1985	660·1
1986	873·8
1987	801·3
1988	790·2
1989	1,084·3

The European Investment Bank only rarely guarantees loans within the Community. As a general rule the guarantees on the bank's loans are provided by member states' Governments, public authorities or first-class financial institutions.

Corporation Tax

Sir Trevor Skeet: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will express the current level of corporation tax in the United Kingdom as a percentage of gross domestic product and provide comparable figures for other European Community countries and the United States of America.

Mr. Lilley: On the first part of the question I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell) on 1 March 1990, *Official Report*, column *265*. The most recent comparable figures for European Community countries and the United States of America are given in table 12 of "Revenue Statistics of OECD Member Countries 1964-1988" which is available in the Library.

Employee Share Ownership

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many companies have taken up the employee share ownership plan; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lilley: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Islington, South and Finsbury (Mr. Smith) on 6 March 1990, *Official Report*, column *593*.

Stamp Duty

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will set out the increase in the yield of stamp duty from house purchase by regions and valuation districts for the last five years; and if he will tabulate this against property value averages and stamp duty thresholds.

Mr. Lilley: The table gives the estimated yield from stamp duty on residential property, broken down by regions, for each of the years 1985-86 to 1988-89. The estimates for Scotland and Northern Ireland are very tentative since the available information does not distinguish receipts from residential property in those regions. Estimates of stamp duty on residential property broken down by valuation districts are not available.

The table also sets out average regional house prices for the same years, at mortgage completion stage. This information is derived from "Housing Finance" published by the Council of Mortgage Lenders.

The latest estimate of stamp duty receipts in 1989-90 attributable to residential property was given in the reply to the hon. Member for Nottingham, North (Mr. Allen) on 7 February 1990, *Official Report*, column *643*. A regional breakdown of this figure and average regional prices for 1989-90 are not yet available.

The stamp duty threshold of £30,000 was set in 1984.

Stamp duty yield attributable to residential property and average house prices

Region	*1985-86*		*1986-87*		*1987-88*		*1988-89*	
	Stamp duty yield £ million	*Average house price £*	*Stamp duty yield £ million*	*Average house price £*	*Stamp duty yield £ million*	*Average house price £*	*Stamp duty yield £ million*	*Average house price £*
North	5	22,754	10	25,058	15	23,132	15	30,667
Yorkshire and Humberside	10	23,756	15	25,928	25	28,417	40	34,805
East Midlands	15	25,863	20	29,171	30	33,138	55	43,272
East Anglia	15	32,549	15	26,546	35	45,611	45	61,310
South East	145	46,392	205	57,102	295	68,093	360	80,249
Greater London	105	42,002	150	50,061	210	60,339	250	76,999
South West	40	34,261	60	39,811	95	46,713	125	61,985
West Midlands	20	26,386	25	28,810	40	33,873	60	45,179
North West	15	25,654	20	28,072	35	29,989	50	35,583
Wales	5	25,333	10	27,502	15	30,210	25	36,007
Scotland	20	27,260	30	28,115	30	29,428	40	32,031
Northern Ireland		23,513		26,749		28,094		30,335
Total	400		570		820		1,065	

Note: Regional figures may not add to totals due to rounding.

Rented Property

Mr. Battle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many new lettings have been made available as a result of the introduction of the business expansion scheme in *(a)* inner London, *(b)* Greater London, *(c)* other metropolitan areas and *(d)* the United Kingdom as a whole, expressed both as a figure and as a percentage of (i) all privately rented property and (ii) all rented property.

Mr. Lilley: Provisional estimates for new lettings from investments under the business expansion scheme in 1988-89 are as follows. Separate figures for inner and Greater London and other metropolitan areas could be provided only at disproportionate costs.

New lettings

	Total	*As a percentage of: all privately rented property*	*all rented property*
South East England	2,250	0·4	0·1
United Kingdom	6,500	0·4	0·1

Information for 1989-90 is not yet available.

Budget Statement

Mr. Allen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whom it is his practice to consult in the preparation of his Budget statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont: My right hon. Friend the Chancellor consults a number of people and interest groups in preparation for the Budget statement. He also receives a large number of written representations.

Council House Sales

Mr. Allen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much additional lending has been injected into the economy since 1979 as a result of council house sales; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Council house sales increase personal sector borrowing and reduce public sector borrowing. No estimates of the net effect on borrowing are available.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what inflationary impact the sale of council houses has had on the economy.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Council house sales have contributed to the improvement in the supply side of the economy and so should help the Government in their objective of reducing inflation.

Inflation

Sir Trevor Skeet: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what would be the current rate of inflation if mortgage interest payments were excluded from the calculation of the retail price index.

Mr. Ryder: It would be 6·1 per cent. in the year to January.

Sir Trevor Skeet: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer which European Community countries *(a)* include and *(b)* exclude mortgage interest payments in the assessment of consumer inflation.

Mr. Ryder: Of EC countries, only the United Kingdom and Ireland include mortgage interest payments in their calculation of the consumer price index. Three other countries, Germany, Netherlands and Spain include some other indicator of owner-occupiers' costs. The remaining seven make no such allowance.

Mortgages

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list in tabular form, and at constant prices the amounts which would be payable each month *(a)* at 15 per cent. and *(b)* at 9·8 per cent., on a standard repayment mortgage repayable over 25 years, of each of the regional average mortgages listed in his answer of 19 February, *Official Report*, column *518*, to the hon. Member for Nottingham, North (Mr. Allen).

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 8 March 1990]:* The monthly interest payments, after deduction of basic rate tax relief, for part *(a)* are given in the table. For part *(b)*, I refer the hon. Member to my answer to the hon. Member for Nottingham, North (Mr. Allen) on 26 February 1990, *Official Report*, column *12*.

Region	*Average new mortgage*[1] £	*Monthly payment*[2] *15 per cent. interest rate* £
Northern	28,400	266·25
Yorkshire and Humberside	29,600	277·50
East Midlands	34,700	340·00
East Anglia	44,600	463·75
Greater London	60,900	667·50
South East	53,200	571·25
South West	43,700	452·50
West Midlands	33,800	328·75
North West	31,300	297·50
Wales	30,200	283·75
Scotland	26,500	248·44
Northern Ireland	24,200	226·88
United Kingdom	38,300	385·00

[1] Third quarter 1989.
[2] Assuming endowment mortgage.

Composite Rate Tax

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he will update the answer given to the hon. Member for Colne Valley (Mr. Riddick) on 13 February 1989, *Official Report*, column *80*, on composite rate tax on investment income;

(2) if he will update the answer on interest taxation given to the hon. Member for Dunfermline, East (Mr. Brown) on 10 January 1989, *Official Report*, column *630;*

(3) if he will update the answer on taxation given to the hon. Member for Edinburgh, South (Mr. Griffiths) on 13 February 1989, *Official Report*, column *84*.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 8 March 1990]:* The latest information is as follows. Estimates for 1986-87 are now final.

There were some 64 million accounts subject to composite rate and which earned over £1 interest in 1986-87, some of which were held by clubs or other non-individuals. Of these accounts, it is estimated that 49 million were held by investors whose composite rate interest would be wholly liable to tax in the absence of

composite rate system, and 13 million by investors none of whose composite rate interest would be liable. The balance of about 2 million accounts was held by investors part of whose interest would be liable to tax if there were no composite rate system.

In 1988-89, the latest year for which information is available, about £450 million of the composite rate tax accounted for by building societies, banks and other deposit takers was due in respect of interest that would not have been liable to tax in the hands of its recipients in the absence of a composite rate scheme, and about £3,050 million was due in respect of interest that would have been liable to tax.

Business Expansion Scheme

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he will give figures to show the tax revenue written off in respect of the business expansion scheme for *(a)* nursing homes and clinics and *(b)* hospitals opened for each year since 1983;

(2) if he will give the total number of schemes involving *(a)* nursing homes and clinics and *(b)* hospitals which have taken advantage of the business expansion scheme; and if he will give the total bed numbers involved in each scheme.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 8 March 1990]:* I regret that the information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Statistical Divisions

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what are the latest figures for the number of staff presently employed, and the full complement of staff, including vacant posts, by grade, in the statistical divisions in the Central Office of Information; if he will differentiate between staff in statistical posts and staff in administrative posts; and if he will give the staffing complements by grade, and differentiated between statistical and administrative posts, proposed for 1990-91.

Mr. Ryder *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* The Central Office of Information does not have statistical divisions or staff in statistical posts; nor are any proposed for in 1990-91.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what are the latest figures for the number of staff presently employed, and the full complement of staff, including vacant posts, by grade, in the statistical divisions in his Department; if he will differentiate between staff in statistical posts and staff in administrative posts; and if he will give the staffing complements by grade, and differentiated between statistical and administrative posts, proposed for 1990-91.

Mr. Ryder *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* The information is as follows:

Staff in Statistical Divisions[1]

	Staff in post 1 February 1990	*Budgeted complement 1989-90*	*Budgeted complement 1990-91*
Unified Grade 5[1]	2	2	2
Unified Grade 7[2]	8	8	7
SEO	2	4	3
HEO	4	5	6
Senior assistant statistician/ Assistant statistician	4	4	4
EO	11	11	11
AO/AA	13	13	14
Total	44	47	47

Notes:

[1] Defined as divisions headed by Grade 5 Chief Statistician and employed mainly on statistical work. There are other statistician posts in Her Majesty's Treasury which are not included in the above figures.

[2] At the senior levels of the service, where management forms a major component of most jobs, there are service-wide common pay and grading arrangements. These unified grades 1 to 7 are known as the Open structure and cover grades from Permanent Secretary level to Grade 7 level. Within the unified grades there are no formal barriers to movement between the former occupational groups, e.g. scientists, administrators, statisticians; each post should be filled by the person best equipped in terms of skills, ability and experience.

Public Relations

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what are the latest figures for the number of staff presently employed, and the full complement of staff, including vacant posts, in the press and public relations office of the Central Office of Information; and what is the proposed complement for 1990-91.

Mr. Ryder *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* The press office of the Central Office of Information is staffed by one information officer. No increase is proposed for 1990-91.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what are the latest figures for the number of staff presently employed, and the full complement of staff, including vacant posts, in the press and public relations office of his Department and what is the proposed complement for 1990-91.

Mr. Ryder *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* The number of press and public relations staff employed in Her Majesty's Treasury on 1 February 1990 was 10 and the budgeted provision was 10; the budgeted provision for 1990-91 is 10.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the total expenditure by the Central Office of Information on press and public relations in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

Mr. Ryder *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* The cost of the press office of the Central Office of Information for 1979-80 to 1983-84 are not readily available. The costs from 1984-85 are as follows:

	£
1984-85	52,528
1985-86	35,173
1986-87	31,234
1987-88	31,185
1988-89	43,450
1989-90	[1]48,850
1990-91	[2]48,700

[1] Estimate.
[2] Budget.

Privatisation

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the total sum paid in fees to outside organisations in the furtherance of privatisation by the Central Office of Information in 1979-80 and in each subsequent year; and what is his estimate for 1990-91.

Mr. Ryder *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* No fees have been paid by the Central Office of Information in the furtherance of privatisation. However, the Central Office of Information has been involved in the following privatisation publicity campaigns:

Date	*Campaign*
December 1986	British Gas
February 1987	British Airways
May 1987	Rolls-Royce
July 1987	British Airports Authority
October 1987	British Petroleum
September 1988	British Steel
September 1989	Water Authorities

The costs of these campaigns have been included in answers provided by the Government Department concerned.

Advertising Expenditure

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what were the figures for the spending by the Central Office of Information on *(a)* television advertising, *(b)* radio advertising, *(c)* newspaper advertising and *(d)* other promotional material in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

Mr. Ryder *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* Figures for the Central Office of Information on *(a)* television advertising, *(b)* radio advertising, *(c)* newspaper advertising and *(d)* other promotional material in 1979-80 to 1985-86 were given in the answer at columns *240-42* on 25 November 1986. Figures for the years 1986-87 to 1989-90 are listed in the table.

	Television Advertising	*Radio Advertising*	*Press Advertising*	*Other Promotional Material*
	£ 000s	*£ 000s*	*£ 000s*	*£ 000s*
1986-87	45,517	3,278	33,168	15,600
1987-88	45,170	1,559	32,665	18,000
1988-89	34,714	1,576	41,324	26,100
1989-90[1]	49,096	2,204	53,310	28,000

[1] Estimate

The figures for 1986-87 and subsequent years are now shown on the basis of invoices issued to client departments in the financial year in question. This is a different basis from that used previously. The figures for TV and radio advertising also now include production costs. Privatisations are included. All figures are VAT exclusive.

Detailed decisions on estimated expenditure on advertising through the Central Office of Information on behalf of other Government Departments for 1990-91 are for departmental Ministers.

Management Consultants

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what were the total fees paid out by the Central Office of Information to management consultants in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

Mr. Ryder *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* Fees paid by the Central Office of Information to management consultants are as follows:

	£
1979-80	nil
1980-81	nil
1981-82	67,690
1982-83	159,424
1983-84	243,868
1984-85	35-883
1985-86	49,338
1986-87	1,050
1987-88	nil
1988-89	nil
1989-90	[1]70,000
1990-91	[2]80,000

[1] Estimate.
[2] Budget.

Gross Domestic Product

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list, for the latest available year and on a comparable basis, the value of gross domestic product per capita adjusted for purchasing power parity for the member states of the European Community, Canada, Japan and the United States of America.

Mr. Ryder *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* Following is the information requested.

GDP per capita at purchasing power parities 1989[1]

Thousands

	US $
United Kingdom	14·3
United States of America	21·0
Japan	15·6
Canada	19·8
Germany	15·4
France	14·7
Italy	14·0
Belgium	13·8
Denmark	14·4
Greece	7·3
Ireland	8·9
Luxembourg	16·7
Netherlands	13·9
Portugal	7·0
Spain	10·2

[1] Population data are for 1988.
Source: OECD, provisional figures.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

South Africa

85. **Mr. Harry Greenway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will estimate how many people's employment in the United Kingdom is dependent upon trade with South Africa; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Redwood: Our estimate is that about 50,000 full-time job equivalents may be involved in the export of goods to South Africa. No information is available on the level of exports of services. This is a broad estimate based on the level of visible trade with that country together with an assumption about the relationship between output and employment.

Business Development

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement about the take-up in Lancashire of his various programmes of assistance to encourage business development.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The following information details the take-up in Lancashire of current Department of Trade and Industry programmes of assistance. All figures are from the date in brackets to the end of January 1990:

Enterprise Initiative (January 1988): 1,031 business reviews have been carried out. Of these 857 have been referred for consultancy advice, and 333 of these projects have been completed.

Regional Selective Assistance (November 1984): In the Blackburn, Accrington and Rossendale travel-to-work area and the West Lancashire part of the Liverpool travel-to-work area, 248 offers have been made totalling £27,057,463.

Small Firms Merit Award for Research and Technology (SMART) (October 1988): Two offers have been made totalling £74,350.

Company Audits

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will introduce procedures under which his Department will monitor the audit qualification appearing in the accounts of large companies with a view to taking early action to deal with the reasons for such qualifications.

Mr. Redwood: No. My Department will, however, continue to respond to specific complaints about non-compliance with statutory requirements relating to company accounts. In addition, the review panel to be established under the new Financial Reporting Council will consider instances of material departures by large companies from accounting standards.

Insider Dealing

Mr. John Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he has any plans to increase the resources available for the investigation of insider dealing; and if he proposes any structural changes within his Department to increase its effectiveness in this area.

Mr. Redwood: Inspectors appointed under section 177 of the Financial Services Act 1986 to investigate possible insider dealing offences have normally been from outside my Department. However, members of the companies investigations branches of the Department have been appointed in two recent cases, and my right hon. Friend will continue to make such appointments in appropriate cases. Responsibility within the investigations division of my Department for appointment of and liaison with section 177 inspectors has recently been brought under the inspector of companies. I shall continue to keep the organisation of the work under review with a view to ensuring efficient operation.

The Companies Act 1989 contains provisions enabling the Secretary of State to consent to the bringing of prosecutions, for example by the stock exchange, for insider dealing offences; and also to enable him to investigate on behalf of overseas regulators. These provisions came into force on 21 February.

Stamps

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will discuss with the chairman of the Post Office *(a)* matters relating to the possible forgery and fraudulent use of the 20p commemorative penny black stamp and *(b)* the question of the illegal reuse of stamps made possible because of unsatisfactory franking ink; what investigation has been undertaken into possible fraud by such means; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Forth: The Post Office naturally keeps such issues under constant review. It does not consider stamp forgery to be a major problem or that the penny black anniversary issue is any more vulnerable than other stamps. It believes that the information obtained from a major fraud investigation last year has enabled it to tighten measures to prevent fraud.

Mailing List Brokers

Mr. French: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will introduce statutory regulation of the activities of mailing list brokers.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I have no plans to do so. Those who own and supply mailing lists which are processed electronically will be subject to the relevant provisions of the Data Protection Act 1984.

The Advertising Association also operates a code of practice on the use of personal data for advertising and direct marketing purposes.

Mr. French: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he has received any representations about the activities of mailing list brokers.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I have received no specific representations, although my Department receives some letters from members of the public who dislike receiving unsolicited mail from sources with which they have had no previous dealings.

Package Travel

Mr. McCrindle: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions he has had with his European counterparts with regard to the application of the European directive on package travel to business travel packages; whether agreement has been reached on its application to business trips the elements of which are booked separately; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Forth: The common position on the draft package travel directive reached by EC Ministers at the 21 and 22 December Council was formally agreed on 22 February this year. The directive will normally apply to a pre-arranged package for business purposes. However, a statement in the minutes records the agreement of the Council and the Commission that when a business trip involves separate bookings of transport and accommodation which do not constitute elements of a pre-arranged package, this will not constitute a package for the purposes of the directive. This is the position even though they are invoiced simultaneously by the travel agent.

Credit Cards

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what progress has been made in seeking undertakings from credit card companies on restrictions on merchant acquisition and the no-discrimination rule following the Monopolies and Mergers Commission's report on credit card services.

Mr. Redwood: On 22 August 1989 my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State published the MMC report on credit card services. The MMC made two recommendations applicable to both the Visa and Mastercard organisations:

- the "No Discrimination" rule, under which traders are required to charge the same price for purchases made with credit cards as those paid for by cash or other means, should not apply within the UK;
- certain rules restricting the freedom of issuers of Visa and Mastercard cards to act as merchant acquirers should not apply in the UK.

He announced last year that he had accepted the recommendations and decided then that the Director General of Fair Trading should seek voluntary undertakings from the companies concerned to implement these recommendations.

On 27 November 1989 Visa was granted leave to apply for judicial review of certain aspects of the MMC report, and certain of the subsequent actions of both the Secretary of State and the Director General of Fair Trading. Visa has subsequently confirmed that it is unwilling to enter into voluntary undertakings on merchant acquisition until after the outcome of the judicial review is known.

In view of this and the delays in implementing the recommendations of the MMC which might result, the Secretary of State has decided to ask the Director General of Fair Trading not to proceed with the negotiation of undertakings.

Instead the Secretary of State will begin the process of statutory consultation preliminary to the making of orders under section 56 of the Fair Trading Act. No decision has yet been taken on when these orders should come into force.

The Secretary of State announced in December that credit card companies will have to provide the Director General of Fair Trading with information on their charges to retailers and on interchange fees, and to publish certain information. We are now considering representations made to us before initiating the statutory consultation procedure preliminary to the enactment of an order.

Public Relations

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what are the latest figures for the number of staff presently employed, and the full complement of staff, including vacant posts in the press and public relations office of his Department; and what is the proposed complement for 1990-91.

Mr. Forth *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* There are 39 posts in the Department's press office; two are currently vacant. The total includes 15 clerical and support posts. The complement for 1990-91 will be broadly similar.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what was the total expenditure by his Department on press and public relations in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

Mr. Forth *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* Separate figures for expenditure on press and public relations before 1987-88 are not readily available. Expenditure in that year and subsequently was:

	£ thousands
1987-88	1,155
1988-89	1,633
[1]1989-90	1,847

[1]estimated.

The figures include regional press officer and other support services. I expect expenditure in 1990-91 to be broadly the same as in the current year.

Privatisation

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what was the total sum paid out in fees to outside organisations in the furtherance of privatisation by his Department in 1979-80 and in each subsequent year; and what is his estimate for 1990-91.

Mr. Forth *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* The answer given in reply to a similar question last year on 13 March 1989, *Official Report*, columns *102-03*, gave actual figures for expenditure on expenses associated with privatisations to 1987-88. The following table, based on published information, shows gross expenditure incurred in connection with the sale of shares in British Steel, British Telecom, Rolls-Royce, and Rover Group plc since then, together with an estimate of expenditure in 1990-91. The figures exclude subscriptions for new shares and injections of funds for restructuring, but include commission and some items (such as stamp duty) which were not paid as fees to outside organisations. The Department also incurred expenses in 1988-89 and 1989-90 under individual contracts for advice to the Department in connection with the sales by the Post Office of Girobank plc and by British Shipbuilders of individual businesses and assets: figures for these are excluded on the grounds of commercial confidentiality.

(£000s)

Company	*Year*	*Amount*
Rolls-Royce	1988-89	[1]1,155
	1989-90	[2]1
Rover	1988-89	[1]1,655
British Steel	1988-89	[1]58,262
	1989-90	[2]3,000
British Telecom	[3]1988-89	[1]21
	1989-90	[2]12

[1] Actual.
[2]Provisional.

[3]Only an aggregated figure for a variety of expenses was shown in the Appropriation Accounts.
Estimated costs for residual expenditure associated with the sale of shares in Rolls-Royce, British Steel and British Telecom in 1990-91 are £15,000.

Advertising Expenditure

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what were the figures for the spending by his Department on *(a)* television advertising, *(b)* radio advertising, *(c)* newspaper advertising and *(d)* other promotional material in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

Mr. Forth *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* Expenditure from the Department's central publicity budget was as follows:

£ 000[1]

	Television advertising	*Radio advertising*	*Press advertising*	*Other promotional materials*[2]
1979-80	—	5	249	599
1980-81	—	9	528	920
1981-82	—	30	800	1,366
1982-83	730	71	1,341	1,101
1983-84	192	—	1,198	1,325
1984-85	32	—	2,081	1,445
1985-86	—	—	1,216	877
1986-87	—	3	987	1,008
1987-88	5,664	57	3,417	1,501
1988-89	13,500	75	4,300	4,800
1989-90[3]	5,400	500	3,700	4,600

[1] Figures include expenditure through the Central Office of Information and, where appropriate, expenditure by the former Departments of Industry and Trade.
[2] Publications, audio-visual materials and posters.
[3] Estimated.
Media allocations for 1990-91 have not yet been made, but I expect expenditure to be within the present year's total.

Management Consultants

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what were the total fees paid out by his Department to management consultants in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

Mr. Forth *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* The information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, the fees paid by the Department of Trade and Industry for general consultancies from 1984-85 to 1988-89 and the latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91 are given in the table. The apparent decrease from 1986-87 indicates a shift of consultancy expenditure from general to programme-related consultancies for which separate consolidated records are not kept. The allocation for 1990-91 will be set shortly in the light of the Department's annual activity and resource management review.

	£000s
1984-85	6,104
1985-86	6,417
1986-87	4,650
1987-88	3,050
1988-89	2,516
1989-90	[1]3,000

[1] Forecast outturn.

HEALTH

Children (Illegal Employment)

81. **Mr. Michael:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has of the number of illegally employed children in Great Britain; and if he will make a statement.

82. **Dr. Reid:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the official estimate of the number of children illegally employed in Great Britain; and if he will make a statement.

83. **Mr. Meale:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he has any estimate available of children employed illegally; and if he will make a statement.

84. **Dr. Kim Howells:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is his estimate of the number of children illegally employed in Great Britain; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: I refer the hon. Members to the reply I gave the hon. Members for Glasgow, Pollok (Mr. Dunnachie) and for Sunderland, South (Mr. Mullin) on 9 March at columns *893-94*.

Mental Patients

Mr. Gould: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will update the information given in the answer to the question from the hon. Member for Dagenham on 21 January 1987, *Official Report*, columns *614-16*.

Mr. Freeman: The figures for 1986 are given in the table and exclude deaths. Figures on duration of stay at discharge are not centrally collected at unit level after 1986.

Discharges from hospitals with mental illness beds only of patients having a length of stay of five years or more England 1986

District Health Authority	*Hospital*	*1986*
Northern Regional Health Authority		
South Tees	St. Lukes	7
East Cumbria	Garlands	12
South West Durham	Holywood Hall	13
	Winterton	19
Northumberland	St. Georges Morpeth	4

District Health Authority	Hospital	1986
Gateshead	St. Mary's	5
Newcastle	St. Nicholas	2
Sunderland	Cherry Knowle	13
Yorkshire Regional Health Authority		
East Yorkshire	Broadgate	26
Scunthorpe	Thorpe Road, Howden	0
	Clifton	16
	Naburn	1
Bradford	Lynfield Mount	2
Airedale	Scalebor Park	6
Leeds Western	High Royds	34
Wakefield	Stanley Royd	28
Trent Regional Health Authority		
Southern Derbyshire	The Pastures	23
	Kingsway	11
Leicestershire	The Towers, Regional Secure Unit	5
	Carlton Hayes	11
North Lincolnshire	St. John's Lincoln	10
South Lincolnshire	Rauceby	9
Nottingham	Mapperley	5
	St. Francis	0
	Saxondale	60
Barnsley	Kendray	5
Doncaster	Loversall	6
Sheffield	Sheffield Mental Illness Unit	20
East Anglian Regional Health Authority		
Cambridge	Fulbourn	16
East Suffolk	St. Audry's	37
Norwich	Hellesdon	2
	St. Andrew's	6
Great Yarmouth and Waveney	St. Nicholas	1
North West Thames Regional Health Authority		
North West Hertfordshire	Hill End	14
Barnet	Napsbury	11
Ealing	St. Bernard's Wing, Ealing	18
Brent	Shenley	23
Riverside	Horton	12
	Banstead	245
North East Thames Regional Health Authority		
Southend	Runwell	32
Barking, Havering and Brentwood	Warley	14
Hampstead	Friern	6
City and Hackney	German	2
Tower Hamlets	The London Hospital St. Clement's	4
Redbridge	Goodmayes	28
Waltham Forest	Thorpe Coombe	0
	Claybury	25
South East Thames Regional Health Authority		
Eastbourne	Hellingly	22
Dartford and Gravesham	Stone House	3
Maidstone	Maidstone	11
Tunbridge Wells	Sundridge	0
Bexley	Bexley	6
Bromley	Cane Hill	21
West Lambeth	Tooting Bec	12
South West Thames Regional Health Authority		
North West Surrey	Ottershaw	1
West Surrey and North East Hants	Brookwood	23
Mid Surrey	West Park	4
East Surrey	Netherne and Fairdene	29
Chichester	Graylingwell	12
Mid Downs	St. Francis, Haywards Heath	9
Croydon	Warlingham Park	6
Kingston and Esher	Long Grove	12
Wandsworth	Springfield	8
Wessex Regional Health Authority		
East Dorset	St. Ann's Poole	1
West Dorset	Herrison	19
Portsmouth and South East Hampshire	St. James's Portsmouth	20
Basingstoke and North Hampshire	Basingstoke District Park Prewett	29
Salisbury	The Old Manor	2
Bath District	Roundway	33
Oxford Regional Health Authority		
West Berkshire	Hungerford	1
	Fair Mile	15
Aylesbury Vale	St. John's Stone	25
Northampton	St. Crispin	9
Oxfordshire	Littlemore	7
	Warneford	3
South Western Regional Health Authority		
Bristol and Weston	Barrow	3
Frenchay	Glenside	12
Cornwall and Isles of Scilly	Trevillis House	0
Exeter	Exe Vale-Digby and Wonford	10
	Ex Vale Exminster Branch	21
Plymouth	Moorhaven	12
Gloucester	Horton Road	18
Somerset	Tone Vale	10
	Mendip	9
West Midlands Regional Health Authority		
Bromsgrove and Redditch	Barnsley Hall	15
Worcester and District	Powick	6
	St. Wulstans	38
Shropshire	Royal Shrewsbury (Shelton)	7
Mid Stafford	St. George's Stafford	10
North Staffordshire	St. Edwards	41
Rugby	Central, Warwick	10
North Birmingham	Highcroft	7
West Birmingham	All Saints	5
Solihull	Hollymoor	7
Mersey Regional Health Authority		
Chester	Countess of Chester (Psych. Wing)	23
Warrington	Winwick	22
St. Helens and Knowsley	Rainhill	46
North Western Regional Health Authority		
Preston	Whittingham	1
Bolton	Fall Birch	0
Salford	Peel Hall	0
	Prestwich	24
Stockport	Ollersett View	1
	ENGLAND TOTAL	1,550

NHS (Competitive Tendering)

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to the answer of 22 February to the hon. Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell), *Official Report*, column *874*, if he will make a statement on his decision not to promote any further central initiatives for additional specific NHS services to be subject to mandatory competitive tendering.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: NHS accounts show that more than 40 per cent. of support services in the NHS, other than those involved in direct provision of patient care, are already routinely subject to competitive tendering or other forms of regular market testing. The White Paper

"Working for Patients" provides a framework within which health authorities can widen the scope for competition across an even wider range of support services in future to ensure value for money and release of resources for improved patient care. The selection and grouping of services for testing, and the specification of requirements are matters best left to local decision.

Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many orthopaedic patients from the Crewe and Nantwich constituency are receiving continuing care from the Agnes Hunt orthopaedic hospital;

(2) how many patients received specialist care from the Agnes Hunt orthopaedic hospital in 1989-90; and how many were from outside the Shropshire area.

Mr. Freeman: In the year ending 31 March 1989 there were 5,956 completed patient stays on wards in the Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt orthopaedic hospital. Data for 1989-90 are not yet available. Information about the districts of residence of those patients is not held centrally. The hon. Member may wish to contact the chairman of Shropshire health authority, who may be able to provide more detailed information.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what talks he is having with the relevant health authorities in relation to the future of the Agnes Hunt orthopaedic hospital, in order to ensure continuing access to its specialist skills for patients.

Mr. Freeman: None.

Immunisation

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will provide an up-to-date table of immunisation rates, district by district for each vaccination, completed course by two years; and how many districts still fall below the target set by the European region of the World Health Organisation.

Mr. Freeman: The two-year uptake for diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio and measles in England, for the financial year 1988-89, is given in the table.

Vaccination and Immunisation 2 year uptakes 1988-89

	Number
Diphtheria	87
Tetanus	87
Pertussis	75
Polio	87
Measles	80

A summary of district uptake levels has been placed in the Library. The World Health Organisation's European region target is 90 per cent. by 1990, and our aim is to reach that target in the year 1990-91. In 1988-89 no district had yet reached the target for pertussis, but 20 had done so for measles and 85 for diphtheria.

Medical Errors

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list by regional health authority and by year for the last five years, the amounts of money that have been paid in damages for medical errors.

Mr. Freeman: The information is not available in the form requested.

The information held centrally is given in the table which shows compensation payments made by health authorities as recorded in their annual accounts. However, this information does not distinguish between compensation payments in respect of medical accidents and other compensation payments, for example, those in respect of damage to property or for unfair dismissal.

Region	*1984-85* £	*1985-86* £	*1986-87* £	*1987-88* £	*1988-89* £
Northern	141,399	266,357	360,445	458,943	617,159
Yorkshire	322,560	526,650	975,346	835,753	695,139
Trent	318,972	480,459	636,355	504,911	841,404
East Anglia	222,633	220,737	212,037	367,993	485,669
North West Thames	534,736	340,419	401,463	558,198	910,754
North East Thames	766,875	474,501	1,218,109	1,565,496	1,651,786
South East Thames	469,300	594,659	481,922	378,382	681,444
South West Thames	320,771	785,099	551,560	413,723	629,904
Wessex	181,534	558,254	508,791	346,078	409,377
Oxford	133,937	204,803	395,219	292,236	752,363
South Western	305,779	208,190	411,820	596,217	661,387
West Midlands	371,489	1,666,715	1,356,637	1,855,308	2,143,084
Mersey	266,350	316,312	477,401	625,944	845,970
North Western	545,479	750,188	1,190,563	1,253,774	1,697,476
SHA's for the London Postgraduate Hospitals	156,776	41,474	53,376	88,686	111,574
Total	5,058,590	7,434,817	9,231,044	10,141,642	13,134,490

Nurses and Midwives (Training)

Mr. Franks: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what provision has been made for the training of nurses and midwives since 1978-79.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave my hon. Friend the Member for Gedling (Mr. Mitchell) on 20 February at column *701*.

NHS and Community Care Bill

Mr. Bradley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much has been spent so far in Greater Manchester by (i) his Department, (ii) district health authorities and (iii) family practitioner committees to prepare for the implementation of the National Health Service and Community Care Bill.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave him on 19 February at column *543*.

Cervical Cancer

Mr. Leadbitter: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the arrangements in the Hartlepool health authority area for the detection, monitoring, and follow-up procedures in respect of cervical cancer.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The main strategy for dealing with cervical cancer is through a programme of early detection based on population screening programmes. In Hartlepool, a computerised call and recall system was implemented on schedule to meet the Department's target date of 31 March 1988. I understand that the district is meeting the Department's target for reporting results of cervical smears to the smear-taker within one month. The district recalls women on a three-yearly basis and has implemented a failsafe system to ensure that women with abnormalities are followed up. In addition, the necessary surgical and pathological facilities are in place to facilitate the further investigation and treatment of such women. The Northern region is making good progress on quality assurance in the laboratories.

Health Standards

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the recommendations he has received but not implemented from *(a)* the Committee on Medical Aspects of Food Policy and *(b)* the National Advisory Committee on Nutritional Education concerning the improvement of health standards by dietary influence.

Mr. Freeman: Since 1987 the chief medical officer's Committee on Medical Aspects of Food Policy (COMA) has published five reports, four of which contained recommendations:

"The Use of Very Low Calorie Diets in Obesity"—1987
"Present Day Practice in Infant Feeding—Third Report"—1988
"Third Report of the Sub-committee on Nutritional Surveillance"—1988
"The Diets Of British Schoolchildren"—1989 (no recommendations)
"Dietary Sugars and Human Disease"—1989

All the recommendations to this Department have either been implemented or are in the process of being implemented.

The National Advisory Committee on Nutrition Education (NACNE) has an ad hoc working group which, before its dissolution in 1983 produced a discussion document which did not contain specific recommendations for Government.

Inner City Health Practices

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received concerning the impact of the National Health Service and Community Care Bill on inner city health practices.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: No representations solely concerning the effects of our proposals on inner city health practices have been identified.

District Health Authorities

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many district health authorities expect to be in deficit at the end of the current financial year.

Mr. Freeman: I refer the hon. Member to the reply my right hon. and learned Friend gave the hon. Members for Wigan (Mr. Stott), for Normanton (Mr. O'Brien), for Sunderland, North (Mr. Clay) and for Wolverhampton, South-East (Mr. Turner) on 23 January at columns *670-71*.

Abortifacient Drugs

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list those abortifacient drugs which are currently licensed for use in the United Kingdom.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The information requested is as follows:

1. Cervagem Pessary 1 mg.
2. Prostin E2 Sterile Solution 1 mg/ml.
3. Prostin E2 Sterile Solution 10 mg/ml.
4. Prostin F2 Alpha Sterile Solution 5 mg/ml extra Amniotic for TH abortion.
5. Prostin F2 Alpha Sterile Solution 5 mg/ml for Therapeutic Abortion I/V.
6. Prostin F2 Alpha Sterile Solution 5 mg/ml (Intra Amniotic Pack).
7. Sterile Solution Prostin/15 m (0·25 mg/ml).
8. Syntocinon Ampoules 2 I.V. per 2 ml (Parenteral Solution).
9. Syntocinon Ampoules 5 I.V. per 1 ml.
10. Syntocinon Ampoules 10 I.V. per 1 ml (Parenteral Solution).
11. Syntocinon Ampoules 50 I.V. per 5 ml (Parenteral Solution).
12. Syntometrine Ampoules.
13. Prostin E2 Sterile Solution.

Consultants

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made on the establishment of new consultants' posts.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The number of consultants in hospital medicine in England increased by an average of 2·4 per cent. per annum over the five years 1983 to 1988.

Regional health authorities continue to plan for expansion of the consultant grade of 2 per cent. per annum. In addition to this, between 1988 and 1990 the Government funded the appointment of 100 new consultants under a pump-priming exercise. A further 100 consultants are to be appointed over the three years 1989-90 to 1991-92 under a scheme announced in the White Paper "Working for Patients". I announced the allocation of the last 65 of these posts on 27 February at columns *125-26*.

Complementary Medicine

Mr. Tredinnick: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he proposes to discuss with EEC representatives the different legal arrangements for United Kingdom practitioners of complementary medicine and those of Community countries which have legislated for treatment under Napoleonic laws; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: No. Practitioners of complementary medicine are able to practice in the United Kingdom

subject only to those provisions of statute and civil law which apply. Legislation enacted by other Community countries will not affect the right to practise complementary therapy in this country.

GPs (Training)

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many applications were made for places on training courses for general practitioners in each year from 1984 to 1989.

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many places have gone unfilled on general practitioner training courses during 1989-90; and in which areas of the United Kingdom courses were undersubscribed this year.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: This information is not held centrally for England. Information relating to other parts of the United Kingdom is the responsibility of my right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for Wales and Northern Ireland and my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland.

Special Hospitals

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the recorded number of hours spent by women in seclusion at Rampton, Broadmoor and Moss Side special hospitals during the 12 months from December 1988 to December 1989.

Mr. Freeman: The Special Hospitals Service Authority has provided the information requested as follows:

	Number
Rampton Hospital	28,744
Broadmoor Hospital	27,846
Moss Side Hospital	10,031

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what is the recorded number of instances of self-mutilation or self harm by women in Rampton, Broadmoor and Moss Side special hospitals during the 12 months from December 1988 to December 1989.

Mr. Freeman: The Special Hospitals Service Authority reports that, during the period in question, 618 such instances were recorded at Moss Side hospital. There is no readily available central record at Rampton and Broadmoor hospitals.

Disabled People

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he now intends to fulfil the commitment to consult voluntary organisations concerning the regulations to be made under section 1 of the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: This will depend on the outcome of the consultations taking place with the local authority associations on the cost and other implications of implementing section 1 and other remaining sections of the Act.

Health Service Contracts

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will designate a number to the paper "Contracts for Health Services: Operating Services" within the series of papers on implementing the White Paper, "Working for Patients".

Mr. Freeman: The series of numbered working papers, which were published shortly after the White Paper "Working for Patients", were largely concerned with taking forward detailed analysis of the policy proposals in the White Paper. Later guidance, such as "Contracts for Health Services: Operating Contracts", has not been numbered within this series as it is intended to be guidance to NHS managers in the practical implementation of those proposals. It has been distributed within the NHS under cover of an executive letter from the chief executive of the NHS Management Executive (in a numbered series), its reference being EL(90)MB/24.

However, the wider interest in this and other such guidance has been recognised by arranging for Her Majesty's Stationery Office to publish it, and by placing copies in the Library. We have made copies available through the Vote Office.

Malaria

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cases of malaria were reported in Britain for each of the last five years.

Mr. Freeman: The information is shown in the table.

Total notifications[1] of malaria
Great Britain: 1985-89

Year	*Notifications*
1985	1,767
1986	1,747
1987	1,264
1988[2]	1,333
1989[2]	1,535

[1] Notified in England and Wales to the Office of Population, Censuses and Surveys (OPCS), and in Scotland to the Scottish Health Service by the individual Health Boards.
[2] Provisional.

National Assistance Act 1948

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Health on how many occasions in each of the last 10 years inquiries have been conducted under section 36 of the National Assistance Act 1948; what was the average length of time taken by an inquiry; on how many occasions the default powers under the section were used; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: No inquiries have been set up under section 36 of the National Assistance Act 1948 in the last 10 years. Nor has any order been made declaring an authority to be in default.

Correspondence

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he will reply to the letters sent to his Department on 15 December by the Chesterfield and District branch of the National Schizophrenia Fellowship under the heading "Mental Illness Services in North Derbyshire".

Mr. Freeman: The Department has no record of having received the letters to which the hon. Member refers. If he would care to let me have copies of them, I will ensure that they are dealt with promptly.

Advertising Expenditure

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what were the figures for the spending by his Department on *(a)* television advertising, *(b)* radio advertising, *(c)* newspaper advertising and *(d)* other promotional material in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* The Department of Health's budget for communications and publicity includes provision for nurse recruitment, blood donor recruitment and drug misuse campaigns.

Information for the years 1979-80 to 1987-88 is not available in the form requested.

	£ million
Expenditure for 1988-89 is as follows:	
Television	1·662
Radio	0·205
Newspaper	1·196
Other Material	7·736
Estimated expenditure for 1989-90 is as follows:	
Television	2·682
Radio	0·127
Newspaper	3·122
Other Material	9·945

The budget for communications and publicity has not yet been agreed for 1990-91.

ENVIRONMENT

English House Condition Survey

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give from the English house condition survey 1986, the number of homes *(a)* affected by excessive draughts, *(b)* with penetrating damp, *(c)* with rising damp, *(d)* affected by slight mould growth and *(e)* affected by serious mould growth, together with their incidence in each room surveyed, by tenure.

Mr. Chope: The numbers, estimated from information provided by the English house condition survey 1986, have today been placed in the Library.

County Structure Plans

Sir John Farr: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will introduce legislation to limit the number of county structure plans which may be prepared by any authority.

Mr. Michael Spicer: My right hon. Friend issued a draft planning policy guidance note on structure plans and regional guidance in November 1989 which encouraged county planning authorities with more than one structure plan to make an early start on preparing a single replacement plan. Our proposals for legislation, set out in the White Paper "The Future of Development Plans" (Cm. 569), envisaged a single statement of planning policies for each county and for each national park.

Water Authority Land (Access)

Dr. Woodcock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he is considering any changes to the access arrangements to water authority land which were made at the time of privatisation.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The Water Act 1989 imposes general environmental and recreational duties, enforceable by the Secretary of State, on the new water companies. In particular they are required to have regard to the desirability of preserving freedom of access to areas of natural beauty and to sites of architectural or historic interest, and to ensure that their water and land is made available for recreational purposes in the best manner.

A code of practice approved by Ministers gives practical guidance to and promotes desirable practices by the companies and other relevant bodies on the performance of these duties. A copy of the code is available in the Library of the House.

There are no plans to amend these statutory duties or the code of practice. However, a Standing Committee is to be set up shortly comprising representatives of the water industry and of the main conservation and recreation interests, to monitor the relevance and effectiveness of the code.

Housing Associations

Ms. Primarolo: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the percentage increase in housing associations' rent for 1989-90 attributable to the new financial arrangements imposed for market rents on housing associations.

Mr. Chope: This information is not available. But under the tenants' guarantee, housing associations are expected to set and maintain rents at levels which are within the reach of those in low-paid employment.

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps he will take to reverse the downward trend in rehabilitation of older property by housing associations since passage of the Housing Act 1988.

Mr. Chope: Housing assocations can provide accommodation for low-income households in a variety of ways, including building new homes, acquiring satisfactory dwellings, and rehabilitation and conversion of older property. The new funding arrangements under the Housing Act 1988 are designed to sharpen the incentives to associations to give value for money, but not otherwise to affect their choice of scheme type. I shall shortly be considering with the Housing Corporation whether any adjustments are needed to the current pattern of grant rates for different types of scheme to ensure this.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Atkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how much Bournemouth borough council and Dorset county council will receive from the unified business rate for 1990-91; how much they received from the commercial rate in 1989-90; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: The expected income from business rates for the Bournemouth area (taking account of the demands

of both the district and county councils) for 1989-90 was £27·389 million. The amount the area will receive in distributed business rate in 1990-91 is £34·652 million.

Mr. Hayward: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will transfer the cost of fire and police from local authorities to central Government; and if he will estimate the average savings per full community charge payer.

Mr. Chope: The Government have no plans to make such a transfer.

Mr. Hayward: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what would be the cost of calculating transitional relief per individual as against the current practice.

Mr. Chope: The information requested is not available.

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, pursuant to his answer of 8 March to the hon. Member for Derbyshire, North-East, if he will reimburse any charging authority the expenditure it is involved in when sending out revised community charge bills following any decision he may make to cap precepting authorities.

Mr. Chope: No. In such circumstances it would be for the charging authority to recover its administrative costs from the precepting authority under section 36 of the Local Government Act 1988.

Mr. French: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list any local authorities known to him which have announced their intention to levy a standard community charge at less than twice the personal community charge.

Mr. Chope *[holding answer 8 March 1990]:* No information is available at present to the Department about standard community charge multipliers set by charging authorities for properties in their areas. Charging authorities have until 31 March to determine multipliers for the coming year.

Hedgerows

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has as to the depletion of hedgerows in England and Wales in the last decade.

Mr. Trippier: Various estimates have been made for past periods. However, none covers the whole of the last decade.

A survey of landscape change in England and Wales carried out for my Department and the Countryside Commission by Hunting Surveys and Consultants Ltd. showed annual losses of some 2,900 miles of hedgerow between 1969 and 1980 and 4,000 miles between 1980 and 1985. A survey of environmental topics on farms carried out by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, however, showed annual losses of 500 miles between 1980 and 1985. The two surveys used different methodologies and neither can be regarded as definitive.

Work is continuing to improve information both on the rate of removal and on the extent of new planting.

Water Privatisation

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list all the organisations which advised his Department on any aspect of the privatisation of the water industry giving, in each case, the dates of their involvement and in each case the aspect on which they advised.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The information is listed in the table:

Organisation		*Date*
J. Henry Schroder Wagg	Merchant Bank	1986-89
Clifford Chance	Legal aspects	1986-89
Touche Ross	Financial accounting and taxation aspects; management consultancy	1986-89
Price Waterhouse	Reporting accountants, fraud audit, management consultancy	1988-89
Deloitte Haskins and Sells	Financial aspects; reporting accountants	1988-89
Coopers and Lybrand	Reporting Accountants	1988-89
Hoare Govett	Stock Broking aspects	1986-87
Rowe and Pitman	Stock Broking aspects	1988-89
Samuel Montagu	United Kingdom Lead Underwriters	1989
National Westminster Bank	Lead Receiving Bank	1988-89
Lloyds Bank	Receiving Bank aspects	1989
Dewe Rogerson	Marketing aspects	1988-89
Market and Opinion Research International	Market Research	1988-89
Collett Dickenson Pearce and Partners	Advertising	1989
Imagination	Roadshows	1989
Binnie and Partners Water Research Centre	Engineering consultancy	1988-89
Debenham Tewson and Chinnocks	Property Assessment	1989
Jones Lang Wootton	Property Assessment	1989
Sanderson Townend and Gilbert	Property Assessment	1989
Grimley J. R. Eve	Property Assessment	1989
Bernard Thorpe and Partners	Property Assessment	1989
Hillier Parker	Property Assessment	1989
Chesterton	Property Assessment	1989
Healey and Baker	Property Assessment	1989
St. Quintin	Property Assessment	1989
JP Sturge and Sons	Property Assessment	1989
Savills	Property Assessment	1989
Burrups Ltd.	Specialist Printing	1988-89
Mail marketing (Bristol) Ltd.	Share Information	1988-89
British Telecom	Office arrangements	1988-89
Royal Mail	Mass mailing	1989
Daiwa Securities; Hamada and Matsumoto (lawyers)	Japanese Offer	1989
Credit Suisse First Boston	European Offer	1989
Wood Gundy; Osler Renault (lawyers)	Canadian Offer	1989
Salomon Brothers; Shearson Lehman Hutton; Shearman and Sterling (lawyers)	United States Offer	1989

Sewage Dumping

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on licences allowing dumping of sewage on the Fylde coast.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The applications made by the North West water authority for the Secretary of State's consent to discharge sewage to the Fylde coast have not yet been determined. It would therefore not be proper for me to comment upon them.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what powers he has to control the dumping of sewage at sea, where such dumping falls under his Department's responsibility.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The regulation of the dumping of sewage at sea is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, using his powers under the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985.

The Secretary of State's powers under the Water Act 1989 relate principally to discharges from land-based sources.

Atmospheric Pollution

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what information his Department has about atmospheric carbon monoxide and lead levels in cities during peak traffic flow; and if his Department has commissioned studies as to how these levels are anticipated to change in the next decade;

(2) what information his Department has about atmospheric carbon monoxide and lead levels in city centres during rush hour traffic; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: Urban concentrations of both pollutants are monitored on behalf of my Department by Warren Spring laboratory.

Between November 1989 and March 1990, and depending upon the prevailing weather conditions, weekly average levels of carbon monoxide in central London varied between 0·9 and 8·1 parts per million at 0800 hours, and between 1·1 and 5·6 parts per million at 1800 hours.

Direct monitoring data for lead are not collected for the short time intervals required by the question. However, estimates from other data suggest that peak lead concentrations in central London would be of the order of 4 microgrammes per cubic metre (μgm^{-3}), with an annual average of 0·6 µgm. For comparison these figures are well below the EC lead in air limit value of 2·0 µgm.

My Department has a substantial programme of research into the modelling and assessment of air pollution which takes into account the effects of pollution abatement measures on ambient concentrations. The increased sales of unleaded petrol and the strict exhaust emission standards set by the EC vehicles directive are expected to reduce urban concentrations of these pollutants markedly well before the year 2000.

North Sea

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the five countries that contribute the highest amounts of phosphorous and nitrogen via direct inputs to the North sea.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The 1990 interim quality status report on the North sea combines information on river and direct inputs to the North sea from all North sea states. These figures are not directly comparable but show the highest inputs from the Netherlands, followed by the Federal Republic of Germany, the United Kingdom, Norway and Belgium.

Definitive information on direct inputs will not be available until the 1990 Paris commission survey using standardised measuring techniques.

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will take urgent steps to reduce by at least 50 per cent. discharges via pipes and rivers into the North sea of all chemicals that are *(a)* persistent, *(b)* toxic and *(c)* liable to bioaccumulate.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The commitment to reduce dangerous substances (defined as persistent, toxic and liable to bioaccumulate) inputs substantially, by the order of 50 per cent., by 1995, was made by the second North sea conference in London in November 1987. Progress in achieving this was among the topics considered by the third conference in the Hague on 7 and 8 March. The United Kingdom has reported the progress it has already achieved and envisages in the national action plan on reducing discharges to rivers, estuaries and coastal waters published on 5 March. At the third conference it was agreed that action should be taken on a list of 36 dangerous substances, most of which are already on the United Kingdom's red list or covered by the national action plan.

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the third North sea conference and measures agreed to halt pollution.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 12 March 1990 by my right hon. Friend to my hon. Friend the Member for Wyre (Mr. Mans) on the outcome of the third North sea conference.

Secure Car Service

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will provide a breakdown of the £34,404 cost of providing a secure car service for the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster in the past 12 months according to *(a)* running costs and *(b)* wages and overtime.

Mr. Chope: The breakdown requested is:

(a) running costs £13,101.
(b) wages and overtime £21,303.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what has been the cost of providing a secure car service for the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster in each of the financial years *(a)* 1987-88, *(b)* 1988-89 and *(c)* 1989-90 to date.

Mr. Chope: The costs of providing a secure car service to the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster were:

	£
(a) 1987-88	31,460
(b) 1988-89	32,472
(c) 1989-90 (to 9 March 1990)	32,634

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if any contribution has been made by or requested for any non-governmental body in respect of official car usage by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

Mr. Chope: No contribution has been made by or requested from any non-governmental body in respect of official car usage by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

Competition (Local Government)

Mr. Tracey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what progress is being made in relation to the enforcement of the competition provisions of the Local Government Act 1988.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: My right hon. Friend has today issued a direction under section 14 of the Local Government Act 1988 prohibiting the London borough of Hillingdon from carrying out its vehicle maintenance through its own staff as from 1 September 1990. He has taken this action because he was not satisfied with its response to the notice issued under section 13. That notice set out his belief that it had acted contrary to the requirement of section 7(7) of the Act which is that, in awarding a contract it must not

"act in a manner having the effect or intended or likely to have the effect of restricting, distorting or preventing competition"

in that it awarded its vehicle maintenance work to its own direct services organisation when it had received a bid which was over £109,000 lower over a four-year period after taking redundancy costs into account.

This makes it absolutely clear that we shall not hesitate to take action when we believe that authorities are distorting the competition process. We have strong powers of enforcement under the Act, and we shall use them where necessary to ensure that charge payers get the full benefits that competition, fairly administered, can bring.

Empty Properties

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what percentage of properties owned by his Department and suitable for residential accommodation has been empty for *(a)* up to a year and *(b)* over a year; and where these properties are located, by region or local authority area.

Mr. Chope *[holding answer 27 February 1990]:* As at 6 March 1990, six (1·5 per cent.) of the 408 residential properties owned by the Department of the Environment had been empty for less than a year and 10 (2·4 per cent.) for more than a year. Of these, 10 (63 per cent.) are in the process of disposal on the open market. These properties are located in the following regions of the United Kingdom and local authority areas:

Scotland
Argyll, City of Glasgow
North East
Hambleton, Langbaurgh
Eastern
Suffolk Coastal
London
Westminster
Southern
Milton Keynes
South West
Cotswold, Sedgemoor
South East
Medway, South Wight

Property Services Agency

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will seek a value for money report from the National Audit Office on the guarantees given by the Property Services Agency to the Crown Suppliers of continued work following privatisation.

Mr. Chope *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* Where Departments are considering entering into commercial agreements with the Crown Suppliers, or any other supplier, whether or not they contain undertakings about future business levels for a period, it is for Departments to satisfy themselves that they provide value for money, and for the National Audit Office to decide whether to investigate.

Waste Recycling

Mr. Janman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the individuals in each local authority, by name and authority, to whom he has written with a questionnaire concerning best practice in recycling household waste.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* The questionnaire is being sent to the chief executives of all district and county councils in England.

Mr. Janman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if his Department has made an assessment or study of the volume of domestic refuse, in terms of percentage, that can be recycled into refuse-derived products, and what percentage remains for landfill; and what is his Department's policy towards the expansion of this capability.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* The Government consider that there is considerable potential for the recycling of waste into refuse-derived products, including fuel, and for reducing the proportion of waste that is committed to landfill. This issue is currently being studied by expert working groups under the aegis of the recycling forum, chaired by my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry.

Mr. Janman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if his Department will encourage local authorities to explore joint venture agreements with private sector companies in the field of recycling; and if his Department has made any assessment of the number of private sector companies that would be able to take part in such schemes.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* Yes; it is important for the private sector to be involved in recycling ventures by local authorities at every stage of recycling—this can include the collection and sorting of waste and its disposal to contractors or direct to manufacturers. Together with the Department of Trade and Industry, we intend to explore the potential for further joint ventures in this field.

Mr. Janman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has on joint ventures currently in existence between local authorities and the private sector to recycle domestic refuse; and if he will list those authorities and companies currently operating such arrangements in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* Comprehensive information about such joint ventures is not currently available, but is being sought through a detailed questionnaire on recycling which is being sent to local authorities.

Public Relations

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what was the total expenditure by his Department on press and public relations in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91;

(2) what were the figures for the spending by his Department on *(a)* television advertising, *(b)* radio advertising, *(c)* newspaper advertising and *(d)* other promotional material in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

Mr. Chris Patten *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* Information relating to the financial years between 1979-80 and 1984-85 inclusive is not readily available and cannot be obtained without disproportionate cost. Final decisions have not yet been made about cost to be incurred in 1990-91.

Following is the information relating to the remaining financial years in respect of paid publicity and associated staff costs for my Department including PSA:

	£ million
1985-86	3·5
1986-87	4·2
1987-88	4·8
1988-89	6·9
[1]1989-90	15·0

[1] Forecast outturn.

Expenditure is not broken down between different publicity media.

The increase in expenditure in 1989-90 is mainly due to specific information campaigns on new legislation on local government finance and housing and to encourage the use of lead-free petrol. Publicity expenditure arising in the course of the flotation of the 10 water plcs is not included and will be notified to Parliament in the usual way.

Parliamentary Creche

Mrs. Fyfe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what progress he has made in identifying suitable premises for the provision of a creche for hon. Members' and employees' families; and whether he has any plans to make provisions for children accompanying parents on visits and lobbies.

Mr. Chope *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* I have not been requested by the Select Committee on House of Commons (Services), to convert accommodation for any of the facilities mentioned by the hon. Lady.

Inner City Programmes

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment which are the inner city programmes his Department is carrying out; what non-Government organisations are taking part in such programmes; where each of these programmes is operating; and on what date each one was started.

Mr. Moynihan *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* Details of the Department of the Environment programmes which are directed towards inner city regeneration are set out in the annual report for 1988-89 "Renewing the Cities" which was published on 28 February. The Department took over responsibility for city action teams in December 1989. Information on CATs is set out in the report "People in Cities" also published on 28 February. Copies of both reports have been placed in the Library. They describe the important part which organisations in the business and voluntary sectors are playing, together with central Government, local authorities and the urban development corporations, in bringing about the revival of inner city areas. They also show where the programmes are operating. The dates when programmes, or organisations, were first established were as follows:

Urban Development Corporations	March 1981
City Grant	May 1988
The Urban Programme	1968-69
Derelict Land Grant	1950
Enterprise Zones	June 1981
Estate Action	1985-86
City Action Teams	April 1985

Inner city revival is also promoted by DOE main programmes, such as the local authority housing investment programme and grants to housing associations through the Housing Corporation, and through other initiatives, such as simplified planning zones and land registers.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Milk Quota

Miss Emma Nicholson: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what plans he has for allocating the additional 1 per cent. of milk quota now available.

Mr. Gummer: We have been advised that the European Community Commission has formally approved our proposals for allocating the additional 1 per cent. of milk quota now available. These provide for quota to be allocated to the following categories of producer.

The first comprises those with tribunal awards which have not yet been granted in full. Small developers will have their allocations made up to the full amount awarded initially subject only to abatement for the cuts totalling approximately 4 per cent. imposed on all producers since the tribunal awards were made. This will benefit producers in Scotland and Northern Ireland; small developers in England and Wales have already been granted their full award. Unfulfilled exceptional hardship awards, which now remain only in Northern Ireland, will be dealt with on the same basis as small developers. Other development awards throughout the United Kingdom will be made up to a common level of around 77 per cent. of the initial allocation (after applying the abatement for across-the-board cuts) except in the minority of cases where a higher percentage of the award has already been granted. In the case of both development and exceptional hardship awards, quota will be allocated only to producers who have actually delivered milk during the period 1 April 1989 to 28 February 1990. This condition will help to ensure that quota goes to those milk producers who are most in need of it.

The second category of producers comprises those who occupy a family-type holding and for whom milk production constitutes a significant activity. My intention here is to give extra help to the family farms that are significantly smaller than average. The best practicable way of targeting this group is by allocating quota to all

producers holding under 200,000 litres of wholesale and direct sales quota. As with the developers and exceptional hardship cases, we shall exclude those who did not deliver milk in the first 11 months of this quota year. Also, since we are aiming at producers for whom milk production is a significant activity, those with under 20,000 litres of quota will be excluded. Within these limits producers will be given an addition of just over 3 per cent. to their current wholesale allocation, including temporarily suspended quota subject to an overall ceiling of 200,000 litres.

Allocations to family-type farms and to producers with outstanding tribunal awards will account for about 120 million of the 148·87 million litres available for distribution. In addition we intend to allocate a small share of the total to producers in the remoter parts of the less-favoured areas, that is, Arran, Bute, Coll, Gigha, Great Cumbrae, Islay, the Isles of Scilly, Kintyre south of Tarbert, Little Cumbrae, Orkney and Shetland. They will each receive an increase representing about 5 per cent. of their current wholesale quota.

Finally, I have earmarked 22·5 million litres for new entrants. The intention would be to allocate quota on loan. Eventually quota used in this way would be recycled to assist further new entrants. The Commission has, however, raised legal objections to the idea of loaning quota and the matter has not yet been resolved. This will not delay the laying of a statutory instrument before Parliament within the next few days to enable the majority of the quota to be allocated before the end of the present quota year.

Salmonella

Mr. Moss: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when the Government will respond to the progress report of the Agriculture Committee on salmonella in eggs; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maclean: The Government have today presented to Parliament their response to the House of Commons Agriculture Committee's progress report on salmonella in eggs. The response welcomes the Agriculture Committee's review of the measures adopted to combat the salmonella problem and notes that the Committee has not recommended any change to the steps taken to protect public health other than in relation to imported eggs.

Copies of the Government's response have been placed in the House Libraries.

Compound Feedstuffs

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what steps have to be taken prior to animal feed manufacturers being permitted to sell proprietary compounds for feeding to farm animals like sheep and poultry.

Mr. Maclean *[holding answer 5 March 1990]:* Manufacturers of medicated animal feedingstuffs are required to register with the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain and abide by a code of practice. The medicinal additives they incorporate must be licensed under medicines legislation.

Additionally all feedingstuffs manufacturers must take steps to ensure that compound feeds sold to farmers comply with the requirements of the Feedingstuffs Regulations 1988.

Green Currency

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the green currency discrepancy for each EC member nation at the most recent available date.

Mr. Curry: The table shows the real monetary gap (RMG) for the main commodities in each member state as at 12 March 1990. This represents the percentage difference between the green and market rate of exchange used for agriculture.

RMGs as at 12 March 1990

Country	*Beef and veal*	*Milk and milk products*	*Sheep*	*Pigmeat*	*Eggs and poultry*	*Cereals*	*Sugar*	*Wine*	*Olive oil*
United Kingdom	−12·485	−16·178	−17·411	−9·029	−16·178	−17·068	−17·068	−17·068	−17·068
Greece	−24·281	−24·281	−3·764	−2·929	−19·803	−7·363	−7·363	−7·363	−7·363
Spain	+3·669	+3·699	+2·147	−·699	+3·699	+2·717	+2·717	+1·879	+1·879
Portugal	n.a.	n.a.	−2·556	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	−2·556	n.a.	−2·556
Bel/Lux	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Denmark	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
France	0	−2	−2	0	−2	−2	−2	−2	−2
Germany	+·4	+·4	+·4	+·4	+·4	+1·368	+·846	+·846	+·846
Ireland	0	−2	−2	−2	−2	−2	−2	−2	−2
Italy	−2·497	−2·497	−2·497	−1·487	−2·497	−3·039	−2·497	−2·858	−2·497
Netherlands	0	0	0	0	0	+·866	0	0	0

n.a.—not applicable.

Wheat and Sheepmeat

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) what is the green pound discrepancy in *(a)* percentage, *(b)* cash per unit at the beginning of each marketing year since 1980 for (i) wheat and (ii) sheepmeat;

(2) what it the United Kingdom intervention price for wheat and the guide price for sheepmeat for each marketing year since 1980 in *(a)* cash terms and *(b)* at 1990 prices.

Mr. Curry: The information requested is supplied in the table:

	Common Wheat Intervention Price		Real monetary gap[2]	Value of monetary discrepancy[3]	Sheepmeat Guide[1] price		Real Monetary Gap[2]	Value of monetary discrepancy[3]
Beginning of Marketing Year	£/tonne	£/tonne[4] 1990 prices	per cent.	£/tonne	£/100kg	£/100kg 1990prices[4]	per cent.	£/100kg
1980-81	96	157	+2·7	+2·6	181	295	+6·6	+11·9
1981-82	102	154	+10·4	+10·6	195	294	+13·9	+27·1
1982-83	111	159	+9·6	+10·7	216	309	+7·9	+17·0
1983-84	114	156	+8·1	+9·3	227	311	+4·5	+10·2
1984-85	113	147	+1·2	+1·4	225	292	+4·7	+10·6
1985-86	111	139	+5·1	+5·7	227	285	−4·9	−11·1
1986-87	113	134	−10·4	−11·7	240	287	−22·8	−54·7
1987-88	118	132	−21·4	−25·2	235	264	−19·6	−46·1
1988-89	118	124	−14·2	−16·7	229	241	−8·2	−18·8
1989-90	122	122	−8·7	−10·6	229	229	−18·5	−42·3

[1] Unseasonalised guide price (85% of basic price).
[2] Percentage difference between the green and market rate used for agriculture.
[3] Real monetary gap applied to the intervention price for common wheat and the guide price for sheepmeat. A positive sign indicates prices above, and a negative sign indicates prices below, the level obtained by using market instead of green rates of exchange.
[4] Using implied GDP deflator at market prices. 1989-90 estimates based on 1989 Autumn Statement.

Horticulture

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what representations he has made to the European Commission on gas aid to horticultural growers in EC member countries.

Mr. Curry: The European Commission has recently decided to initiate legal proceedings against the Netherlands in respect of subsidised gas prices for Dutch glasshouse growers. We are giving the Commission full support in its efforts to ensure fair competition in the Community.

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what representations he has received about gas aid to horticultural growers in EC member states.

Mr. Curry: Some representations have been received at official level. I am continuing to keep this area under careful review.

Organic Production

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what progress is being made to achieve common standards with other EEC countries for organic production systems; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Curry: In December last year the European Commission issued a proposal for a Council regulation on organic production. Discussions in the relevant Council working group commenced in January. In the view of Her Majesty's Government, the original draft was unsatisfactory in that it would not have provided adequate protection for consumers and contained features which were operationally impractical. There has, however, been some progress in the discussions and my Department is seeking to ensure that the regulation is compatible with the more fully developed standards set by the United Kingdom register of organic food standards (UKROFS).

Agrochemicals

Sir Richard Body: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what arrangements exist to ensure adequate training for those handling agrochemicals in agricultural production; if such training assumes a minimum level of literacy and scientific knowledge; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Curry: Formal training in the handling and use of pesticides is available both from the agricultural training board and from the county agricultural and horticultural colleges. For safety reasons, trainees are expected to be able to read and interpret the product label, but no specific scientific knowledge is required.

Organic Farming

Sir Richard Body: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what financial and other support he is making available for organic farming; what estimate he has made of the increased employment resulting from organic farming methods; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Curry: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave to the hon. Member for Truro (Mr. Taylor) on 16 January 1990, *Official Report*, columns *215-16*, in which I set out the wide range of support for organic farming currently available or being planned. It is too early to estimate the increased level of employment likely to result from these initiatives and from the increase in market demand. However, we are anxious that the agricultural industry should respond to the market and ensure that a growing share of that market is met by United Kingdom production.

Waste Incineration

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many tonnes of waste will be incinerated at sea in 1990; whether the Government intend to curtail such incineration for all materials; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Curry: I refer the hon. Member to the reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Waveney (Mr. Porter) on 5 March, *Official Report*, column *489*.

The amount of waste to be incinerated in 1990 is expected to be less than 6,000 tonnes.

North Sea Dumping

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what representations have been made regarding the proposed dumping of 50,000 tonnes of acid and other wastes into the sea off the north-east coast from other countries and United Kingdom organisations; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Curry: The Department has received a number of representations from some of the other contracting parties to the Oslo commission and from United Kingdom organisations about proposals to issue licences for the dumping of industrial wastes into the North sea.

In accordance with the requirements of the internationally agreed procedures in respect of the dumping of such wastes after 1989, we have submitted detailed information to the Oslo commission about the nature of the wastes concerned, the methods of dumping proposed, the tests carried out to confirm that such dumping would not pose any risk of harm to the marine environment and the work undertaken into alternative disposal methods. An Oslo commission working group on 14 February 1989 expressed its appreciation of the United Kingdom's efforts to phase out this dumping. As a result of these efforts to establish environmentally acceptable land-based methods for dealing with these wastes I was able on 2 February to announce my intention to terminate the licences for their disposal at sea by the end of 1992. Two licences would be extended into 1993 only if absolutely necessary and for the shortest possible part of that year.

Turkeys

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he expects to answer the letter from the hon. Member for Caerphilly of 15 January concerning the welfare of turkeys at slaughter.

Mr. Curry: An answer to the hon. Member's letter of 15 January was dispatched on 12 March 1990.

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what research his Department has carried out to see whether calves' brains can be contaminated by bovine spongiform encephalopathy.

Mr. Curry: In studies carried out in relation to natural scrapie in sheep and goats, infectivity could not be detected anywhere, including the brain, in animals under 10 months of age. The probable cause of bovine spongiform encephalopathy was the feeding of ruminant-based protein, which included material from sheep with scrapie. Calves would not have been fed this material, since the practice was banned in July 1988. In addition, there is no evidence at present of cattle-to-cattle transmission, although we are conducting experiments to see whether this could occur. Field and experimental studies on BSE are in hand and include the assessment of the infectivity of different tissues.

Farmers and Farm Workers

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what assessment he has made of the reasons for the decline in the number of farmers and farm workers in Britain in 1989; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Curry *[holding answer 9 March 1990]:* The decline in the numbers of farmers and farm workers in 1989 reflects a continuation of a long-standing trend resulting from a range of factors—for example, continuing increases in labour productivity and technological development, the increased success of the European Community in tackling the problems of the CAP and, more recently, the need for tight financial disciplines throughout the economy as a whole. We shall, however, have to await the results of the June 1990 census before it will be possible to assess fully the extent of the decline in 1989.

DEFENCE

SSBN 005

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement regarding the progress of the Intercept sonar for SSBN 005.

Mr. Neubert: Development of the Intercept sonar sub-system is largely complete, and it is expected that integration with the sonar suite will be accomplished on schedule.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when production units of the inboard sonar suite for SSBN 005 were delivered.

Mr. Neubert: Delivery of the SSBN 005 onboard sonar suite is not yet required under the shipbuilding programme. The equipment is available and the programme date will be met.

Heat Injury

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* boards of inquiry, *(b)* disciplinary inquiries and *(c)* courts martial have taken place following the occurrence of heat-induced injuries or fatalities; and in how many cases disciplinary action was taken.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: As regards boards of inquiry and disciplinary inquiries, the information requested is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost and effort. As regards courts martial, I refer the right hon. Member to the answer given to him by my hon. Friend the Member for Romford (Mr. Neubert) on 15 January 1990, *Official Report*, column *121*. Since then one court martial has taken place following a case of heat induced injury.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will detail the action taken by him in the past two years to reduce the number of casualties from heat injury in the forces.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Two defence council instructions have been issued: the first in December 1988, as a reminder of the risks of heat stress, heat exhaustion, heat stroke and similar conditions; and the second last month, to provide detailed guidance on the prediction, prevention and treatment of such conditions. These have been disseminated throughout the three services and are an important means of maintaining and improving awareness of the risks of heat injury. In addition, as far as training is concerned, the content of courses is kept under review and, where appropriate, revised. Thus, for example, changes to

the Army's combat fitness test instructions to enable commanding officers to exercise discretion over dress requirements in certain climatic conditions, as well as the planned increase in the time allowed for completion of the test, should reduce the risk of heat stress and other injuries.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will give the figures relating to episodes of injury or death attributable to excessive heat or insulation within the services for 1989.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The information requested is not yet available for 1989. It will be included in the services annual health tables which are published each summer.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will initiate an independent review of the heat-related injuries and deaths that occurred between 1978 and 1988 with a view to preventing such injuries in the future.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: No. All deaths from other than natural causes are investigated as a matter of course to consider whether such incidents could have been avoided.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the changes made in naval training following the heat-related injury to Lieutenant Simon Rowland.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Following the injury to Lieutenant Simon Rowland, a number of new safety measures for the RN aircrew survival course have been introduced. Cellphones and radios have been purchased for use by staff on the course, and casualty evacuation procedures have been reviewed. First aid training is now being given to all instructors and the medical fitness category for the course has been reviewed. The format of the "forced march" or "battle run" element of the aircrew survival course has also been reviewed and the length of this element has been shortened.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make it his policy to order an automatic court martial or disciplinary inquiry with a published report into every case of heat-related injury or death.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: No. In any such case it is the responsibility of the relevant service authority to determine what action would be appropriate, which will depend on the particular circumstances of the case.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will place in the Library *(a)* the defence council instruction issued on 23 December 1988 regarding the prevention of heat stroke and exhaustion and *(b)* the single service instructions that are referred to in the defence council instruction;

(2) if he will place in the Library the existing regulations referred to in the letter of 6 November 1989 from the Under-Secretary of State to the right hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, South regarding the prediction, prevention and treatment of heat injury; whether these regulations are given to all training instructors; and whether they were given to Lieutenant Gordon Smith late of the RN survival equipment school;

(3) if he will place in the Library the separate instructions issued to commanding officers requiring them to take appropriate preventive measures that are referred to in the letter of 29 June 1988 about heat injuries from the Under-Secretary of State to the right hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, South.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Although defence council instructions are internal management documents not normally intended for publication outside the Ministry of Defence and the services, I am arranging, exceptionally, for the instruction referred to by the right hon. Member to be placed in the Library. However, I do not consider the public interest would be served by the more general publication of internal instructions and regulations.

The practice regarding giving copies of regulations to individual instructors varies, the main consideration being that they should be readily available in a suitable form and that they should be read and understood by all concerned. All instructors in the Royal Navy have been given copies of the defence council instructions issued in December 1988, including Lieutenant Gordon Smith while he was an instructor at the RN survival equipment school.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will publish in the *Official Report* details of the clothing worn by Lieutenant Simon Rowland and his fellow trainees during the training exercise in the New Forest; and what was the temperature during each day of the exercise.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: For the practical phase of the survival course Lt Rowland and his fellow trainees were wearing flying overalls, underpants, socks and boots. No headgear was worn.

The temperature each day in the area during the practical phase of the course carried out in the New Forest is shown in the chart:

Ambient air temperatures for period 22-25 July 1989—local times

Date	*0900*	*1200*	*1500*	*1800*
22 July	25C	30C	32C	27C
23 July	22C	28C	31C	29C
24 July	23C	29C	30C	28C
25 July	21C	25C	27C	26C

Source: Met Office, Southampton Airport.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will set up a study of the distribution of the 663 heat injuries between 1978 and 1988 to see if there are any instances of commanding officers having a number of injuries to men training under their command significantly greater than that likely to have occurred by chance.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: No. The information necessary to conduct such a study is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what independent medical advice he has received on the avoidability of heat injury or death.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: None. I refer the right hon. Member to the answer given to him on 15 January 1990, *Official Report*, column *121*.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when it was decided to prepare the more detailed defence council instruction, referred to in the letter of 6 November 1989 from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary to the right hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, South; what external independent advice has been sought on the content; when it will be finalised; to whom it will be circulated; if he will place a copy in the Library; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: It was decided in May 1989 to issue a defence council instruction (DCI) which was to bring together the guidance already available in various instructions and publications. The new DCI covers all aspects of the prediction, prevention and treatment of heat injury. External advice was not sought as there was sufficient informed opinion within the services.

The DCI was issued on 23 February 1990 and will be seen by all service personnel and appropriate civilian organisations within the MOD.

Although DCIs are internal management documents I am arranging, exceptionally, for this instruction to be placed in the Library of the House.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) whether a training instructor in the armed forces has ever been charged for failing in his duty to observe a defence council instruction relating to the prediction, prevention and treatment of heat injury;

(2) whether a training instructor in the armed forces has ever been charged for failing in his duty to observe the training regulations relating to the prediction, prevention and treatment of heat injury.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Not over the last 10 years for which records are available.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the other branches of the forces intend to modify their training programmes to match the changes made by the Royal Navy following the heat-related injury to Lieutenant Simon Rowland.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Relevant training practices in the other services are being examined to establish whether any of the changes being introduced by the Royal Navy are applicable.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether training instructors have a duty to observe the training regulations relating to the prediction, prevention and treatment of heat injury; and if it is an offence to disregard them.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: If a training regulation imposes a duty on a training instructor which he fails to carry out or carries out negligently, he can be charged with an offence under the relevant service discipline Act.

Training Injuries

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many men died or were seriously injured while taking part in SAS, SBS or Royal Marine training courses during 1989.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: It is not the practice to comment on matters relating to special forces. During 1989 three men died and one serious injury was sustained as a result of participation in Royal Marine training courses or exercises.

Training Instructors

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make it his policy to require training instructors to dress in the same clothes and carry the same equipment as those they are training.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: No. This would not always be practicable, especially in cases where such a requirement would undermine the effectiveness of the supervision provided by instructors, which is important for safety and other reasons.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether training instructors have a duty to observe defence council instructions; and if it is an offence to disregard them.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Defence council instructions are not usually expressed as direct orders and non-compliance with any given instruction is therefore not automatically an offence. However, if a defence council instruction imposes a duty on a training instructor which he fails to carry out or carries out negligently, he can be charged with an offence under the relevant service discipline Act.

Hazardous Training

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if there are any obligatory medical checks on members of the forces before they take part in potentially hazardous training.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The PULHHEEMS system is the standard assessment of each individual's medical fitness for all aspects of service with Her Majesty's forces. Additional medical examinations are provided in specialised occupations such as pilots and divers.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if there is any limitation on the discretion of commanding officers regarding the hazardous nature of training courses for which they have responsibility.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Commanding officers are responsible for the health and safety of those in their charge and, in conducting training, they are required to have full regard to this responsibility and to the framework of relevant instructions, guidance and advice (including medical advice), while ensuring that training is of military value.

Chemical and Biological Defence

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many personnel are currently employed in research and development into pyrotechnic equipment for chemical and biological defence; and if he has any plans to increase the complement of staff or consultants working in this field.

Mr. Neubert *[holding answer 1 March 1990]:* The Ministry of Defence has no personnel currently employed in research and development into pyrotechnic equipment for chemical and biological defence, nor is there any intention to engage such personnel. The Department is, however, considering purchase of equipment developed in this field.

Forest Moor Base

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what new building work has been commissioned at the Forest Moor base over the last five years; and at what cost.

Mr. Archie Hamilton *[holding answer 5 March 1990]:* Contracts for the following works at Forest Moor have been let in the past five years:

UK HF Ship-to-Shore Aerials
Patching Jack Field
COMMCEN Security Improvements
Conversions to Repair Laboratory
Crypto Workshop and Store Improvements
Galley/Drainage System Improvements
Provision for Refuse Compactor
Anti-Pollution Measures
CCTV System
COMMCEN Access Control Improvements
Road Drainage Improvements
Sports Field Drainage Improvements
Provision of Security Fences and Water Tower
COMMCEN Structural Alterations
Sewage Ejector Station Up-Grade
Demolition of Masts and Towers
Other Security Measures

The total value of these contracts was £421,096,000.

EMPLOYMENT

Wages Councils

2. **Mr. Corbett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what steps he takes to monitor the effectiveness of the wages councils.

Mr. Nicholls: The councils are empowered to set minimum rates of pay in certain industries. The extent of compliance with these rates is regularly assessed.

Labour Statistics

16. **Miss Emma Nicholson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment by how much long-term unemployment among 18 to 24-year-olds has fallen in the past year.

Mr. Howard: In the year to January, long-term unemployment among 18 to 24-year-olds fell by almost 46,000 or 33 per cent.

22. **Mr. Ian Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the number of 18 to 24-year-olds who were long-term unemployed in *(a)* the quarter to January 1986 and *(b)* the quarter to January 1990.

Mr. Howard: Between January 1986 and January 1990 the number of 18 to 24-year-olds who have been unemployed for 12 months or more fell by 243,000 or 73 per cent.

26. **Mr. Pawsey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment by how much the work force in employment in the United Kingdom has increased since March 1983.

Mr. Nicholls: Since 1983 the United Kingdom work force in employment has been on a rising trend. In September 1989, the latest date for which information is available, the work force in employment was 26,487,000. This represents an increase of 2,923,000 or 12·4 per cent. since March 1983 when the figure was 23,563,000.

30. **Mr. Hind:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what has been the percentage reduction in the total number of long-term unemployed people in the last two years.

Mr. Nicholls: Between January 1988 and January 1990 the number of unemployed claimants in the United Kingdom who had been unemployed for one year or more fell by about 48 per cent. The comparison is slightly affected by the changes in coverage of the count over the period specified.

32. **Mr. Burt:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the percentage change in unemployment in the Bury, North constituency during the period September 1986 to December 1989.

Mr. Nicholls: Between September 1986 and December 1989 the number of unemployed claimants in Bury, North parliamentary constituency fell by about 60 per cent. Direct comparisons are affected by the change in benefit regulations for under 18-year-olds in September 1988, and by seasonal influences.

44. **Mr. Duffy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many full-time jobs have been created in the city of Sheffield in 1989.

Mr. Nicholls: This information is not available. The Department's statistics for local areas monitor only net changes in employment between census of employment dates and the most recent figures are for September 1987.

47. **Mr. Anthony Beaumont-Dark:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what are the total numbers in employment in the west midlands *(a)* currently and *(b)* one year ago.

Mr. Nicholls: In September 1989, the latest date for which figures are available, the civilian work force in employment in the west midlands region was 2,398,000. This represents an increase of 59,000 or 2·5 per cent. since September 1988 when the figure was 2,339,000.

50. **Mr. Andrew MacKay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the current level of unemployment.

Mr. Nicholls: In January 1990, seasonally adjusted unemployment in the United Kingdom was 1,611,400, the lowest for more than nine years on a consistent basis.

56. **Mr. Devlin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the unemployment rate among those aged under 25 years for *(a)* the United Kingdom and *(b)* the European Community.

67. **Mr. Andrew Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many European Community countries have a higher rate of unemployment among those aged under 25 years than the United Kingdom.

Mr. Nicholls: In December 1989, the latest available date, the unemployment rate in the United Kingdom among under 25-year-olds was 8·2 per cent., under half that of the EC average of 16·5 per cent. The rate for eight of our EC partners is higher than this. The rate for Greece is unavailable.

57. **Mr. Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list the number of employed in each of the standard regions in *(a)* June 1989 and *(b)* June 1979.

Mr. Nicholls: The information is as follows:

Civilian workforce in employment (unadjusted for seasonal variation)

(Thousands)

Regions	*June 1979*	*June 1989*	*Change*	
			Number	*Per cent.*
South East Including London	8,124	9,019	896	11·0
East Anglia	781	933	152	19·4
South West	1,744	2,064	319	18·3
West Midlands	2,382	2,367	−15	−0·6
East Midlands	1,671	1,818	147	8·8
Yorkshire and Humberside	2,145	2,129	−15	−0·7
North West	2,890	2,824	−66	−2·3
North	1,325	1,257	−67	−5·1
Wales	1,157	1,200	43	3·7
Scotland	2,262	2,255	−8	−0·3
Great Britain	24,480	25,868	1,388	5·7
Northern Ireland	598	584	−14	−2·3
United Kingdom	25,079	26,452	1,374	5·5

60. **Mr. Michael Brown:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment for how many months the unemployment total has been falling.

Mr. Nicholls: The unemployment total in the United Kingdom has now been falling continuously for 42 months on a consistent basis.

65. **Mr. Hardy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what proportion of new jobs created in the last three years are of part-time character; and what proportion of the total number of employees are part-time.

Mr. Nicholls: There are no figures for new jobs created but only for net increases in employment. In the three years to September 1989, the latest date for which estimates are available, 27 per cent. of the net increase in employees in employment was in part-time jobs. Part-time employees in employment now represent 24 per cent. of the total number of the employees.

72. **Mr. Gill:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what has been the change in the percentage of the work force working outside the public sector over the last 10 years; and what is the overall trend allowing for the effect of privatisation.

Mr. Nicholls: Mid-year estimates of employment in the public sector are prepared by the Central Statistical Office. Estimates of the total work force are prepared by the Department of Employment. On this basis, the proportion working outside the public sector rose from 69·4 per cent. in 1979 to 74·4 per cent. in 1989. This increase includes the effects of privatisation. The data that would enable reliable estimates of the change in the proportion working outside the public sector allowing for the effects of privatisation are not available.

75. **Mr. Harris:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what has been the fall in the numbers of unemployed people aged 50 years and over over the last year.

Mr. Nicholls: Between January 1989 and January 1990 the number of unemployed claimants aged 50 years and over in the United Kingdom fell by about 113,000 or 26 per cent. This comparison is affected by the changes in the operation of the redundant mineworkers payments scheme in July 1989. These changes will particularly have affected older age groups.

Training

18. **Sir Michael McNair-Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he has any proposals to improve the level of training for new skills.

Mr. Howard: The Government are investing almost £3 billion this year in training, and in the introduction of training and enterprise councils across the country. Training and enterprise councils represent the most exciting training initiative this country has ever seen, and I am delighted by the progress they are making and the support they are receiving.

36. **Mr. Dykes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he plans to meet his European Economic Community counterparts to discuss training and retraining schemes and the exchange of ideas between different systems in European countries.

Mr. Nicholls: My right hon. and learned Friend has already visited Bonn to discuss training issues with his counterparts there and also held bilateral discussions in Dublin before attending the informal meeting of Labour and Social Affairs Ministers on 1 to 2 March, which included a review of EC training initiatives. It is hoped that a number of bilaterals with colleagues in other member states will be arranged within the next six months.

27. **Mr. Patrick Thompson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what has been the increase in annual expenditure by his Department on training since 1979 in *(a)* real terms and *(b)* cash terms.

Mr. Nicholls: Records are kept on the basis of the standard financial year for Government expenditure, which runs from 1 April to 31 March.

The increase in annual expenditure on training programmes from 1979-80 to 1989-90 in cash terms is £2,512 million. When expenditure is inflated to constant 1989-90 prices the increase is £1,966·4 million.

49. **Mr. Ron Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the provision of training by employers.

Mr. Nicholls: The latest available figures show that in 1986-87 £18 billion was spent by employers on training. This represents a very considerable investment in the skills of the British work force.

51. **Mr. Janman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what estimate he has made of the proportion of gross domestic product represented by the overall cost of all training undertaken in Britain.

Mr. Nicholls: It has been estimated that in 1986-87 the total costs of training, including the implicit cost to trainees of earnings forgone while on training, was about 8 per cent. of gross domestic product.

59. **Mr. Moss:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what information he has on the overall cost of all training undertaken in Britain in 1986-87.

Mr. Nicholls: It has been estimated that the total costs of training, including the implicit cost to trainees of earnings forgone while on training, was about £33 billion in 1986-87.

Mr. Leighton: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment on what percentage of employment training places employers make additional contributions to the cost of training; and what is the average contribution.

Mr. Nicholls: The information requested is not available.

Mr. Skinner: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he has any proposals to increase jobs in the manufacturing sector through training programmes; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: The overall aim of Government training programmes is to promote better arrangements for people to acquire and improve their skills and competence for work. Improved training arrangements will in turn lead to a more highly skilled and competent work force and a more competitive economy, thus promoting employment in manufacturing as elsewhere.

Low Pay

21. **Mr. Tom Clarke:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what plans he has to eradicate low pay.

Mr. Nicholls: The best way to help the lowest paid is through the development of a prosperous and growing economy which the Government's policies are helping to achieve.

Euro Information Centres

23. **Ms. Quin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the future funding of Euro information centres.

Mr. Eggar: The first four centres in the United Kingdom were established in 1987; a further 16 for the United Kingdom were approved in October 1989 and will be operational by April this year.

The Commission provides pump-priming funds on a reducing basis in the first three years of operation.

Self-Employment

24. **Mr. Kirkhope:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what has been the increase in the numbers of self-employed people since 1979.

Mr. Eggar: In September 1989, the latest date for which information is available, there were 3,276,000 self-employed people in the United Kingdom. This represents an increase of 1,370,000, or 72 per cent., since June 1979. Self-employed people now represent 12·2 per cent. of the work force in employment.

79. **Mr. Stevens:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what proportion of the work force in employment is now self-employed.

Mr. Nicholls: In September 1989, the latest date for which information is available, self-employed people represented 12·2 per cent. of the work force in employment.

Training and Enterprise Councils

25. **Mr. Paice:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many training and enterprise councils have been approved for pilot funding; how many applications are being processed; and how many areas of the country are still to make applications.

Mr. Howard: Sixty-four employer-led groups have been given development funding to establish training and enterprise councils (TECs). A further six applications are under consideration, and 12 more are expected later. This will give a complete network of TECs across England and Wales.

58. **Mr. Latham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he will make a statement on training and enterprise councils.

64. **Mr. Summerson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the progress of the training and enterprise council network.

Mr. Eggar: I have been very encouraged by the excellent response from employers throughout the country since we issued the invitation to form training and enterprise councils.

80. **Mr. Trotter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment when he last met the chairman of the Tynemouth training and enterprise council; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. Nicholls: My right hon. and learned Friend met the chairman of the prospective training and enterprise council for Tyneside on 23 January. The development of a TEC for the area and the progress being made with their plans was discussed.

Job Clubs

28. **Dr. Michael Clark:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the progress of job clubs.

Mr. Eggar: In recent months job clubs have been particularly successful in attracting entrants—20 per cent. more during the last quarter of 1989 than during the corresponding period in 1988.

The employment service is currently considering its plans for 1990-91. Provision will be made for a large and vigorous job club programme to continue.

I believe that job club is an excellent programme offering practical help with jobsearch to long-term unemployed people and others at a disadvantage in the labour market.

YTS

29. **Mr. Boswell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what proportion of YTS leavers go into a job, further education or training.

Mr. Nicholls: Eighty-one per cent. of all young people who leave YTS courses go into either employment, further education or training.

35. **Mr. Richard Shepherd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what proportion of those who complete a YTS course achieve a qualification.

Mr. Nicholls: Sixty-seven per cent. of those young people who complete a YTS course achieve a qualification.

Overseas Teachers

31. **Mr. Cox:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what has been the number of work permits that have been given to overseas teachers to work in England and Wales during the past 12 months; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: Figures are not available for England and Wales alone. The total number of work permits recorded as having been issued to employers wishing to employ overseas teachers in Great Britain between March 1989 and February 1990 was 323.

Hosiery Industry

33. **Mr. Janner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he will make a statement regarding employment levels within the hosiery industry in Leicestershire.

Mr. Nicholls: The latest available employment estimates for the county are from the September 1987 census of employment. There were then 29,000 employees employed in the manufacture of hosiery and other weft knitted goods and fabrics (activity heading 4363 of the standard industrial classification 1980) in Leicestershire.

Employment Training

34. **Mr. Clelland:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will give the total number of employment training referrals from the employment scheme to training agents in each of the months of November and December 1989 and the number of ET starts in each of those months.

Mr. Nicholls: The information requested is given in the following table.

Employment training Great Britain

Month	*Employment service referrals to employment training*	*Starts with training managers*
November	75,700	36,200
December	59,100	26,300

39. **Mr. Livsey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he has any plans to introduce a compulsory element to employment training.

Mr. Nicholls: My right hon. and learned Friend has no current plans to change the basis on which employment training operates. Employment training is a highly successful programme with 209,000 voluntary participants in training.

46. **Mr. Eastham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on employment training in Greater Manchester.

Mr. Nicholls: Employment training in Greater Manchester, as nationally, continues to make excellent progress. It is currently helping nearly 9,700 unemployed people to get the skills and experience they need to obtain jobs.

Mr. O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many people on the Government employment training scheme have left the training course before the completion of their programme in the Yorkshire region in the last 12 months; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: The information requested is not available.

77. **Mr. Parry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he has any plans to modify employment training.

Mr. Nicholls: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to my hon. Friend the Member for Stevenage (Mr. Wood) on 5 March 1990, *Official Report*, column *507*.

Vocational Training

37. **Mr. Wallace:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will obtain for his Department's library the recently published reports into vocational training published by the National Institute of Economic and Social Research.

Mr. Eggar: The Library has purchased copies of the institute's recently published compilation of its reports on vocational training entitled "Productivity, Education and Training:—Britain and other Countries Compared."

Disabled People

38. **Mrs. Mahon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what additional measures he plans to introduce to enable disabled persons to participate fully in the work force.

41. **Ms. Ruddock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what steps he intends to take to encourage the disabled to participate fully in the workplace.

Mr. Eggar: The adequacy of current measures to enable people with disabilities to participate fully in the work force is being considered in the review of services for people with disabilities which my Department has been undertaking. A consultative document covering the conclusions reached in the review will be published as soon as possible.

55. **Mr. McAllion:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what guidelines are issued to his Department's staff regarding the distribution of quota exemption permits to employers.

Mr. Eggar: Instructions to disablement resettlement officers require them to consider the availability of suitable

registered disabled people and the degree of commitment shown by employers towards meeting their obligations under the Disabled Persons (Employment) Act 1944.

Construction Industry Training Board

40. **Mr. Bellingham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment when he next plans to meet the chairman of the construction industry training board; and what he proposes to discuss.

Mr. Nicholls: My right hon. and learned Friend expects to meet the chairman to discuss plans for taking forward training within the industry soon after the board is reconstituted.

Tourism

42. **Mr. Alton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what steps his Department has taken to promote tourism in Merseyside.

Mr. Nicholls: Through the English tourist board, my Department supports the work of the North-West tourist board in promoting tourism throughout the north-west. Specific Merseyside activities include the Liverpool strategic development initiative. My Department is also involved in the work of the Liverpool city action team, several of whose initiatives benefit tourism in the area.

43. **Mr. Mans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what has been the increase in the total of self-employment within the tourism industry since 1983.

Mr. Nicholls: The latest available estimate from the labour force survey indicates that there were 204,000 self-employed workers in tourism-related industries in spring 1988—44,000 more than in spring 1983.

52. **Mr. Bevan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the value of spending in Britain by overseas visitors in 1989.

Mr. Nicholls: It is provisionally estimated that overseas residents spent £6,850 million in the United Kingdom during 1989—11 per cent. more than in 1988.

Health and Safety

45. **Mr. Tony Lloyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what plans there are for increasing the number of construction inspectors within the Health and Safety Executive.

Mr. Nicholls: The Health and Safety Executive has achieved its objective of having 100 inspectors regularly engaged on the inspection of construction activities nationally by 1990. This number will be maintained. The HSE has no plans to increase the number in 1990, but the position will be kept under review.

54. **Mr. Boyes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what plans he has to extend health and safety protection at work.

Mr. Nicholls: The Government have increased financial provision for the Health and Safety Commission and Executive over previously agreed levels again for 1990-91. The additional provision is £7 million, excluding money transferred from the Department of Energy for nuclear safety research.

My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State expects shortly to receive for his approval details of the commission's plans for 1990-91 and beyond. The commission hopes to publish its plan of work in May.

71. **Mr. Nigel Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he has any plans to introduce legislation allowing for heavier fines for cases brought by the Health and Safety Executive.

Mr. Nicholls: The introduction of legislation allowing for heavier fines, including those for cases brought by the Health and Safety Executive, is the responsibility of my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department.

73. **Mr. Lofthouse:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what steps the Health and Safety Executive is taking to comply with European Community directives on the workplace, the use of workplace equipment and the use of personal protective equipment.

Mr. Eggar: The Health and Safety Executive is assessing what changes to existing legislation need to be made in the light of the directives, and will make recommendations to the Health and Safety Commission in due course. The commission hopes to publish proposals in the form of a consultative document by about the end of this year.

Benefit Fraud

48. **Mr. Ian Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many people have withdrawn their claims to benefit as a result of employment service fraud investigations since 1987.

Mr. Eggar: The latest available figures show that since June 1987 204,500 people have withdrawn their claims to benefit following fraud investigations.

68. **Mr. Simon Coombs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what were the total savings to the taxpayer achieved by employment service fraud investigations in 1989.

Mr. Eggar: The total saving to the taxpayer in 1989 was £53·16 million.

TVEI

53. **Mr. Andy Stewart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the progress of the technical and vocational education initiative.

Mr. Nicholls: The technical and vocational education initiative (TVEI) is making excellent progress. Over half a million students are currently involved. Significant achievements are being recorded in the 81 education authorities currently extending TVEI to all their schools and colleges:

(i) The proportion of students taking balanced science courses has virtually doubled from 36 per cent. to 64 per cent.
(ii) Students taking design and technology courses has virtually doubled from 30 per cent. to 55 per cent.
(iii) 71 per cent. of teachers report TVEI has increased students ability to solve problems.
(iv) 70 per cent. of employers feel that what TVEI teaches is relevant to their needs.

As the initiative expands, all students will be getting a period of work experience, an individual action plan and a record of achievement. I am confident that TVEI is making a significant contribution to improving the quality of the nation's work force.

Stonehenge

61. **Mr. Key:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he has met the chairman of English Heritage to discuss the tourism potential of Stonehenge; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Howard: Since my appointment as Secretary of State for Employment, I have not yet had the opportunity of meeting the chairman of English Heritage.

Job Creation

62. **Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will now meet representatives of the local authority associations to discuss the role of local government in job creation.

Mr. Eggar: I have no plans for such a meeting. Local authorities are aware that they can help to create jobs by attracting industrial and commercial investment. The Government have assisted the authorities which can benefit most from investment by, among other things, the creation of enterprise zones such as Wakefield.

Restart

63. **Mrs. Maureen Hicks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many restart interviews were conducted between April 1988 and December 1989.

Mr. Eggar: The number of restart interviews conducted between April 1988 and December 1989 was 3,758,000.

Employment Rights

66. **Mr. Jack Thompson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what plans he has to extend employment rights to all those in work.

Mr. Nicholls: I refer the hon. Member to my answer to the hon. Member for Tyne Bridge (Mr. Clelland) on 7 December 1989, *Official Report*, column *205*.

Age Discrimination

69. **Mr. Barry Field:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what further steps his Department is taking to discourage the practice of age discrimination among employers.

Mr. Nicholls: The Government believe that older workers are a valuable resource. Age discrimination is unfair to individuals and not in an employer's own interest. We continue to put this message across to employers through various media, particularly in the context of publicity about demographic change. In addition, instructions to jobcentre staff have been strengthened to ensure all upper age limits on vacancies notified by employers are challenged. There are encouraging signs that employers are heeding this message. We will continue our efforts to ensure this progress continues.

EC Employment Ministers

70. **Mr. Holt:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment when he last met his opposite numbers in *(a)* France, *(b)* Germany and *(c)* Italy; and what was discussed.

Mr. Howard: I met my European Community counterparts at an informal meeting of Labour and Social Affairs Ministers in Dublin on 1 and 2 March when we discussed help for the long-term unemployed and training assistance for eastern European countries.

I was also able to secure agreement that the Commission would in future present regular reports to the Council of Ministers on member states' records in implementing European legislation. This will show that the United Kingdom has an extremely good record on implementation and will help to ensure that Community legislation is effectively and fairly implemented throughout the Community.

It will also make member states think more carefully about implementation before agreeing to new directives.

Industrial Action

74. **Mr. Riddick:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the annual average of working days lost due to industrial action in each of the last two decades.

Mr. Nicholls: The annual average of working days lost due to industrial disputes in the 1970s was 12·9 million. The provisional estimate for the 1980s is 7·2 million.

Women Workers

76. **Mr. Orme:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what steps he is taking to encourage women back into the workplace after having children.

Mr. Nicholls: It is not Government policy specifically to encourage women with dependent children back to work. It must be a matter of personal choice for the woman concerned. For details of the steps being taken by the Government to help those women who wish to do so to return to the labour market, I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Derbyshire, South (Mrs. Currie) on 16 January, *Official Report*, columns *234-35*.

Small Businesses

78. **Mr. David Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what has been the average weekly increase in the number of small businesses created over the last three years for which figures are available.

Mr. Eggar: In 1988, the latest year for which figures have been published by my Department, the net increase in the number of VAT-registered businesses averaged just over 1,200 per week. This compares with 800 a week in 1987 and 500 a week in 1986. Early indications from data collected by HM Customs and Excise are that there was a net increase in 1989 of 1,500 a week on average.

Work Trial Placements

Ms. Primarolo: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will give the latest figures for the number of work trial placements completed under the job interview guarantee scheme for each of the sites of the pilot scheme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: The number of work trial placements completed is as follows:

Pilot area	*Number of work trials*	*Number found employment*
Lower Don Valley	1	1
Leeds	2	2
Sunderland	1	1
Cardiff	1	—

The job interview guarantee involves an employer guaranteeing to interview long-term unemployed people from inner cities who are submitted from one or more of the following: matching-screening service, a job preparation course, a job club adopted by an employer, a work trial and a customised training course. It was formally launched in 20 pilot areas in November 1989. The latest available information is that 1,556 individuals, which includes those still participating, and 403 employers have participated in the initiative. The progress of the pilots has been encouraging. So far, 587 people have been placed in jobs including 60 per cent. of participants in the job preparation courses.

Training Agency

Mr. Blair: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list the funding paid to each area covered by the Training Agency for 1989-90 and the estimated funding for each of the following three years.

Mr. Nicholls: The information is not available in the precise form requested. Expenditure for field-delivered training programmes for April to December 1989 by Training Agency regions is set out in the table. The Government's plans for overall expenditure by the Training Agency over the next three years are set out in chapter 6 of the public expenditure White Paper (CM 1006).

Training Agency expenditure April to December 1989

Region	*£*
South East	100·91
London	79·16
South West	73·21
West Midlands	111·84
East Midlands and Eastern	108·01
Yorkshire and Humberside	110·75
North West	147·55
Northern	96·41
Wales	69·54
Scotland	126·70
TNPU[1]	212·83
Great Britain	1,236·90

[1] The TECS and National Provider's Unit is based centrally and holds contracts for major companies who provide training throughout Great Britain.
Note: Expenditure excludes training allowances and other costs administered centrally.

Asbestos

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on his proposals for reducing asbestos-related hazards.

Mr. Nicholls: The Government have already introduced a comprehensive range of legislation to reduce the risks from exposure to asbestos in both the work place and the environment and I have no plans at present for further legislation.

Departmental Staff

Ms. Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will give the numbers of people employed in his Department in 1979 and 1989.

Mr. Eggar: The number employed by this Department in 1979 was 53,657 and in 1989 it was 56,376.

Skills Training Agency

Mr. Amos: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a further statement about the sale of the Skills Training Agency.

Mr. Eggar: Further to the statement that my right hon. and learned Friend made to the House on 13 February 1990, *Offical Report*, column *141*, about the sale of the Skills Training Agency (STA), I can announce that terms of sale have now been agreed with the Training Business for the business located at Lambeth skill centre.

The offer from the Training Business was considered against the Government's objectives for the sale, which were placed in the Vote Office on 13 February, and will involve a payment of some £0·8 million from the Government to the Training Business: this reflects the need for restructuring and reforming the business at the skill centre. There will be no loss to the Government from the transaction compared with the alternative of closing the skill centre.

This brings the total number of skill centres businesses which will be sold up to 52. There will be no more sales of training businesses.

Statistical Divisions

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment (1) what are the latest figures for the number of staff presently employed, and the full complement of staff, including vacant posts, by grade, in the statistical divisions in the Training Agency; if he will differentiate between staff in statistical posts and staff in administrative posts; and if he will give the staffing complements by grade, and differentiated between statistical and administrative posts, proposed for 1990-91;

(2) what are the latest figures for the number of staff presently employed, and the full complement of staff, including vacant posts, by grade, in the statistical divisions in his Department; if he will differentiate between staff in statistical posts and staff in administration posts; and if he will give the staffing complements by grade, and differentiated between statistical and administrative posts, proposed for 1990-91.

Mr. Nicholls *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* The numbers of staff, by grade, employed as at 31 January 1990

in statistical divisions in the Department of Employment headquarters, the Training Agency, the employment service and the Health and Safety Executive are as in the table. The permanent staff included within these numbers are close to the current complement and to that proposed for 1990-91. More casual administrative staff than are included in these numbers will be employed as necessary to process the 1989 census of employment and the 1990 earnings surveys. The table excludes the 35 staff previously in the Department and transferred to the new Central Statistical Office on 31 July 1989.

Staff[1] in post in ED group statistical divisions
As at 31 January 1990

Grade	*Number*
Statistical grades	
Grade 3 (Director of Statisticis)	1
Grade 5 (Chief Statistican)	5
Grade 7 (Statistician)	23·7
Assistant/Senior Assistant Statistician	20
Total statistical grades	49·7
Administrative grades	
Grade 6	1
Grade 7	3
Senior Executive Officer	8
Higher Executive Officer	24·5
Executive Officer	53·5
Administrative Officer	95·6
Administrative Assistant	33
Senior/Personal Secretary	7
Total administrative grades	225·6
Other staff	
Grade 7 (Economic Adviser)	2
Senior/Economic Assistant	2
Senior/Research Officer	2
Assistant Librarian	1
Total other grades	7
Total all grades	282·3

[1] Part-time staff shown as proportion of full-time.

Public Relations

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment (1) what are the latest figures for the number of staff presently employed, and the full complement of staff, including vacant posts, in the press and public relations office of the Training Agency; and what is the proposed complement for 1990-91;

(2) what are the latest figures for the number of staff presently employed, and the full complement of staff, including vacant posts, in the press and public relations office of his Department; and what is the proposed complement for 1990-91.

Mr. Eggar *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* The Department's information division, which includes the press and public relations offices, presently employs 120 people with six posts vacant. The division merged with the Training Agency's information services branch in November 1989. The proposed complement for 1990-91 is 126.

HSE (Information Leaks)

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the practice followed by the Health and Safety Executive in inquiring into the source of leaks of information; and how many such inquiries have taken place in this calendar year and in 1989.

Mr. Nicholls: The Health and Safety Executive would carry out inquiries into the sources of leaks of information in the same manner as all other Civil Service departments. The procedures are centrally determined. There were no such inquiries during 1989.

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 14 March 1990

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Open University

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what has been the cost of Open university foundation courses in constant prices over the past 21 years.

Mr. Jackson: Information is not available at this stage in the form requested. The table provides information at constant 1989 prices (using the GDP deflator) on the average total cost of a full credit course, broken down by the cost to the Exchequer from grant, and the cost to the student from the undergraduate tuition fee and the summer school fee.

Cost of an Open University full credit course

1989 prices

Year	*Total cost* £	*Exchequer grant* £	*Undergraduate tuition fee* £	*Summer school fee* £
1971	1,884·9	1,621·5	117·1	146·3
1972	1,391·3	1,147·7	108·3	135·3
1973	1,460·8	1,182·8	126·4	151·6
1974	1,469·6	1,210·0	110·0	149·6
1975	1,309·3	1,089·6	86·5	133·2
1976	1,515·1	1,247·6	120·2	147·3
1977	1,498·8	1,250·8	118·7	129·3
1978	1,433·7	1,192·0	123·2	118·5
1979	1,426·9	1,205·3	113·9	107·7
1980	1,566·2	1,342·7	116·1	107·4
1981	1,641·1	1,372·0	152·4	116·7
1982	1,594·3	1,309·5	173·5	111·3
1983	1,516·7	1,229·8	174·3	112·6
1984	1,515·1	1,225·2	174·5	115·4
1985	1,488·9	1,197·1	175·1	116·7
1986	1,504·8	1,203·6	182·4	118·8
1987	1,454·6	1,135·9	180·8	117·9
1988	1,378·0	1,082·4	178·4	117·2
1989	1,396·0	1,088·0	186·0	122·0

Student Loans

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what has been the total expenditure to date on and by the Student Loans Company Ltd.

Mr. Jackson: The Student Loans Company Ltd. has spent some £3,127,000 inclusive of VAT on preparatory work on the student loans scheme since its formation on 20 November 1989. This expenditure has been funded by the Department of Education and Science in accordance with the estimate approved by Parliament.

Teacher Training

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what information he has on the increase in numbers recruited to the university education departments of Aberystwyth, Bangor, Cardiff and Swansea in each of the past five years, expressed in numbers and percentage terms; and in which subject areas the increase has taken place.

Mr. Alan Howarth: The tables show intakes to courses in column (a) and in columns (b) and (c) the relative yearly increase in numbers recruited, expressed in numbers and percentage terms, respectively, for the university education departments of Aberystwyth, Bangor, Cardiff and Swansea for the academic years 1985-86 to 1989-90.

Initial teacher training recruitment (1985 to 1989) to university education departments Aberystwyth, Bangor, Cardiff and Swansea

1985

	(a) Intake	*(b) +/−*	*(c) Per cent.*
Aberystwyth			
Primary	36	4	12·5
Secondary:			
Drama	8	3	60·0
History	11	2	22·2
Music	5	−2	−28·6
RE	7	0	0
English	10	−5	−33·3
Languages	26	1	4·0
Geography	7	−5	41·6
Mathematics	3	−9	−75·0
Biology	10	−2	−16·6
Chemistry	6	3	100·0
Physics	10	7	233·3
Other Science	4	−1	−20·0
Total Secondary	107	−8	−6·9
Bangor			
Primary	38	8	26·6
Secondary:			
History	11	1	10·0
RE	6	−1	−14·3
English	2	−9	−81·8
Languages	11	−3	−21·4
Geography	8	−5	−33·3
Mathematics	13	1	8·3
Biology	12	1	9·1
Chemistry	10	−2	−16·6
Physics	6	2	50·0
Other Science	0	0	0
TEFL	15	2	15·4
PE	8	8	—
Other	0	0	0
Total Secondary	102	−7	−6·4
Cardiff			
Primary	30	4	15·4
Secondary:			
Art	0	0	0
History	8	3	60·0
Music	10	2	25·0
RE	7	4	133·3
English	15	2	15·4
Languages	17	−3	−15·0
Geography	7	1	16·6
Mathematics	19	0	0
Biology	7	−3	−30·0
Chemistry	11	3	37·5
Physics	10	4	66·6
Home Economics	24	−3	−11·1
Other	0	0	0
Total Secondary	135	10	8·0
Swansea			
Primary:	19	−1	−5·0
Secondary:			
History	16	3	23·1
RE	0	−7	−100·0

	(a) Intake	(b) +/−	(c) Per cent.
English	9	−2	−18·2
Languages	15	−9	−37·5
Geography	16	−1	−5·9
Mathematics	18	4	28·6
Biology	15	−5	−50·0
Chemistry	5	−5	−50·0
Physics	10	7	233·3
Other Science	0	0	0
Total Secondary	104	−5	−4·6

	(a) Intake	(b) +/−	(c) Per cent.
English	11	−4	−26·6
Languagess	24	−6	−20·0
Geography	17	5	41·6
Mathematics	14	1	7·7
Biology	10	−2	−16·6
Chemistry	10	−2	−16·6
Physics	3	−2	−40·0
Other Science	0	0	0
Total Secondary	109	−17	−13·5

1986

	(a) Intake	(b) +/−	(c) Per cent.
Aberystwyth			
Primary	32	2	6·6
Secondary:			
Drama	5	−1	−16·6
History	9	0	0
Music	7	−1	−12·5
RE	7	1	16·6
English	15	0	0
Languages	25	−6	−19·3
Geography	12	0	0
Mathematics	12	−6	−33·3
Biology	12	2	20·0
Chemistry	3	−2	−40·0
Physics	3	−2	−40·0
Other Science	5	0	0
Total Secondary	115	−15	−11·5
Bangor			
Primary	30	−1	−3·2
Secondary:			
History	10	−1	−9·1
RE	7	4	133·3
English	11	−1	−8·3
Languages	14	−3	−17·6
Geography	15	2	15·4
Mathematics	12	0	0
Biology	11	−3	−21·4
Chemistry	12	1	9·1
Physics	4	−4	−50·0
Other Science	0	0	0
TEFL	13	−5	−27·7
PE	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0
Total Secondary	109	−10	−8·4
Cardiff			
Primary	26	−1	−3·7
Secondary:			
Art	0	−8	−100·0
History	5	−2	−28·6
Music	8	−10	−55·5
RE	3	1	25·0
English	13	−1	−7·1
Languages	20	−1	−4·8
Geography	6	0	0
Mathematics	19	1	5·5
Biology	10	3	42·8
Chemistry	8	0	0
Physics	6	−3	−33·3
Home Economics	27	−5	−15·6
Other	0	0	0
Total Secondary	125	−27	−17·8
Swansea			
Primary	20	−2	−9·1
Secondary:			
History	13	−3	−18·7
RE	7	−4	−36·4

1987

	(a) Intake	(b) +/−	(c) Per cent.
Aberystwyth			
Primary	45	9	25·0
Secondary:			
Drama	7	−1	−12·5
History	12	1	9·1
Music	10	5	100·0
RE	2	−5	−71·4
English	12	2	20·0
Languages	19	−7	−26·9
Geography	12	5	71·4
Mathematics	8	5	166·6
Biology	4	−6	−60·0
Chemistry	8	2	33·3
Physics	11	1	10·0
Other Science	6	2	50·0
Total Secondary	111	4	3·7
Bangor			
Primary	48	10	26·3
Secondary:			
History	11	0	0
RE	9	3	50·0
English	8	6	300·0
Languages	10	−1	−9·1
Geography	9	1	12·5
Mathematics	11	−2	−15·4
Biology	6	−6	−50·0
Chemistry	7	−3	−30·0
Physics	10	4	66·6
Other Science	0	0	0
TEFL	13	−2	−13·3
PE	8	0	0
Other	0	0	0
Total Secondary	102	0	0
Cardiff			
Primary	39	9	30·0
Secondary:			
Art	0	0	0
History	8	0	0
Music	15	5	50·0
RE	8	1	14·3
English	15	0	0
Languages	15	−2	−11·7
Geography	8	1	14·3
Mathematics	19	0	0
Biology	9	2	28·6
Chemistry	9	−2	−18·2
Physics	10	0	0
Home Economics	16	−8	−33·3
Other	5	5	—
Total Secondary	137	2	1·5
Swansea			
Primary	28	9	47·4
Secondary:			
History	14	−2	−1·6
RE	6	6	—

	(a) Intake	(b) +/−	(c) Per cent.
English	13	4	44·4
Languagess	15	0	0
Geography	15	−1	−6·2
Mathematics	16	−2	−11·1
Biology	15	0	0
Chemistry	10	5	100·0
Physics	14	4	40·0
Other Science	0	0	0
Total Secondary	118	14	13·5

	(a) Intake	(b) +/−	(c) Per cent.
English	13	0	0·0
Languages	13	−2	−13·3
Geography	15	0	0·0
Mathematics	12	−4	−25·0
Biology	11	−4	−26·6
Chemistry	5	5	−50·0
Physics	14	0	0·0
Other Science	10	0	0·0
Total Secondary	99	−19	−16·1

1988

	(a) Intake	(b) +/−	(c) Per cent.
Aberystwyth			
Primary	68	23	51·1
Secondary:			
Drama	8	1	14·3
History	11	−1	−8·3
Music	10	0	0·0
RE	3	1	50·0
English	11	−1	−8·3
Languages	19	0	0·0
Geography	12	0	0
Mathematics	8	0	0·0
Biology	13	9	225·0
Chemistry	2	−6	−75·0
Physics	6	−5	−45·4
Other Science	4	−2	−33·3
Total Secondary	107	−4	−3·6
Bangor			
Primary	0	−48	−100·0
Secondary:			
History	0	−11	−100·0
RE	2	−7	−77·7
English	6	−2	−25·0
Languages	17	7	70·0
Geography	7	−2	−22·2
Mathematics	9	−2	−18·2
Biology	11	5	83·3
Chemistry	8	1	14·3
Physics	10	0	0·0
Other Science	0	0	0·0
TEFL	19	6	46·1
PE	8	0	0·0
Other	0	0	0·0
Total Secondary	97	−5	−4·9
Cardiff			
Primary	38	−1	−2·6
Secondary:			
Art	0	0	0·0
History	12	4	50·0
Music	15	0	0·0
RE	4	−4	−50·0
English	16	1	6·6
Languages	25	10	66·6
Geography	8	0	0·0
Mathematics	20	1	5·3
Biology	11	2	22·2
Chemistry	11	2	22·2
Physics	9	−1	−10·0
Home Economics	18	2	12·5
Other	0	−5	−100·0
Total Secondary	149	12	8·8
Swansea			
Primary	30	2	7·2
Secondary:			
History	13	−1	−7·1
RE	3	−3	−50·0

1989

	a Intake	b +/−	c per cent.
Aberystwyth			
Primary	116·0	48·0	70·6
Secondary:			
Drama	8·0	0·0	0·0
History	11·0	0·0	0·0
Music	4·0	−6·0	−60·0
RE	3·0	0·0	0·0
English	10·0	−1·0	−9·1
Language	15·0	−4·0	−21·1
Geography	13·0	1·0	8·3
Mathematics	7·0	−1·0	−12·5
Biology	14·0	1·0	7·7
Chemistry	5·0	3·0	150·0
Physics	3·0	−3·0	−50·0
Other Science	3·0	−1·0	−25·0
Total Secondary	96·0	−11·0	−10·3
Bangor			
Primary	0·0	0·0	0·0
Secondary:			
History	0·0	0·0	0·0
RE	5·0	3·0	150·0
English	9·0	3·0	50·0
Language	13·0	−4·0	−23·5
Geography	0·0	−7·0	−100·0
Mathematics	7·5	−1·5	−16·6
Biology	10·5	−0·5	−4·5
Chemistry	11·5	3·5	43·7
Physics	4·5	−5·5	−55·0
Other Science	7·0	7·0	—
TEFL	17·0	−2·0	−10·5
PE	0·0	−8·0	−100·0
Other	8·0	8·0	—
Total Secondary	93·0	−4·0	−4·1
Cardiff			
Primary	46·0	8·0	21·0
Secondary:			
Art	0·0	0·0	0·0
History	7·0	−5·0	−41·6
Music	11·0	−4·0	−26·6
RE	9·0	5·0	125·0
English	17·0	1·0	6·2
Language	17·0	−8·0	−32·0
Geography	9·0	1·0	12·5
Mathematics	13·0	−7·0	−35·0
Biology	7·0	−4·0	−36·4
Chemistry	9·0	−2·0	−18·2
Physics	8·0	−1·0	−11·1
Home Economics	23·0	5·0	27·7
Other	0·0	0·0	0·0
Total Secondary	130·0	−19·0	−12·7
Swansea			
Primary	44·0	14·0	46·6
Secondary:			
History	14·0	1·0	7·7
RE	8·0	5·0	166·6

	a Intake	b +/−	c per cent.
English	18·0	5·0	38·5
Languages	21·0	8·0	61·5
Geography	15·0	0·0	0·0
Mathematics	13·0	1·0	8·3
Biology	13·0	2·0	18·2
Chemistry	10·0	5·0	100·0
Physics	5·0	−9·0	−35·7
Other Science	4·5	4·5	—
Total Secondary	121·5	22·5	22·7

Columns *b* and *c* show the increase/decrease in intakes, as compared with the previous year's figures.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what information he has on University college, Swansea's recruitment for its 1990-91 teacher training course.

Mr. Alan Howarth: These data will not be available until after the beginning of the academic year 1990-91.

Special Educational Needs

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is his best estimate of the additional costs which will fall on local education authorities in *(a)* England and *(b)* Devon in the financial year 1990-91 arising from his Department's circular 22/89 concering children with special educational needs; and on what date such additional costs were first calculated and passed to the Department of the Environment.

Mr. Alan Howarth: The purpose of circular 22/89 is to review, and advise local education authorities (LEAs) and others on, the implementation of the provisions in the Education Act 1981 on the making of assessments and statements of special educational needs, in the light of subsequent experience and events. The circular does not of itself impose substantial new burdens on LEAs; and, as paragraph 2 of the circular states, the new elements it contains are not intended to require additional expenditure.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Rates

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is the percentage increase in the district rates for each of the 26 councils in Northern Ireland for the years 1990-91 and 1989-90.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The information is set out in the table:

District council	Percentage increase in 1990-91	Percentage increase in 1989-90
1. Antrim BC	2·83	3·92
2. Ards BC	13·04	6·48
3. Armagh DC	7·95	7·32
4. Ballymena BC	6·82	2·68
5. Ballymoney BC	7·46	6·91
6. Banbridge DC	7·65	0·00
7. Belfast CC	4·91	0·00
8. Carrickfergus BC	5·70	5·20
9. Castlereagh BC	17·12	5·01
10. Coleraine BC	0·00	3·77
11. Cookstown DC	8·38	11·70
12. Craigavon BC	4·89	6·50
13. Derry CC	9·38	5·86
14. Down DC	2·94	4·62
15. Dungannon DC	8·52	0·00
16. Fermanagh DC	3·60	3·74
17. Larne BC	13·97	1·79
18. Limavady BC	7·45	8·05
19. Lisburn BC	3·71	0·00
20. Magherafelt DC	5·74	6·53
21. Moyle DC	8·51	4·43
22. Newry & Mourne DC	0·00	2·85
23. Newtownabbey BC	0·92	6·73
24. North Down BC	5·15	3·38
25. Omagh DC	9·91	6·36
26. Strabane DC	10·70	6·58

Local Government Finance

Mr. Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the research carried out into the possible introduction of the poll tax in Northern Ireland, and the conclusions reached.

Mr. Cope: The arrangements for local government finance in Northern Ireland are significantly different from those in the rest of the United Kingdom. Since 1973, the services provided by local government account for only some 10 per cent. of total spending in Northern Ireland on services similar to those provided by local authorities in Great Britain. The remaining 90 per cent. is administered by central Government or their agencies subject to the scrutiny of Parliament. The circumstances in Northern Ireland are, therefore, different from those in Great Britain and there are no plans at present to replace the existing rating system in Northern Ireland.

Suicides

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many suicides in Northern Ireland occurred during 1989 at *(a)* prison establishments, *(b)* remand establishments and *(c)* young offenders centres; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Cope: During 1989 there was one suicide in a Northern Ireland prison establishment. There was none at young offenders centres and there are no remand establishments.

Suicide prevention in the Northern Ireland prison service establishments is being examined by a working group and as a result of the group's deliberations a comprehensive suicide prevention manual is in the course of preparation and will be issued shortly.

Equal Opportunities

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what grade is his Department's equal opportunities officer.

Mr. Cope *[holding answer 5 March 1990]:* The equal opportunities unit of the Northern Ireland Civil Service is headed by a grade 7. The Home civil service group of the Northern Ireland Office also has an equal opportunities unit, headed by a grade 7.

Internal Audit

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many internal auditors are employed in his office and the departments for which he is responsible and at what cost; how many internal audit reports were produced in 1989; how many of these were drawn to the attention of a Minister in his Department; and what internal audit work is subcontracted to private firms and at what cost.

Mr. Cope *[holding answer 7 March 1990]:* The following information covers the Northern Ireland Office and the Police Authority (NI) as well as the six Northern Ireland Civil Service departmental internal audit groups. The full staffing complement at 1 March 1990 was 90. Departmental running costs for 1989-90 are £1,315,000.

There were 190 internal audit reports produced in 1989, of which one was brought to the attention of a Minister.

No internal audit work has been subcontracted to the private sector. However, one department has made extensive use of consultants in an advisory capacity at a cost of £54,000 in 1989.

Gaelic Athletic Association

Mr. A. Cecil Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what level of grant in financial terms has been provided for the Gaelic Athletic Association in each of the last three years.

Dr. Mawhinney *[holding answer 7 March 1990]:* Grants paid by the Department of Education and Sports Council for Northern Ireland to the Gaelic Athletic Association and its affiliated clubs were as follows:

	Financial year		
	1986-87 (£)	*1987-88 (£)*	*1988-89 (£)*
Department of Education capital grant to affiliated GAA clubs	59,642	48,650	35,337
Sports Council for Northern Ireland			
Club equipment grants	6,428	4,600	4,467
Administration coaching grants	13,979	21,966	18,995

Labour Statistics

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is the average length of time a person is unemployed in Northern Ireland; and how many are at present unemployed for less than (1) one year, (2) two years, (3) three years, (4) four years, (5) five years and (6) more than five years; and, in each group, how many are *(a)* male and *(b)* female.

Mr. Peter Bottomley *[holding answer 13 March 1990]:* The estimated average durations of unemployment for those unemployed at 11 January 1990 were as follows:

	Average duration in weeks[1]
Male	76
Female	34
Overall average	60

[1] Average duration is taken as the median duration i.e. the spell of unemployment which divides the unemployed into two halves; one half with durations greater than the median and the other half with durations less than the median.

Unemployment by sex and duration at 11 January 1990:

Duration of unemployment	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*
One year or less	32,066	15,225	47,291
Two years or less[2]	42,397	18,758	61,155
Three years or less[2]	48,706	20,404	69,110
Four years or less[2]	53,599	21,555	75,154
Five years or less[2]	57,759	22,432	80,191
Over five years	17,808	2,414	20,222

[2] These figures are not mutually exclusive. For example, the numbers unemployed three years or less are included in the numbers unemployed four years or less.

TRANSPORT

Transport Supplementary Grant

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list in the *Official Report* for each county highway authority the total net present value of those road projects qualifying for transport supplementary grants in the financial years 1989-90 and 1990-91.

Mr. Atkins: The table below lists all county council highway schemes supported by transport supplementary grant (TSG) in 1989-90 and 1990-91 for which a net present value is available. It is not possible to produce an aggregate total for each authority because the costs and benefits are often based on, and discounted to, different years. A number of other schemes for which economic costs and benefits are not available is also supported with TSG.

Known NPUs for County Council TSG schemes

Authority and scheme	*TSG support in*		*NPU (£ million)*	*Base year*
Avon—Newfoundland Street Bristol	1989-90	1990-91	1·700	1979
Avon—Avon Ring Road (IA): Hambrook-Badminton Road	1989-90	1990-91	5·410	1979
Avon—Avon Ring Road (IV): Marsham Way-A4 Bath Road	—	1990-91	6,400	1979
Avon—Avon RR (IB1): Badminton Road-Westerleigh Road	1989-90	1990-91	5·410	1979
Avon—Avon RR (IB2): Westerleigh Road-Shortwood Road	1989-90	1990-91	26·100	1979
Avon—Avon Ring Road (III): A120 Warmley-Marsham Way	1989-90	1990-91	26·100	1979
Avon—M5-Town Centre Link Weston Super Mare Stage 1	1989-90	1990-91	3·866	1979
Avon—Urban Traffic Control	1989-90	1990-91	3·540	1979
Avon—Weston Super Mare PDR Stages VA & VB	—	1990-91	3·866	1979
Bedfordshire—Stagsden Bypass	—	1990-91	1·157	1988
Bedfordshire—Shefford/Clifton/Henlow Bypass	1989-90	1990-91	4·610	1979
Berkshire—Sandhurst Crowthorne Bypass	—	1990-91	27·884	1988
Berkshire—Slough Bath Road Montem Lane-Wellington Street	—	1990-91	11·114	1988
Buckinghamshire—Wing-Milton Keynes Fenny Stratford Bypass	1989-90	1990-91	3·738	1979

Authority and scheme	*TSG support in*		*NPU (£ million)*	*Base year*
Cambridgeshire—Elton/Chesterton Bypass	1989-90	1990-91	23·200	1988
Cheshire—Diversion (Phase 2) Warrington	1989-90	1990-91	1·980	1979
Cheshire—Station Road Bypass Winsford	1989-90	—	0·472	1979
Cheshire—Chester Western Bypass Phase 1	1989-90	1990-91	3·192	1979
Cheshire—Haslington Bypass	1989-90	1990-91	1·322	1979
Cleveland—Durham Road Bypass	1989-90	1990-91	3·320	1976
Cleveland—South Bank Link Road	1989-90	1990-91	3·000	1986
Cleveland—Thornaby Bypass	—	1990-91	18·760	1986
Cleveland—Guisborough Road Improvement	1989-90	1990-91	0·448	1979
Cornwall—Penzance Primary Distributor	1989-90	1990-91	1·219	1979
Cornwall—Truro-Devoran T (Carnon Downs Bypass)	1989-90	1990-91	0·680	1979
Cornwall—Newquay Gannel Link Road	1989-90	1990-91	12·970	1979
Cornwall—Sticker Bypass	1989-90	1990-91	0·356	1979
Cornwall—Liskeard Industrial Distributor Road	—	1990-91	5·560	1979
Cumbria—Staveley Bypass	1989-90	—	0·698	1979
Cumbria—Papcastle Diversion	1989-90	1990-91	3·283	1979
Cumbria—Romney Road Link	1989-90	1990-91	3·309	1979
Derbyshire—Ilkeston Inner Relief Road	1989-90	1990-91	5·272	1979
Derbyshire—Tapton Bypass Chesterfield (Stages 1 and 2)	1989-90	1990-91	3·117	1979
Devon—Plymouth-St Budeaux Bypass	1989-90	1990-91	6·972	1985
Devon—Milehouse Junction Improvement Plymouth	—	1990-91	28·603	1988
Devon—Torbay Ring Road Stage 2	—	1990-91	34·836	1988
Devon—Thorns Cross—Eagle Farm St 1(Olchard Lane-Eagle farm)	1989-90	1990-91	1·354	1979
Devon—Thorns Cross to Eagle Farm Stage 4	—	1990-91	6·806	1988
Devon—Western Approach/Union Street Junction IMP Plymouth	—	1990-91	34·170	1988
Dorset—Gillingham Internal Relief Road	1989-90	1990-91	0·600	1979
Dorset—A37 Improvement-Section A	—	1990-91	0·076	1979
Durham—Canney Hill Bypass	1989-90	—	4·750	1979
Durham—Wheatley Hill Bypass	1989-90	1990-91	2·097	1979
Durham—Coundon Bypass	1989-90	1990-91	0·774	1979
Durham—Metal Bridge to Bowburn	—	1990-91	3·518	1988
East Sussex—Boarshead to Eridge	—	1990-91	10·013	1988
East Sussex—Maresfield Bypass	1989-90	1990-91	5·992	1986
East Sussex—Mayfield Bypass	1989-90	1990-91	0·964	1986
Essex—Dovercourt Bypass Stage 2 Phase 2	—	1990-91	2·881	1979
Essex—Canes Lane Improvement (Final Stage)	—	1990-91	1·837	1979
Essex—Maldon Bypass	1989-90	1990-91	2·616	1979
Essex—Braintree Bypass Stage 1	1989-90	1990-91	17·693	1979
Gloucestershire—Eastington to Stroud 3 Ebley Bypass	—	1990-91	4·737	n.a.
Gloucestershire—Eastington-Stroud-Ebley Bypass	1989-90	—	1·834	1979
Gloucestershire—Eastington-Stroud 3A-Ebley Bypass-Dudbridge	1989-90	—	3·249	1979
Gloucestershire—Eastington-Stroud 3B-Byeford-Dudbridge	1989-90	—	3·837	1979
Hampshire—Blackwater Valley Route	1989-90	1990-91	24·462	1988
Hampshire—West Totton Bypass(3)	1989-90	1990-91	32·469	1988
Hampshire—Hook Bypass Underbridge	1989-90	1990-91	3·310	1979
Hampshire—M3 Link Minley	—	1990-91	15·663	1988
Hereford-Worcester—Roman Road Hereford Phase 4 Stage 2	—	1990-91	−0·252	1988
Hereford-Worcester—A44-A422 Link Worcester Road-Whittington Road Mari Bank	—	1990-91	71·260	1988
Hertfordshire—Stanstead Abbotts Bypass	1989-90	1990-91	3·471	1979
Hertfordshire—Waltham Cross Relief Road Phase II	1989-90	—	0·905	1979
Hertfordshire—Tonwell Bypass	1989-90	—	0·399	1979
Hertfordshire—Watford M1 Link and Southern Junction System	1989-90	1990-91	27·858	1979
Hertfordshire—Stanstead Abbotts to Harlow	1989-90	1990-91	0·975	1979
Humberside—Hull North Orbital Road	1989-90	1990-91	4·900	1979
Humberside—Hull Drypool Link	1989-90	1990-91	0·680	1979
Humberside—Hull Wilmington Link	1989-90	—	5·430	1985
Humberside—Long Riston Bypass	1989-90	1990-91	0·365	1979
Humberside—Grimsby New Baxtergate	1989-90	—	0·600	1985
Humberside—Castle Hill to Bentley	1989-90	1990-91	0·390	1979
Humberside—Hull Stoneferry Bridge	1989-90	1990-91	0·383	1979
Humberside—Humber Bridge Northern Approach Road	1989-90	1990-91	3·085	1979
Humberside—Hedon Bypass	1989-90	1990-91	2·603	1979
Humberside—Hull Ennerdale Link	1989-90	1990-91	1·621	1979
Kent—Faversham Western Link Road	1989-90	—	1·495	1979
Kent—Albion Place-Mote Road	1989-90	1990-91	2·227	1979
Kent—Thanet Way Dualling	1989-90	1990-91	0·365	1979
Kent—Ashford Southern Orbital	1989-90	1990-91	1·400	1979
Kent—Beaver Road Diversion	1989-90	1990-91	8·000	1979
Kent—Hamstreet Bypass	1989-90	1990-91	−1·123	1979
Kent—Denton Bypass	1989-90	1990-91	−0·459	1979
Kent—Whitfield Bypass	1989-90	1990-91	0·374	1979
Kent—Sturry Road to Military Road Link Canterbury	1989-90	—	1·087	1979
Kent—Dartford Northern Bypass	—	1990-91	68·312	1988
Kent—Whitfield to Eastry	1989-90	1990-91	−0·059	1979
Kent—Lord of the Manor	1989-90	1990-91	1·024	1979
Kent—Eastry Bypass	1989-90	1990-91	0·552	1979

Authority and scheme	TSG support in		NPU (£ million)	Base year
Kent—Densole-Hawkinge Bypass	1989-90	1990-91	0·159	1979
Kent—South Ashford to Hamstreet	1989-90	1990-91	−0·059	1979
Kent—Stockbridge to Brenzett	1989-90	1990-91	0·091	1979
Kent—Maidstone Spine Road	1989-90	1990-91	30·350	1979
Kent—Somerhill Park Link Tonbridge	1989-90	1990-91	1·924	1979
Kent—Thames-side Industrial Route(TIR) Stage 1	—	1990-91	21·292	1988
Lancashire—Shuttleworth Hall Link Road	1989-90	—	10·548	1979
Lancashire—Kirkham and Wesham Bypass	1989-90	1990-91	15·508	1988
Lancashire—Burnley Inner Relief Road (Phase II)	1989-90	1990-91	34·641	1988
Lancashire—Penwortham Bypass Ext to Preston	1989-90	1990-91	72·971	1988
Lancashire—Nelson-Colne (Main Works)	1989-90	1990-91	32·829	1979
Lancashire—ChorleyTown Centre Bypass (Phase I)	1989-90	1990-91	0·298	1988
Lancashire—Blackburn Inner Relief Road (Phase I)	—	1990-91	13·892	1988
Lancashire—North Valley Link Road Colne	1989-90	1990-91	9·325	1979
Lancashire—Squires Gate Lane Blackpool Dualling	—	1990-91	6·374	1988
Lancashire—Accrington Town Centre Relief Road	1989-90	1990-91	14·432	1988
Lancashire—Freckleton Bypass	1989-90	1990-91	29·567	1988
Lancashire—Park Road-St Helens Road Link Ormskirk	—	1990-91	7·602	1988
Lancashire—Lancaster—Morecambe Bypass (Phase I)	1989-90	1990-91	36·168	1988
Leicestershire—Asfordby Bypass	1989-90	1990-91	0·819	1979
Leicestershire—Syston Northern Bypass	1989-90	1990-91	0·468	1979
Leicestershire—Ashby-Loughborough Coleorton improvement	—	1990-91	0·178	1979
Leicestershire—Redland Quarry to Quorn/Mountsorrel Bypass Link	—	1990-91	0·264	1979
Lincolnshire—Wainfleet Bypass	1989-90	1990-91	7·414	1988
Lincolnshire—Donington Bypass	1989-90	1990-91	0·165	1979
Norfolk—Dersingham/Snettisham Bypass	1989-90	1990-91	7·718	1979
Norfolk—Trowse Bypass	1989-90	1990-91	1·400	1979
Norfolk—Kirby Cane/Geldeston Bypass	1989-90	1990-91	−0·333	1979
Norfolk—Outwell Bends	1989-90	1990-91	0·154	1979
Norfolk—Watton Inner Relief Road	—	1990-91	5·937	1979
Northamptonshire—Oundle Bypass	1989-90	1990-91	−2·541	1979
Northamptonshire—Brigstock Bypass	1989-90	1990-91	−0·352	1979
Northamptonshire—Wollaston Bypass	1989-90	1990-91	0·369	1979
Northamptonshire—Yardley Gobion Bypass	1989-90	1990-91	0·551	1979
Northamptonshire—Raunds and Stanwick Bypass	1989-90	1990-91	6·705	1979
Northamptonshire—Ringstead and Denford Bypass (including M1/A1 junction)	1989-90	1990-91	6·705	1979
Northamptonshire—Thrapston Eastern Bypass	1989-90	1990-91	6·705	1979
Northamptonshire—Bozeat Bypass	1989-90	1990-91	−0·447	1979
Northamptonshire—Middleton Cheney Bypass and Overthorpe Hall Improvement	—	1990-91	13·753	1988
Northamptonshire—Brixworth Bypass	1989-90	1990-91	−0·769	1979
Northamptonshire—River Tove Bends	—	1990-91	2·664	1988
Northamptonshire—Staverton Bypass	1989-90	1990-91	0·054	1979
Northamptonshire—Nene Valley Way 1 Crawler Lane	—	1990-91	1·384	1988
Northumberland—Prudhoe Northern Bypass	—	1990-91	23·182	1988
Northumberland—Swinburne Quarry to Fourlaws Stage 1	—	1990-91	1·308	1988
North Yorkshire—York Outer Ring Road	1989-90	—	10·824	1976
North Yorkshire A658/A59 Harrogate Knaresborough Southern Bypass	1989-90	1990-91	9·698	1979
North Yorkshire—Green Hamerton Bypass	1989-90	1990-91	1·016	1979
North Yorkshire—Bar Laithe to Pacegate	1989-90	1990-91	0·292	1979
North Yorkshire—Sherburn-in-Elmet and South Milford Bypass	—	1990-91	7·358	1988
Nottinghamshire—Hucknall Bypass	1989-90	1990-91	4·543	1979
Nottinghamshire—Manvers Street Link Nottingham	—	1990-91	3·781	1979
Oxfordshire—Banbury Inner Relief Road	—	1990-91	37·360	1988
Shropshire—English Bridge Gyratory	1989-90	1990-91	16·582	1988
Shropshire—Reabrook to Telford Way Link	1989-90	1990-91	8·237	1979
Shropshire—Whitchurch Bypass	1989-90	1990-91	5·523	1988
Shropshire—Ironbridge Bypass Extension	—	1990-91	3·746	1988
Somerset—Ashill to Southfields Roundabout (A303)	1989-90	1990-91	0·693	1979
Staffordshire—Tutbury Bypass	1989-90	1990-91	1·482	1988
Staffordshire—Himley Bypass	1989-90	—	1·177	1979
Staffordshire—Uttoxeter to Combridge	1989-90	1990-91	10·033	1988
Staffordshire—Burton Southern Primary Route	1989-90	1990-91	6·137	1979
Staffordshire—Keele Bypass	1989-90	1990-91	2·602	1988
Staffordshire—Cannock Eastern Primary Route	1989-90	1990-91	30·723	1988
Staffordshire—Hawkins Lane Link Burton-upon-Trent	1989-90	1990-91	3·207	1988
Suffolk—Stowmarket Relief Road	—	1990-91	10·144	1988
Suffolk—Long Melford Bypass	1989-90	1990-91	8·587	1988
Suffolk—Kessingland Bypass	1989-90	1990-91	2·001	1979
Suffolk—Mutford Bridge	—	1990-91	0·545	1988
Surrey—Ewell Bypass	1989-90	1990-91	1·914	1987
Warwickshire—Stratford Southern Relief Road	1989-90	1990-91	4·754	1979
Warwickshire—Bedworth Bypass Extension (Hen Lane-M6)	1989-90	1990-91	9·010	1985
Warwickshire—Wellesbourne Bypass	1989-90	1990-91	−0·024	1979
West Sussex—Cuckfield Bypass	1989-90	1990-91	1·720	1979
West Sussex—Bewbush	1989-90	1990-91	0·630	1979

Authority and scheme	TSG support in		NPU (£ million)	Base year
West Sussex—Rustington Bypass	1989-90	1990-91	2·080	1979
West Sussex—Littlehampton Bypass (main scheme)	—	1990-91	24·708	1988
West Sussex—Crawley South Western Bypass	—	1990-91	15·067	1988
Wiltshire—Chippenham Relief Road Stage 1	1989-90	1990-91	1·636	1984
Wiltshire—Burbage Bypass	—	1990-91	2·581	1988

Rail Travel Improvements

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what information he has on the progress made on the plans to improve rail travel outlined in his answer of 16 November 1989, *Official Report*, column *398*, in respect of the Westminster area.

Mr. Portillo: The LRT has now deposited a Bill in respect of the extension of the Jubilee line from Green Park to dockands and Stratford. The Bill provides for a Jubilee line station to be constructed at Westminster with a new ticket hall and interchange links to the existing District and Circle Lines. Detailed discussions are in progress with all relevant authorities and interested parties on this proposal and the impact of the construction works on the surrounding area.

My right hon. Friend recently gave the go-ahead for a contract worth over £50 million to refurbish 101 trains on London's Underground including all 44 on the Victoria line. London Underground also has an enormous programme of improvements which will increase the capacity and improve the environment of many of its stations, including Victoria.

Departmental Property

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many houses are in the ownership of his Department in each district in Greater Manchester; and what percentage of them are empty.

Mr. Atkins: The information is as follows:

District	Number of houses	Percentage empty
Wigan	9	44
Stockport	56	9
Manchester	43	2
Rochdale	53	5
Tameside	38	10
Oldham	108	16

Channel Tunnel

Mr. Speed: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the additional expenditure schemes earmarked for Channel tunnel related roads in the county of Kent.

Mr. Atkins: Following are local road schemes, proposed by Kent county council in the context of the Channel tunnel, which my Department is supporting under the transport supplementary grant system with grant over and above that attracted by the county council's ordinary road building programme:

A2070 Ashford South Orbital
A2070 Beaver Road Diversion
A2070 Hamstreet Bypass
A2070 South Ashford to Hamstreet
A2070 Stockbridge to Brenzett
A256 Whitfield Bypass
A256 Whitfield to Eastry
A256 Eastry Bypass
A260 Denton/Selsted Bypass
A260 Densole/Hawkinge Bypass

Our very substantial trunk road programme in Kent, valued at about £678 million (November 1987 prices) would be necessary with or without a Channel tunnel.

Mr. Speed: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will publish the Channel tunnel working group's forecasts and report on traffic data and the effects of the Channel tunnel on traffic demand, together with the assumptions upon which they are based.

Mr. Atkins: I am making arrangements for copies of the Channel tunnel traffic working group's report, dated June 1986, to be placed in the Library.

Mr. Speed: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what studies are being undertaken in his Department on estimating road traffic growth following the Channel tunnel opening in summer 1993.

Mr. Atkins: The net extra traffic resulting from the completion of the Channel tunnel is not expected to be significant compared with forecast traffic growth generally. Therefore, no specific studies relating to the opening of the tunnel are planned. However, my Department has established the cross-Channel traffic group to produce an up-to-date estimate of all cross-Channel traffic in 1993 and beyond on the main road network in the south-east. General traffic growth will continue to be monitored in the normal way.

Traffic Counts

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what guidelines his Department issues for the inclusion of cyclists in traffic counts.

Mr. Atkins *[holding answer 13 March 1990]:* For the purposes of the national traffic census the Department's standard rules on traffic counting are those published in statistics bulletin (88)32 "Description of Vehicles for Traffic Counting Purposes"—a copy is in the Library. Pedal cycles and motor cycles are included as separate categories of vehicle.

The same guidelines are used in the Department's traffic appraisal manual, though for most cost-benefit analyses prepared for the Department data on cycle and motor cycle traffic are not required and, therefore, may not be collected.

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether his Department undertakes traffic counts at weekends.

Mr. Atkins *[holding answer 13 March 1990]:* Yes. In particular, regular weekend counts classified by type of vehicle are carried out at 163 sites throughout Great

Britain for the national traffic census. A number of other sites are monitored at weekends by automatic traffic data counting systems which collect unclassified data on the total flow of vehicles.

THE ARTS

Art Treasures

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Minister for the Arts if he will give details of items currently included on the decided list of art treasures; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Luce *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* I refer the hon. Member to my answer to the hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, Central (Mr. Fisher) on 28 February 1990, *Official Report,* column *200.*

CIVIL SERVICE

Disabled Employees

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Minister for the Civil Service how many Government Departments ensure that at least 3 per cent. of their employees are registered disabled people.

Mr. Luce: All Government Departments aim to employ at least a 3 per cent. quota of people who are registered as disabled. On 1 June 1989 five Departments had met this target. A further four Departments employed over 2·5 per cent. of people registered as disabled. Figures showing the proportion of staff who are registered as disabled in each Department are presented annually in the civil service magazine *Independent,* copies of which I am placing in the Libraries of the House.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Property Law

Mr. French: To ask the Attorney-General what representations he has received about the effects of section 2 of the Law of Property (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1989.

The Attorney-General: The Lord Chancellor has received four representations from practitioners and an academic about the effect of section 2 of the Law of Property (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1989. In general terms these raised the following matters: (1) options (2) security documents (3) equitable charges (4) contracts by exchange of correspondence. The Lord Chancellor is satisfied that no amendment to section 2 is required in the light of these representations.

Mr. French: To ask the Attorney-General if he will bring forward amendments to section 2 of the Law of Property (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1989 so that it does not apply to the exercise of an option on property granted after 27 September 1989.

The Attorney-General: The Lord Chancellor has no plans to bring forward amendments to section 2 of the Law of Property (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1989.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Poland

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he will now list the projects so far approved from the know-how fund for Poland.

Mrs. Chalker: The information is as follows:

Activities approved under the know-how fund for Poland as at 8 March 1990

Title:	Foreign Investment agency
Description:	Four seminars on corporate finance, and financial and management accounting
Status:	Completed
Cost:	£56,000
Title:	Bank Handlowy
Description:	Two seminars on Treasury management and an introduction to capital markets
Status:	Completed
Cost:	£34,000
Title:	Banking and finance sector mission
Description:	Project identification
Status:	Completed
Cost:	£10,000
Title:	Finance and the City of London
Description:	Course in financial institutions for 20 Polish visitors
Status:	Completed
Cost:	£61,000
Title:	Accountancy sector mission
Description:	Project identification
Status:	Completed
Cost:	£19,000
Title:	Privatisation conference
Description:	Conference
Status:	Completed:
Cost:	£33,000
Title:	Job Ownership
Description:	Study tour of United Kingdom employee-owned businesses
Status:	Completed
Cost:	£10,000
Title:	Warszawskie Zaklady Telewizyjne (WZT)
Description:	Pilot consultancy on employee ownership
Status:	Underway
Cost:	£12,000
Title:	Management Study tour
Description:	Directors of Polish management education schools to undertake two-week United Kingdom study tour
Status:	Completed
Cost:	£31,000
Title:	Management seminars
Description:	Seminars on marketing and export promotion
Status:	Completed
Cost:	£20,000
Title:	Young management graduates
Description:	Two month programme at British Institute of management plus attachments
Status:	Underway
Cost:	£222,000
Title:	Management educators
Description:	Training of trainers at various institutions
Status:	Underway
Cost:	£251,000

Title: Visiting lecturers
Description: Tours of Polish management schools by invited British specialists
Status: Underway
Cost: £56,000

Title: Fishery management
Description: Three month programme at Hull for Polish fishery managers plus study tour by senior managers
Status: Underway
Cost: £133,000

Title: Farmer/Co-operatives training
Description: Identification and implementation of training programme for managers of cooperatives
Status: Underway
Cost: £20,000

Title: English for management
Description: Project identification
Status: Completed
Cost: £10,000

Title: Management libraries
Description: Provision of management books and videos to key Polish educational institutions
Status: Underway
Cost: £125,000

Title: Industrial consultancy
Description: Assessment of potential productivity improvements at three Polish plants and substantive work at FSO car manufacturing plant
Status: Underway
Cost: £75,000

Title: Financial seminars
Description: Increasing awareness of how Western financial institutions and markets work
Status: Completed
Cost: £172,000

Title: Translation of key management texts
Description: Two consultants to identify needs in relation to the translation and publication of selected texts and the potential establishment of a publishing house
Status: Underway
Cost: £10,820

Title: Electricity sector
Description: Reconnaissance mission
Status: Completed
Cost: £10,000

Title: IBRD social security mission
Description: Secondment of three United Kingdom experts to an IBRD mission to look at the social aspects of economic adjustment
Status: Completed
Cost: £39,000

Title: Blood plasma
Description: Feasibility study for establishment of a blood fractionation plant
Status: Underway
Cost: £154,000

Title: Data Processing
Description: Adaptation of Polish econometric model to meet IMF specifications
Status: Completed
Cost: £22,000

Title: Economic Adviser
Description: Appointment of a macro-economic adviser to the Ministry of Finance
Status: Underway
Cost: £60,000

Title: Equipment for Ministry of Finance
Description: Provision of office machinery
Status: Completed
Cost: £20,000

Title: Equipment for Ministry of Education
Description: Provision of office machinery to the Task Force for co-ordination
Status: Completed
Cost: £20,000

Title: Coal industry training
Description: Training in colliery management techniques
Status: Underway
Cost: £49,000

Title: Cracow tourism study
Description: Recommendation of immediate measures to help Cracow cope with the coming tourist season, and development of longer-term proposals
Status: Underway
Cost: £37,000

Title: Agros dried vegetables
Description: Recommendations for productivity improvements
Status: Underway
Cost: £55,000

Title: Company doctor training
Description: Seven courses in training Polish consultants in techniques of company analysis
Status: Underway
Cost: £97,000

Title: Conference on demonopolisation
Description: Discussion of methods and experiences of demonopolisation in relation to the process of economic and political decision taking
Status: To be implemented
Cost: £11,000

Title: Book industry training
Description: Pilot project to assess the training needs of the Polish book industry
Status: To be implemented
Cost: £17,200

Title: Post-experience training for journalists
Description: Four courses including academic and practical attachments
Status: Underway
Cost: £240,000

Title: Local government assistance
Description: Project to combat environmental pollution involving Carlisle and Slupsk
Status: To be implemented
Cost: £30,000

Title: Seminars for Polish MPs
Description: Introduction to British parliamentary concepts
Status: Completed
Cost: £15,000

Title: Media training
Description: Seven courses organised by BBC World Service
Status: Underway
Cost: £225,000

Title: Establishment of capital markets
Description: Familiarisation trip by Ministry of Finance officials to the London Stock Exchange
Status: Completed
Cost: £7,600

Title: AIDS training
Description: Training for Polish doctors and nurses on how to handle AIDS patients
Status: To be implemented

Cost: £21,500

Title: Railway training
Description: Attendance at signalling and telecommunications course for three railway engineers
Status: To be implemented
Cost: £15,800

Title: New banks mission
Description: Technical assistance for the establishment of new banks
Status: To be implemented
Cost: £25,000

Title: Agricultural sector mission
Description: Project identification
Status: Completed
Cost: £25,000

Title: Pharmaceutical sector
Description: Mission to assess pharmacy training needs and joint venture possibilities
Status: To be implemented
Cost: £2,300

Title: Foreign trade training
Description: Secondment from the Polish Chamber of Foreign Trade to the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce
Status: To be implemented
Cost: £2,200

Title: Scholarships programme
Description: Non project-related training awards administered by the British Council
Status: To be implemented
Cost: £500,000 per year

Title: Academic links programme
Description: Finance to allow two-way exploratory visits between institutions which will be administered by the British Council
Status: To be implemented
Cost: £100,000 per year

Title: IBRD banking mission
Description: Secondment of two United Kingdom experts to an IBRD mission to look at project preparatory work in the banking sector
Status: Completed
Cost: £16,900

Title: Assistance to local government
Description: Provision of equipment for the Foundation of Local Democracy centre in Lodz
Status: To be implemented
Cost: £20,000

Title: Research Programme
Description: Assessment of the competitiveness of the industrial sector in Poland
Status: To be implemented
Cost: £27,000

Title: Privatisation and market research centre in Gdansk
Description: Assistance to the Centre
Status: To be implemented
Cost: £38,000

Title: Legal training
Description: Three month placements for 13 Polish lawyers with United Kingdom firms
Status: To be implemented
Cost: £40,000

Title Energy Audit
Description: Detailed analysis of the Power and Brown Coal Board by a team of 12 United Kingdom utility personnel
Status: To be implemented
Cost: £403,000

Title: Economic Adviser
Description: Appointment of a second Economic Adviser to the Ministry of Finance
Status: Underway
Cost: £7,000

Title: Financial Markets Adviser
Description: Appointment of an Adviser to the Ministry of Finance
Status: Underway
Cost: £70,000

Title: Assistance to local government
Description: Three courses for newly elected local government councillors and officials based at Leicester Polytechnic
Status: To be implemented
Cost: £190,000

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Atrazine

Mr. Colvin: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what measures he will take to limit the use of the chemical atrazine.

Mr. Maclean: The use of atrazine is already restricted under the Control of Pesticides Regulations 1986. The Advisory Committee on Pesticides is at present reviewing atrazine and could if necessary recommend to Ministers that these conditions should be amended.

Poultry Flocks

Mr. Colvin: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when his Department will be issuing details of the regulations for registration by poultry flocks; and what is the date by which registration is required.

Mr. Maclean: The Poultry Laying Flocks (Testing and Registration etc.) Order 1989 and the Poultry Breeding Flocks and Hatcheries (Registration and Testing) Order 1989 came into operation on 26 October 1989 apart from the registration requirement which applies from 2 April. Details of the arrangements were circulated on a wide scale in October, registration application forms have been circulated and a reminder about registration will be issued shortly.

Mineral Water

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the accuracy of the description of Perrier water as a naturally carbonated mineral water.

Mr. Maclean: The conditions which have to be met by water labelled as naturally carbonated natural mineral water are laid down in annex I, part III, of Council directive 80/777/EEC. Information which came to light during the recent Perrier contamination incident raises a number of questions on the labelling of this natural mineral water and I have asked my officials to write to the European Commission seeking clarification.

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the

provision in the European Communities directive which permits bottled water not to have the full chemical analysis printed on the label.

Mr. Maclean: Article 7(2) of directive 80/777/EEC requires labels on natural mineral waters either to bear a declaration of the water's analytical composition or to state that the composition is in accordance with the results of the official analysis. A proposal to require the mandatory declaration of information on the analytical composition has already been made and the United Kingdom Government will press for such a proposal as being more informative to consumers.

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will raise with the European Communities Commission the question of mineral water purity and labelling.

Mr. Maclean: The European Commission has already indicated that it intends to review Council directive 80/777/EEC and has asked member states for comments. Purity and labelling issues will likely be part of the review.

Mr. Kirkhope: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether describing the practice of the removal of carbon dioxide from water, its cleaning and then reinjection under pressure as naturally carbonated complies with the labelling rules; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maclean: Council directive 80/777/EEC defines naturally carbonated natural mineral water as

"water whose content of carbon dioxide from the spring after decanting, if any, and bottling is the same as at source, taking into account where appropriate the reintroduction of a quantity of carbon dioxide from the same water table or deposit equivalent to that released in the course of those operations and subject to the usual technical tolerances".

I have asked my officials to write to the European Commission to seek clarification on exactly how this provision operates when gas and water are extracted separately at the source and subsequently mixed during bottling.

Rabies

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has any contingency plans for the use of vaccinations of wild animals acting as vectors of rabies in the event of an outbreak in the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maclean: Oral vaccination of wildlife is not appropriate in a rabies-free country. In the unlikely event of an outbreak in wildlife in the United Kingdom control measures would concentrate on the destruction of foxes in the infected area.

Pesticides

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he proposes to report on his review of maneb, mancozeb and zineb.

Mr. Maclean: The report on immediate concerns was published on 31 January. The report of the ongoing review of remaining areas will be published as soon as possible.

Animal Waste

Mr. Hind: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what changes have been made in the temperature levels defined as appropriate for the heat treatment of animal waste since 1980; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maclean: The Government have strict controls which apply to animal protein processors' handling of animal waste, principally to minimise the risk of salmonella contamination, but it has never laid down specific heat treatment requirements.

Commercial technological developments led to a move away from batch processing to continuous rendering. Both batch and continuous systems operate at a range of temperatures; batch between 100 and 150 deg. C, and continuous between 100 and 145 deg. C.

Livestock (Transit Care)

Mr. Leadbitter: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the trade in horsemeat betwen the United Kingdom and Europe in respect of the care of horses and other livestock in transit, and on any breaches of standards of care of animals; and if he has any proposals under consideration to bring this trade to an end.

Mr. Maclean: In 1989 the United Kingdom exported 1,932 tonnes of meat derived from horses and other equines, valued at £2·85 million. There is no reason to end this trade. In Community negotiations we shall, however, press to retain existing controls designed to prevent the export of live horses and ponies for slaughter.

Artificial Flavourings

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, pursuant to his answer of 28 February, *Official Report,* column *242,* if he will introduce legislation to replace the legal term "flavour" with the term "artificial flavour" to assist consumers seeking to avoid the use of artificial flavourings.

Mr. Maclean: No. I believe that the term "artificial flavour" instead of "flavour" would not necessarily help consumers and might be misleading. While the term "strawberry flavour," for example, indicates that the flavour does not come wholly or mainly from strawberries, some of it may come from strawberries and the rest might come from other natural flavourings. The European Commission is, however, expected to make proposals on the labelling of flavourings in food and I shall be pressing for terminology which enables consumers to make an informed choice.

Fish and Cetaceans (Disease)

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if there is any evidence of a change in the levels of disease suffered by fish or cetaceans in British coastal waters.

Mr. Curry: Disease levels in marine fish populations have been found to fluctuate from year to year and in some cases seasonally, but there is no clear evidence of a long-term trend of changing levels of disease in fish. There

has been no comprehensive collection of data on the incidence of disease in cetaceans, but I understand that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment is considering new research projects on cetaceans and marine mammals, including post-mortem analysis for stranded cetaceans and other marine animals found on our shores.

Salmonella

Sir Peter Emery: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many laying breeding flocks in Britain have now been found to have been carrying salmonella enteritidis, and in what regions of the United Kingdom these flocks were found.

Mr. Maclean: Salmonella enteritidis has been isolated from one layer breeder flock located in south-west England.

Eggs

Sir Peter Emery: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the production and sale by month over the last 12 months of British eggs; and what was the level of importation and sale month by month of eggs from overseas during the same period.

Mr. Curry: The latest monthly data for throughput at packing stations in Great Britain (that is excluding Northern Ireland) and in the United Kingdom and for imports into the United Kingdom are as follows. Figures are not collected on sales of eggs.

thousand boxes (of 360 eggs)

	Great Britain Packing station throughput	*United Kingdom Packing station throughput*	*Imports into United Kingdom*
1989			
February	2,060	2,202	21
March	2,093	2,231	22
April	[1]2,711	[1]2,889	111
May	2,227	2,367	78
June	2,250	2,393	72
July	[1]2,681	[1]2,843	63
August	2,117	2,256	98
September	2,148	2,296	161
October	[1]2,659	[1]2,847	106
November	2,041	2,203	207
December	2,035	2,186	150
1990			
January	[1]2,681	[1]2,882	105

[1] 5 week months.

WALES

Cancer Treatment

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many responses in total have been submitted to date on the review of the provision of cancer treatment services for the people of north Wales; and how many favour option 4.

Mr. Grist: Of the 18 responses to consultation received by 9 March, eight have specified a preference for a radiotherapy unit in north Wales (option 4).

Roads

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many representations he has received from the local highway authority and others concerning the provision of a pedestrian crossing on the A487(T) at Tremadog; and what response he has made.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: Three. The request for a pedestrian crossing was refused but Gwynedd county council has been asked to prepare a scheme to improve pedestrian safety by widening the footpath and reducing the width of the carriageway thus making crossing easier.

Special Educational Needs

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many children received a statement of special educational needs in each year from 1984 to 1989 in each local education authority in Wales; and what is each figure as a percentage of all pupils in maintained schools in Wales.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: Data for 1989 are not yet available. Prior to 1986 information in the form requested was not collected centrally. Information for 1986, 1987 and 1988 is shown in the table:

Children who received a statement of special educational need[1]

	1986		*1987*		*1988*	
	Number	*Per cent.*	*Number*	*Per cent.*	*Number*	*Per cent.*
Clwyd	377	0·5	187	0·3	213	0·3
Dyfed	160	0·3	104	0·2	121	0·2
Gwent	272	0·4	235	0·3	463	0·6
Gwynedd	80	0·2	70	0·2	99	0·3
Mid Glamorgan	537	0·6	575	0·6	643	0·7
Powys	17	0·1	16	0·1	30	0·2
South Glamorgan	217	0·3	201	0·3	174	0·3
West Glamorgan	274	0·5	234	0·4	304	0·5

[1] The figures shown indicate the number of children, in each calendar year, for whom statements of special education need were made for the first time.

Storm Damage

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what additional finance he will give to borough councils, additional to the Bellwin formula, in north Clwyd consequent upon the February storms; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Walker: The Bellwin scheme represents an entirely appropriate and adequate Government response to the additional costs incurred by local authorities in dealing with emergencies. In view of the scale of the emergency, and the very high expenditure being incurred by the local councils directly affected by the recent flooding in north Wales, I am pleased to say that the rate of grant payable has, exceptionally, been increased to 85 per cent. of eligible expenditure. I have, in addition, announced a Government contribution of £150,000 to the appeal funds launched locally.

Mr. Gwilym Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will provide help to farmers in north Wales whose land has been affected by sea water.

Mr. Peter Walker: It is too early to assess the full extent of the damage to farms in the affected areas. However, it is clear that immediate steps must be taken to counter the damaging effects of prolonged sea water flooding of agricultural land by the application of gypsum. In these wholly exceptional circumstances my Department will meet the costs of this measure and ADAS will provide free advice. Farmers will also be advised of the assistance available under existing grant schemes to help meet the costs of other work that may be necessary.

Parliamentary approval to this exceptional measure will be sought in a revised estimate for the agricultural services, support for the fishing industry, regional and industrial development, Wales vote 2 (class XVI vote 2, 1990-91).

Cash Limits

Mr. Gwilym Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he proposes making any further cash limits changes.

Mr. Peter Walker: Yes. Provision for regional enterprise grants on class XVII, vote 2, is being reduced by £500,000 and the cash limit reduced from £86,448,000 to £85,948,000. This reduction will provide the necessary public expenditure cover for a temporary borrowing facility required by the Development Board for Rural Wales to meet its expenditure commitments during the remainder of the current financial year. The facility will not add to the board's overall resources but will ease its cash flow position pending the settlement of a substantial claim for repayment of VAT from Her Majesty's Customs and Excise not now expected until the next financial year.

Community Charge

Mr. Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if women's refuges in Wales are exempted from collective community charge; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for the Environment on 8 March, *Official Report*, column 799.

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what representations he has received from companies about the additional burden of cost and administration to be placed on them under the terms of the Community Charges (Administration and Enforcement Regulations) 1989; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Walker: I have received no such representations.

Community Care

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list all working papers, implementation documents, consultative documents, departmental circulars, and other publications, whether in draft or final form, that have been issued to date in respect of Wales regarding *(a)* National Health Service matters and *(b)* care in the community matters arising from the National Health Service and Community Care Bill, the Government's White Papers on these topics, and associated Government initiatives.

Mr. Grist *[holding answer 5 March 1990]:* Relevant publications issued by the Department in Wales are shown in the tables:

Table 1
Documents issued pursuant to the White Paper "Working for Patients" CM 555, January 1989

Date	*Reference number*	*Consultation*	*Title*
1. January 1989	—	Final	The NHS in Wales: Proposals for Action
2. August 1989	—	Final	"Working for Patients", text of the Secretary of State letter of 1 August 1989 to Health Authority and Family Practitioner Committee Chairmen
DOH working papers			
3. March 1989	Working Paper 1	Final	Self-governing Hospitals
4. March 1989	Working Paper 2	Final	Funding and Contracts for Hospital Services
5. March 1989	Working Paper 3	Final	Practice Budgets for General Medical Practitioners
6. March 1989	Working Paper 4	Final	Indicative Prescribing Budgets for General Medical Practitioners
7. March 1989	Working Paper 5	Final	Capital Charges
8. March 1989	Working Paper 6	Final	Medical Audit
9. March 1989	Working Paper 7	Final	NHS Consultants: Appointments, Contracts and Distinction Awards
10. March 1989	Working Paper 8	Final	Implications for Family Practitioner Committees
11. July 1989	Working Paper 9	Final	Capital Charges: Funding Issues
12. November 1989	Working Paper 10	Final	Education and Training
Resource Allocation			
13. February 1990	RAWG(90)5	Final	Implications for Resource Allocation Working Group (RAWG) of the Government White Paper

Date	Reference number	Consultation	Title
14. July 1989	RAWG(89)9	Final	RAWG further work
15. July 1989	RAWG(89)11	Final	RAWG Resident Population Resourcing Sub-Group Progress Report: Setting up an experiment to test the feasibility of involving GPs in the planning and development of DHA provided services.
16. January 1990	RAWG(90)1	Final	Capital Charges and Capital Allocations: A discussion paper
17. January 1990	RAWG(90)2	Final	Weighted Capitation Funding: Revenue Formula
18. January 1990	RAWG(90)3	Final	Implementing the White Paper: Contractual Arrangements
Capital Charging and Asset Accounting			
19. March 1989	EL(89) MB60 Department of Health (DOH) letter	Final	Capital Charges and Asset Registers: Report of Pilot Exercises
20. July 1989	—	Final	Capital Charges update 1989/1: Basis of valuation of land and buildings
21. July 1989	—	Final	Capital Charges update 89/2
22. August 1989	—	Final	Capital Charges update 89/3
23. October 1989	—	Final	Capital Charges update 89/4
24. October 1989	—	Final	Department of Health Booklet: "The Costing of Health Buildings for Capital Charging Purposes"
25. November 1989	—	Final	Asset Registers: Pro forma on Progress Report—covering letter
26. November 1989	—	Final	BCIS Cost Analyses for Wales—covering letter
27. November 1989	—	Final	Letter with sets of cost beacons
28. December 1989	—	Final	Capital Charges Update 89/5
29. January 1990	DGM(90)5	Final	Capital Asset Registers: Valuation of Land and Buildings
30. January 1990	—	Final	Capital Charges Update 90/1 and 90/2
Financial Management			
31. October 1989	DGM(89)103	Final	Use of Private Sector Capital in the NHS (Unconventional Finance): Revised Guidance
32. October 1989	DGM(89)108	Final	Contracts for Health Services—Operational Principles
33. October 1989	DGM(89)108	Final	Discussion document on Pricing and Openness in Contracts
34. December 1989	—	Final	Consultation on Charging for WHCSA Services
35. January 1990	DGM(90)11	Final	Study of the feasibility of recording and reviewing patients' need for and use of hospital and community health services in general practice
36. February 1990	DGM(90)16	Final	Contracting for services and funding arrangements in 1991-92 and beyond
37. February 1990	—	Consultation	DOH paper: Contracts and Cash Limits
Family practitioner services			
38. April 1989	FPCL(W)22/89	Final	FPC Management Structures
39. June 1989	WHC(89)39	Final	Pay and Conditions of Service: FPC Managers
40. October 1989	WHC(89)62	Final	FPC Managers: Remuneration and Conditions of Service
41. December 1989	FPCL(W)97/89	Final	Practitioner Funding Scheme: Issue of Programme to GPs
42. January 1990	—	Final	Funding General Practice—booklet issued to all GPs
Quality assurance			
43. August 1989	WHC(89)47	Consultation	Quality Patient Care
Information technology			
44. December 1989	—	Final	Information and Information Technology strategic direction for the NHS in Wales
45. May 1989	—	Consultation	All-Wales Health Service IT Strategy: Impact of White Paper Draft for discussion
46. July 1989	—	Final	IT strategy: comments
47. February 1990	DOH Working Paper 11	Final	Framework for Information Systems
NHS trusts and contracts			
48. September 1989	—	Final	Self-Governing Hospitals: An Initial Guide
49. September 1989	DGM(89)94	Final	Self-Governing Hospitals: Outline Application document
50. March 1990	DGM(90)23	Consultation	Implementing the White Paper: Operating Contracts
Health strategy			
51. July 1989	—	Final	Strategic Planning in the NHS after the White Paper "Working for Patients"
52. *(a)* November 1989	—	Consultation	Welsh Health Planning Forum (WHPF) Consultation Documents "Local strategies for health: a New Approach to Strategic Planning"; and "Strategic Intent and Direction for the NHS in Wales"
(b) February 1990	—	Final	Executive summaries of the documents in *(a)* above
53. October 1989	DGM(89)107	Final	Development of Business Plans 1990/91
54. November 1989	DGM(89)120	Consultation	Business Planning 1990/91: Draft Guidance
55. January 1990	DGM(90)1	Final	Business Planning 1990/91: Final Guidance
CHCs			

Date	Reference number	Consultation	Title
56. November 1989	—	Consultation	Review of Community Health Councils in Wales: A consultation paper
Manpower			
57. December 1989	—	Final	The Health Service in Wales—Towards 2000 Manpower Planning, Education and Training
58. November 1989	DGM(89)115	Consultation	NHS: Medical and Dental Staff—Amendment of NHS (Appointment of Consultants) Regulations

Table 2
Documents issued pursuant to the white paper "Caring for People: Community Care in the next decade and beyond" CM 849, November 1989

Date	Reference	Consultation/ Final	Title
1. December 1989	—	Final	Caring for People: Community Care in the Next Decade and Beyond—The Proposals for Wales
2. 26 January 1990	—	Consultation	Draft Planning Guidance
3. 16 February 1990	—	Consultation	Community Care: Caring for People Independent Inspection Units
4. 22 February 1990	—	Consultation	Community Care—Future Central Funding of the Development of Services for the Elderly
5. 29 December 1989	—	Consultation	Services for People with Physical and/or Sensory Disabilities
6. 8 March 1990	—	Consultation	Community Care White Paper: Caring For People—Proposed Development Projects—Assessment and Case Management

Health Service

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make it his policy that all working papers, implementation documents, consultative documents, departmental circulars and other publications in regard to the implementation of *(a)* the National Health Service aspects and *(b)* the care in the community aspects of the National Health Service and Community Care Bill and the associated White Papers in Wales shall be numbered sequentially and shall be available in the Vote Office and the Library, together with a comprehensive list of all such publications which is brought up to date from time to time.

Mr. Grist *[holding answer 6 March 1990]:* The Department's policy of providing the Vote Office and Library with copies of all major consultation documents, circulars, and other papers on National Health Service and community care issues will continue. Lists of such documents together with any other associated publications will be available in the Library and updated quarterly. The documents are not produced in a single series, so sequential numbering would not be appropriate.

EMPLOYMENT

Training

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will publish up-to-date figures for Great Britain and each Training Agency region for each month since November 1989 and the cumulative numbers of *(a)* referrals to ET from the employment service to training agents, *(b)* agreed ET action plans of training agents, *(c)* starts with ET training managers, *(d)* the number in training on ET each month and *(e)* the number on continuation training.

Mr. Nicholls: The information on referrals, action plans, starts and numbers in training is provided in the tables. Information is not separately available for those on continuation training.

Table 1
Employment training
Referrals from employment service to employment training
December 1989 to January 1990
(cumulative)

Employment service region	December	January
London and South East	12,900	29,900
South West	3,000	7,300
West Midlands	5,800	14,600
East Midlands and Eastern	4,600	10,700
Yorkshire and Humberside	6,500	14,900
North West	8,700	21,300
Northern	4,600	11,200
Wales	3,800	9,200
Scotland	9,100	20,600
Great Britain	59,100	139,700

Notes:
Regional figures may not equal Great Britain total because of rounding.
Figures for February are not yet available.

Table 2
Employment training
Agreed action plans at training agents
December 1989 to February 1990
(cumulative)

Training agency region	December	January	February
South East	2,400	5,400	9,300
London	3,900	7,800	12,500
South West	1,800	3,900	6,300
West Midlands	3,400	7,600	13,100
East Midlands and Eastern	2,500	4,900	8,200
Yorkshire and Humberside	4,600	9,400	15,000
North West	4,400	9,700	16,400
Northern	3,400	7,600	12,300
Wales	1,900	4,400	8,000
Scotland	4,300	8,800	14,300
Great Britain	32,600	69,500	115,400

Note:
Regional figures may not equal Great Britain total because of rounding.

Table 3
Employment training
Starts with training managers
December 1989 to February 1990 (cumulative)

Training agency region	December	January	February
South East	1,500	4,300	6,900
London	2,600	6,500	10,600
South West	1,400	3,400	5,200
West Midlands	2,900	6,500	10,900
East Midlands and Eastern	2,100	4,600	7,700
Yorkshire and Humberside	3,700	8,000	13,200
North West	3,600	9,000	14,900
Northern	2,900	6,200	10,300
Wales	1,900	4,400	7,500
Scotland	3,500	7,400	12,700
Great Britain[1]	26,100	60,500	100,100

[1] Great Britain total includes small number of starts at Residential Training Colleges and Large Contractors not inlcuded in regional totals.

Table 4
Employment training
Filled places: December 1989 to February 1990

Training agency region	December	January	February
South East	14,300	14,700	14,900
London	21,000	21,800	22,300
South West	11,900	12,100	11,800
West Midlands	22,500	21,900	22,400
East Midlands and Eastern	16,600	16,400	16,400
Yorkshire and Humberside	25,100	24,700	25,000
North West	28,800	28,900	29,000
Northern	24,200	23,700	23,300
Wales	16,100	15,900	16,100
Scotland	26,100	25,900	26,300
Great Britain[1]	208,000	207,000	209,000

[1] Great Britain total includes small number of trainees at Residential Training Colleges and Large Contractors not included in regional totals.

Acute Myeloid Leukaemia

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he has made an assessment of the incidence of acute myeloid leukaemia among telegraph, radio and radar operators; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: A limited review undertaken in 1988 suggests that there may be a small increase in relative risk of acute myeloid leukaemia for telegraph, radio and radar operators. I am not aware of any current studies on this topic.

Gateshead Garden Festival

Mr. Amos: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what assistance his Department is making available to NGF(90)Ltd., organisers of the Gateshead garden festival, for the employment and training of unemployed people during the festival; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: I am making arrangements so that the organisers may employ and train up to 1,140 unemployed people during the festival from public funds. Parliamentary approval to this provision will be sought in a supplementary estimate for the Department of Employment's training and enterprise programmes vote (class VI vote 1). Pending that approval, urgent expenditure estimated at £2·7 million will be met by repayable advances from the Contingencies Fund.

Disabled Employees

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many nationalised industries and public authorities ensure that at least 3 per cent. of their employees are registered disabled people.

Mr. Eggar: The figures showing the quota position of a range of individual public sector employers are published with their agreement in the *Employment Gazette*. In June 1989, the latest date for which figures are available, 26 of these firms employed 3 per cent. or more registered people with disabilities.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many prosecutions there have been in the last 15 years against employers who fail to fulfil their obligations under the Disabled Persons (Employment) Act 1944; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: There have been three prosecutions in the last 15 years against employers who have failed to fulfil their obligations under the Disabled Persons (Employment) Act 1944. The policy of successive Governments has been to use education and persuasion to secure and improve the policies and practices of all employers in relation to the employment of people with disabilities and to bring prosecutions only as a last resort.

Wages Councils

Mr. Nellist: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will publish in the *Official Report* the statistics on wages council employment and compliance with wages council rates in 1989, in the same format as in the reply given on 1 March 1989, *Official Report*, columns *201-06*.

Mr. Nicholls: The information requested is given in the following tables:

Table 1
Establishments covered by wages councils on register—as at January 1989

Wages councils / Divisions	London	South East	Eastern	South West	Midlands	North West	Yorkshire and Humberside	North	Scotland	Great Britain
Aerated waters	7	14	57	16	111	25	24	22	66	342
Clothing manufacture	3,006	159	306	301	1,282	937	452	214	307	6,964
Boot and shoe repairing	764	255	258	345	373	406	277	70	130	2,878
Button manufacturing	18	4	4	4	18	4	3	1	1	57
Coffin furniture and cerement making	1	—	—	2	8	2	5	—	2	20
Cotton waste reclamation	—	—	—	—	1	28	8	3	2	42
Flax and hemp	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	1	6	8
Fur	147	8	8	7	14	28	11	3	36	262

Wages councils / Divisions	London	South East	Eastern	South West	Midlands	North West	Yorkshire and Humberside	North	Scotland	Great Britain
General waste materials reclamation	124	74	107	151	291	308	240	99	137	1,531
Hairdressing undertakings	4,482	3,181	3,302	4,106	5,362	5,171	3,029	1,968	2,840	33,441
Hat, cap and millinery	25	2	44	5	12	14	8	11	2	123
Lace finishing	—	—	—	1	73	—	—	—	—	74
Laundry	215	281	79	114	105	68	67	35	122	1,086
Linen and cotton handkerchief	2	1	3	3	10	80	9	1	5	114
Made up textile	34	13	36	31	51	34	42	18	33	292
Ostrich and fancy feather	12	1	6	4	—	—	—	4	3	30
Perambulator and invalid carriage	3	2	5	3	11	4	6	1	1	36
Retail bespoke tailoring	180	55	52	38	42	52	39	14	37	509
Rope, twine and net	—	1	5	12	5	20	18	5	19	85
Sack and bag	20	—	7	5	14	20	12	2	6	86
Toy manufacturing	17	16	45	30	35	40	32	15	9	239
Retail non-food trades	20,069	11,990	9,840	12,085	19,457	13,350	8,712	4,495	8,840	108,838
Retail food and allied trades	11,770	13,100	10,066	12,853	13,339	15,891	10,018	7,199	10,881	105,117
Licensed non-residential	6,263	5,962	6,363	9,323	12,406	9,540	6,452	4,001	5,429	65,739
Licensed residential and restaurant	5,023	3,901	3,595	6,842	3,591	3,355	2,013	1,418	3,890	33,628
Unlicensed place of refreshment	4,143	2,049	1,540	2,585	1,746	1,977	1,324	851	1,497	17,712
Total	56,325	41,069	35,728	48,867	58,357	51,354	32,801	20,451	34,301	379,253

Table 2

Establishments checked and underpayments found in wages council trades—1989

Wages Councils	Establishments checked by all methods	Percentage of register checked	Establishments checked by visit	Percentage of register checked by visit	Establishments found underpaying	Percentage of all establishments checked underpaying	Percentage of establishments visited underpaying
Aerated Waters	22	6·4	17	4·9	1	4·5	5·8
Clothing Manufacture	486	6·9	436	6·2	111	22·8	25·4
Boot and Shoe Repairing	216	7·5	91	3·1	11	5·0	12·0
Button Manufacturing	5	8·7	5	8·7	1	20·0	20·00
Coffin Furniture and Cerement Making	3	15·0	3	15·0	—	—	—
Cotton Waste Reclamation	3	7·1	3	7·1	—	—	—
Flax and Hemp	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Fur	12	4·5	11	4·1	3	25·0	27·2
General Waste Materials Reclamation	100	6·5	59	3·8	2	2·0	3·3
Hairdressing Undertakings	2,633	7·8	1,517	4·5	319	12·1	21·0
Hat, Cap and Millinery	11	8·9	6	4·8	—	—	—
Lace Finishing	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Laundry	95	8·7	66	6·0	16	16·8	24·2
Linen and Cotton Handkerchief	14	12·2	14	12·2	3	21·4	21·4
Made-up Textile	27	9·2	24	8·2	5	18·5	20·8
Ostrich and Fancy Feather	6	20·0	4	13·3	—	—	—
Perambulator and Invalid Carriage	3	8·3	3	8·3	—	—	—
Retail Bespoke Tailoring	40	7·8	33	6·4	3	7·5	9·0
Rope, Twine and Net	11	12·9	10	11·7	—	—	—
Sack and Bag	6	6·9	5	5·8	—	—	—
Toy Manufacturing	18	7·5	16	6·6	3	16·6	18·7
Retail Non-Food Trades	9,551	8·7	3,993	3·6	1,108	11·6	27·7
Retail Food and Allied Trades	10,111	9·6	6,228	5·9	2,289	22·6	36·7
Licensed Non-Residential	5,310	8·0	2,963	4·5	847	15·9	28·5
Licensed Residential and Restaurant	2,781	8·2	1,882	5·5	475	17·0	25·2
Unlicensed Place of Refreshment	2,164	12·2	1,050	5·9	331	15·2	31·5
Total	33,628	8·8	18,439	4·8	5,528	16·4	29·9

Table 3
Workers covered by wages councils and results of checks—1989

Wages Councils	Number of workers covered by Wages Order (Est. 1988)	Workers whose pay was checked by all methods	Workers whose pay was checked by visit	Workers found underpaid	Per cent. underpaid of all workers checked	Per cent. underpaid of all workers checked by visit	Arrears paid	Arrears not pursued at workers request	Arrears not pursued for other reasons	Total arrears assessed as due
							£	£	£	£
Aerated Waters	5,500	848	421	1	0·1	0·2	280	—	—	280
Clothing Manufacture	147,000	10,875	10,025	356	3·2	3·5	30,306	2,283	3,039	35,628
Boot and Shoe Repairing	5,000	477	209	12	2·5	5·7	3,650	3,165	—	6,815
Button Manufacturing	1,000	133	133	1	0·7	0·7	164	—	—	164
Coffin Furniture and Cerement Making	200	12	12	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cotton Waste Reclamation	300	25	25	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Flax and Hemp	500	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Fur	1,500	55	46	3	5·4	6·5	323	—	—	323
General Waste Materials Reclamation	13,000	967	556	7	0·7	1·2	5,091	—	—	5,091
Hairdressing Undertakings	64,000	8,245	4,784	403	4·8	8·4	47,191	14,062	4,540	65,793
Hat, Cap and Millinery	4,000	320	288	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Lace Finishing	900	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Laundry	26,000	3,100	1,606	36	1·1	2·2	5,756	—	270	6,026
Linen and Cotton Handkerchief	2,500	717	717	8	1·1	1·1	366	—	—	366
Made-up Textile	3,000	348	330	18	5·1	5·4	2,123	—	—	2,123
Ostrich and Fancy Feather	500	123	113	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Perambulator and Invalid Carriage	2,000	263	263	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Retail Bespoke Tailoring	4,000	138	108	6	4·3	5·5	62	2,030	—	2,092
Rope, Twine and Net	2,500	1,287	1,283	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sack and Bag	1,000	96	81	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Toy Manufacturing	11,000	615	609	14	2·2	2·2	818	133	22	973
Retail Non-Food Trades	745,000	68,184	15,788	1,820	2·6	11·5	177,515	74,696	17,320	269,531
Retail Food and Allied Trades	465,000	120,911	23,793	4,421	3·6	18·5	360,350	229,397	38,788	628,535
Licensed Non-Residential	492,000	41,774	19,599	2,178	5·2	11·1	147,060	34,066	9,100	190,226
Licensed Residential and Restaurant	379,000	40,962	23,028	1,092	2·6	4·7	83,128	8,991	5,648	97,767
Unlicensed Place of Refreshment	96,000	25,460	6,094	690	2·7	11·3	45,936	16,860	2,683	65,479
TOTAL	2,472,400	325,935	109,911	11,066	3·3	10·0	910,119	385,683	81,410	1,377,212

Table 4
Checks carried out and underpayments found in Wages Inspectorate divisions—1989

Division	Estabs checks by all methods	Percentage of register checked	Estabs checked by visit	Percentage of register checked by visit	Estabs found underpaying	Percentage of all estabs checked underpaying	Percentage of estabs visited underpaying
London	2,545	4·9	1,399	2·7	229	8·9	16·3
South East	4,462	10·3	1,815	4·2	478	10·7	26·3
Eastern	2,809	7·1	1,866	4·7	432	15·3	23·1
South West	4,297	7·6	2,531	4·5	960	22·3	37·9
Midlands	4,801	7·8	2,369	3·8	822	17·1	34·6
North West	4,939	9·2	3,161	5·9	1,104	22·4	35·0
Yorkshire and Humberside	4,494	12·8	1,804	5·1	569	12·6	31·5
Northern	1,989	9·2	1,306	6·0	387	19·4	29·6
Scotland	3,292	9·5	2,188	6·3	547	16·6	25·0
Great Britain	33,628	8·8	18,439	4·8	5,528	16·4	29·9

All branches of multiple firms are recorded under the division in which the Head Office is located. Account has to be taken of this when comparing divisional figures.

Table 5
Workers whose pay was checked in wages inspectorate divisions—1989

Division	Workers whose pay was checked by all methods	Workers whose pay was checked by visit	Workers found underpaid	Percentage underpaid of all workers checked	Percentage underpaid of all workers checked by visit	Arrears paid	Arrears not pursued at workers request	Arrears not pursued for other reasons	Total arrears assessed as due
						£	£	£	£
London	21,262	10,540	509	2·3	4·8	54,330	3,234	3,522	61,086
South East	44,799	11,551	833	1·8	7·2	92,785	27,520	15,673	135,978
Eastern	16,641	11,419	883	5·3	7·7	82,643	27,469	2,568	112,680
South West	38,613	15,006	1,691	4·3	11·2	107,893	45,899	10,546	164,338
Midlands	34,650	14,908	1,607	4·6	10·7	85,734	65,298	9,795	160,827
North West	35,515	16,537	2,272	6·4	13·7	219,648	114,988	16,622	351,258
Yorkshire and Humberside	88,437	8,910	1,172	1·3	13·1	77,352	56,277	4,339	137,968
Northern	16,693	6,417	846	5·0	13·1	69,315	13,731	3,453	86,499

Division	Workers whose pay was checked by all methods	Workers whose pay was checked by visit	Workers found underpaid	Percentage underpaid of all workers checked	Percentage underpaid of all workers checked by visit	Arrears paid £	Arrears not pursued at workers request £	Arrears not pursued for other reasons £	Total arrears assessed as due £
Scotland	29,325	14,623	1,253	4·2	8·5	120,419	31,267	14,892	166,578
Great Britain	325,935	109,911	11,066	3·3	10·0	910,119	385,683	81,410	1,377,212

Note: The numbers of workers in branches of multiple firms are recorded under the division in which the Head Office is located. Account has to be taken of this when comparing divisional figures.

Mr. Nellist: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will update the information given in his answer of 1 March 1989, *Official Report*, columns *201-02*, with the levels of employment in each wages council for 1988 and 1989; and if he will explain the methodology behind the collation of these statistics.

Mr. Nicholls: No new estimates have been made. The figures given in the answer of 1 March 1989, as in earlier answers, were based essentially on data collected by wages inspectors in the course of inspections, supplemented where appropriate by other information obtained from employers in the trades concerned and such published material as is relevant.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Nellist: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will publish the number of employees, broken down into full-timers and part-timers who are *(a)* under 18 years, *(b)* 18 years and over and *(c)* 21 years old and over in the following standard industrial classifications (i) zero to nine, (ii) one to five, (iii) two to four, (iv) six to nine, (v) zero, (vi) 43, (vii) 45, (viii) 6, (ix) 64 and 65 and their subgroups, (x) 66 and its subgroups, (xi) eight, (xii) 91, (xiii) 92, (xiv) 93, (xv) 95, (xvi) 96, (xvii) 97 and (xviii) 98.

Mr. Nicholls: Preliminary results from the 1989 labour force survey, as requested, are shown in the table.

Employees in full or part-time employment, by age and industry—Great Britain
Spring 1989
Thousands

	Industry (Sic 1980)		Full-time[1] Age			Part-time[1] Age		
Divisions	Classes	Groups	16 or 17	18 to 20	21 or over	16 or 17	18 to 20	21 or over
[2]0-9	—	—	296	1,416	15,339	365	217	4,413
0	—	—	[3]—	19	193	[3]—	[3]—	42
1-5	—	—	130	524	5,955	18	12	525
2-4	—	—	99	391	4,488	16	10	430
—	43	—	[3]—	14	157	[3]—	[3]—	21
—	45	—	[3]—	37	207	[3]—	[3]—	50
6-9	—	—	161	872	9,167	333	215	3,841
6	—	—	73	349	2,202	283	155	1,319
—	64/65	—	42	196	1,105	209	102	803
—	—	[4]651/2	[3]—	28	174	[3]—	[3]—	36
—	66	—	14	62	342	66	49	406
—	—	661	[3]—	24	98	40	20	87
—	—	662	[3]—	[3]—	46	[3]—	17	112
—	—	663	[3]—	[3]—	24	[3]—	[3]—	47
—	—	664	[3]—	[3]—	71	[3]—	[3]—	107
—	—	665	[3]—	20	90	12	[3]—	49
—	—	667	[3]—	[3]—	12	[3]—	[3]—	[3]—
8	—	—	49	236	1,724	[3]—	[3]—	344
—	91	—	[3]—	54	1,263	[3]—	[3]—	169
—	92	—	[3]—	[3]—	133	[3]—	[3]—	74
—	93	—	[3]—	11	970	[3]—	[3]—	635
—	95	—	[3]—	45	675	[3]—	[3]—	517
—	96	—	[3]—	20	404	[3]—	12	403
—	97	—	[3]—	26	287	12	13	128
—	98	—	[3]—	30	84	[3]—	[3]—	48

[1] Based on the respondent's own assessment, not on the number of hours usually worked.
[2] Includes those who inadequately described their industry.
[3] Sample size too small for reliable estimate.
[4] Other groups in classes 64/65 are not separately identified.
Source: 1989 LFS, preliminary results.

Mr. Speed: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list the January unemployment percentage figure in the Ashford travel-to-work area for each of the last 10 years.

Mr. Nicholls: The information in the following table is available from the Library and is affected by seasonal influences, changes to the count, and a redefinition of travel-to-work areas.

"Narrow-based" unadjusted unemployment rates in Ashford travel-to-work area[1]: January each year

	Ashford Jobcentre based TTWA *Percentage rate*	*Ashford ward based TTWA* *Percentage rate*
1980	4·5	—
1981	8·5	—
1982	12·0	—
1983	11·9	—
1984	11·3	10·6
1985	—	11·7
1986	—	12·2
1987	—	11·2
1988	—	7·9
1989	—	4·9
1990	—	4·2

[1] The definition of travel-to-work areas changed in 1984. Earlier data are given for the old Ashford travel-to-work area.

Privatisation

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the total sum paid out in fees to outside organisations in the furtherance of privatisation by his Department in 1979-80 and in each subsequent year; and what is his estimate for 1990-91.

Mr. Eggar *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* There were no fees paid to outside organisations in the furtherance of privatisation by the Employment Department Group (excluding the Training Agency) in the financial period from 1979-80 to 1987-88 inclusive.

Fees to the value of £369,000 were incurred in 1988-89.

Costs incurred by the Employment Department Group in connection with the privatisation programme in 1989-90 and 1990-91 will be reported to Parliament in due course in the usual way.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what were the total fees paid out by his Department to management consultants in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

Mr. Eggar *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* Expenditure on management consultancy in the Employment Department Group (excluding the Training Agency) in each year from 1984-85 to 1988-89 was as follows:

	£ thousands
1984-85	237
1985-86	174
1986-87	629
1987-88	415
1988-89	783

The estimated outturn for the current year (1989-90) is £1,412,000 and the budget for 1990-91 is expected to be around £1·3 million.

SCOTLAND

Homelessness

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what information his Department has recently gathered regarding the total number of homeless people who *(a)* have no home or family to go back to, *(b)* have been forced to leave home by an adult member of the family, *(c)* left home after being abused or fearing abuse by another member of the family and *(d)* could safely return to their families; and what use he makes of this information in shaping his (1) housing and (2) social security policies.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The homelessness statistics collected by the Scottish Development Department relate to households which apply to local authorities under the provisions of part II of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987. For each applicant, the returns record information including the reason given for becoming homeless. Information in the detail requested is not available. However, on the basis of the returns, in 1988-89, 37 per cent. of applicants gave as their reason for homelessness that friends or relatives were no longer willing or able to accommodate them; 14 per cent. said they had had a violent dispute with the spouse or co-habitee.

The Government take account of all relevant available information in formulating their policies. Social security matters are the responsibility of the Secretary of State for Social Security.

Ticket Touts

Mr. Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has any plans to increase the powers of the police to deal with ticket touting.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Ticket touting can in certain circumstances already lead to an offence in Scotland under section 55 of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982. The Government are currently considering whether existing powers under the 1982 Act are adequate.

Mr. Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has any plans to introduce legislation to make ticket touting illegal.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: A review of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 is already under way and the Government are currently considering whether the existing powers under this Act relating to the activity of ticket touting are adequate.

Mr. Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will commission a study into ticket touting at major sporting events.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I have no plans to do so at present.

Mr. Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will discuss ticket touting at major sporting events when he next meets the chief constables of Strathclyde and of Midlothian and the Borders.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I have no plans to do so.

Mr. Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will discuss ticket touting when he next meets the chairman of the Scottish Sports Council.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I have no plans to do so.

White Fish

Mr. Allan Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the total value at first sale of the main species of white fish landed into Scotland by United Kingdom vessels in January 1990 and the corresponding figure for January 1989.

Mr. Lang: The provisional value of cod, haddock, whiting and saithe landed by United Kingdom vessels in Scotland in January 1990 was £7·4 million, compared with £7·1 million in January 1989. The value of these landings therefore increased by 4 per cent. despite the reduction of 26 per cent. in the volume landed. Unit prices increased by as much as 57 per cent. in the case of whiting and 53 per cent. in the case of haddock.

Surgery (Fatalities)

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list in the *Official Report* the death rate for ruptured aortic aneurysm operations in *(a)* the Inverclyde Royal hospital, Greenock, for each of the past eight years and *(b)* other hospitals in Scotland for the same years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 9 March 1990]:* The death rate for ruptured aortic aneurysm operations in both Inverclyde Royal hospital, Greenock and other hospitals in Scotland over the past eight years is shown in the table. In Scotland 66·2 per cent. of cases result in death, compared with 62·5 per cent. in the Inverclyde royal hospital at Greenock.

Operations for ruptured aortic aneurysm 1981-88 Scotland

	1981	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	*1987*	*1988*	*Total*
Inverclyde Royal									
Episodes	3	3	1	3	1	2	2	1	16
Episodes where outcome known[1]	3	3	1	3	1	2	2	1	16
Deaths	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	10
Percentage deaths over known outcome	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	62·5
All Scotland									
Episodes	99	108	94	124	122	143	140	140	970
Episodes where outcome known[1]	56	52	47	58	45	57	53	58	426
Deaths	31	27	34	43	32	41	33	41	282
Percentage deaths over known outcome	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	66·2

[1] Patients at Inverclyde Royal suffering from Aortic Aneurysm are not transferred to other facilities but elsewhere in Scotland they are. The records of transferred patients could only be correlated at disproportionate cost; therefore numbers of deaths have been compared in each case with the known outcomes of patients being discharged from or dying in the same unit.

Heart Disease

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list all the research projects on heart diseases carried out or sponsored by his Department for each year since 1975.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 9 March 1990]:* The information is as follows:

Year and Project Title

1975

Correlation of certain pathological findings in the heart and coronary arteries, obtained by a post mortem investigation including sterioarteriography with clinical observations made before death.

Fibroblast viability in allograft heart valve leaflet.

1977

ECG interpretation by computer.

Genetic variation in the regulation of cholestrol synthesis in relation to coronary heart disease.

Computer assisted radionuclide cardiovascular diagnosis

1978

Computer assisted reporting on electrocardiograms

Computer analysis of instantaneous pressure and velocity signals to assess ventricular contractility power and output impedance in patients with coronary and valvular heart disease before and after surgical heart treatment.

1980

A study of cardiac and respiratory rate and rhythm in the new born to determined (i) their relationship to each other, (ii) whether or not this changes during the first few months of life, (iii) if recordings at home differ from those in hospital and (iv) their possible roll in sudden infant death.

Comparison of nuclear angiography and echo-cardiography (M-mode and phased array) in the investigation of left ventricular performance.

1981

A study of biochemical origins and prevention of lethal ventricular arrythmias during acute myocardial ischaemia.

1983

Metabolic electrophysiological and epidemiological aspects of sudden cardiac death: purchase of fast analyser.

Acute experimental myocardial ischaemia—the role of substances derived from arachidonic acid.

1983

Myocardial effects of prolonged exposure to lead ethanol.

1984

Investigations into mechanisms of serious ventricular arrhythmias during the early hours of acute myocardial infarction in man.

1985

Strategy for screening for risk of coronary heart disease.

1986

The role of the neutrophil in acute myocardial infarction.

Acute experimental myocardial ischaemia—possible role of locally released coronary vasoconstrictor and platelet aggregating agents, with particular reference to substances derived from membrane phospholipids.

The activity of antiarrhythmic drugs in myocardial ischaemia

The importance of neuropeptide Y in the central control of blood pressure and heart rate.

1987

The effect of physiological and pathological factors and of xenobiotics on the distribution of high density lipoprotein subspecies in relation to coronary heart disease.

Non-invasive recording of small signals from the conduction system of the heart.

The development and evaluation of a self-help manual for use in the rehabilitation of myocardial infarct patients.

1988

A prospective evaluation of the Bjork-Shiely Hancock and Carpentier-Edwards Heart Valve Prostheses.

1989

Application of Stable Isotope Technology to the study of lipoprotein metabolism.

1990

Sympathetic and parasympathetic interaction and the development of serious arrhythmias during acute myocardial ischaemia.

In addition, the Scottish Home and Health Department has, since 1981, provided core funding for the programme of research of the cardiovascular epidemiology unit at Dundee university. It is also providing funding for the Scottish centre of the World Health Organisation MONICA project: a multinational long-term study to monitor trends and determinants in cardiovascular disease.

Also the Scottish Hospital Endowments Research Trust has supported the following projects:

Year and Project Title

1976

Electrophysiological evaluation of the Wolff-Parkinson-White syndrome and post-operative conduction abnormalities in patients with congenital heart disease.

1977

The effect of anaesthetic agents and techniques on myocardial blood flow during acute experimental myocardial ischaemia.

Investigation of the experimental basis of surgery for coronary artery stenosis.

1978

Experimental study of methods for assessment and prevention of myocardial injury during cardiac surgery.

The effects of six months physical training on plasma lipoprotein distribution echocardiography and exercise cardiography in male survivors of myocardial infarction.

1983

An experimental study of left ventricular assistance.

1984

An investigation into sudden death in Glasgow.

A study of metabolism of atherogenic lipoproteins in the plasma.

1986

Investigation into the cellular mechanisms underlying arrhythmias in cardiac cells and into the action of antiarrythmic drugs.

A population study of blood viscosity, plasma viscosity, haematocrit and fibrinogen in relation to cardiovascular risk factors.

1987

Membrane vesicles from cardiac muscle.

Prospective study of the effect of intravenous insulin infusion in diabetics with acute myocardial infarction.

The effects of hypothermia on postoperative energy expenditure in cardiac surgical patients determined by the doubly labelled water and indirect calorimetry techniques.

Normal limits of the paediatric electrocardiogram and echocardiogram.

1988

The role of vascular endothelium as a target in renal allograft rejection.

Protection of the ischaemic myocardium: a clinical and experimental evaluation of the influence of ionised calcium during cardiopulmonary bypass.

The plasma high density lipoprotein profile as an index of coronary status: a comparison of lipoprotein and clinical data in coronary patients.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Iraq

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if Her Majesty's Government have made any representations to the Government of Iraq about the refusal to permit the editor of *The Observer* to attend the trial of Farzad Bazoft in Baghdad.

Mr. Waldegrave: Yes.

Deputy Secretaries

Mr. Tom Arnold: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the responsibilities of each of the deputy secretaries in his Department and the numbers and grades of staff reporting to each.

Mr. Maude: There are seven deputy secretaries in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, six in the diplomatic wing and one in the ODA. Broad areas of responsibility are as follows. A full range of diplomatic service grades (senior grade to DS10), specialist staff, secretaries and certain home civil service grades report to each diplomatic wing deputy secretary. Numbers of staff in London reporting to each are indicated in brackets.

(i) Europe and the United Nations (129);
(ii) Commercial and certain functional areas including scientific environmental departments (129);
(iii) Public related (e.g. consular, migration and visa) and administration departments (2,717);
(iv) Geographical departments covering the Americas, Asia and the Pacific (144);
(v) Geographical departments covering Africa and the Middle East (113);
(vi) Remaining political departments including areas such as security and defence (97).

A few specialist departments are not under the remit of a deputy secretary, for example legal advisers. Others are under the direct authority of the permanent under-secretary, for example research and economic advisers. Staff in these total 251.

The ODA's one deputy secretary is responsible for all expenditure, both bilateral and multilateral, under the aid programme. The ODA's operations are managed by 625 staff at home and 52 staff overseas across a full range of grades.

Guatemala

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the meeting of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary with the Foreign Minister of Guatemala.

Mr. Maude: My hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs met Mr. Rivera on Monday 19 February. They discussed bilateral relations, human rights and Belize.

West Bank and Gaza

Sir David Steel: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations Her Majesty's Government have made to the Government of Israel concerning the continued closure of six universities in the West Bank and Gaza strip; and what response he has received.

Mr. Waldegrave: We take every opportunity to urge the Israelis to allow all higher education institutions in the occupied territories to reopen. I reiterated our concern to the Israeli Minister without Portfolio, Mr. Olmert, on 5 March.

Katyn Massacre

Mr. Atkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on progress on his Department's studies into the responsibility for the Katyn massacre.

Mr. Waldegrave: We are following developments closely. There is substantial circumstantial evidence pointing to Soviet responsibility for the Katyn massacre. We urge the Soviet authorities to help establish the facts quickly.

South Africa

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the British companies that have invested in South Africa for each of the past 10 years; and how much investment in pounds sterling that has amounted to.

Mr Redwood: I have been asked to reply.

Under the Statistics of Trade Act 1947, the names of United Kingdom companies which furnish such information are confidential. The most recent estimate (end of 1987) of the book value of United Kingdom direct investment in South Africa is £1,821 million.

ENVIRONMENT

Uniform Business Rate

106. **Mr. Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what has been the impact of the unified business rate on small business growth in the midlands.

107. **Mr. Cunliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what has been the impact of the unified business rate on small business growth in the midlands.

Mr. Chope: The uniform business rate and the non-domestic revaluation do not come into effect until 1 April 1990, but when they do, average non-domestic rate bills will fall in real terms by 6 per cent. in the west midlands and 4 per cent. in the east midlands in 1990-91 and, once transition to the new system is complete, by 28 per cent. and 15 per cent. respectively. This will be a stimulus to business growth.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Leighton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how much of the new money recently announced for inner cities is to go to the London borough of Newham.

Mr. David Hunt: Spending on the programmes which come within the "Action for Cities" initiative is planned to increase by £500 million in 1990-91 to a total of around £4 billion. It is not possible to estimate the amount which will be spent in any individual local authority's area.

Sir John Stanley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will reform the community charge system in England to enable the amount of revenue support grant attributable to county and district councils respectively to be separately identified either on the basis that it is currently separately identified in Wales or on the basis that it is currently separately identified for regional and district councils in Scotland.

Mr. David Hunt *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* No.

Sir John Stanley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will reproduce in the *Official Report* the full calculation underlying his reply to the right hon. Member for Tonbridge and Malling on 12 February, *Official Report*, column *58*, that under the community charge system about 15 times as much will be contributed to the cost of local government by the top 10 per cent. of householders by income compared with the poorest 10 per cent.

Mr. David Hunt *[holding answer 7 March 1990]:* I will write to my right hon. Friend.

Council Rents

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what plans the Government have to alleviate the effects of recent increases in council rents.

Mr. Chope: It is for local authorities to determine their own rent levels. The Government allocate sufficient HRA subsidy to enable council rents to be set at reasonable levels. Rent rebates give assistance to those who need it.

Electromagnetic Fields

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any plans to introduce controls relating to exposure levels within electromagnetic fields.

Mr. Trippier: I have no plans at present to introduce specific controls relating to the exposure to electromagnetic fields.

USSR (Exposure Levels)

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has made an assessment of the permitted exposure levels to microwave and RF EM fields in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Mr. Trippier: I understand that the NRPB is currently assessing all the available biological and epidemiological evidence and will be publishing an assessment during the year.

Water Flotation (Cost)

Mrs. Golding: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when the full cost of the flotation of the water industry including *(a)* the total cost to public funds of advertising and *(b)* the total cost to public funds in fees to City advisers, will be available to Parliament.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: Figures for overall costs to the Government are being compiled and will be reported shortly.

Acid Mist (Lincolnshire and Norfolk)

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if his Department has investigated the causes of the acid mist that blighted acres of hawthorn trees in Lincolnshire and Norfolk on 9 September 1989.

Mr. Trippier: My Department commissioned the scientists who were working on the Halvergate marshes at the time to collect all available information and to report on the acid mist incident. The report is expected soon and I will arrange for copies to be placed in the Library of the House.

Energy Conservation

Miss Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what measures are being taken to alert builders erecting or converting homes of the need to conserve energy; and whether he intends to introduce any regulations to ensure that builders respond to such needs.

Mr. Chope: The Building Regulations 1985 already include requirements relating to energy conservation measures in new buildings and extensions. The Building Regulations (Amendment) Regulations 1989, which are due to come into force on 1 April, will make the existing requirements more stringent, and the changes have been widely publicised.

Disabled People

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment which voluntary organisations he consulted on "Local Government and Housing Act 1989: Implementation of Part VIII, House Adaptations for Disabled People".

Mr. Chope: We made copies of a draft of a circular entitled "House Adaptations for Disabled People" generally available, and welcomed comments from any organisation or individual with an interest. We specifically sought the views of:

The British Council of Organisations of Disabled People
The Royal Association of Disability and Rehabilitation
"Panel of Four" c/o Royal National Institute for the Deaf
Royal National Institute for the Blind
Access Committee for England
The Centre on Environment for the Handicapped
MIND
MENCAP
The Disability Income Group
National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux
Shelter
Age Concern

Sewage Disposal

Mr. Speller: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will take steps to prohibit the use of long sea outfalls for sewage disposal in the Bristol channel and set a date for this prohibition.

Mr. Trippier: As my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State announced to the House on 5 March, the Government have decided that in general municipal sewage should receive secondary treatment, but that primary treatment would be more appropriate for discharges to coastal waters, where it can be shown that this does not adversely affect the environment, *Official Report*, volume 168, column *452*.

It will be for the National Rivers Authority to implement this policy by using its powers to consent discharges.

Waste Recycling

Mr. Janman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make it his policy to conduct a survey, similar to the one initiated by his Department called "Survey of Local Authority Domestic Waste Recycling Activity", directed at the recycling industry, to assess its view of waste recycling capability and potential.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* Yes.

Leeds Development Corporation

Mr. Fatchett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, further to his reply of 5 March, *Official Report*, column *448*, how many display signs were purchased by the Leeds development corporation for the £26,500 referred to in that reply; and how many of those signs are still in place.

Mr. Moynihan *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* Leeds development corporation's expenditure on display signs of £26,500 since designation in June 1988 covers design work, materials and erection costs. Some 40 signs have been purchased and erected during that period, including 10 replacements. Thirty are currently in place, of which two have recently been blown down and two affected by storm damage. Work is in hand by the corporation to reinstate these signs.

Mr. Fatchett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will set out the main items of expenditure by the Leeds development corporation under the budget heading of £320,000 in 1989-90 and £480,000 in 1990-91 for promotion and publicity.

Mr. Moynihan *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* The key objective of Leeds development corporation's promotion and publicity budget is to promote the economic regeneration of the Leeds urban development area. The main items of expenditure are the promotion and marketing of the urban development area and of Leeds in general; the promotion and marketing of specific sites; exhibition material; keeping the local community informed of the development corporation's activities, including a bi-annual newspaper; community sponsorship; and the production of an annual report.

London Residuary Body

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list all those properties currently vested in the London residuary body for which he has refused consent to its sale to the relevant London borough under section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972; and if he will state the date and the reasons for refusal in each case.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: An application by the London residuary body for consent to the sale of 67-69 Cowcross street, London EC1 to the London borough of Islington was refused on 26 February 1990 for the reasons given in my letter of the same date to the hon. Member. No other properties currently vested in the London residuary body have been refused for disposal under section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972.

Lakes

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what assessment has been made of the effects of agricultural uses of fertiliser on British lakes in increasing nitrogen and phosphate contents;

(2) what assessment has been made of the effects of eutrophication on species diversity in British lakes; and what steps are being taken to reduce eutrophication;

(3) what studies his Department has made into the eutrophication of British lakes; and what causes of eutrophication have been identified.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory *[holding answer 13 March 1990]:* A number of surveys have been carried out in recent years by the water authorities into the eutrophication of British waters. These have concluded that eutrophication is not increasing in the United Kingdom and is limited to a small number of areas, for example, the Norfolk Broads, Loch Leven and Lake Windermere. In nearly all cases it is phosphorus which is the cause of eutrophication. To reduce eutrophication action is best taken at local level because the sources contributing to excess nutrients vary from place to place. Phosphorus stripping at sewage works is nearly always an effective control option.

Coniferous Afforestation

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information his Department has about the acidification of upland soils and waterways by coniferous afforestation.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory *[holding answer 13 March 1990]:* A number of recent reviews and reports on the relationship between coniferous afforestation and possible acidification of upland soils and waterways have been placed in the Library of the House. They include;

(i) The United Kingdom Acid Waters Review Group Second Report "Acidity In United Kingdom Freshwaters" December 1988.

(ii) "Lake Acidification in the United Kingdom" prepared for the Department of the Environment by the Paleoecology Research Unit, University College of London.

(iii) "Acidification in Scotland" Symposium Proceedings, 8th November 1988, published by the Scottish Development Department, December 1989.

(iv) "Acid Waters in Wales" by Edwards, Stoner and Gee, Welsh National Rivers Authority, March 1990.

(v) "Forests and Surface Water Acidification", Forestry Commission Bulletin No. 86, March 1990.

Additional information on this issue is also available from a number of research projects being funded by the NERC, DOE and CEGB.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Productivity

108. **Mr. Beaumont-Dark:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what are the trends of manufacturing industry productivity over the last 12 months.

Mr. Lamont: Indices of United Kingdom manufacturing productivity can be found on the CSO databank, which is accessible through the House of Commons Library.

Interest Rates

109. **Mr. Cox:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the impact of interest rates on manufacturing industry.

110. **Mr. Darling:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the impact of interest rates on manufacturing industry.

111. **Mr. Cummings:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the impact of interest rates on manufacturing industry.

114. **Mr. Frank Cook:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the impact of interest rates on manufacturing industry.

116. **Mr. Corbett:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the impact of interest rates on manufacturing industry.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Interest rates have been set at their current level to put downward pressure on inflation. Inflation is the greatest threat to the future prosperity of manufacturing industry.

113. **Mr. Fearn:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent representations he has received from small businesses on interest rates.

115. **Mr. Rowlands:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations have been made to him concerning the effect of the present level of interest rates on the costs of manufacturing industry.

Mr. Ryder: My right hon. Friend has received a number of such representations.

Exchange Rate

112. **Mr. Geraint Howells:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received from small businesses on the exchange rate.

Mr. Ryder: My right hon. Friend has received a number of representations.

Balance of Trade

117. **Mr. Wallace:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received on the trade deficit.

Mr. Norman Lamont: My right hon. Friend receives a few letters each month from members of the public concerning the trade deficit.

Imports

118. **Mr. Livsey:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what are the latest trends in imports.

Mr. Norman Lamont: In the three months to January, import volumes (less oil and erratics) were 1 per cent. lower than in the previous three months, and only 2 per cent. higher than in the same period a year earlier. This is clear evidence that imports are responding to the tightening of policy.

Mortgage Tax Relief

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, further to his reply to the hon. Member for Great Grimsby of 21 December 1989, *Official Report,*

columns *368-69*, on mortgage interest tax relief and investment income, whether he will provide for 1989-90 the numbers in each range of income with investment income of more than £200 and less than £500, and those with investment income of more than £500.

Mr. Lilley: The information requested is in the table. These estimates are provisional and subject to revision.

Single People and Married Couples Receiving Mortgage Interest Relief:

Range of total income (£)	*Numbers with annual investment income of*	
	more than £200, but less than £500 (thousands)	*more than £500 (thousands)*
0–4,999	30	20
5,000–9,999	90	260
10,000–14,999	260	290
15,000–19,999	300	350
20,000–29,999	280	450
30,000 +	140	490
Total	1,100	1,860

Estimates are based on the 1987 family expenditure survey and the 1987-88 survey of personal incomes projected to 1989-90.

Taxes and Benefits

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will update the table in the answer to the hon. Member for Hornchurch (Mr. Squire) on 10 January 1989, *Official Report*, columns *632-34*, stating the effects at different income levels of alternative policies based on Exchequer expenditure equal to a 1p cut in income tax.

Mr. Lilley: The effects of the various changes to income tax and child benefit on a married man with two children are shown in the table. Each of the changes would cost £1·7 billion a year, that is the cost in a full year of a 1p cut in the basic rate of income tax. Estimates are based on projections of the 1987-88 survey of personal incomes in line with forecasts in the Autumn Statement.

Increase in income after tax[1] (£ per week) compared with indexation[2] in 1990-91 for married man[3] with two children.

	Multiple of average earnings[4]						
	½	*¾*	*1*	*1½*	*2*	*5*	*10*
Increased derived from							
(i) 1p cut in basic rate	0·61	1·37	2·13	3·65	4·29	4·29	4·29
(ii) 7·5 per cent increase in main income tax allowances	1·59	1·59	1·59	1·59	2·54	2·54	2·54
(iii) Increase in child benefit							
(a) £3·15 per week per child[5]	6·30	6·30	6·30	6·30	6·30	6·30	6·30
(b) £2·45 per week per child[6]	4·90	4·90	4·90	4·90	4·90	4·90	4·90
(iv) reduced rate band of 20 per cent. on first £1,450 of taxable income	1·40	1·40	1·40	1·40	1·40	1·40	1·40
(v) reduced rate band of 15 per cent. on first £700 of taxable income	1·35	1·35	1·35	1·35	1·35	1·35	1·35

[1] Disregarding any change to entitlement to social security income-related benefits except in item (iii) (b).
[2] Calculations based on the standard assumption that 1989-90 allowances and the basis rate limit have been indexed by 7·7 per cent. for 1990-91.
[3] Assumed to have no reliefs and allowances other than the personal allowance and the married couple's allowance.
[4] Average earnings assumed to be £303.8 per week, an increase of 8·5 per cent. on 1989-90 in line with the assumptions used by the Government Actuary for reviewing national insurance contributions (paragraph 3·02 of the Autumn Statement 1989).
[5] Assuming no change in income support and family credit children's rates.
[6] Assuming corresponding changes in income support and family credit children's rates.

Manufacturing Investment

Mr. Battle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the level of manufacturing investment.

119. **Mr. Harry Barnes:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the level of manufacturing investment.

120. **Mr. Barron:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the level of manufacturing investment.

121. **Mr. Bell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the level of manufacturing investment.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Manufacturing investment reached a record level in 1989 after six years of growth averaging 8 per cent.

Foreign-owned Companies

Mr. Allen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what profits and other capital payments have been remitted back to the host country from Britain from foreign-owned concerns for each of the last 10 years.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The latest available information on profits and capital flows remitted back to the host country by foreign-owned concerns in the United Kingdom is given in table 2·1 of *Business Monitor* MA4 "Overseas Transactions 1987". The relevant items in net earnings and net direct investment are:

(i) interest paid to, net of interest received from, overseas parent companies;
(ii) dividends paid to overseas parent companies;
(iii) net profits from United Kingdom branches;
(iv) disposals of United Kingdom companies' share and loan capital.

In addition, the categories "increase in amount due to overseas parent on inter-company account" and "increase in indebtedness to overseas parent companies on branch head office account" may include indistinguishably certain capital flows from United Kingdom subsidiaries, associates and branches to their overseas direct investors.

Inflation

Sir Trevor Skeet: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he intends to align with the practice in other European Community countries in calculating inflation.

Mr. Lilley: My right hon. Friend the Chancellor has no plans to do so at present. The practices followed in compiling consumer prices indices vary between Community countries. The United Kingdom regularly joins in discussions with other members with a view to understanding the differences in methodology. When changes in the retail prices index have been proposed they have always been considered by the RPI advisory committee and due account taken then of practice elsewhere.

Capital Gains Tax

Mr. Beith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many taxpayers paid capital gains tax in 1987-88.

Mr. Lilley: The number of individuals and trusts who have a liability to pay capital gains tax from gains on disposals made in 1987-88 is provisionally estimated at 170,000.

Investment

Mr. Butterfill: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the business fixed investment figures in the United Kingdom for the last five years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The latest annual data for business investment are:

	£ billion 1985 prices
1984	36·9
1985	39·7
1986	39·5
1987	43·7
1988	51·4

In the five years to 1988 (1983-88) business investment grew by over 50 per cent. in real terms.

Currency

Mr. Robert Sheldon: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he has any plans to introduce a £100 note.

Mr. Major: The Bank of England is responsible for the note issue. It has no plans to introduce a £100 note.

Capital Investment

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what are the latest figures on capital investment by business.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Business investment was 12¼ per cent. higher in real terms in the first three quarters of 1989 than in the same period in 1988. In the two years to 1988 business investment grew by over 30 per cent.

Taxation

Mr. Hanley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer *(a)* whether he will raise the income limits which govern the Inland Revenue's practice for remitting arrears of tax where information provided to the Revenue had not been used within a reasonable time and *(b)* what are the implications of independent taxation for the income limits.

Mr. Lilley: I am pleased to announce that limits are to be increased from today. From 6 April 1990 the income scale will apply separately to the incomes of husbands and wives.

(a) The Inland Revenue's practice of remitting tax in cases where the Department has not made timely use of information available is set out in a White Paper of July 1971 (first report from the Select Committee on the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration: Session 1970-71: Cmnd 4729). The proportion of arrears collected varies according to the size of the taxpayer's gross income; the balance of the arrear is remitted.

The new scale of limits will apply to arrears of tax, the actual of likely amount of which is first notified to the taxpayer of his agent on or after today.

New scale Gross income £	*Percentage of arrears remitted*	*Old scale Gross income £*
0 to 12,000	All	0 to 8,500
12,001 to 14,500	0·75	8,501 to 10,500
14,501 to 18,500	0·50	10,501 to 13,500
18,501 to 22,000	0·25	13,501 to 16,000
22,001 to 32,000	0·10	16,001 to 23,000
Over 32,000	None	Over 23,000

For taxpayers aged 65 or over or who are in receipt of the national insurance retirement or widows' pension each of the bands is increased by the following:

Pensioners addition to each band	
New scale £	*Old scale £*
3,300	2,500

If a taxpayer in this category has gross income of £15,300 or less the whole of the arrear will be remitted, whilst some remission will be allowed on gross income up to £35,300.

(b) At present income limits for the purposes of the concession apply equally to a single person or the joint incomes of a husband and wife. With the introduction of independent taxation the income scale will apply only to the spouse assessed.

This new rule will apply to arrears of tax, the actual or likely amount of which is notified to a taxpayer on or after 6 April 1990.

ECOFIN

Dr. Twinn: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the outcome of the latest meeting of the European Community's Economic and Finance Council.

Mr. Ryder: The ECOFIN Council met in Brussels on 12 March. Before the formal meeting of the Council, my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer attended the lunch at which prospects for Germany monetary union were discussed. The Chancellor also stressed the importance of making good progress in establishing the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and emphasised the attractions of London as its location.

During the formal Council, I represented the United Kingdom. A common position was established on the proposal to revise the financial perspective which sets out EC budgetary ceilings. A Council declaration identifying

areas in which further measures against EC budget fraud are needed was also agreed. I stressed the importance of simplifying the relevant EC legislation, improving reporting by member states and agreeing on administrative sanctions. The Court of Auditors' annual report for 1988 formed the basis of an agreed opinion on the discharge of the 1988 budget.

Revised Council decisions on the promotion of economic convergence and co-operation between central banks during stage 1 of EMU were formally adopted, and the Council took note of reports on multilateral surveillance of member states' economies during stage 1 from the monetary committee, the economic policy committee and the committee of central bank governors. I also stressed the need for early proposals from the Commission and a discussion in the Council on technical VAT and statistics systems after 1992.

Consumer Spending

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the retail price index takes full account of the increase since 1979 in (i) imputed rent and (ii) mortgage interest given in the reply to the hon. Member for Great Grimsby of 19 February, *Official Report*, column *524-25*, concerning consumer's expenditure detailed in table 1.6 of the Monthly Digest of Statistics.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 7 March 1990]:* Imputed rents have not been used as a measure of owner-occupiers' housing costs in the retail prices index since 1975. They were then replaced by mortgage interest payments following a standardised formulation recommended by the Retail Prices Index Advisory Committee.

Female Earnings

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many women in work, and how many of those with children under five, have earnings below £8,500.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 7 March 1990]:* Information on the distribution of weekly earnings of women in employment is published in the 1989 new earnings survey report and information on dependent children of women in work is given in chapter 9 of the report on the 1987 general household survey. Further information is not available.

Public Sector Asset Creation

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will extend the series of total public sector asset creation as given in table 21.2.15 of the public expenditure White Paper, Cm. 1021, as far back as possible both in cash and in 1988-89 prices.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 8 March 1990]:* Information on total public sector asset creation is available for the years since 1978-79 and is given in table 21.2.16 of chapter 21 of the 1990 public expenditure White Paper in both cash and real terms (1988-89 prices).

Pay Figures

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will provide the pay figures for the financial year 1983-84, and as far back as is possible, on the same basis as those figures given in table 21.02.13 of Cm. 1021; if these figures, are available on a quarterly basis; and where both sets of data are published.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 9 March 1990]:* Figures on a consistent basis with those given in table 21.2.13 are not readily available for earlier years. Calendar years figures for general government expenditure on wages and salaries and so on, consistent with table 9.4 of the 1989 edition of the "United Kingdom National Accounts" (the CSO Blue Book), are given in the table. These data are not on exactly the same basis as that provided in the public expenditure White Paper.

	£ million
1961	2,534
1962	2,722
1963	2,929
1964	3,161
1965	3,473
1966	3,778
1967	4,083
1968	4,382
1969	4,690
1970	5,402
1971	6,372
1972	7,460
1973	8,423
1974	10,556
1975	14,815
1976	16,907
1977	18,281
1978	20,377
1979	23,258
1980	29,469
1981	33,577
1982	35,773
1983	39,060
1984	41,271
1985	43,695
1986	46,896
1987	50,914
1988	55,219

The CSO figures are higher than those in the public expenditure White Paper mainly because the former include with wages and salaries and so on, the pension increase elements of pensions paid to members of the teachers' and NHS superannuation schemes and payments to community programme participants engaged by local authorities.

Quarterly figures on either basis are not available.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the total expenditure by his Department on press and public relations in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

Mr. Ryder *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* The expenditure for 1988-89 is £548,264, the estimated expenditure for the current year is £550,525 and the budget provision for 1990-91 is £599,680. Comparable figures for the years 1979-80 to 1987-88 are not available because of the machinery of Government changes, and could be given only at disproportionate cost.

Advertising Expenditure

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what were the figures for the spending by his Department on *(a)* television advertising, *(b)* radio advertising,

(c) newspaper advertising and *(d)* other promotional material in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

Mr. Ryder *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* The expenditure for 1988-89 is £49,310 and the estimated expenditure for 1989-90 is £52,486, none of which is on television or radio advertising; the 1990-91 budget is £49,313, none of which is likely to be on television or radio advertising.

Comparable figures for the years 1979-80 to 1987-88 are not available because of the machinery of Government changes, and could be given only at disproportionate cost.

Management Consultants

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what were the total fees paid out by his Department to management consultants in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

Mr. Ryder *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* For 1979-80 and each ensuing year up to and including 1987-88, I would refer the hon. Member to the reply given on 17 March 1989, *Official Report*, column *383*, by my right hon. Friend the then Paymaster General. The fees paid in 1988-89 were £2,334,613, the estimated fees for the current year are £2,757,110 and the budget provision for 1990-91 is £3,157,489.

National Income

Mr. Denzil Davies: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what percentage, in the latest available year, of the national income of the United Kingdom was made up of interest, dividends and private rents.

Mr. Major *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* Interest and dividends are redistributive transactions which have no net impact on national income. The share of rent in total domestic income is given in table 16.3 of the CSO publication "United Kingdom National Accounts", 1989 edition.

Income Tax

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what percentage of income tax payers are currently paying tax at the higher rate.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 13 March 1990]:* About 7 per cent. of taxpaying single people and married couples are liable at the higher rate in 1989-90. The estimate is based on a projection of the 1987-88 survey of personal incomes and is, therefore, provisional.

Council of Ministers

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the name and status of the report of the working party which reported to the Council of Ministers of the European Economic Community, referred to by the Economic Secretary in his speech on 27 February, *Official Report*, column 243, the date of the Council meeting at which the report was considered, and the action then agreed; and if he will place a copy of the report in the Library.

Mr. Curry: I have been asked to reply.

The working party referred to by my hon. Friend was an expert group chaired by the European Commission, whose report was sent to the Council of Ministers in June 1989. I am arranging for a copy to be placed in the Library. Subsequently the Council adopted regulation 3757/89 introducing compulsory physical stock checks in intervention stores. The Commission has also made regulations adjusting the flat-rate systems for financing storage and interest costs, and adopted other measures to improve the management of public storage.

HEALTH

Northern RHA (Statistics)

Mr. Leadbitter: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list for each district of the Northern regional health authority the number of *(a)* in-patients, *(b)* qualified nursing staff and *(c)* consultants for the latest available year; and if he will give figures for the five previous years.

Mr. Freeman: The information requested is given in the tables.

In-patient cases treated, by district health authority, Northern RHA, 1983 to 1988-89

Health authority	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	*1987-88*	*1988-89*
Hartlepool	16,096	16,315	16,876	18,845	18,825	18,857
North Tees	22,670	23,887	24,491	24,777	24,338	23,833
South Tees	47,035	48,450	51,246	54,262	56,389	55,464
East Cumbria	22,508	22,908	22,217	23,483	24,503	25,764
South Cumbria	17,744	18,194	19,736	20,245	22,088	22,483
West Cumbria	14,702	15,400	15,819	15,616	16,019	15,682
Darlington	16,656	17,321	18,126	17,977	19,066	18,858
Durham	16,725	16,858	17,409	17,470	18,756	18,991
North West Durham	13,220	13,449	13,459	13,295	13,020	12,603
South West Durham	14,846	14,905	15,533	16,293	16,969	17,620
Northumberland	25,303	25,767	27,018	27,713	29,236	28,433
Gateshead	19,927	20,004	21,050	21,105	21,729	20,685
Newcastle	79,645	80,748	82,086	84,769	92,352	92,094
North Tyneside	17,304	18,031	19,329	19,102	20,265	20,387
South Tyneside	15,509	16,898	17,626	17,323	17,055	17,604
Sunderland	49,225	50,945	51,110	48,820	52,156	51,675
Northern RHA	409,115	420,080	433,131	441,095	462,766	461,033

(b) Qualified nursing and midwifery staff at 30 September 1983-1988
(Excludes agency staff)

Whole-time equivalents[1]

	1983	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	*1987*	*1988*
Northern RHA	15,730	16,040	16,590	16,910	17,230	17,410
Northern HQ	10	10	10	10	10	10
Hartlepool	500	490	520	540	570	580
North Tees	700	700	700	750	820	820
South Tees	1,740	1,710	1,770	1,780	1,860	1,870
East Cumbria	930	920	940	960	980	990
South Cumbria	670	710	730	730	730	740
West Cumbria	680	710	710	710	700	700
Darlington	790	800	810	800	780	730
Durham	700	710	760	750	760	770
North West Durham	450	450	460	470	470	470
South West Durham	890	930	950	950	950	970
Northumberland	1,500	1,610	1,640	1,670	1,750	1,730
Gateshead	800	800	810	870	870	870
Newcastle	2,750	2,740	2,960	3,050	3,090	3,280
North Tyneside	580	640	640	660	670	660
South Tyneside	560	610	600	620	620	620
Sunderland	1,490	1,490	1,560	1,590	1,600	1,610

Source: DH (SM13C) Annual Census of NHS Non-Medical Manpower.
[1] All figures are rounded to the nearest ten (10) whole-time equivalent.
[2] Excludes midwifery students and health visitor students.

(c) Hospital medical and dental consultants at 30 September each year

	Northern region	*Newcastle district health authority (teaching)*
1983	908	289
1984	922	291
1985	954	297
1986	973	302
1987	1,000	308
1988	1,003	277

Note: Includes permanent paid and honorary staff.

Contracts for consultants in non-teaching district health authorities are held by the regional health authorities. Districts where these staff work cannot be identified centrally, and are therefore included with the regional total.

Kidney Transplants

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will give the latest conveniently available figures for the shortage of kidneys to transplant.

Mr. Freeman: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave him on 20 February at column *720*.

Health Authorities (Land Sales)

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what contribution he expects land sales to make to the revenue of health authorities in London during the coming financial year.

Mr. Freeman: In the coming financial year surplus property with an estimated value of £163 million will be available for disposal by the four Thames regional health authorities. However, the need to obtain planning permission, and the depressed and uncertain state of the property market, preclude a reliable forecast of what receipts will actually be received.

Community Health Councils

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he last met the representatives of community health councils; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. Freeman: My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State has not met representatives of community health councils (CHCs). However, I met the chairman and officers of the Association of Community Health Councils for England and Wales on 23 November 1989 to discuss the role of CHCs. Questions arising from the meeting are still being considered.

Dental Staff

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he plans to issue guidance on changes to disciplinary procedures for hospital and community medical and dental staff.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: A circular containing guidance on new and revised disciplinary procedures for hospital doctors and dentists, and for community doctors, has been published today. This follows negotiations with the professions on the basis of recommendations from a joint working party. A copy of the circular, HC(90)(9), is being placed in the Library.

The circular amends the procedure for holding inquiries into doctors' alleged serious professional misconduct or incompetence—the HM(61)112 procedure—as well as the right of appeal against dismissal. Improvements include setting time limits to help reduce the cost and delay of these procedures.

Two new procedures are being introduced: professional review machinery, a peer group approach for reviewing the conduct of hospital consultants said to have failed repeatedly to honour their contractual commitments, and an intermediate procedure, which deals with allegations of professional misconduct or incompetence which are sufficiently serious to warrant disciplinary action but are unlikely to lead to dismissal.

These changes should result in a more comprehensive disciplinary framework for medical and dental staff and should make it easier for health authorities to take appropriate action where necessary.

NHS Reform

Mr. Anthony Coombs: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many general practitioner practices have registered their interest in becoming fund holders under the Government's proposed reforms for the National Health Service set out in "Working for Patients".

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I announced this morning that 850 GP practices have so far registered their interest in becoming fund-holding practices. The response so far is a clear endorsement of the attractiveness of the scheme. It shows that significant numbers of GPs recognise the advantage of being able to choose to take control of some NHS funds to finance a range of local services for their patients and to having more influence over the quality of hospital services.

South Western RHA

Mr. Robert Hicks: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement about the position of the chairman of the South Western regional health authority.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: Sir Vernon Seccombe's appointment as chairman of South Western regional health authority ends on 31 July. After seven years as regional health authority chairman, Sir Vernon has told me that he would like to continue in the National Health Service but in a position which is much nearer to his home. I have therefore asked if he would be willing to take over the chairmanship of Plymouth health authority after the current chairman retires on 31 March. I am pleased to say that Sir Vernon has accepted. I am grateful to him for all that he has achieved during his successful period of office as regional health authority chairman and glad that he will continue as a district health authority chairman. The precise date for Sir Vernon to take up his new responsibilities will be announced shortly. Sir Vernon's successor as regional health authority chairman will also be announced shortly.

Salmonella

Sir Peter Emery: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cases of salmonella infection in human beings have been proved absolutely to have arisen from the consumption of eggs; and in how many cases it was impossible to trace back to an egg or to an egg farm such infection and assumptions made that it originated in this manner.

Mr. Freeman: The evidence linking eggs and salmonella infection in man is based on many different kinds of information. It is not often possible to prove absolutely the cause and effect in individual cases—any more than individual cases of cancer of the lung can be proven as due to cigarettes.

Since the beginning of 1988, the PHLS communicable disease surveillance centre (CDSC) has investigated 11 outbreaks (involving at least 759 people) of salmonella infection in which a statistical association with eggs was found. In five of these (involving at least 341 people) there was supporting microbiological evidence. Most of these investigations have been published in the medical literature.

In 1988 and 1989, public health professionals reported to CDSC 76 outbreaks (involving at least 1,257 people) which they attributed to eggs or foods which contained egg.

Egg packaging is required to show certain information, for example, the packaging station number which will assist investigations to trace back eggs implicated in food poisoning outbreaks. However, the packaging may not always be available and, when it is, it is not always possible to identify a producer particularly in those cases where a packing station is handling eggs from more than one source.

Storm Damage

Mr. David Howell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what insurance cover is provided to district health authorities for the protection of hospitals and other buildings against storm damage; what estimates he has received of the damage inflicted by storms in January and February on property belonging to district and regional health authorities; and what funds will be made available to repair the damage caused.

Mr. Freeman: NHS property is not covered by commercial insurance. Authorities are therefore expected to make some provision within their allocations to meet such contingencies. Information is not held centrally on the total damage to NHS property in January and February. Initial provisional estimates from regions which suffered damage arising from the storm on 25 January amount to about £12 million.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Dogs (Hunting)

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make it his policy to prohibit hare coursing and deer hunting with dogs; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The Government believe that participation in field sports is a matter for the conscience of the individual and have no plans for legislation to prohibit or restrict such activities.

Grants to Local Government

Mr. John Townend: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what are the main purposes for which grants under section 11 of the Local Government Act 1966 are paid to local authorities.

Mr. Waddington *[pursuant to the reply, 7 December 1989, c. 395]:* I have today published my proposals for the improved administration of section 11 grant in the form of a draft circular to local authorities on which I am inviting comments. Copies have been placed in the Library.

The new arrangements are the outcome of the Government's consideration of the scrutiny report into the workings of the grant. Some £89 million section 11 grant was paid out in 1988-89 (the latest year for which figures are available); provision of £110 million has been secured for 1990-91.

Our ethnic minorities make a substantial contribution to this country. The Government are committed to equality of opportunity and good community relations. Barriers which prevent ethnic minorities from making their full contribution to the life of the country must be broken down. The reforms that we propose are designed to enable section 11 to make a major contribution to this objective. The grant has an important role in enabling people from the ethnic minorities to participate fully in the mainstream of British life. This is the Government's prime objective in the reforms proposed for the policy and administration of the grant in the light of the scrutiny report.

The scrutiny report shows that new legislation will be needed for any fundamental reform of section 11.

The Government agree that it is desirable to make the existing legislation more relevant to current needs, but believe that much can be done, in advance of any possible legislative change, to improve the way in which section 11 funding is administered. The main changes in funding arrangements set out in the draft circular are:

- the emphasis of the grant in future will be put on practical projects working to identified needs, such as a lack of English language or low achievement in schools and local authorities will in future bid for funding for projects to be judged against such specific criteria;
- all projects will have to be regularly monitored and reviewed against recognisable performance targets;
- in advance of formal legislative change arrangements are being made for some section 11 funding to be redirected to innovative projects that tackle ethnic minority need, to be sponsored by the new training and enterprise councils (TECs), with task forces and city action teams in support;
- local authorities will be strongly encouraged to work with voluntary organisations and to identify a proportion of projects for the voluntary sector;
- new administrative arrangements would come into effect on 1 October 1991. Bids for funding will be invited on an annual basis to a fixed timetable.

The new arrangements will allow for wider and more innovative proposals, but existing projects will still be able to continue if they are brought within the new criteria. To increase effectiveness, all projects, whether local authority or voluntary sector-based, will need to set clear objectives for achievement. For example, specific objectives for section 11 funding in education are:

- to give school age children whose mother tongue is not English a command of English and to help them achieve at the same level as others in their age group in all areas of the curriculum;
- to strengthen ties between schools and the parents of ethnic minority pupils, where those ties are hard to establish because of parents' lack of English or because of cultural factors;
- to give ethnic minority adults, who have an inadequate command of English or who lack numeracy or literacy skills, sufficient knowledge and skills to compete for jobs and participate fully in the mainstream of national life.

Some specific objectives in the area of employment, training and enterprise are:

- to increase the awareness and take-up of the range of educational and employment opportunities by young people from ethnic minorities and to advise employers and community groups on the potential and training needs of such people;
- to secure better take-up by ethnic minorities of small business support services to promote the creation and growth of small firms and self-employment.

The grant can help ethnic minorities in need in a number of ways by providing or aiding the provision of:

- Services that cater for the particular problems faced by ethnic minority women and their children, for example, family and women's refuges and maternity social workers.
- Social workers able to give help to ethnic minorities who are isolated, speak and write little or no English and experience cultural barriers to full use of services of the elderly; advice on fostering and adoption and help in the case of mental and physical illness.

The proposals in the circular will encourage the widest take-up in grant while at the same time ensuring that grant-seekers do not become wholly dependent on funding.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Benefits, Bradford

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will provide for the Bradford social security offices the information on social fund budget and crisis loans provided in his reply to the hon. Member for Caernarfon (Mr. Wigley) of 25 January, *Official Report*, columns *809-12*.

Mr. Scott: The information given in the table represents the number of loans being repaid on the last day of each month.

	Number of income support applicants	*Lone parents*	*Disabled*[1]	*Pensioners*	*Unemployed*
BRADFORD EAST					
Budgeting loans 1989					
January	885	386	70	35	337
February	963	429	74	33	367
March	1,012	448	72	39	392
April	1,066	470	70	45	418
May	1,101	490	70	48	433
June	1,160	516	74	49	456
July	1,208	535	73	50	479
August	1,170	528	71	47	458
September	1,193	532	65	40	490
October	1,167	540	56	34	472
November	1,212	572	50	38	483
December	1,181	559	47	39	471
Crisis loans 1989					
January	89	17	2	1	58
February	127	29	5	2	82

	Number of income support applicants	Lone parents	Disabled[1]	Pensioners	Unemployed
March	124	26	1	3	82
April	115	28	0	3	79
May	129	34	1	5	82
June	139	33	1	2	98
July	141	23	3	1	101
August	122	29	5	2	79
September	143	39	3	4	88
October	158	40	2	4	100
November	167	49	3	1	102
December	143	40	4	0	91
BRADFORD SOUTH					
Budget Loans 1989					
January	771	402	48	27	256
February	833	428	46	32	290
March	894	463	42	38	312
April	982	506	42	35	353
May	1,075	534	48	38	410
June	1,149	595	50	39	413
July	1,178	608	51	48	414
August	1,171	606	47	39	414
September	1,210	639	48	43	418
October	1,217	642	52	46	416
November	1,202	634	52	44	411
December	1,192	635	54	47	393
Crisis Loans 1989					
January	96	26	2	2	55
February	108	25	3	3	66
March	118	25	5	1	76
April	101	23	3	2	65
May	116	19	3	2	84
June	113	21	4	2	77
July	120	26	4	2	77
August	134	35	3	1	86
September	147	28	3	2	103
October	162	28	5	1	112
November	159	36	3	1	106
December	156	36	4	3	103
BRADFORD WEST					
Budget Loans 1989					
January	826	312	76	46	327
February	879	346	71	49	351
March	929	358	77	56	373
April	951	375	73	62	380
May	979	377	71	63	405
June	1,015	403	70	64	419
July	1,024	411	67	63	426
August	990	405	67	57	406
September	967	399	62	59	395
October	977	396	71	64	390
November	1,002	412	70	62	402
December	984	416	64	55	402
Crisis Loans 1989					
January	91	19	3	0	55
February	93	22	2	1	57
March	90	25	3	0	52
April	92	25	2	1	57
May	92	21	4	1	54
June	88	26	4	1	45
July	101	29	3	0	60
August	116	32	7	1	62
September	105	38	1	0	55
October	95	29	3	1	52
November	99	24	3	3	58
December	100	30	3	3	56

[1] Applicants receiving a disability premium. It is not possible to identify separately applicants who are sick and not receiving a disability premium.

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will provide for the Bradford social security offices the information on the proportion of income support claimants repaying budget and crisis loans

provided in the manner of his reply of 25 January to the hon. Member for Caernarfon (Mr. Wigley), *Official Report*, columns *811-12*.

Mr. Scott: Information about the local income support caseload is collected on a quarterly basis and the percentage of loans being repaid on the last day of each quarter is shown in the table.

	Budgeting loans per cent.	*Crisis loans per cent.*
Bradford East		
February 1989	7·390	0·975
May 1989	8·526	1·000
August 1989	8·800	0·918
November 1989	9·600	1·323
Bradford West		
February 1989	7·530	0·797
May 1989	8·570	0·805
August 1989	8·349	0·978
November 1989	8·464	0·836
Bradford South		
February 1989	7·215	0·935
May 1989	9·244	0·998
August 1989	9·775	1·119
November 1989	10·254	1·356

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will provide for the Bradford social security offices the information on budgeting and crisis loans provided in his reply of 25 January to the hon. Member for Caernarfon (Mr. Wigley), *Official Report*, columns *812-13*.

Mr. Scott: The information given in the table represents the provisional amounts outstanding on the last day of each calendar month.

	Budgeting loans £	*Crisis loans £*
Bradford East		
1989		
January	140,942·21	14,687·02
February	160,510·33	15,047·83
March	179,816·99	16,159·13
April	200,618·34	18,989·92
May	212,374·59	22,085·93
June	221,129·65	23,728·09
July	221,455·57	27,380·30
August	212,477·88	28,356·86
September	209,111·24	31,752·55
October	200,938·20	31,795·34
November	210,934·55	34,952·49
December	205,800·39	36,913·19
Bradford West		
January	159,897·95	13,646·82
February	172,273·28	15,293·81
March	188,264·30	16,729·69
April	198,362·53	19,359·65
May	213,301·91	21,475·74
June	220,080·00	23,300·79
July	221,823·79	26,507·36
August	n/a	n/a
September	208,432·73	30,134·77
October	207,862·58	32,164·37
November	218,004·89	32,627·23
December	214,927·04	33,851·43
Bradford South		
January	127,454·88	11,808·44
February	149,906·97	14,365·61
March	176,022·78	16,381·78
April	188,297·91	18,135·07
May	200,714·97	19,250·12
June	210,627·92	19,429·18
July	215,742·32	22,417·17
August	208,884·30	24,592·56
September	214,962·19	27,549·72
October	215,997·96	30,741·48
November	217,045·99	34,157·41
December	210,550·19	34,192·18

Community Care Grants

Mrs. Wise: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security in how many refusals of community care grants one of the grounds for refusal has been insufficient funds.

Mr. Scott: In the period April 1989 to January 1990 43,000 community care grants were refused on the grounds that they were of insufficient priority for an award to be made.

Welsh Language

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will list all the application forms and leaflets on benefits produced in the Welsh language with their reference numbers; and if his Department has any plans to produce any other leaflets or application forms in the Welsh language between the present date and the beginning of April.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* Social fund claim forms SF100 (maternity payments) and SF200 (funeral payments) have been translated and are in use.

We have no plans to produce any more leaflets in Welsh before April 1990. However, recommendations of a working party for additional Welsh language material have been made and will be implemented as soon as practicable.

Claimants, Scotland

Mr. Norman Hogg: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) how many people in Scotland depend entirely on state benefits for their income;

(2) how many people in the area covered by his Department's office in Cumbernauld depend entirely on state benefits for their income.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Information on the number of people depending entirely on state benefits is not available. However, in November 1989 there were 505,052 people in Scotland claiming income support, 9,179 of whom are claiming income support from Cumbernauld local social security office.

Note:
Data is derived from a 100 per cent. count of cases in action, which includes a number where benefit payment has ceased but other action is continuing.

DEFENCE

Lieutenant Commander Taylor Scott

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what evidence he asked British Aerospace to provide for the official inquiry into the causes of the accident involving Lt. Cdr. Taylor Scott on 22 October 1987.

Mr. Alan Clark: Following the accident the director of quality assurance of the Ministry of Defence took possession, under the terms of the Ministry of Defence's contract with British Aerospace, of all documents known to be of relevance and these were presented to the board of inquiry. The board was also able to have access to additional documents which subsequently appeared relevant in the light of its inquiries.

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what statutory powers he had to obtain evidence for his inquiry into the causes of the accident involving Lt. Cdr. Taylor Scott on 22 October 1987;

(2) what was the statutory basis of his inquiry into the causes of the accident involving Lt. Cdr. Taylor Scott on 22 October 1987.

Mr. Alan Clark: It is the standard practice of the Ministry of Defence to hold formal boards of inquiry into the causes of all serious accidents involving military aircraft in the United Kingdom but these boards have a basis in statute, and statutory powers to obtain evidence, only when the pilot is a serving member of Her Majesty's armed forces. Since Lt. Cdr. Taylor Scott had retired from the Royal Navy and was employed by British Aerospace the board of inquiry did not have a basis in statute or statutory powers to obtain evidence.

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he intends to seek further evidence from British Aerospace into the causes of the accident involving Lt. Cdr. Taylor Scott on 22 October 1987.

Mr. Alan Clark: No. The British Aerospace memorandum which has recently been reported in the press was not available to the board of inquiry that investigated the accident but has now been examined thoroughly by Ministry of Defence experts. It contains two main points, the first of which is that British Aerospace had identified a problem whereby a foul between the aircraft structure and seat linkage caused an automatic eject of the top portion of the personal equipment connector when the seat was raised and lowered. Ministry of Defence experts have found that a modification needed to overcome this problem was carried out on Lt. Cdr. Taylor Scott's aircraft, Harrier GR5 ZD325, some five weeks before the accident occurred. This particular problem could not have caused the accident on 22 October 1987. The second main point in the British Aerospace memorandum is that documentation was inadequate. The board of inquiry independently expressed a number of concerns over British Aerospace's documentation and certification of work and recommended corrective action. This action has since been taken.

In the light of these findings, I am satisfied that there is no need to seek further evidence from British Aerospace.

AWACS

Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what progress has been made in the Boeing/AWACS offset arrangements.

Mr. Alan Clark: Boeing has to date submitted five progress reports listing contracts placed with United Kingdom companies to the value of $1,176 million, of which we have so far agreed some $672 million to count for offset credit purposes.

NATO Weapons Systems

Mr. Cartwright: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is his policy in respect of the redistribution to other NATO Governments of weapon systems removed by NATO nations as the result of a CFE treaty.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: We need to ensure that, while complying fully with a CFE treaty to reduce certain categories of equipment holdings in both alliances, NATO retains an effective defence capability. NATO is consequently examining the scope for reallocating equipment between allies so that the less efficient items currently in service would be destroyed first. Any such reallocations would have to be fully compliant with CFE treaty obligations.

Harrier GR5

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the nature of the contractual arrangements for development of the Harrier GR5.

Mr. Alan Clark: The Ministry of Defence placed a target cost incentive contract with a maximum price on British Aerospace for the development and initial production of the Harrier GR5.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Steel

18. **Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on his assessment of the United Kingdom's need for high-integrity founding plants such as that at the Atlas steel works at Armadale, West Lothian.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: High integrity castings are of crucial importance to customer industries which depend upon a high quality and high performance product. British foundries can expect to achieve a share of that market if they can satisfy customers on price, delivery and quality.

Post Office

19. **Mr. Fisher:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he next plans to meet the chairman of the Post Office; and what will be discussed.

71. **Mr. Frank Field:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he next plans to meet the chairman of the Post Office; and what will be discussed.

79. **Mrs. Fyfe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he next plans to meet the chairman of the Post Office; and what will be discussed.

Mr. Forth: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State expects to meet the chairman of the Post Office, Sir Bryan Nicholson, on 27 March. They will discuss various matters on mutual interest.

Exporters

20. **Mr. Ted Garrett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he has any new plans to help British exporters.

62. **Dr. Godman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he has any new plans to help British exporters.

Mr. Redwood: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Glasgow, Hillhead (Mr. Galloway) earlier today.

Recycling

21. **Mr. McWilliam:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he expects the Recycling Advisory Group to report on its consideration of recycling of domestic and industrial waste.

Mr. Forth: The group is expected to complete the current phase of its work before the end of May.

Product Liability

22. **Mr. Steinberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he last discussed product liability with *(a)* consumers' associations, *(b)* the Confederation of British Industry, *(c)* trading standards officers and *(d)* the European Commission.

96. **Mr. Ernie Ross:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he last discussed product liability with *(a)* consumers' associations, *(b)* the Confederation of British Industry, *(c)* trading standards officers and *(d)* the European Commission.

Mr. Forth: The European product liability directive was implemented in part I of the Consumer Protection Act 1987 and came into force on 1 March 1988. The consumers' associations, the Confederation of British Industry and the Local Authority Co-ordinating Body on Trading Standards were included in the consultation exercise.

I have had no meetings with these organisations or the European Commission on this subject in the last 12 months.

East Germany

23. **Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what was the United Kingdom's trade deficit with East Germany in 1989.

Mr. Redwood: In 1989 the crude deficit in United Kingdom visible trade with East Germany was £63 million.

Balance of Trade

25. **Mr. Dykes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will consider direct action by his Department to improve the United Kingdom's trade deficit figures with other advanced economies.

Mr. Redwood: Exports from the United Kingdom are running at record levels. The present deficit has been caused mainly by excessive growth in domestic demand in relation to domestic industrial capacity. It is therefore a macro-economic problem which will be resolved by the sound macro-economic policies which the Government are pursuing. The Government administer a number of schemes to help promote exports.

61. **Mr. Livingstone:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the east and west European countries with which the United Kingdom has a trade surplus in manufactures.

67. **Mr. Lewis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the east and west European countries with which the United Kingdom has a trade surplus in manufactures.

Mr. Redwood: The European countries with which the United Kingdom in 1989 had a crude surplus in trade in manufactured goods are, in decreasing size of surplus:

Irish Republic
Spain
Soviet Union
Greece
Malta
Gibraltar
Bulgaria
Turkey
Hungary
Iceland
Yugoslavia
Andorra
Faroe Islands
Vatican City
Albania

28. **Mr. Leighton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what was the United Kingdom's balance of trade with the EEC *(a)* in 1972 and *(b)* currently, in (i) the manufacturing sector and (ii) the financial services sector.

Mr. Redwood: In 1972 United Kingdom exports of manufactures to the countries currently comprising the EC exceeded imports by £168 million. The same comparison for 1989 shows that exports were exceeded by imports by £14·4 billion. Corresponding information on trade in financial services is not available.

Interest Rates

26. **Mr. Lofthouse:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what further representations he has made to retail outlets on the rates of interest being charged to customers for credit.

Mr. Forth: My right hon. Friend has made no such representations. In a competitive market each retailer decides what credit terms to offer and consumers have a choice between alternative sources of credit.

49. **Mr. McAllion:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what further representations he has made to retail outlets on the rates of interest being charged to customers for credit.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what further representations he has made to retail outlets on the rates of interest being charged to customers for credit.

Mr. Forth: I have made no such representations. In a competitive market each retailer decides what credit terms to offer and consumers have a choice between alternative sources of credit.

Information Technology

27. **Mr. Rogers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is his Department's policy on the training of senior staff in the application of information technology.

80. **Mr. Buckley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is his Department's policy on the training of senior staff in the application of information technology.

Mr. Forth: The Department's policy is to ensure that sufficient training on the application of information technology is available to meet departmental needs. To this end, a great deal of training on and about IT is available for all departmental staff, incuding senior members.

50. **Ms. Short:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has had from the information technology sector on the subject of skill shortages.

Mr. Forth: There have been representations from the information technology sector in the past with regard to IT skills shortages. My Department supports a number of programmes aimed at increasing skills in this sector.

33. **Mr. Buchan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has had from the information technology sector on the subject of skill shortages.

Mr. Forth: There have been representations from the information technology sector in the past with regard to IT skills shortages. In recognising this, my Department announced support of up to £440,000 over three years for the recently launched Women into Information Technology (WIT) campaign, where this support is appropriately matched by industry. My Department supports a programme aimed at stimulating the production of distance learning video courses on subjects directly relating to skills in micro-electronics, information technology, and their applications. Support is also being given to an industry-further education collaborative programme aimed at producing interactive video courses relating in the main to IT skills.

My Department also has an Information Technology Advisory Board (ITAB) with representatives from industry commerce, and academia. One of ITAB's support committees advises specifically on education and training and comments on IT skills issues.

Regional Assistance

29. **Mr. Eastham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what was the level of regional development grant and regional selective assistance *(a)* between May 1978 and May 1979 and *(b)* in the last financial year.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: In the period 1 May 1978 to 30 April 1979 expenditure in Great Britain on regional development grants and regional selective assistance was £422·2 million and £112·9 million respectively while in 1988-89 expenditure was £297·3 million and £216 million respectively.

95. **Mr. Soley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what was the level of regional development grants and regional selective assistance in *(a)* 1978-79 and *(b)* the last financial year.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: In 1978-79 expenditure in Great Britain on regional development grants and regional selective assistance was £416·9 million and £104·5 million respectively while in 1988-89 expenditure was £297·3 million and £216 million respectively.

Internal Market Council

30. **Mr. Nicholas Brown:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the most recent meeting of the EEC Internal Market Council.

39. **Mr. Murphy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the most recent meeting of the EEC Internal Market Council.

Mr. Redwood: The most recent meeting of the Internal Market Council was held on 22 February 1990. The Council reached a satisfactory agreement on the main agenda item: a directive on public procurement in the water, transport, telecommunications and energy sectors. This represents an important step towards the liberalisation of public procurement in the Community. The Council also received a progress report from the Commission on further work in this area.

The Council also agreed a timetable for future work towards liberalisation of the insurance market in the Community, and discussed amendments to the fourth and seventh company law directives.

This was a satisfactory first Council under the Irish presidency, which maintains the momentum on the single market.

European Commission

31. **Mr. Boateng:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he last met his counterparts in the European Commission; and what topics were discussed.

41. **Mr. Boyes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he last met his counterparts in the European Commission; and what topics were discussed.

101. **Mr. Bidwell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he last met his counterparts in the Europan Commission; and what topics were discussed.

Mr. Redwood: I keep in close contact with the European Commission on a whole range of issues.

Stock Exchange

32. **Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he next plans to meet the chairman of the stock exchange; and what will be discussed.

52. **Mr. Watson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he next plans to meet the chairman of the stock exchange; and what will be discussed.

Mr. Redwood: Ministers meet the chairman of the stock exchange whenever appropriate to discuss topics of mutual interest.

Competition Policy

34. **Mr. Martyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he has any plans to review his policy on competition.

93. **Mr. Sean Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he has any plans to review his policy on competition.

103. **Mr. Ingram:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he has any plans to review his policy on competition.

Mr. Redwood: No.

Product Safety

35. **Mr. Morley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what further measures his Department is taking to improve the safety of retail goods.

38. **Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what further measures his Department is taking to improve the safety of retail goods.

74. **Mr. Bill Michie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what further measures his Department is taking to improve the safety of retail goods.

Mr. Forth: Safety of retail goods will continue to be a high priority for my Department. Arrangements exist for the collection and analysis of accident statistics and for the promotion of effective safety campaigns. The Consumer Protection Act 1987 makes it a criminal offence to supply any consumer product that is not reasonably safe. This is supported by safety regulations, where necessary, and by the promotion of safety standards. This framework facilitates the promotion of reasonable standards of safety in the marketing of consumer goods.

GATT

36. **Mr. Janner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on current progress in the general agreement on tariffs and trade negotiations concerning clothing imports.

69. **Mr. Riddick:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on current negotiations concerning the multi-fibre arrangement.

Mr. Redwood: The GATT negotiating group on textiles and clothing is discussing how best to return trade in textiles and clothing to GATT rules after the MFA expires next year. There is general agreement that a transitional period will be necessary, but its length has not yet been determined nor has the exact nature of the transitional arrangements. The Community continues to argue that integration of the sector into GATT rules must be paralleled by the strengthening of GATT rules and disciplines, particularly in relation to safeguards, intellectual property, unfair trade and access to raw materials coupled with a greater commitment to market opening, especially from the newly industrialised economies. The group is now meeting more frequently with the aim of making more rapid progress.

Investment

37. **Mr. Sumberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate he has as to the amount of inward investment that has taken place in the north-west of England over the past five years; and what steps he is taking to encourage further such investment.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: According to the latest figures readily available to the Invest in Britain Bureau, in the five years from 1985 to 1989, a total of 150 inward investment decisions were made to locate in the north-west of the United Kingdom. These included the establishment of a new business, expansion or acquisition of an existing business and involvement in joint venture. The projects were expected to create about 8,400 new jobs and to have safeguarded a further 11,900. The figures are based on information provided by the companies themselves at the time of the investment and do not take into account subsequent developments.

In addition to the activities of my Department's Invest in Britain bureau, which promotes the attractions of all parts of the United Kingdom, the Department is the major source of funds for Inward (the regional development body for the north-west). To assist Inward in its activities, I announced on 8 March that it would be offered grant of £840,000 in 1990-91. This is a very large uplift on the 1989-90 grant of £541,000 and will allow Inward to devote extra resources towards encouraging inward investment.

Departmental Expenditure

40. **Mrs. Dunwoody:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is the real value of his Department's total expenditure in *(a)* 1989-90, *(b)* 1990-91 and *(c)* 1991-92.

47. **Mr. Doran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is the real value of his Department's total expenditure in *(a)* 1989-90, *(b)* 1990-91 and *(c)* 1991-92.

60. **Mr. Dunnachie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is the real value of his Department's total expenditure in *(a)* 1989-90, *(b)* 1990-91 and *(c)* 1991-92.

97. **Mr. Eadie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is the real value of his Department's total expenditure in *(a)* 1989-90, *(b)* 1990-91 and *(c)* 1991-92.

Mr. Forth: The estimated outturn for total Department of Trade and Industry expenditure in 1989-90 (including public corporations) is £1,363 million. Department of Trade and Industry expenditure plans for 1990-91 and 1991-92 total £1,247 million and £1,000 million respectively (the 1991-92 figure is rounded to the nearest £10 million). These planned levels of expenditure are equivalent to £1,187 million (1990-91) and £920 million (1991-92) at 1989-90 prices, based on the GDP deflator assumed for the public expenditure plans.

Japan

42. **Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will discuss with his EEC counterparts the possibility of introducing trade sanctions against Japan.

Mr. Redwood: No. Imposing trade sanctions against Japan would contravene the international obligations of both the United Kingdom and our Community partners under the general agreement on tariffs and trade. In 1989, United Kingdom exports to Japan increased by 30·1 per cent. to £2·3 billion compared with 1988, a growth rate over three times faster than Japan's exports to the United Kingdom.

63. **Mr. Yeo:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received regarding access for British exporters to the Japanese market.

Mr. Redwood: The Government attach great importance to Britain's trade with Japan. Representations on

market access are received from British companies from time to time and, where appropriate, we take them up vigorously with the Japanese authorities, both directly and through the European Commission.

In January our exports to Japan increased in value by 27·4 per cent. compared with the same month last year.

Regional Policy

43. **Mr. James Lamond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on his future plans for regional policy.

83. **Mr. Lambie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on his future plans for regional policy.

85. **Mr. Leadbitter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on his future plans for regional policy.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Regional policy is kept under continuing review.

Insider Dealing

44. **Mr. Stott:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he last reviewed the regulations to deal with insider dealing.

Mr. Redwood: As I told the House on 8 December, the Government that day published a consultative document on proposals to change the law on insider dealing. A copy is in the Library. I am grateful to all those who responded; careful consideration is being given to their comments.

Biotechnology

45. **Mr. Snape:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is the current best estimate of the balance of trade in biotechnology products.

98. **Ms. Armstrong:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is the current best estimate for the balance of trade in biotechnology products.

Mr. Redwood: Biotechnology is just emerging from the research phase. It will find expression in such sectors as chemicals, pharmaceuticals, diagnostics, food, agriculture and process equipment. Data on trade in biotechnology are not identified separately in statistics for these sectors.

Grants to Industry

46. **Mr. Gill:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the effect of grants in aid to industry on those enterprises which are not eligible.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The likely effects of grant on non-eligible businesses and also on non-recipients are considered in the appraisal of all applications under schemes where grant amounts might be substantial (for example, regional selective assistance). These effects are also studied as part of the evaluation of all industrial support schemes.

Exports

48. **Mr. Jack Thompson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on his future plans for his Department's export programme.

Mr. Redwood: The British Overseas Trade Board's forward plan, published on 23 January, sets out the priorities for the use of the resources available for official export promotion—over £120 million a year—in 1990-91 and provides a basis for their use in the next two years. This will ensure that resources are used where they will have the greatest effect on our exports.

Financial Services Act

51. **Mr. Wray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps have been taken to ensure that the Financial Services Act is being operated to the benefit of the investor.

64. **Mr. Alan W. Williams:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps have been taken to ensure that the Financial Services Act is being operated to the benefit of the investor.

Mr. Redwood: I believe that the Financial Services Act has already brought benefits for investors, not least the SIB compensation scheme. However, investors also benefit financially when regulation of the firms with which they deal is least burdensome, and the amendments introduced in the new Companies Act should make the system of investor protection more flexible and cost-effective.

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many firms were permitted to trade on the basis of interim authorisation by SIB and FIMBRA 18 months after their applications under the Financial Services Act; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Redwood: Only applications received by 27 February 1988 were given interim authorisation. Eighteen months later 120 applications to FIMBRA and seven to SIB were still operating under interim authorisation.

Government Support for Business

53. **Mr. Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much has been spent in real terms on Government support for business in *(a)* 1979, *(b)* 1984 and *(c)* 1989.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Total DTI expenditure (including expenditure in respect of public corporations) was £2,257 million in 1979-80 and £1,814 million in 1984-85: it is now expected to be £1,363 million in 1989-90. The levels of expenditure in 1979-80 and 1984-85 are equivalent to £4,548 million and £2,387 million respectively in 1989-90 prices, based on the GDP deflator.

Advice Centres

54. **Mr. Jim Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what funding he proposes to give citizens advice bureaux and consumer advice centres for 1990-91.

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what funding he proposes to give citizens advice bureaux and consumer advice centres for 1990-91.

Mr. Forth: My Department does not provide any funds specifically for consumer advice centres or directly to citizens advice bureaux. Details of the DTI grant in aid for

the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux and Citizens Advice Scotland in 1990-91 will not be available until after the Chancellor's annual statement on 20 March.

Car Manufacturers

55. **Dr. Kim Howells:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he last met the major car manufacturers; and what was discussed.

65. **Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he last met the major car manufacturers; and what was discussed.

105. **Mr. Hood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he last met the major car manufacturers; and what was discussed.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: My Department has regular contacts with the major car manufacturers on a range of issues of interest to the industry.

Procurement Markets

56. **Mr. Ian Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the implications for British industry of the opening up of public procurement markets within the European Community.

Mr. Redwood: The opening up of EC public procurement markets will provide important new opportunities for British industry in markets in other member states which are closed at present. The British market, unlike some others, is already more open.

To put this into context, the annual value of EC public procurement is around £430 billion at 1989 prices. About half this amount is under contracts which are, or will soon be, subject to Council directives. Purchasers affected are Government Departments, regional and local authorities and public utilities. Also covered will be private sector firms in the energy, water, telecommunications and energy sectors operating on the basis of special or exclusive rights granted by public authorities. Suppliers harmed by infringements will be able to seek remedies from judicial or administrative review bodies.

Confederation of British Industry

57. **Mr. Home Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he next expects to meet the president of the Confederation of British Industry; and what matters he intends to discuss.

88. **Mr. Norman Hogg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he next expects to meet the president of the Confederation of British Industry; and what matters he intends to discuss.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I look forward to a continuation of constructive dialogue with the president of the CBI on matters relevant to the well-being of British business.

78. **Mr. Oppenheim:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he last met the Confederation of British Industry; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I met the director general of the CBI on 1 February to discuss industrial representation and services to business.

Securities and Investments Board

58. **Mr. Adams:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he next plans to meet the chairman of the Securities and Investments Board; and what will be discussed.

Mr. Redwood: My right hon. Friend and I meet the chairman of the Securities and Investments Board to discuss issues of mutual interest as frequently as is necessary. No date has been fixed for the next such meeting.

104. **Mr. McCrindle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he last met the chairman of the Securities and Investments Board; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. Redwood: My right hon. Friend last met the Chairman of the Securities and Investments Board on 7 November and I saw him on 17 January. On each occasion a range of topics was discussed.

Trading Standards Officers

67. **Mr. Meale:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he last met representatives of local authority trading standards officers to discuss consumer matters.

Mr. Forth: I met representatives of local authority trading standards offices on three occasions in 1989 to discuss consumer matters and my officials have frequent meetings with trading standards officers.

Departmental Structure

66. **Mr. Tom Clarke:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received on his plans for the future structure of his Department, pursuant to his answer of 21 February, *Official Report*, column *783-84*.

87. **Mr. Ronnie Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received about his plans for the future structure of his Department, pursuant to his answer of 21 February, *Official Report*, column *783-84*.

99. **Mr. Clelland:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received on his plans for the future structure of his Department, pursuant to his answer of 21 February, *Official Report*, column *783-84*.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: None, as of 13 March 1990.

Shipbuilding

68. **Mr. Patchett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a further statement on the future of the shipbuilding industry in Britain.

72. **Mr. Orme:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a further statement on the future of the shipbuilding industry in Britain.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The future of the shipbuilding industry in the United Kingdom will depend on the level of demand and on its ability to obtain orders in the face of

international competition. The Government provide substantial support to the industry to assist its return to normal competitive conditions.

Mr. Clay: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, pursuant to the reply by the hon. Member for Grantham (Mr. Hogg) to the hon. Member for Sunderland, North, 28 February, *Official Report*, column *207*, which sentences in the statement by the right hon. Member for Braintree (Mr. Newton), 14 November 1988, *Official Report*, column 748, state the reasons why his Department rejected the bid by Mr. Nat Puri to acquire North-East Shipbuilders Ltd.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: References to the reasons for the rejection of the original bids received for NESL are contained in the statement made by my right hon. Friend the Member for Braintree (Mr. Newton) on 14 November 1988, *Official Report*, column *748*.

Mr. Clay: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions his Department has held with the European Commission as to the implications for the sixth directive on shipbuilding arising from the amalgamation of the West German Shipbuilders Association and the German Democratic Republic Shipbuilders Association.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: None.

Rechar Initiative

70. **Mr. Ashton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much funding he expects the objective 2 areas of the east midlands in Retford, Worksop and Mansfield to receive from the Rechar initiative for coal mining areas from the European Commission.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: It is too early to say. The European Commission has first to determine and publish a list of eligible coal mining areas for the purpose of Rechar and then to consider programmes of measures for such areas. I hope that its decisions on the amounts of Rechar grants will be reached before the end of this year.

Batteries

73. **Mr. McAvoy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has made to manufacturers and retailers about the lead content of batteries.

94. **Mr. McCartney:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has made to manufacturers and retailers about the lead content of batteries.

Mr. Forth: Most lead-containing batteries are covered by the scope of a draft EC directive which aims to reduce the amounts of that metal going in spent batteries to landfill or incineration for disposal. Negotiations on the draft directive have recently begun in Brussels. Officials in my Department have been in regular contact with representatives of the lead and battery industries over the past months.

Industry Council

75. **Mr. Bernie Grant:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what matters he expects to discuss at the next meeting of the EEC Industry Council.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply I gave earlier to the hon. Member for Renfrew, West and Inverclyde (Mr. Graham).

FIMBRA

76. **Mr. French:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received about the role of FIMBRA in regulating the investment company C. J. How.

Mr. Redwood: My Department has received a number of such representations.

Liquidation

77. **Mr. Ron Brown:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many firms have gone into voluntary liquidation during 1989; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Redwood: A total of 10,840 companies in Great Britain went into voluntary liquidation in 1989. Of these, 6,633 were creditors voluntary liquidations and 4,207 were members voluntary liquidations. Figures of company liquidations in Northern Ireland are not available for the whole of 1989, but in the 10 months up to October, 92 companies went into voluntary liquidation; of these, 47 were creditors voluntary liquidations and 45 were members voluntary liquidations.

National Economic Development Council

81. **Mr. John Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he last met the director general of the National Economic Development Council; and what was discussed.

90. **Mr. Robert Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he last met the director general of the National Economic Development Council; and what was discussed.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: My Department has frequent contacts with the director general of NEDO and his staff on a wide range of business matters and I look forward to continuing these when I chair the council on 4 April.

West Germany

82. **Mr. Bradley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he last met his West German counterpart; and what was discussed.

Mr. Redwood: My colleagues and I keep in close contact with our West German counterparts on a range of issues.

Aerospace Industry

84. **Mrs. Maureen Hicks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the contributions being made by British companies to the aerospace industry in Europe and the United States of America.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I am well aware of the significant contribution made by United Kingdom companies to the aerospace industry worldwide; indeed the United

Kingdom has a large trade surplus in aerospace products. United Kingdom firms are prominent in all areas of the industry—as aircraft and aero-engine manufacturers, as partners in international collaborative programmes such as Airbus, EFA and the V2500 engine, and as major suppliers of equipment and components to other European and United States manufacturers such as Fokker, Boeing and McDonnell Douglas.

Electronics

86. **Mr. Worthington:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has had from the electronics industry on the subject of skills shortages.

Mr. Forth: There have been no direct representations from the electronics industry on skills shortages during the past two months, but there have in the past been approaches with regard to IT skills shortages. My Department supports a number of programmes aimed at increasing skills in the sector.

100. **Mr. Allan Roberts:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is the latest annual estimate of the balance of trade in electronic components.

Mr. Forth: Estimates based on figures published by the Central Statistical Office suggest that the United Kingdom had a crude trade deficit[1] in electronic components[2] of £1·1 billion in 1989.

Notes:

[1] Imports (cif) less Exports (fob).

[2] Principal Products of Activity Headings 3444 and 3453 of the Standard Industrial Classification (Revised 1980).

Financial Regulations

89. **Mr. Gareth Wardell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of self-regulation of the financial regulations.

Mr. Redwood: The Securities and Investments Board is responsible for ensuring that the appropriate standard of protection for investors is provided by the self-regulating bodies recognised under the Financial Services Act.

Rover Group

91. **Mr. Andrew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he has any plans to meet representatives of the Rover Group concerning the future of Cowley.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I have no plans to meet representatives of the Rover Group concerning the future of its operation at Cowley.

Fur Exports

92. **Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the export of British furs and pelts.

Mr. Redwood: Available statistics show that exports (including re-exports) of furs and pelts (group 212 of the SITC) from the United Kingdom amounted to £53 million in 1989.

Bankruptcy

102. **Mr. Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what are the latest figures for the level of bankruptcies.

Mr. Redwood: A total of 8,115 bankruptcy orders were made in England and Wales in 1989. In the same year, 2,294 sequestrations (the equivalent of bankruptcy orders in England and Wales) were awarded in Scotland and 146 bankruptcy adjudication orders were made in Northern Ireland.

Hulme and Moss Side Development Projects

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will give details of *(a)* the present membership of the Hulme and Moss Side community economic development trust and the means by which they were selected and *(b)* the mechanism by which elections will take place for the trust board including details of how voting will be conducted.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The information requested is a matter for the trust itself.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will give details of projects assisted by the Hulme and Moss Side task force which involve a training element and which do not involve employment training.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Since the introduction of employment training the task force has assisted the following projects for unemployed adults involving a non-ET training element:

Roots Oral History—20 trainees—Basic editorial skills in producing a book

Community Computing—30 trainees—Equipment for a "drop-in" training centre for Information Technology (re) familiarisation.

In both cases, the training offered is of an informal nature and aimed at unemployed people who are not yet ready to follow an ET training course.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry in what way the Hulme and Moss Side task force makes applicants for assistance aware of Department of Trade and Industry encouragement of the use of employment training.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Employment training is recommended to applicants as a source of funding whenever it seems appropriate.

Company Accounts

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the checks which Companies house staff perform upon receipt of annual company accounts.

Mr. Redwood: The basic checks carried out by the Registrar of Companies vary according to the type of accounts filed. For full accounts, these include confirmation that the accounts comprise the company's profit and loss account and balance sheet, the directors' report, the auditors' report and, where appropriate, the company's group accounts. The basic checks are supplemented by such other checks as the registrar considers are appropriate. Companies house is not responsible for the contents of the accounts.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether, prior to formulating section 15 of the Companies Act 1989, his Department estimated the average cost of printing a full set of accounts which are normally circulated to shareholders.

Mr. Redwood: No, but my Department's customary prior consultations showed that the proposal to give listed companies the option of providing summary financial statements instead of full reports and accounts was endorsed by a range of public companies and representative organisations.

Financial Services

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if persons who lose money on the basis of advice from persons with interim authorisation from FIMBRA or SIB have their interests protected in any way by these organisations; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Redwood: Interim authorised persons are treated as though they had been granted authorisation and are effectively subject to the appropriate rules of FIMBRA or SIB. Interim authorised persons are not included in the investors' compensation scheme of SIB.

Mr. Adrian Ward

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will undertake discussions with the Securities and Investments Board on the trading as a financial adviser of Mr. Adrian Ward.

Mr. Redwood: No. The day-to-day operation of the regulatory system under the Financial Services Act is the responsibility of the Securities and Investments Board and the self-regulating bodies.

Statistical Divisions

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what are the latest figures for the number of staff presently employed, and the full complement of staff, including vacant posts, by grade, in the statistical divisions in his Department; if he will differentiate between staff in statistical posts and staff in administrative posts; and if he will give the staffing complements by grade, and differentiated between statistical and administrative posts, proposed for 1990-91.

Mr. Forth *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* A major part of the Department's statistical work and associated staff were transferred to the Central Statistical Office on 31 July 1989. The remaining statistical work was distributed among a number of divisions within the Department. The following figures for 1989-90 relate to the statistics sections of these divisions. The manpower allocation for 1 April 1991 will be set later this month in the light of the Department's annual activity and resource management review.

	SIP 1 March 1990	*Allocation 1 April 1990*
Statistical posts		
G5	1	1
G7	11	11
Senior assistant statistician	3	6
Assistant statistician	1	—
Administrative posts		
HEO	5	5
EO	13	15
AO	14	17
AA	3	3
PS	1	1
Support grade 2	1	1

House of Fraser

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what response he has had from the Bank of England to the submission to it of the House of Fraser report; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Redwood *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* None. The Bank of England is not accountable to the Secretary of State.

Garston Amhurst

Mr. McCrindle: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether, in view of the Garston Amhurst case, he will introduce legislation making the organisations appointing representatives liable for all the actions of these representatives, whether in the course of conducting authorised business or not; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Redwood *[holding answer 13 March 1990]:* Under the Financial Services Act, a principal is responsible for its appointed representatives' actions in carrying on investment business for which the principal has accepted responsibility in writing. It is for the Securities and Investments Board and the self-regulating bodies to consider what requirements should be imposed on principals in relation to the activities of their appointed representatives. I have no plans to amend the Financial Services Act in this regard.

Multi-fibre Arrangement

Mr. Henderson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the quotas covered by the multi-fibre arrangement and indicate the proportion of each quota used.

Mr. Redwood *[holding answer 13 March 1990]:* Details of current quotas for the United Kingdom under the European Community's bilateral multi-fibre arrangement agreements with third countries are set out in the notice to importers 2249 published in *Lloyd's List International* on 4 January 1990. This is available in the Library of the House.

Quota utilisation records for 1989 will not be finalised for some time yet. The DTI is currently preparing a summary of quota utilisation in 1988, a copy of which will be placed in the Library of the House when it is ready.

Enterprise Initiative Scheme

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what examination he makes in considering a company's eligibility for assistance under the enterprise initiative scheme of *(a)* previous name changes by the company, *(b)* its record of payment of liabilities to redundant workers and *(c)* its record of payment of rates.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 12 March 1990]*: The eligibility of companies applying for consultancy assistance under the enterprise initiative is the responsibility of my Department. Applicants are approved only after a visit by an enterprise counsellor who, after a broadly based review of the firm's business activities, is required to identify whether the firm would benefit from consultancy assistance and whether it has the resources to pay its share of a consultancy project.

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 15 March 1990

TRANSPORT

Network SouthEast

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the effect of his decision to curtail public subsidy to Network SouthEast services on the quality of service offered to passengers.

Mr. Portillo: The latest objectives for British Rail are based on the board's forecasts in the 1989 corporate plan that the need for subsidy for Network SouthEast will be eliminated progressively over the next three years as a result of increased revenue and greater efficiency. The objectives also set tougher quality of service targets, which NSE will be expected to meet route by route. The investment programme of £1·2 billion over the next three years will make a major contribution to the achievement of these objectives, both through savings in energy and maintenance costs and through additional revenue from increases in capacity and improved service quality.

Roads Programme

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he has made an assessment of the environmental implications of the proposed £13 billion road building programme.

Mr. Atkins: Protecting and enhancing the environment is a major feature of the Government's road building plans.

By reducing congestion, which wastes fuel, the trunk road programme will lead to lower exhaust emissions than would otherwise be the case if additional road capacity was not provided. The emphasis in the programme on increasing capacity on existing motorways and other strategic routes will help minimise the requirement for additional land and the overall impact on the countryside. Some one third of trunk road schemes are bypasses, which will considerably improve the environment of the communities concerned.

MOT Tests

Mr. Gregory: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how many Ministry of Transport test centres have been suspended and subsequently permitted to continue for each year since 1983; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what is the number of garages whose operation of Ministry of Transport testing has been terminated by his Department for each year since 1983; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Atkins: The information is as follows:

Year	*Total MOT stations withdrawn*	*Permitted to continue after appeal*	*Appeals disallowed*
1983	90	13	42
1984	107	35	43
1985	80	28	37
1986	73	17	38
1987	127	21	39
1988	103	22	45
1989	74	17	43

Mr. Gregory: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the average time taken between suspension and the final decision on the resumption or termination of testing for Ministry of Transport test centres; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Atkins: Sixteen weeks.

Railway Inspectorate

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will state the extent of the remit given to the railway inspectorate in respect of reliability of equipment and systems of automatic train control as distinct from the safety of its operations.

Mr. Portillo: In his report on the Clapham junction accident investigation, Sir Anthony Hidden, QC, recommended that the railway inspectorate should monitor at six-monthly intervals British Rail's progress in implementing automatic train protection. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State announced on 7 November last that he accepted this recommendation. Safety and reliability are closely associated, and the inspectorate will take account of equipment and system reliability in its continuing oversight.

Management Consultants

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what were the total fees paid out by his Department to management consultants in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

Mr. Atkins *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* The latest figures for fees paid by the Department to management consultants are as follows:

	£
1984-85	250,000
1985-86	272,000
1986-87	248,000
1987-88	371,000
1988-89	604,000
1989-90	[1]270,000
1990-91	[2]437,000

[1] Latest estimate.
[2] Budget.

This excludes fees on computing consultancies.

Information for earlier years could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Hospital Posts

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he expects the permanent third anaesthetist post in the Downe group of hospitals, Downpatrick, will be filled.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Appointment to the post is a matter for the Eastern health and social services board. It is under active consideration by the board.

ENVIRONMENT

Waste Disposal

Mr. Robert B. Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what advice is given by his Department to local authorities on how to handle redundant fridges and small quantities of solvents being disposed of by members of the public.

Mr. Trippier: My Department and the Department of Trade and Industry are currently considering the final draft of a report by Coopers and Lybrand Deloitte entitled "CFC Market Study", which, among other things, considers the methodology and economics of CFC recovery and recycling. We hope to issue advice to local authorities in the light of the final report which is expected shortly.

Litter

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he intends to publish for consultation the draft code of practice relating to litter and part IV of the Environmental Protection Bill.

Mr. Trippier: The Secretary of State, together with the Secretaries of State for Scotland, for Wales and for Transport, published for public consultation a draft code of practice on litter and refuse on 20 February.

Water (Quality)

Mr. Knapman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what amount will be invested over the next 10 years to improve the quality of Britain's rivers, seas and drinking water.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: In addition to the investment in new water treatment and disposal by industry and agriculture to meet effluent standards, the water industry in England and Wales will be carrying out the biggest programme of sustained investment in its history with total capital expenditure of over £27 billion planned over the next 10 years. This will enable the industry to renew and extend sewers and sewage treatment works, to improve our drinking water and to complete the clean-up of our coastal waters and beaches. The benefits of this investment will be seen in improved water quality, as well as in higher standards of service to the consumer.

In Scotland, where the water industry remains in the public sector, capital expenditure provision is considered over a three-year period with annual reviews. Provision for the water and sewerage programme has been substantially increased to over £500 million for the period 1990-91 to 1992-93. This will enable authorities to make good progress with improvements.

North Sea

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what proportion of measured or estimated total airborne pollution deposited on the North sea arises from discharges from factories, power stations and farms in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: Emissions by source category of the major United Kingdom air pollutants will be published in the digest of environmental protection and water statistics, volume 12, at the end of March 1990, a copy of which will be placed in the Library of the House. Agricultural sources account for the majority of total reduced nitrogen emissions.

Modelling studies commissioned by my Department for oxides of nitrogen suggest that around 30 per cent. of United Kingdom emissions are deposited on the North sea.

Mr. McFall: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what further action he has taken on waste dumping in the North sea.

Mr. Trippier: I refer the hon. Member to the answer of my right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food on 5 March to my hon. Friend the Member for Tynemouth (Mr. Trotter), *Official Report*, Vol. 168, column *489*, and to my right hon. Friend's answer on 12 March to my hon. Friend the Member for Wyre (Mr. Mans) on the outcome of the Hague conference on 7 to 8 March, *Official Report*, Vol. 169, column *106*.

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement regarding talks at, and the outcome of, the North sea conference of Ministers held earlier this month.

Mr. Colvin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the North sea conference held on 8 March.

Mr. Tredinnick: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what recent initiatives he has taken to reduce pollution in the North sea.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: I refer the hon. Members to the reply given by my right hon. Friend on 12 March to my hon. Friend the Member for Wyre (Mr. Mans) on the outcome of the Hague conference on 7 to 8 March, *Official Report*, Vol. 169, column *106*.

Water Charges

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how the new infrastructure charges limits on water and sewerage, being introduced by each of the water services companies as from 1 April 1990, were arrived at.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The infrastructure charges limits were determined by my right hon. Friends the Secretary of State and the Secretary of State for Wales following an assessment of each company's investment needs to meet the demands of new developments, so that estimated income from the new charges balances the investment required over the period from 1990-91 to 1999-2000.

Waste Paper Recycling

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will introduce measures to protect the economic viability of recycling of waste paper from the effects of the current market price.

Mr. Trippier: No. Direct Government intervention artifically to maintain the price of waste paper through subsidising collection costs or other means would be ineffective or damaging since paper is an internationally traded commodity and users could switch to imported supplies. Central interference in the market overseas has been shown to drive down the price of waste paper and hamper recycling. The priority must be to encourage the market for recycled paper and expand industrial capacity to process waste paper. My Department and the Department of Trade and Industry are specifically examining the waste paper market to assess the economic and environmental benefits of waste paper recycling, the means of collecting waste paper, what new uses for waste paper might be promoted and how demand for recycled paper might be stimulated. Government Departments are also considering their use of paper with a view to increasing the use of recycled products wherever feasible and economic.

Hazardous Substances

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he intends to introduce regulations to implement the hazardous substance consent provisions contained in part IV of the Housing and Planning Act 1986.

Mr. Trippier: Later this year.

Inland Waters

Mrs. Ann Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has any intention of designating inland waters for the purpose of the EC bathing water directive (76/160/EEC).

Mr. Trippier: I am not aware of any inland waters which meet the criteria for inclusion within the scope of directive 76/160/EEC.

Crown Suppliers and Property Services Agency

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the latest position in relation to the privatisation of the Crown Suppliers and the Property Services Agency.

Mr. Chope: The Property Services Agency and Crown Suppliers Bill was given its Second Reading in another place on 5 March. The competition for the sale of the Crown Suppliers is proceeding.

Environmental Protection

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has made an assessment of the role of market mechanisms in protecting the environment.

Mr. Trippier: There will be such an assessment in the forthcoming White Paper on the environment.

Sewage Sludge

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what advice he offers to those industries seeking to dispose of sewage sludge.

Mr. Trippier: Discussions are now being arranged with sewerage undertakers to consider the implications of the policy to end dumping of sewage sludge at sea by the end of 1998. We intend that wherever possible sludge should be used beneficially. We shall need to examine carefully with the sewerage undertakers the various options for disposal which vary according to the particular circumstances of each location. The main disposal options are to agricultural land, landfill, and incineration.

Pharmaceutical Wastes

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what advice his Department offers to those industries seeking to dispose of pharmaceutical wastes.

Mr. Trippier: My Department has issued general guidance on the disposal of pharmaceutical waste in waste management paper No. 19—"Wastes from the Manufacture of Pharmaceuticals, Toiletries and Cosmetics." However, advice on the disposal of specific pharmaceutical wastes is best obtained from the appropriate waste disposal authority as the body statutorily responsible for regulating waste disposal in its area.

Waste Water Treatment

Mrs. Ann Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, further to his answer to the hon. Member for Gloucester (Mr. French) of 5 March, *Official Report*, column *452*, (1) who will be responsible for showing that coastal discharges which receive only primary treatment will not adversely affect the environment; and how this obligation will work in practice;

(2) what is his Department's definition of a substantial discharge of sewage;

(3) what proportion of existing sewage discharge outlets will be affected by the requirement for (i) primary and (ii) secondary treatment;

(4) how the investment programme of £1·5 billion for treating sewage discharges will be financed;

(5) what is the timetable for implementation of his policy on waste water treatment.

Mr. Trippier: My right hon. Friend's answer to my hon. Friend the Member for Gloucester (Mr. French) on 5 March, *Official Report*, column *452*, noted that the investment programme should be completed as soon as practicable and that discussions would be held with the National Rivers Authority, the Office of Water Services and the sewerage undertakers to work out the detailed arrangements for implementing this. Those discussions are now being held. The starting point for those discussions will be the CES report, copies of which have been placed in the Library. In this context substantial discharges are those from settlements of 10,000 or more to coastal waters. The number of sewage discharge outfalls covered by this definition is shown in tables 3·1 and 3·2 of the CES report. It will be for the water companies to determine how to

finance their investment programmes, and for the director general to determine what adjustments to water charges will be needed.

Community Charge

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has circulated to community charge registration officers on the changes to the rules governing exemptions from the poll tax established by the Local Government and Housing Act; and if he will place copies of all relevant circulars in the Library.

Mr. David Hunt *[holding answer 9 March 1990]:* The Department wrote to all community charge registration officers on 16 November 1989, outlining the changes to be made to schedule 1 (personal community charge: exemptions) to the Local Government Finance Act 1988 by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. I am arranging for a copy of the letter to be placed in the Library of the House.

Irish Sea

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what amount of pollution in the Irish sea is caused by sea dumping.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* Licences for dumping are granted by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and in the Irish sea apply only to the disposal of dredged spoil and sewage sludge.

Available data on inputs to the Irish sea are contained in the quality status report by scientists from the United Kingdom and Ireland published by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, a copy of which is in the Library. As with other United Kingdom coastal waters, inputs of contaminants from dumping are generally less significant than those from rivers and estuaries.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what recent representations have been received about pollution in the Irish sea.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* A number of representations have been received recently from organisations and individuals concerned with protection of the marine environment in the Irish sea. The United Kingdom Government are committed to applying their policy to protect the marine environment generally to all their coastal waters and the Irish sea will benefit from the package of measures which were agreed at the North sea conference in the Hague on 7 to 8 March.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish in the *Official Report* recalculations of the tables in annex J of Cmnd. 9714 "Paying for Local Government" on the basis of the poll tax levels set by local authorities for 1990-91.

Mr. David Hunt: I do not yet have full information on levels of community charge set by local authorities.

Sir John Stanley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps he took to inform right hon. and hon. Members of the availability of the Community Charge Transitional Relief Report (England) laid before the House on 15 February, and of the levels of the assumed community charges to be used in the transitional relief scheme in 1990-91 by the local authorities in their constituencies.

Mr. David Hunt *[holding answer 14 March 1990]:* Illustrative figures of the assumed charge for the purposes of transitional relief were announced on 11 January by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State in his answer that day to my hon. Friend the Member for Spelthorne (Mr. Wilshire), *Official Report*, Vol. 164, columns *682-83*. These were confirmed in the report laid before the House on 15 February to which reference was made by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State in his answer that day to my hon. Friend the Member for Suffolk, Central (Mr. Lord).

Sir John Stanley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) whether he is considering raising levels of the assumed community charges to be used in the transitional relief scheme in 1990-91 above those set out in the Community Charge Transitional Relief Report (England);

(2) whether he will make the assumed community charge in 1990-91 for each charging authority to be used in the transitional relief scheme the same as the assumed average community charge of £278 per head rather than the assumed community charge set out in the Community Charge Transitional Relief Report (England) where the latter is lower.

Mr. David Hunt *[holding answer 14 March 1990]:* I refer my right hon. Friend to the answer I gave him on 8 March, *Official Report*, Vol. 168, column *798*.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

House of Fraser

Mr. Shore: To ask the Attorney-General if he will prosecute the Al Fayed brothers under section 5(c) of the Perjury Act 1911 in view of the conclusion of the Department of Trade and Industry inspectors appointed under section 432(2) of the Companies Act 1985 that they repeatedly lied to them; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: I refer the right hon. Member to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Nottingham, South (Mr. Brandon-Bravo) on 1 March.

Property Law

Dr. Goodson-Wickes: To ask the Attorney-General when the Government intend to bring into force section 1 of the Law of Property (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1989 and section 130 of the Companies Act 1989.

The Attorney-General: Section 1 of the Law of Property (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1989 will be brought into force on 31 July 1990. Section 130 of the Companies Act 1989 will be brought into force in respect of England, Wales and Scotland on the same date.

THE ARTS

Arts Exports

Mr. Cormack: To ask the Minister for the Arts if he is now in a position to announce decisions on the replacement for the indefinite stop and the recommendations of the reviewing committee on the export of works of art on collections.

Mr. Luce: I have today written to the chairman of the reviewing committee on the export of works of art conveying to him and his committee members the decisions which I and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry have taken on the indefinite stop. I have also conveyed in that letter my decisions on the committee's recommendations on collections, which it made to me in its annual reports for 1987-88 and 1988-89. I have placed copies of the letter in the Libraries of both Houses.

ENERGY

Renewable Energy

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if, pursuant to the answer given to the hon. Member for Gordon in the *Official Report*, 21 February, column *772*, he will indicate which of the countries listed include expenditure on nuclear research and development in their renewable energy budget, giving details of the relative proportions of nuclear research and development and renewable energies research and development in each of these cases, if known.

Mr. Wakeham: While some of the countries listed spend substantial sums on their nuclear R and D programmes within their total energy R and D budgets, these sums are not included within the renewables element. The effect of a nuclear energy research and development programme is generally to increase the total size of the energy research and development programme and thus reduce the proportion of the total energy research and development programme spent on renewable energy development. The table sets out the budgets of different IEA Governments in 1988 on renewables R and D, nuclear R and D and expresses these as a percentage of the total energy R and D budgets.

Percentage of total energy R and D budgets committed to renewable energy R and D and to nuclear energy R and D and total Government energy R and D budgets in 1988

Country	*Renewable R and D*		*Nuclear R and D*		*Total Government energy R and D*
	Budget $US million	*Percentage of total R and D budget*	*Budget $US million*	*Percentage of total R and D budget*	*Budget $US million*
Austria	4·20	16·63	1·80	7·19	25·30
Belgium	3·10	4·09	62·90	83·98	74·92
Canada	13·90	4·23	129·90	39·56	328·22
Germany	101·40	17·61	343·00	57·86	575·65
Greece	5·00	61·46	1·10	14·06	8·18
Italy	52·50	6·51	422·40	52·35	806·86
Japan	128·50	5·95	1,485·70	68·82	2,158·83
Netherlands	21·70	13·39	31·70	19·53	162·13
Norway	2·90	6·95	3·20	7·61	41·94
Portugal	1·50	26·07	1·30	21·74	5·75
Spain	21·40	33·71	18·10	28·65	63·35
Sweden	18·10	21·06	14·90	17·31	85·98
Switzerland	14·40	14·19	45·80	45·27	101·16
United Kingdom	21·50	5·40	273·20	68·60	398·26
United States	124·30	6·08	1,013·00	49·57	2,043·40

Full details may be found in "Energy Policies and Programmes of IEA Countries—1988 Review", International Energy Agency, OECD, 1989.

Flue Gas Desulphurisation

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Carmarthen (Mr. Williams) of 26 February, *Official Report*, column *89*, when he expects the first two units of the flue gas desulphurisation plant at Drax to become fully operational.

Mr. Wakeham: I am advised by the Central Electricity Generating Board that the first two 660 MW units at Drax power station are expected to be operational by the end of 1993.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what contribution he estimates the flue gas desulphurisation programme at the Drax power station will make to the reduction in SO_2 emissions set out in the consultative document on implementation of the large combustion plants directive by 1993.

Mr. Wakeham: I am advised by the Central Electricity Generating Board that, when fully operational, the flue gas desulphurisation installation at Drax is likely to reduce the station's emissions of sulphur dioxide by about 250,000 to 280,000 tonnes.

Central Electricity Generating Board Property

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what date he proposes to set for the making of the scheme for the division of property which the Central Electricity Generating Board must prepare under section 66 of the Electricity Act 1989.

Mr. Wakeham: The Central Electricity Generating Board submitted on 12 March a scheme for transferring all the board's property, rights and liabilities to successor companies which subject to my approval and any modifications will come into force on 31 March 1990.

Bankside Power Station

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what estimate has been made of the asset value of the Bankside power station site.

Mr. Wakeham: The estimate of the value placed on this site is commercially confidential.

Greenhouse Gas

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what was the contribution of coal to the United Kingdom *(a)* primary and *(b)* final energy consumption in the years 1970, 1975, 1980, 1985 and 1989; and what is the projected contribution for 2005 and 2020 in the range of scenarios set out in the evaluation of energy-related greenhouse gas emissions and measures to ameliorate them prepared for the intergovernmental panel on climate change.

Mr. Wakeham: The percentage contribution of coal to primary and final energy demands is shown in the table. Data for 1989 are provisional. Figures for 2005 and 2020 represent the range across all scenarios considered, on the basis of energy prices provided by the International Energy Agency.

Year	*Primary Demand*	*Final Demand*
1970	46·7	30·8
1975	36·4	18·1
1980	35·8	12·9
1985	31·8	13·1
1989	[1]31·4	[1]12·1
2005	23-28	7-12
2020	9-34	6-12

[1] Provisional.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what was the contribution of nuclear power to United Kingdom primary and final energy consumption in the years 1970, 1975, 1980, 1985 and 1989; and what is the projected contribution in the range of scenarios outlined in the evaluation of energy-related greenhouse gas emissions and measures to ameliorate them prepared for the intergovernmental panel on climate change.

Mr. Wakeham: The percentage contribution of United Kingdom-produced nuclear power to primary demand is shown in the table on a heat-supplied basis. Data for 1989 are provisional. Figures for 2005 and 2020 represent the range across all scenarios considered, on price assumptions provided by the International Energy Agency.

Percentage contribution of nuclear to Primary Energy Demand (Domestic Production Only).

Year	*Primary Demand*
1970	2·6
1975	3·1
1980	3·8
1985	6·3
1989	[1]7·1
2005	6-8
2020	3-4

[1] Provisional.

After the generation stage, in final energy consumption, it is not possible to separately identify the contribution of electricity from any particular source.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

National Curriculum

Mr. Fatchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he expects to set up the national curriculum working parties in *(a)* physical education, *(b)* music and *(c)* art.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend hopes to make an announcement shortly.

Gipsies

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what action he proposes to ensure rights of traveller children to education in those areas where authorities have not applied for grant under section 210 of the Education Reform Act 1988.

Mr. Alan Howarth: Section 6(1) of the Education Act 1980 places a duty on local education authorities to make arrangements to enable the parents of children in their area, including those of traveller children, to express a preference as to the school they wish their child to attend and to give reasons for their preference.

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what criteria have been established to determine allocation of grant under section 210 of the Education Reform Act 1988; and what plans he has to alter the level of funding for traveller education in future years.

Mr. Alan Howarth: The draft circular issued in July 1989 indicated that in the case of satisfactory bids exceeding the total grant available priority would be given, as far as possible, to the maintenance of existing special provision. My right hon. Friend will review the level of funding for future years in the light of experience of the 1990-91 programme.

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is the total amount of grant allocated for traveller education under section 210 of the Education Reform Act 1988 for the financial year 1990-91.

Mr. Alan Howarth: Expenditure of £7·9 million on traveller education is due to be supported through grant in 1990-91. Grant will be paid at the rate of 75 per cent.

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether grants for traveller education under section 210 of the Education Reform Act are affected by whether local authorities applying have been granted designation under the Caravan Act 1968.

Mr. Alan Howarth: Grants are not affected by designation.

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science which local authorities have applied, under section 210 of the Education Reform Act 1988 for grant to *(a)* finance existing traveller education provision and *(b)* to finance new provision; how many of *(a)* and *(b)* have received grant; and what is the amount of grant allocated to each local education authority.

Mr. Alan Howarth: The following local authorities have applied for grant to:

(a) finance existing Traveller education provision:

Avon
Bedfordshire
Berkshire
Bradford
Brent
Bromley
Buckinghamshire
Bury
Cambridgeshire
Cheshire
Cleveland
Croydon
Cumbria
Derbyshire
Devon
Doncaster
Dorset
Durham
Ealing
East Sussex
Essex
Gateshead
Gloucestershire
Greenwich
Hammersmith and Fulham
Haringey
Harrow
Havering
Hertfordshire
Hillingdon
Hounslow
Humberside
Kensington and Chelsea
Kent
Lambeth
Lancashire
Leeds
Leicestershire
Lewisham
Lincolnshire
Liverpool
Manchester
Newcastle
Newham
Norfolk
North Yorkshire
Northamptonshire
Northumbria
Nottinghamshire
Oxfordshire
Richmond
Rochdale
Rotherham
Sefton
Sheffield
Solihull
Somerset
Southwark
Suffolk
Surrey
Tower Hamlets
Trafford
Wakefield
West Sussex
Wigan
Wiltshire
Wolverhampton

(b) finance new provision:

Barnsley
Bolton
Camden
Cornwall
Hackney
Hampshire
Salford
Waltham Forest
Wandsworth

In addition a number of authorities with existing provision applied for grant to expand that provision.

Sixty-one authorities in group *(a)* have been informed of the level of expenditure which the Secretary of State expects to approve for their authority in 1990-91. This indicative approval is subject to confirmation on the coming into force of the Education (Grants) (Travellers and Displaced Persons) Regulations 1990.

The details for individual authorities are as follows:

Indicative approvals for the financial year 1990-91 of expenditure to be supported by grant

Authority	*£000's*
Avon	260·2
Bedfordshire	207·1
Berkshire	212·4
Bradford	165·8
Brent	26·7
Bromley	84·1
Buckinghamshire	245·5
Bury	9·1
Cambridgeshire	249·1
Cleveland	62·9
Cumbria	13·8
Derbyshire	145·2
Devon	139·5
Doncaster	58·1
Dorset	57·0
Durham	110·7
Ealing	12·0
East Sussex	54·7
Essex	509·5
Gateshead	35·8
Gloucestershire	59·8
Greenwich	75·4
Hammersmith/Fulham	9·6
Haringey	78·1

Authority	£000's
Harrow	40·7
Havering	8·8
Hertfordshire	600·2
Hounslow	96·1
Humberside	226·7
Kensington/Chelsea	8·0
Kent	173·0
Lambeth	16·5
Lancashire	293·6
Leeds	193·9
Leicestershire	85·0
Lewisham	49·0
Lincolnshire	162·8
Manchester	286·1
Newcastle	16·0
Newham	46·8
Norfolk	65·3
North Yorkshire	105·0
Northamptonshire	184·0
Northumbria	32·0
Nottinghamshire	28·8
Oxfordshire	282·0
Richmond	14·6
Sefton	39·9
Sheffield	156·4
Solihull	22·1
Somerset	58·6
Southwark	200·5
Suffolk	122·5
Surrey	322·9
Tower Hamlets	17·8
Trafford	19·2
Wakefield	86·4
West Sussex	114·8
Wigan	56·3
Wiltshire	76·0
Wolverhampton (West Midlands consortium)	739·1

Education Reform (Devon)

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is his best estimate of the cost to Devon county council of *(a)* circular 22/89, *(b)* introducing local management of schools and *(c)* introducing the national curriculum in the financial year 1990-91; and by what method each of the above was calculated.

Mr. Alan Howarth: On circular 22/89, I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave him on 14 March on the same subject. Estimates have not been made on an LEA by LEA basis of the additional costs of introducing LMS and the national curriculum in 1990-91. However, the additional pressures on spending nationally arising from the implementation of these reforms were among the factors taken into account in setting total standard spending for education for that year. Some of this spending is supported by specific grants (education support grants and local education authority training grants). Allocations of these grants to Devon LEA for 1990-91 will support spending of some £3·3 million on activities related to LMS and the national curriculum. These allocations are mainly determined by formulae relating to the number of pupils and schools in each authority.

Teachers' Pay

Mr. Straw: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Blackburn, *Official Report*, 7 March, columns *626-27*, what assumption he made in calculating the cost of £620 million in 1990-91 of implementing the recommendations of the interim advisory committee on teachers' pay in the manner he has proposed of *(a)* the number of teachers who would be awarded pay supplements of £750 in the Inner London weighting area from 1 April, *(b)* the number of teachers awarded enhanced incremental points and *(c)* the number of teachers whose maximum was extended to £18,000.

Mr. MacGregor: I followed the IAC in assuming that 50 per cent. of eligible teachers would receive the new London pay supplement. The new main scale discretions, which will be introduced from 1 January 1991, are designed to give authorities a wider range of options on pay in the light of local circumstances: they will not necessarily lead to increases in costs overall.

Modern Languages

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he expects to publish the initial advice of the national curriculum working group for modern foreign languages; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. MacGregor: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales and I are publishing today the initial advice of the national curriculum working group for modern foreign languages, together with our letter to the group's chairman, Professor Martin Harris. Copies of the initial advice including the letter have been placed in the Library.

We welcome the progress which the group has made in developing the attainment targets and programmes of study for modern foreign languages in the national curriculum. The proposed structure covers the important aspects of learning a modern foreign language and it should provide a good basis for both developing and raising the linguistic competence of pupils of all abilities during compulsory secondary schooling.

We also welcome the helpful advice which the group has offered on the issues in its terms of reference. We hope that all those concerned with modern foreign languages will now take the opportunity during the consultation period to comment on the group's proposals in order to guide it in its further work. We look forward to receiving the group's final report by the end of July.

Capital Allocations

Mr. Thornton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will provide estimates showing for each financial year from 1978-79 to 1989-90 the capital spending allocations for *(a)* local education authorities and *(b)* voluntary-aided and special schools.

Mr. Alan Howarth *[pursuant to his reply, 21 December 1989, column 351]:* In my earlier reply, the figures for capital grants paid to voluntary-aided and special agreement schools were given, from 1982-83 to 1989-90, as gross amounts including the governing bodies' 15 per cent. contribution. The adjusted table shows the level of net DES capital grants to these schools:

	£ million
1978-79	16·4
1979-80	20·3
1980-81	22·1

	£ million
1981-82	24·0
1982-83	22·3
1983-84	19·0
1984-85	24·7
1985-86	31·0
1986-87	28·3
1987-88	31·6
1988-89	42·8
1989-90	55·5

Notes:
1. Capital grants are paid at the rate of 85 per cent. of gross expenditure; the balance of 15 per cent. is met by governing bodies.
2. From 1978-79 to 1981-82 capital grants were subsumed within a single building grant which included repairs and maintenance. The figures for this period in the table are estimates based on an apportionment of the building grant using the average ratio between capital and repairs during 1982-83 and 1985-86.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Abattoirs and Meat Inspection

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) how many of his staff, full-time equivalent, were involved in the supervision of abattoirs in 1988-89 and 1989-90;

(2) if he will list the number of man years of his staff involved in poultry meat inspection in 1988-89 and 1989-90.

Mr. Maclean: Local authorities are responsible for the supervision of slaughterhouses and for meat inspection. Officers of my Department visit plants to advise on hygiene and welfare standards. The manpower involved for 1988-89 was approximately 41 man years and we expect that it will be of a similar order for 1989-90. Of this, we estimate that in 1988-89 and 1989-90 seven man years were spent on poultry meat premises.

Food Safety Bill

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what level of new costs he expects to fall upon Devon county council in implementing the provisions of the Food Safety Bill and making preparation therefor, in the financial years 1990-91, 1991-92 and 1992-93, respectively.

Mr. Maclean: We have already announced that the Food Safety Bill is likely to create additional costs, for all the local authorities in Great Britain taken together, of the order of £30 million a year from 1991-92 onwards. This sum will be taken into account in the revenue support grant settlements, and will be reflected in the standard spending assessment for each authority. It is for individual authorities to plan their expenditure accordingly.

Butter Substitutes

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has any plans to introduce further legal controls on butter substitutes; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maclean: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to my hon. Friend the Member for Bolton, North-East (Mr. Thurnham) on 1 March 1990, at column 335.

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make it his policy to purchase at full value all offspring of cattle affected by bovine spongiform encephalopathy; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maclean: We have no plans to do so.

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what assessment he has made of the risks arising from his decision to allow the export of calves born of mothers affected by bovine spongiform encephalopathy.

Mr. Maclean: The Southwood working party concluded that the risk to humans from BSE is remote and there is no evidence at present to show that the disease can be transmitted maternally from dam to offspring.

From 1 March, EC measures have restricted United Kingdom cattle exports to animals less than six months old and which are not the progeny of BSE-affected dams. Exports of cattle to third countries must satisfy the health conditions imposed by those countries.

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what further measures he proposes to take to prevent the spread of bovine spongiform encephalopathy among cattle and to reduce further the possibility of transmission to humans.

Mr. Maclean: The Government have introduced a comprehensive package of measures to tackle BSE in cattle and to eliminate the remote risk to public health.

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the relationship between scrapie and bovine spongiform encephalopathy; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maclean: BSE was almost certainly caused by feeding scrapie-infected protein material to cattle. The feeding to ruminants of protein material derived from ruminants was prohibited in July 1988.

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what recent representations he has had from the National Farmers Union in respect of the incidence of bovine spongiform encephalopathy.

Mr. Maclean: We have received a number of representations from the National Farmers Union about BSE.

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what steps his Ministry will take to ensure that no threat is posed to humans by the sale of calves of six months or under, whose mothers are affected by bovine spongiform encephalopathy.

Mr. Maclean: If transmission from dam to offspring can take place (and there is no evidence to indicate that this occurs), research into scrapie suggests that the agent of the disease would not be detectable in such young animals.

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what studies have been undertaken to establish whether bovine spongiform encephalopathy can transfer from cattle to sheep; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maclean: Studies on the experimental transmission of BSE from cattle to sheep are being undertaken as part of the Ministry's programme of research announced on 9 January at column 572.

Salmonella

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what action he is taking to eliminate so far as is practicable salmonella in poultry breeding flocks; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maclean: Under the Poultry Breeding Flocks and Hatcheries (Registration and Testing) Order 1989, registered owners of breeding flocks are required to have their flocks tested for the presence of salmonella and to comply with specific hygiene standards. A programme of compulsory slaughter, with compensation, has been introduced for flocks infected with salmonella enteritidis or salmonella typhimurium.

Scrapie

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what studies have been undertaken to establish whether scrapie can transfer from sheep to cattle; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maclean: Epidemiological studies have shown that the most likely cause of BSE was feeding cattle with ruminant-based protein which included material from sheep infected with scrapie. Research investigating the experimental transmission of scrapie from sheep to cattle is not considered a priority.

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether scrapie has been identified in muscle tissue in sheep; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maclean: No.

Glacé Cherries

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food why the use of E127 on glacé cherries is permitted; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maclean: The food colour erythrosine BS (E.127) is currently approved for use in both the United Kingdom and the European Community in a number of foodstuffs. The recent review of colouring matter in foodstuffs conducted by the Food Advisory Committee recommended in the light of fresh scientific evidence that the use of E.127 should be restricted to cocktail and glacé to a maximum level of 200 mg/kg. I have accepted that recommendation and will be taking steps to implement it in United Kingdom regulations in conjunction with European Community requirements as soon as possible.

PRIME MINISTER

Mr. Ian Richter

Q157. **Mr. Hanley:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will continue to seek to secure the release of Ian Richter from detention in Iraq.

The Prime Minister: I assure my hon. Friend that our efforts to secure the release of Ian Richter on humanitarian grounds are continuing and will continue. Mr. Richter's case remains a cause of deep concern, as we have made clear to the Iraqis on many occasions.

Marine Archaeological Sites

Q206. **Dr. Godman:** To ask the Prime Minister what recent discussions Her Majesty's Government have held with other European Community states concerning the protection of important marine archaeological sites; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: None.

Car Imports

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Prime Minister if she will raise at the next meeting of the European Council the restraints placed on the import of cars by individual member states; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: The future treatment of car imports into the European Community from Japan was discussed at the Foreign Affairs Council on 5 March. The Commission is to open exploratory talks with Japan and the Government will consider any proposals resulting from these talks when they emerge.

The Government have put the case forcefully that there must be no obstacle to free trade between member states in all cars produced within the Community.

German Reunification

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Prime Minister if she will raise at the next meeting of the European Council the implications for the European Economic Community of the reunification of Germany; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: The EC implications of German unification will be considered at an informal meeting of Community Heads of State and Government in Dublin on 28 April.

Marine Pollution

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Prime Minister what recent representations she has received concerning action to reduce marine pollution.

The Prime Minister: The Government have recently had representations from a wide range of interested organisations and individuals including industry, environmental groups and members of the public in the run-up to the third North sea conference which took place in The Hague last week on 7 and 8 March.

The United Kingdom played a full and constructive part at the conference which, among other measures, agreed to

- reduce discharges to rivers and atmosphere for substances causing a major threat to the marine environment, such as cadmium, mercury, dioxins and lead by 70 per cent. or more by 1995;
- reduce emissions to the atmosphere for 17 dangerous substances by 50 per cent. or more by 1995, and at the latest by 1999;
- phase out all remaining identifiable uses of PCB by 1999 and to destroy them as far as possible in the country of origin and using storage only as an interim option;
- reduce nutrient inputs to the North sea by improving sewage discharge treatment standards and adopting secondary treatment as a general rule with exceptions in less sensitive areas;

end sewage sludge dumping at sea at the latest by 1998 and to develop a programme to achieve this as soon as possible;
end incineration in the North sea by the end of 1991 (the United Kingdom will end it by the end of this year);
protect dolphin and small cetacean species in the North sea and to co-operate on a programme to identify and protect a network of marine wildlife conservation sites around the North sea.

South Africa

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Prime Minister how many representations and from whom, she has received regarding opposition to her current policy in South Africa; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: I receive many representations from a wide range of people expressing both opposition and support for our policy towards South Africa.

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Prime Minister what public expenditure will be incurred on publicising the lifting of limited sanctions with South Africa in order to encourage wider investment in that country; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, in a written answer to a parliamentary question on 23 February 1990, *Official Report*, columns *934-35*, announced the withdrawal of the advice on new investment in South Africa which was issued in 1986. This was a deserved response to the constructive steps taken by President de Klerk. However, it will, as before, be for companies and firms to make their own judgment about whether to invest in South Africa. The Government will neither encourage nor discourage them.

The statement made by the Secretary of State announcing the lifting of the ban was released as a press notice. Copies of this notice were also sent to relevant associated bodies and United Kingdom companies with existing interests in South Africa.

The Department of Trade and Industry incurred minor administrative costs in doing this.

Engagements

Mr. Pike: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 15 March.

Mr. Rathbone: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 15 March.

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 15 March.

The Prime Minister: This morning I presided at a meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in this House I shall be having further meetings later today.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Kashmir

Mr. Denis Howell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he has received a petition on behalf of the Jammu and Kashmir Plebiscite Front about the rights of the people of Kashmir to obtain self-determination; and what response he proposes to make.

Mr. Maude: Yes. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs is writing to the right hon. Member. Both the Indian and Pakistan Governments are aware of our concern about the situation in Kashmir, and also of our long-standing view that their dispute over its status can be settled only by agreement between them.

North Korea

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the reply to the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Leith (Mr. Brown), *Official Report*, column *702*, 7 March, what action is taken to protect the well-being of British citizens who visit North Korea.

Mr. Maude: Since we do not recognise North Korea as a state, and accordingly have no relations with any authorities in North Korea, we can offer no consular protection there. British travellers to North Korea who seek advice from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office are warned of this difficulty.

Archbishop Romero

Sir Russell Johnston: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations have been made to the Salvadorean authorities about the murder of Archbishop Romero on 24 March 1980 and efforts to bring the perpetrators to justice.

Mr. Maude: None.

DEFENCE

Conventional Forces in Europe

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what are the current United Kingdom and NATO holdings of equipment covered by the Vienna negotiations on conventional forces in Europe.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Definitions of the treaty-limited items of equipment covered by CFE are not yet fixed. It is not therefore possible to be precise about the relevant holdings. But in general terms, on proposed western definitions the United Kingdom has some 1,250 battle tanks; 650 artillery pieces; 3,500 armoured combat vehicles; 1,000 combat aircraft; and 500 attack helicopters. Equivalent NATO figures are some 24,000 battle tanks; 18,000 artillery pieces; 30,000 armoured combat vehicles; 6,000 combat aircraft and 2,400 attack helicopters. The figures reflect the fact that for treaty purposes the definitions extend to equipment in storage and held in other non-operational forms, for example, in R and D and training establishments, rather than the more usual categorisation which reflects only equipment in active units.

Nuclear Tests

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if, at the next meeting of NATO Defence Ministers, he will raise the implications of the Soviet decision to move its nuclear warhead-testing site to the Novaya Zemlya Islands.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: My right hon. Friend will discuss a wide range of issues of mutual interest with other NATO Defence Ministers when they next meet at the nuclear planning group meeting early in May.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had with his counterpart in Norway concerning the plan by the Soviet Union to move its nuclear warhead-testing site to the Novaya Zemlya Islands.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: None.

Ministry of Defence Land

Dr. Woodcock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will review water access arrangements to Ministry of Defence land with a view to facilitating greater access when this would not pose security or safety problems.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: It is Ministry of Defence policy to allow access to our land and facilities for recreational, social or commercial purposes wherever this is consistent with operational, safety and security requirements and does not conflict with the interests of tenants or have a detrimental effect on local amenities and the environment.

Low Flying

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many complaints about low flying were received in each month since November 1988 from addresses in (1) Scotland, (2) England, (3) Wales and (4) Northern Ireland.

Mr. Neubert: The number of total monthly inquiries and complaints received over the period 1 November 1988 to 28 February 1990 relating to military low-flying training in England, Scotland and Wales is as follows:

Month	*England*	*Scotland*	*Wales*
1988			
November	254	81	50
December	137	63	26
1989			
January	428	78	106
February	297	90	82
March	278	75	36
April	301	55	86
May	478	132	100
June	662	167	118
July	822	186	196
August	802	143	154
September	584	179	70
October	437	165	91
November	250	160	32
December	117	61	39
1990			
January	267	93	18
February	256	71	62

No fixed-wing low-flying training is carried out in Northern Ireland. However, helicopters undertake low-flying operations in Northern Ireland and although no central records are available of complaints received, headquarters Northern Ireland received 38 complaints in 1988 and 50 in 1989.

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many low-flying sorties were carried out over the United Kingdom in each month from November 1988 to the latest available date.

Mr. Neubert: The number of low-flying sorties flown in the United Kingdom in each month over the period of 1 November 1988 to 31 December 1989 is as follows:

Month	*Sorties*
1988	
November	13,105
December	9,408
1989	
January	13,168
February	11,702
March	11,816
April	12,398
May	14,299
June	15,641
July	14,282
August	11,279
September	9,376
October	12,682
November	11,462
December	6,218

Exercise Northaxe

Mr. Macdonald: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters are scheduled to take part in Exercise Northaxe 2/90; and what overland flying activity is planned during the exercise;

(2) what use is being made of *(a)* Stornoway airport, *(b)* Benbecula airport and *(c)* the Cape Wrath ranges as part of Exercise Northaxe 2/90.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Some 74 aircraft took part in Northaxe 2/90. Overland flying during the exercise was limited to transiting to and from Stornoway airport (to collect mail, stores and passengers for ships at sea), navigation training over north-west Scotland and the use of the Cape Wrath range. Benbecula airport was used as a diversion airfield.

Mr. Macdonald: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many surface vessels and submarines are scheduled to take part in Exercise Northaxe 2/90; and what warnings have been issued to mariners about activities connected with this exercise.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Eleven vessels were involved in the exercise. Warnings of activity in the area round the Cape Wrath range between 6 and 9 March were issued to fishermen. It is not our normal practice to issue notices to mariners for exercises of this sort.

Mr. Macdonald: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what instructions have been given to military aircrew concerning interceptions of civilian air traffic during Exercise Northaxe.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Military aircraft engaged on operational exercises have no instructions to intercept civilian aircraft and, in accordance with normal practice, aircrew have been instructed to avoid civilian aircraft during Exercise Northaxe.

Mr. Macdonald: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the purpose of Exercise Northaxe 2/90; which nations are participating in the exercise; whether it is part of a regular series of exercises; and what plans exist to hold future Northaxe exercises in the region of the Minch.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Northaxe 2/90 is a primarily naval exercise which enables participant forces, all British, to practise their various anti-submarine and air defence roles. Northaxe exercises generally take place annually and one is provisionally planned for 1991.

Radiation

Mr. John Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many individuals have received, in the last two decades, consecutive or separate annual radiation doses of more than 15 milliSieverts; and what is the total radiation dose, including doses of less than 15 milliSieverts, sustained by those workers.

Mr. Archie Hamilton *[holding answer 5 March 1990]:* Records for radiation workers at the atomic weapons establishments are held separately from those for other Ministry of Defence radiation workers.

During the 17 years that AWE has been under the control of the Ministry of Defence, 91 individuals sustained attributable exposures to penetrating radiation determined to have been 15 mSv or more in each of one or more calendar years. The total attributable radiation exposure for all these individuals was approximately 15 person-sieverts.

Figures for other MOD radiation workers are readily available only for the period 1 January 1979 to 31 December 1989, when 1,484 individuals sustained attributable exposures to penetrating radiation determined to have been 15 mSv or more in each of one or more calendar years. The total attributable radiation exposure for all these individuals, based on a sample of 100, was approximately 143 person-sieverts.

Mr. John Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many nuclear submariners have received radiation doses of more than 15 milliSieverts in two or more consecutive years, for the last two decades to the latest available date; if he will specify in ranges of 5 milliSieverts the doses into which those nuclear submarine personnel fall; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton *[holding answer 5 March 1990]:* In the period for which figures are readily available—1 January 1979 to 31 December 1989—60 naval personnel received radiation doses in excess of 15 milliSieverts per annum in two or more consecutive years. No naval personnel have received such consecutive doses for more than four years.

The 5 mSv ranges of lifetime radiation dose into which these individuals fall are shown in the table:

Ranges	*Dose*
30-35	1
35-40	1
40-45	1
45-50	0
50-55	2
55-60	3
60-65	5
65-70	5
70-75	3
75-80	5
80-85	2
85-90	5
90-95	1
95-100	1
100-105	2
105-110	4
110-115	2
115-120	1
120-125	2
125-130	6
130-135	1
135-140	0
140-145	0
145-150	0
150-155	1
155-160	1
160-165	1
165-170	0
170-175	1
175-180	0
180-185	0
185-190	1
190-195	1
195-200	0
200-205	1

Mr. McFall: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many individuals at CSB Faslane have been subjected to a total exposure to radiation of 10 milliSieverts over a period of six months in each of the last 10 years.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Radiation dose data are not held in the form requested and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

SOCIAL SECURITY

National Insurance

59. **Mr. Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what representations he has received seeking reform of the system of national insurance contributions.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Representations have been received from the Confederation of British Industry about employers' national insurance, from the Institute of Directors about the upper earnings limit and from the Construction Industry Joint Taxation Committee about the closer integration of pay-as-you-earn tax and national insurance.

Child Benefit

Dr. Reid: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will give the total estimated saving to the Exchequer as a result of the freezing of child benefit in the financial years 1988-89 and 1989-90; and if he will make a statement.

58. **Mr. Doran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will give the total estimated saving to the Exchequer as a result of the freezing of child benefit in the financial years 1988-89 and 1989-90; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The sums involved are about £140 million and £210 million respectively.

Community Charge

Mr. Maxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will publish in the *Official Report* the maximum net weekly incomes that would qualify for community charge rebates for *(a)* a single person aged 18

to 24 years, *(b)* a married couple with two children under 11 years, *(c)* a pensioner couple aged 60 to 79 years and *(d)* any person with capital in excess of £8,000, assuming community charge per adult levels of (i) £250, (ii) £300, (iii) £350, (iv) £400, (v) £438 and (vi) £328.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The information requested is shown in the table. Where a claimant or his partner has assessed capital in excess of £8,000 community charge benefit is not payable.

Annual community charge	*Single under 25*	*Couple two children under 11*	*Pensioner couple aged 60-74*	*Pensioner couple aged 75-79*
£250	56·03	147·45	123·35	127·00
£300	61·15	157·68	133·58	137·23
£328	64·01	163·41	139·31	142·96
£350	66·26	167·91	143·81	147·46
£400	71·37	178·14	154·04	157·69
£438	75·26	185·91	161·81	165·46

Unemployment Benefit

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) how many other appeals have been received following that of Mrs. Morris and Whitbread concerning the effect of occupational pensions on unemployment benefit; what timetable he has established for dealing with these appeals; what consideration he has given to his general policy on this matter; and when he expects the social security commissioners to review the remainder of cases;

(2) if he will make a statement on the position of claimants aged 55 years or over in receipt of an occupational pension of £35 per week or over, whose unemployment benefit was reduced or removed on 1 January.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: From 1 January 1989 the age at which unemployment benefit is abated by the value of any occupational pension in excess of £35 per week was reduced from 60 to 55 years. The change affected people in receipt of unemployment benefit at the time and all subsequent claimants over age 55.

The appeal against the decision by the social security appeals tribunal in Mrs. Morris' case was heard by a tribunal of social security commissioners on 8 March and this decision is awaited. Pending the outcome of this case, employment service local offices are maintaining a record of people in similar circumstances who may wish to have their cases reviewed in the light of the commissioners' decision. These records, and the number of other appeals which might have been lodged, are not held centrally and the overall numbers could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Administration Costs

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what are the total administration costs as a percentage of benefit expenditure for each year from 1978-79 to 1989-90.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard *[holding answer 5 March 1990]:* Administration costs as a percentage of benefit expenditure for each year from 1978-79 to 1989-90 are in the table:

	Per cent.
1978-79	5·0
1979-80	4·9
1980-81	5·0
1981-82	4·9
1982-83	4·8
1983-84	4·7
1984-85	4·4
1985-86	4·4
1986-87	4·6
1987-88	5·0
1988-89	5·3
1989-90	[1]5·6

[1] Estimated.

EMPLOYMENT

Employment, Training

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment for each of the Training Agency areas within Greater London, Merseyside, Greater Manchester, the Birmingham and Solihull Manpower Services Commission area and for Great Britain as a whole, what are the most recent monthly statistics for employment training showing *(a)* entrants in the latest available period, and the number of cumulative entrants since the scheme started, *(b)* a breakdown of entrants which shows how many were male and female, the length of time they had been out of work, their ethnic background and whether or not they had any disabilities, *(c)* the number of trainees in the latest available period who entered work placements and the cumulative total of how many are in work places at the latest available date, *(d)* trainees who left the scheme in the latest available period, and the number of cumulative leavers since the scheme started, *(e)* for all those trainees who have left the scheme how many found work; failed to attend; went on to another course of training or education; completed the course; left for sickness; or went back into unemployment and *(f)* the total number of currently filled places.

Mr. Nicholls: Information on entrants is given in table 1. The breakdown of entrants is given in table 2. Information about those entering or on work placements is not available. The estimated number of leavers in the most recent period is given in table 3. Information about the cumulative number of leavers since September 1988 is not available. Information about the destinations of leavers is not yet available. The number of filled places is given in table 4.

Table 1
Employment training entrants February 1990

Area	*February*	*Cumulative since September 1988*
London North	840	11,300
London West	250	3,970
London East	470	6,980
London South	520	5,630
Inner London North	1,360	18,100
Inner London South	640	9,620
Merseyside	1,810	29,230
Manchester East	600	9,900
Manchester Central	890	14,500
Manchester North	690	10,800

Area	February	Cumulative since September 1988
Birmingham and Solihull	1,370	21,900
Great Britain	39,600	621,900

Table 2
Employment training characteristics of entrants (April 1989 to January 1990)
(all figures are percentages, figures may not total 100 because of rounding)

Area	Men	Women	Unemployment duration (months)				Ethnic origin[1]					PWD[2]	
			0 to 6	6 to 12	13 to 23	24+	1	2	3	4	5	Yes	No
London North	54	46	24	30	14	32	45	25	15	8	7	9	91
London West	56	44	25	32	12	31	61	12	18	6	3	8	92
London East	60	40	18	37	12	33	56	20	18	4	2	12	88
London South	56	44	21	32	13	34	64	19	8	4	5	10	89
Inner London North	58	42	22	31	15	32	48	27	9	8	8	6	94
Inner London South	58	40	11	34	16	40	46	36	4	7	7	10	90
Merseyside	65	35	26	24	13	37	95	2	1	1	2	6	94
Manchester East	69	31	29	29	11	30	91	2	5	1	1	10	90
Manchester Central	69	31	28	27	13	31	82	8	5	2	3	8	92
Manchester North	67	33	27	29	12	32	91	1	6	1	1	9	91
Birmingham and Solihull	64	36	22	27	11	40	63	17	14	3	3	8	92
Great Britain	67	33	26	30	12	32	87	5	4	2	2	11	89

[1] Ethnic origin: 1. White
2. Black/African/Caribbean
3. Indian/Pakistan/Bangladeshi/Sri Lankan
4. None of these
5. I prefer not to say

[2] PWD—People with disabilities. Those trainees answering whether they had a long-term health problem or disability which affected the type of work they could do. Figures to end December 1989.

. . = Less than 0·5 per cent.

Table 3
Employment training
Leavers during February 1990 (estimated)

Area	Numbers
London North	690
London West	270
London East	430
London South	490
Inner London North	1,080
Inner London South	600
Merseyside	1,860
Manchester East	530
Manchester Central	880
Manchester North	590
Birmingham and Solihull	1,370
Great Britain	38,000

Table 4
Employment training
Filled places at 23 February 1990

Area	Numbers
London North	4,775
London West	1,309
London East	2,750
London South	2,106
Inner London North	7,525
Inner London South	3,855
Merseyside	10,521
Manchester East	2,539
Manchester Central	4,165
Manchester North	2,977
Birmingham and Solihull	7,365
Great Britain	209,000

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment for each standard region of Great Britain what are the monthly statistics since December 1988 for employment training showing *(a)* entrants in each monthly period, and the number of cumulative entrants since the scheme started, *(b)* a breakdown of entrants which shows how many were male and female, the length of time they had been out of work, their ethnic backgrounds and whether or not they had any disabilities, *(c)* the number of trainees in each monthly period who entered work placements and the cumulative total of how many are in project places at the latest available date, *(d)* trainees who left the scheme in each monthly period, and the number of cumulative leavers since the scheme started, *(e)* for all those trainees who have left the scheme how many found work; failed to attend; went on to another course of training or education; completed the course; left for sickness; or went back into unemployment and *(f)* the total number of currently filled places.

Mr. Nicholls: Information on entrants is given in table 1. The breakdown of entrants is given in table 2. Information about those entering work placements is not available. Information on trainees on project placements is given in table 3. Leavers information is not available before April 1989; figures since April are given in table 4.

Information about the destinations of leavers is not available for the period requested. The number of filled places is given in table 5.

Table 1
Starts at employment training managers: January 1989 to February 1990

Training agency region	1989 January	February	March
South East	2,300	2,500	2,100
London	3,800	3,400	3,800
South West	2,100	2,500	2,300
West Midlands	4,300	5,000	4,900
East Midlands and Eastern	2,900	3,600	3,200
Yorkshire and Humberside	5,500	6,100	5,400
North West	5,500	7,100	6,500
Northern	3,600	4,800	4,700
Wales	2,900	3,600	3,200
Scotland	3,700	5,400	6,000

Training agency region	1989 April	May	June
South East	2,300	1,600	2,400
London	3,100	2,600	3,100
South West	2,000	1,700	1,900
West Midlands	4,100	3,300	3,800
East Midlands and Eastern	3,100	2,400	2,800
Yorkshire and Humberside	4,900	4,100	4,500
North West	5,800	4,800	6,300
Northern	3,800	3,200	4,100
Wales	2,900	2,300	2,600
Scotland	4,400	4,400	4,800

Training agency region	1989 July	August	September
South East	4,500	1,900	3,400
London	3,100	2,700	4,800
South West	1,500	1,200	2,300
West Midlands	3,300	3,200	4,500
East Midlands and Eastern	3,000	2,500	3,500
Yorkshire and Humberside	3,800	3,500	5,500
North West	5,300	4,500	6,200
Northern	3,600	3,000	4,900
Wales	2,700	2,300	3,700
Scotland	3,400	4,500	5,600

Training agency region	1989 October	November	December
South East	2,500	2,300	1,500
London	3,300	3,600	2,600
South West	1,900	1,700	1,400
West Midlands	3,800	3,800	2,900
East Midlands and Eastern	2,800	2,800	2,100
Yorkshire and Humberside	4,600	4,800	3,700
North West	5,200	5,600	3,700
Northern	3,700	3,700	2,900
Wales	2,900	2,400	1,900
Scotland	4,800	4,900	3,500

Training agency region	1990 January	February	Cumulative since September 1988
South East	2,800	2,600	41,900
London	3,900	4,100	58,800
South West	2,000	1,800	33,000
West Midlands	3,600	4,500	68,400
East Midlands and Eastern	2,500	3,100	49,700
Yorkshire and Humberside	4,400	5,100	83,100
North West	5,400	5,900	95,400
Northern	3,300	4,100	65,000
Wales	2,500	3,100	47,300
Scotland	3,900	5,300	77,500

Table 2
Employment training characteristics of entrants (January 1989-January 1990)

Region	Men	Women	Unemployment Duration (Months) 0-5	6-12	13-23	24+	Ethnic Origin[1] 1	2	3	4	5	PWD[2] Yes	No
South East	59	41	36	25	10	29	91	2	3	2	2	14	86
London	58	42	19	32	15	34	51	25	11	7	6	9	91
South West	66	34	29	32	12	28	93	2	1	1	2	14	86
West Midlands	66	34	25	26	11	38	79	9	9	2	2	12	88
East Midlands and Eastern	69	31	18	34	13	35	87	4	5	1	2	14	86
Yorks and Humber	71	29	28	30	12	31	89	2	5	1	2	10	90
North West	69	31	25	29	13	33	92	2	3	1	2	9	91
Northern	73	27	24	34	13	30	97	[3] ..	1	1	1	8	92
Wales	69	31	25	33	13	29	95	1	1	1	2	11	89
Scotland	71	29	18	32	15	35	97	[3] ..	[3] ..	1	2	9	91

All figures are percentages, figures may not total 100 because of rounding.

[1] Ethnic origin 1—White, 2—Black/African/Caribbean, 3—Indian/Pakistan/Bangladeshi/Sri Lankan, 4—None of these, 5—prefer not to say.

[2] PWD—People with disabilities. Starts to end December. Those trainees answering whether they had a long-term health problem or disability which affected the type of work they could do.

[3] .. = less than 0·5 per cent.

Table 3
Employment Training
Trainees on practical training placements on projects on census day 29 December 1989 (estimated)

Region	December per cent.
South East	29
London	42
South West	37
West Midlands	59
East Midlands and Eastern	n/a
Yorkshire and Humberside	50
North West	49
Northern	51
Wales	39
Scotland	64

n/a = Not available because of low numbers of returns.

Table 4
Employment training leavers: April 1989 to February 1990

Training agency region	1989 April	May	June
South East	2,100	1,000	1,700
London	2,200	2,200	2,500
South West	600	1,500	1,600
West Midlands	2,600	3,000	3,400
East Midlands and Eastern	2,100	2,100	2,500
Yorkshire and Humberside	4,100	3,800	4,200
North West	4,700	4,300	5,200
Northern	2,800	2,600	2,900
Wales	2,100	2,000	2,300
Scotland	3,300	3,600	3,900

Training agency region	1989 July	August	September
South East	1,500	2,200	2,700
London	2,400	2,600	3,500
South West	1,500	1,500	1,800
West Midlands	2,900	2,800	4,700
East Midlands and Eastern	2,100	2,100	3,300
Yorkshire and Humberside	3,800	3,600	5,500
North West	3,900	4,800	5,800
Northern	2,200	2,700	4,700
Wales	1,700	2,100	3,700
Scotland	2,900	3,800	4,900

Training agency region	1989 October	November	December
South East	2,500	2,400	2,100
London	2,900	3,200	2,700
South West	1,600	1,800	1,600
West Midlands	3,800	3,900	3,500
East Midlands and Eastern	2,900	2,700	2,300
Yorkshire and Humberside	4,600	4,900	3,800
North West	5,500	4,600	4,600
Northern	4,400	3,600	3,100
Wales	2,800	2,600	2,300
Scotland	4,100	4,200	3,800

Training agency region	1990 January	February
South East	2,400	2,300
London	3,100	3,500
South West	1,800	2,200
West Midlands	4,200	3,900
East Midlands and Eastern	2,700	3,000
Yorkshire and Humberside	4,800	4,800
North West	5,300	5,800
Northern	3,800	4,500
Wales	2,800	2,900
Scotland	4,000	4,900

Table 5
Employment training
Filled places at 23 February 1990

Region	Numbers
South East	14,900
London	22,300
South West	11,800
West Midlands	22,400
East Midlands and Eastern	16,400
Yorkshire and Humberside	25,000
North West	29,000
Northern	23,300
Wales	16,100
Scotland	26,300

Disabled Employees

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what percentage of the work force at Easington district council are registered disabled.

Mr. Nicholls: As at 1 June 1989, 3·1 per cent of the work force of Easington district council were registered disabled, as published in the *Employment Gazette* in February 1990.

YTS

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many young people aged over 18 years are on YTS with special training needs endorsements.

Mr. Nicholls: A total of 15,900 young people aged over 18 were on YTS with special training needs endorsements on 31 December 1989.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether the Government intend to introduce an increase in the YT allowance, age related for 18-year-olds and over, in line with the principle set in April 1988 for income support claimants when rate liability was introduced.

Mr. Nicholls: There will be no change to the value of the higher rate of the youth training allowance. The present level of this allowance represents a clear lead over the corresponding level of the income support for 18-year-olds, and will continue to do so when the income support rates are increased in April.

Roustabout Training

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many people have gone through the roustabout training programme at the drilling instruction training centre; and what percentage of such people have subsequently been offered full-time employment by offshore contractors; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: A total of 217 people have gone through the roustabout training programme operated by the

offshore petroleum industry training board. Of these 191 or 88 per cent. have successfully completed their agreed training and have obtained full-time jobs with offshore drilling contractors. I welcome this extremely successful employment training initiative with the private sector and recognise the important contribution it makes in helping unemployed people find work and in meeting the labour needs of the oil industry.

Earnings

Mr. Fatchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what figures he has on the latest available evidence for average earnings for *(a)* 18 to 20-year-olds and *(b)* 20 to 40-year-olds by (i) gender and (ii) region.

Mr. Nicholls: The latest available information, for April 1989, is provided in the table:

Average gross weekly earnings of full-time employees whose pay was not affected by absence, April 1989

Region	Males		Females	
	18-20 £	*21-39* £	*18-20* £	*21-39* £
South East	160·5	302·7	143·6	220·0
East Anglia	144·2	249·0	120·2	174·7
South West	139·6	243·8	116·6	171·8
West Midlands	133·3	232·9	108·5	167·9
East Midlands	138·2	232·5	110·6	162·4
Yorkshire and Humberside	131·2	232·0	109·3	165·5
North West	130·5	235·5	111·7	172·0
North	130·7	226·7	109·2	163·1
Wales	131·3	223·3	110·6	171·2
Scotland	129·3	239·5	107·5	171·7
Great Britain	142·4	258·3	122·3	188·4

Benefit Fraud

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the total cost of fraud investigations conducted in the last year for which figures are available.

Mr. Eggar: The total cost of employment service fraud investigation in 1989 was £20·23 million.

Labour Relations

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he has reconsidered the Government's reply to the Trades Union Congress's comments on the application of article 1 of International Labour Organisation convention 151, "Labour Relations —Public Service", to parliamentary staff, contained in the report of the committee of experts to the 71st conference of the International Labour Organisation; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: The Government have submitted further reports to the ILO since the committee of experts' report to the 71st conference in 1985 and have stated, following legal advice, that in the respects in question parliamentary staff enjoy the full range of normal employees' rights. The Government thus consider that the arrangements for parliamentary staff are fully in accordance with ILO convention 151 and that the application of article 1 of this convention to parliamentary staff is no longer at issue.

Toxic Substances

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many copies of each issue of the "Toxic Substances Bulletin" are provided and to whom they are distributed.

Mr. Nicholls: "Toxic Substances Bulletin" is issued twice a year and is available on subscription from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). There are currently 2,400 subscribers, mainly from industry and professional institutions concerned with the control of exposure to hazardous substances at the workplace, accounting for 2,900 copies of the publication. A total of 1,500 copies are distributed within HSE and a small stock is held for new subscribers and complimentary issues.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what proportion of industrial establishments subject to the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations have registered a COSHH audit to 1 January 1990.

Mr. Nicholls: There is no requirement under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 1988 for registration of COSHH audits.

Genetically Engineered Organisms

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment at how many locations experiments connected with the release or potential releases of genetically engineered organisms are taking place; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: Eleven centres have notified the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) of proposals to release genetically manipulated organisms to the environment. At eight of these centres, releases have taken place and the HSE is presently reviewing applications from the remaining three.

WALES

Local Government Finance

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is the average level of the poll tax so far declared by Welsh local authorities.

Mr. Peter Walker: Information available to me at present indicates that declared community charges range from £169 to £284 with a weighted average of £222.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will publish a table showing for each of the past 10 years, for each county in Wales, the total expenditure by that county authority, and the contribution towards their spending that came from *(a)* Exchequer grants, *(b)* rate contributions, *(c)* capital receipts and *(d)* other sources.

Mr. Grist *[holding answer 22 February 1990]:* Information relating to the total expenditure for block grant purposes, rate income, rate support grant and the use of balances and other sources for each Welsh county for each of the past 10 years is shown in the following tables:

£000 at outturn prices

Local authority	Total expenditure[1]	Rate support grant	Rate income	Balances and other sources
1979-80				
Clwyd	92,000	28,223	63,621	155
Dyfed	80,844	28,018	48,520	4,306
Gwent	108,002	34,738	74,642	−1,378
Gwynedd	56,813	20,476	37,252	−915
Mid Glamorgan	140,028	44,176	88,919	6,933
Powys	32,358	16,027	14,821	1,511
South Glamorgan	92,442	33,354	59,637	−550
West Glamorgan	96,249	26,197	68,653	1,398
Total Wales	698,736	231,209	456,064	11,461
1980-81				
Clwyd	114,650	33,831	80,437	383
Dyfed	96,606	33,930	63,393	−718
Gwent	135,406	43,226	89,282	2,897
Gwynedd	69,394	23,450	43,592	2,351
Mid Glamorgan	167,694	53,411	112,542	1,741
Powys	38,508	18,859	19,803	−154
South Glamorgan	111,950	42,100	69,794	56
West Glamorgan	113,871	31,345	85,028	−2,502
Total Wales	848,079	280,152	563,871	4,054
1981-82				
Clwyd	130,431	76,068	57,202	−2,838
Dyfed	106,940	68,449	38,252	239
Gwent	148,438	87,664	58,050	2,724
Gwynedd	78,605	47,000	28,906	2,699
Mid Glamorgan	183,230	132,608	54,966	−4,344
Powys	41,776	30,543	11,746	−513
South Glamorgan	121,491	62,798	59,723	−1,030
West Glamorgan	126,554	69,184	58,459	−1,089
Total Wales	937,465	574,315	367,304	−4,153
1982-83				
Clwyd	139,097	86,455	57,345	−4,702
Dyfed	113,391	75,846	38,356	−811
Gwent	153,730	99,380	60,404	−6,054
Gwynedd	81,993	54,000	28,214	−221
Mid Glamorgan	194,759	142,350	55,332	−2,923
Powys	46,954	36,401	12,267	−1,714
South Glamorgan	129,407	71,386	67,816	−9,794
West Glamorgan	137,196	81,000	59,780	−3,584
Total Wales	996,527	646,818	379,514	−29,803
1983-84				
Clwyd	146,678	84,849	58,709	3,120
Dyfed	120,506	79,048	40,778	680
Gwent	160,316	101,037	61,717	−2,438
Gwynedd	86,314	55,400	32,415	−1,501
Mid Glamorgan	207,517	143,000	58,915	5,602
Powys	49,273	36,605	12,244	424
South Glamorgan	138,750	70,302	63,341	5,107
West Glamorgan	141,924	79,327	60,179	2,418
Total Wales	1,051,278	649,568	388,298	13,412
1984-85				
Clwyd	150,403	85,667	64,126	610
Dyfed	126,488	79,365	44,701	2,422
Gwent	166,119	101,902	62,521	1,696
Gwynedd	91,214	55,070	35,536	607
Mid Glamorgan	217,985	144,165	69,102	4,718
Powys	51,026	36,009	12,965	2,052
South Glamorgan	141,274	68,549	66,749	5,976
West Glamorgan	144,826	80,551	63,734	541
Total Wales	1,089,335	651,278	419,434	18,622
1985-86				
Clwyd	156,895	89,579	68,120	−804
Dyfed	130,335	81,690	53,812	−5,167
Gwent	173,327	102,352	64,558	6,417

Local authority	Total expenditure[1]	Rate support grant	Rate income	Balances and other sources
Gwynedd	94,465	55,170	37,926	1,369
Mid Glamorgan	218,722	152,434	72,321	−6,033
Powys	52,911	36,839	15,165	906
South Glamorgan	147,715	69,107	75,874	2,734
West Glamorgan	150,228	85,167	68,232	−3,171
Total Wales	1,124,598	672,338	456,008	−3,749
1986-87				
Clwyd	169,753	93,495	76,348	−90
Dyfed	147,245	88,797	60,570	−2,123
Gwent	184,342	112,389	75,860	−3,908
Gwynedd	101,560	59,000	43,222	−662
Mid Glamorgan	239,148	157,652	79,549	1,947
Powys	56,186	38,387	17,767	32
South Glamorgan	162,111	72,672	95,469	−6,030
West Glamorgan	164,292	89,101	72,504	2,687
Total Wales	1,224,637	711,493	521,289	−8,147
1987-88				
Clwyd	180,390	102,049	81,362	−3,021
Dyfed	159,590	96,919	64,965	−2,293
Gwent	201,358	116,000	86,801	−1,444
Gwynedd	110,734	62,000	47,749	986
Mid Glamorgan	256,154	173,596	84,438	−1,880
Powys	59,282	41,384	19,434	−1,536
South Glamorgan	173,371	79,001	102,101	−7,732
West Glamorgan	174,930	92,844	81,568	518
Total Wales	1,315,809	763,793	568,418	−16,402
1988-89				
Clwyd	197,043	105,970	88,176	−2,897
Dyfed	174,299	107,153	68,051	−905
Gwent	219,117	124,686	95,501	−1,070
Gwynedd	119,888	70,696	53,226	−4,034
Mid Glamorgan	280,049	189,767	88,562	1,720
Powys	64,860	43,767	21,047	46
South Glamorgan	196,980	81,281	111,073	4,626
West Glamorgan	191,377	100,045	94,209	−2,877
Total Wales	1,443,613	823,365	619,845	−5,391

[1] As defined for Block Grant purposes. Net of specific and supplementary grants.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what targets were set by his Department and what are the actual sums set by each district, borough and city council for *(a)* each borough community charge and *(b)* each average sum for community council purposes within each council.

Mr. Peter Walker: Information about the actual level of community charge set by councils will be published when available. I have set no targets for 1990-91; it is for councils to determine their own budgets.

Milk

Mr. Alan W. Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many dairy farmers in the Carmarthen area are likely to produce more milk than their quota allows for this financial year and whose payments are now being reduced by the Milk Marketing Board.

Mr. Peter Walker: The position of individual producers under the quota arrangements is a matter for the Milk Marketing Board.

Health Authorities (Performance-related Pay)

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will publish a table showing for each district health authority in Wales the total payments made by way of performance-related pay during 1988-89; and what was the number of employees in each authority who received such performance-related pay.

Mr. Grist: The numbers of general and other senior managers authorised to receive performance-related pay additions to salary in 1988-89 are as shown in the following table:

Health authority	Number of senior staff authorised to receive PRP
Clwyd	10
Gwynedd	2
Powys	2
Gwent	6
Mid Glamorgan	9
South Glamorgan	8
West Glamorgan	8
East Dyfed	1
Pembrokeshire	3

Employing authorities have discretion to determine the level of payments within prescribed percentage limits. Particulars of actual payments made are confidential and information thereon is not held centrally.

EC Funds

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what representations he has made to the European Commission to ensure that adequate funds are available to meet the integrated development operation programme of Gwynedd, Dyfed and Powys; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Walker: The major element of the integrated development operation (IDO) programme, £108 million of European regional development fund grant, was allocated in 1988 following my visit to Brussels in February of that year. The United Kingdom Government are currently in discussion with the Commission about the availability of sufficient funding to complete the IDO.

Roads

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what was his original planned timetable for the construction of the Penydip tunnel on the A55 near Penmaenmawr together with the original estimated cost of this tunnel; and what is the latest timetable and estimated project cost.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The decision to proceed with a tunnel on the present alignment was taken in 1985. "Roads in Wales 1985" indicated that the estimated gross cost at November 1984 prices was £31·32 million and work was programmed to start between January 1988 and December 1990. Work on the four-year contract started in November 1989, at which time the estimated gross cost of the scheme was £79·4 million at October 1989 prices.

Uniform Business Rate

Mr. Denzil Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether he will list those boroughs and district councils in Wales which in 1990-91 are estimated to pay more to central Government in respect of the uniform business rate than they will receive in return.

Mr. Peter Walker: Non-domestic rates are collected by the 37 Welsh charging authorities and (subject to netting-off arrangements) paid to the Welsh Office. The product is then redistributed by the Welsh Office to the 45 county and district councils in Wales as a flat-rate amount per head of population. Because both counties and districts receive shares of the amount collected, but only the districts collect, it follows that the amounts distributed to the boroughs and districts are in all cases less than the amounts they collect and pay to the Welsh Office.

Cancer

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what steps he is taking to ensure early publication of figures on the incidence in Wales of leukaemia, lung cancer, colon cancer and stomach cancer in each district in Wales in respect of the years 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988 and 1989.

Mr. Grist: As the actual numbers of certain cancer cases registered in a given year may be relatively small and subject to chance fluctuations, the publication of annual incidence rates in isolation may lead to misinterpretation. The practice has therefore been to produce several years' registrations with explanatory text. As previously advised, the most recently available information on cancer incidence rates in Wales is presented in "Cancer Registration in Wales, 1974-84", published in 1988.

It is intended that full data in respect of the period 1984 to 1986 together with a commentary will be published during 1990.

The Department is currently reviewing its procedures for collating information on patients who have developed cancer. In particular, the computer system for cancer registrations is being re-examined with a view to improving the speed and accuracy of recording. Subject to the outcome of this review it may be possible to complete the scrutiny of the records for 1987 and 1988 before the end of the year.

Flooding

Sir Anthony Meyer: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he proposes to make any changes to class XVII, vote 5, of his Department's cash limits in the current year.

Mr. Peter Walker: As foreshadowed in my statements on 1 and 13 March, at columns 403 and 143 respectively, about the flood disaster in north Wales, the Government will be making contributions totalling £150,000 to the disaster funds.

This contribution will be met from savings on class XVII, vote 5, and the cash limit for the vote has been reduced accordingly from £268,972,000 to £268,822,000. As a result, the contribution will not add to the planned total of public expenditure.

Welsh Language

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what financial support his Department is giving this year towards the teaching of Welsh to adults in Wales, and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wyn Roberts *[pursuant to his reply, 20 February 1990, c. 630]:* Unfortunately, due to an error an incorrect figure was given. The figure of £305,000 should read £356,000.

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is the annual expenditure on schemes to teach Welsh as a second language to adults in Wales.

Mr. Wyn Roberts *[pursuant to his reply, 27 February 1990, c. 101]:* Unfortunately, due to an error an incorrect figure was given. The figure of £305,000 should read £356,000.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many tutors are employed in a full-time capacity in Wales to teach the Welsh language to adults; and whether his Department has any plans to increase the number of full-time tutors of Welsh for adults.

Mr. Wyn Roberts *[pursuant to his reply, 1 March 1990, c. 284]:* Unfortunately, due to an error an incorrect figure was given. The figure of £305,000 should read £356,000.

SCOTLAND

Scottish Agricultural College

Mr. Maclennan: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what steps he is taking to ensure that the membership of the board of the new Scottish agricultural college is representative of the different geographical areas within Scotland, including the highlands and islands.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I refer the hon. Member to the press release issued on behalf of my noble Friend the Minister of State on 8 March which indicates the membership of the board of directors of the Scottish agricultural college, a copy of which has been placed in the Library of the House. In deciding who should be invited to serve as directors, the Secretary of State took careful account of the desirability of representing the different geographical areas within Scotland, including the highlands and islands. He is confident that the new board adequately reflects the balance of backgrounds necessary to take forward the work of the Scottish agricultural college.

Tourism

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what reviews he is carrying out for Scotland under section 4 of the Development of Tourism Act 1969.

Mr. Lang: The means by which Government support is delivered to the Scottish tourist industry, including the Scottish tourist board's section 4 assistance scheme, are kept under constant review. I remain satisfied that this support is both relevant and effective.

Under-age Drinking

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what information he has on the relationship between alcohol sales in supermarkets and under-age drinking in Scotland; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Both the 1986 survey on adolescent drinking conducted by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys and the 1987 report of the working group on alcohol and young people chaired by Baroness Masham identified under-age drinking as a major problem, and off-sale premises—including supermarkets—as a significant source of supply for under-age drinkers.

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he issues any guidance on the enforcement of the law against sale of alcohol to under-age drinkers in Scotland; what action he intends to take to improve enforcement; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Enforcement of the law against sale of alcohol to under-age persons is an operational matter for the police. The Government are, however, concerned about under-age drinking and the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill includes measures to restrict unsupervised off-sales by persons under the age of 18. These measures, if enacted, should significantly reduce the chance of illegal sales through ignorance, deliberate flouting of the law, or collusion between an under-age purchaser and a young sales assistant.

Deaf-blind Children

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) how many deaf-blind children have been identified in Scotland in the age range *(a)* nought to two, *(b)* two to five, *(c)* six to 11, *(d)* 12 to 15 and *(e)* 16 to 19 years;

(2) how many deaf-blind children in Scotland attend specialist deaf-blind units;

(3) what plans he has to issue a policy statement on the education of deaf-blind children in Scotland;

(4) what provision is made to ensure the training of teachers of deaf-blind children in Scotland.

Mr. Lang: Carnbooth school in Glasgow operates as a centre for deaf-blind children from all parts of Scotland. It has nine pupils in all: six aged between six and 11, two between 12 and 15 and one between 16 and 19. Provision for other deaf-blind children is made by the education authorities in whose areas they reside. Details of the age distribution of such children are not held centrally.

I have no plans at present to issue a policy statement on the education of deaf-blind children. However, my Department is presently funding Moray House college of education and Carnbooth school to produce a training programme for teachers and carers of deaf-blind children.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what support is provided to the families of pre-school deaf-blind children in Scotland.

Mr. Lang: Local authorities have statutory responsibilities for the care and support of young children who are sensorily handicapped and their families. Health boards have similar responsibilities in relation to Health Service provision and there are well-established arrangements for co-operation between health and social work services. Decisions on the nature and extent of assistance to be provided are for the authorities themselves, having regard to the resources available to them.

The Scottish Office supports two voluntary organisations which, to varying degrees, support such children and their families. The Carers' National Association has recently been awarded a grant of up to £31,750 during 1990-91 under section 10(1) of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 towards the cost of setting up and running an office in Scotland. The association offers information, advice, training and support to carers who look after all types of people, not only those who are sensorily handicapped. SENSE in Scotland is a specialised voluntary organisation which provides a wide range of service and support specifically for deaf-blind young people and their families. It is currently receiving a grant of around £60,000, comprising £45,000 revenue and £15,000 capital support, also under section 10(1) of the 1968 Act.

With regard to financial support from the DSS, the full range of social security benefits is available to families with disabled children. In particular for families on income support, the disabled child premium will be more than doubled from £6·50 to £15·40 from April; lower rate attendance allowance (£25·05 from April) is available for all severely affected deaf-blind children; and invalid care allowance (£28·20 from April) may be available to the parent or other carer who spends at least 38 hours each week caring for a disabled child for whom attendance allowance is paid.

Food Hygiene

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on his response to the representations of the Scottish Association of Master Bakery in relation to temperature control of bakery-crafted produce and food hygiene.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The representations made by the association will be taken fully into account in the revision of the food hygiene regulations.

Seal Culling

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the level of illegal seal culling in fish farming areas.

Mr. Lang: Any evidence of a suspected offence under the Conservation of Seals Act 1970 in Scotland should be reported to the police or procurator fiscal. The outcome of any subsequent proceedings is a matter for the courts.

The Scottish Salmon Growers Association has developed, in collaboration with various wildlife conservation interests, including the Nature Conservancy Council, a code of practice on salmon farming and predatory wildlife. This was published in February this year and lays down the general policy, which my right hon. and learned Friend welcomes, that shooting or other methods of destructive control must be considered only as a last resort. In relation to seals, the code of practice emphasises that the killing of a particular animal may be considered only after reasonable measures have been taken to exclude seals from salmon farms.

Education Budget

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the change in cash and percentage terms to his education budget in 1990-91 as against 1989-90 *(a)* including student support and *(b)* excluding student support.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 13 March 1990]:* Education expenditure will increase by £49 million or 13·1 per cent. between 1989-90 and 1990-91. Excluding student support, the increase is £5 million, or 2·1 per cent. No valid comparisons can be made between these separately calculated increases because of the effect on higher educational institutions of the switch to higher student fees.

Inverclyde Enterprise Zone

Mr. Clay: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many jobs have been created in the Inverclyde enterprise zone.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 14 March 1990]:* Two hundred and fifteen jobs have been created and a further 347 jobs forecast by firms which have established or announced their intention to establish in the Inverclyde enterprise zone.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Electoral Registration

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to his reply of 8 March to the hon. Member for Copeland, *Official Report*, column *818*, if he will provide *(a)* a breakdown by country of the £760,000 for overseas electoral registration expenditure for 1990-91 and *(b)* a breakdown of the £486,000 expenditure in Great Britain.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The information requested is not readily available. I will write to the hon. Member.

Race Relations (Prisons)

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what account of race relations issues is taken by the prison department in the drafting of new contracts with individual prison governors.

Mr. Mellor: Regional directors have been asked to ensure that every governor's contract for 1990-91 includes objectives relating to the race relations liaison officer, the race relations management team and ethnic monitoring.

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has any plans to allow prisoner representation on race relations and other internal committees in England and Wales.

Mr. Mellor: We are considering what guidance we might offer to governors about prisoner representation on race relations committees. As regards committees generally, I would refer the hon. Member to the reply given to a question from the hon. Member for Tooting (Mr. Cox) on 16 January 1990 at column *176*.

Ethnic Minorities (Prisons)

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what were the total and ethnic minority numbers for the latest date available in *(a)* HMP Long Lartin, *(b)* HMP Parkhurst, *(c)* HMP Wakefield, *(d)* HMP Holloway, *(e)* HMP Frankland, *(f)* HMP Albany, *(g)* HMP Full Sutton, *(h)* HMP Gartree, *(i)* HMP Maidstone, *(j)* HMP Nottingham, *(k)* HMP Lewes and *(l)* HMP Wormwood Scrubs.

Mr. Mellor: The latest readily available information is given in the table:

Population[1] of specified Prison Service establishments in England and Wales on 30 September 1989: by establishment and ethnic origin.

Number

Establishment	*Ethnic origin*					*Total number of persons in establishments*
	White	*West Indian, Guyanese, African*	*Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi*	*Chinese, Arab, Mixed origin*	*Other not recorded (including refusals)*	
Long Lartin	319	56	26	12	10	423
Parkhurst	179	43	5	6	5	238
Wakefield	639	31	31	12	5	718
Holloway	248	149	6	17	75	495

Establishment	Ethnic origin					Total number of persons in establishments
	White	West Indian, Guyanese, African	Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi	Chinese, Arab, Mixed origin	Other not recorded (including refusals)	
Frankland	328	17	11	14	5	375
Albany	294	63	16	9	5	387
Full Sutton	359	20	13	5	2	399
Gartree	236	49	16	4	2	307
Maidstone	404	89	37	10	12	552
Nottingham	253	49	10	5	—	317
Lewes	405	43	9	9	61	527
Wormwood Scrubs	677	268	36	26	21	1,028

[1] The figures are those recorded centrally and are approximate.

Mr. Colin Wallace

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what reassessment he has now made of his parliamentary answers and Adjournment debate replies in the case of Colin Wallace.

Mr. Waddington: I have nothing to add to the answer given to the question from the hon. Member on 14 February 1990 at column *238*.

Breathalyser Technology

Sir Ian Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will now issue a general circular to chief constables confirming the position stated by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport on 14 March 1988, *Official Report*, column 974, that the police have no powers to prevent clubs or pubs from installing breath alchohol testing machines.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: No. I see no need to do so.

Remand Prisoners

Mr. Grocott: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department at the latest available date, how many male and female prisoners in England and Wales are currently remanded in custody awaiting medical reports.

Mr. Mellor: The data on remands in custody awaiting a medical report are collected annually and are not available centrally in a form which would enable a figure to be given for the number held on remand for this purpose on a particular date. This could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Grocott: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department in each year since 1979, how many male and female prisoners in England and Wales were remanded in custody for medical reports.

Mr. Mellor: The number of male and female prisoners in England and Wales remanded into custody for medical reports since 1980 is as follows:

	Males	Females
1980	7,587	1,058
1981	7,225	1,006
1982	7,506	832
1983	7,507	840
January 1984—March 1985	8,289	1,032
1985-86	7,578	782
1986-87	5,860	676
1987-88	5,493	481
1988-89	5,043	652

Figures are not available for 1979 and could be collected only at disproportionate cost.

Acid House Parties

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received about acid house parties held in Lancashire.

Mr. John Patten: We have received a number of representations, both from hon. Members and members of the public, about acid house or pay parties. Some of these representations referred to Lancashire in particular but it is not possible to determine which particular events caused concern to our correspondents.

Police (Pay)

Mr. Dykes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what has been the real increase in a police constable's pay over the last 10 years.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Between March 1980 and March 1990, the basic pay of a police constable increased by 100 per cent., from £5,334 to £10,671 a year. Over the same period, the retail prices index increased by 86·9 per cent. and the tax and prices index by 77·3 per cent.

Firearms Certificates

Mr. Colvin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on fees for firearms and shotgun certificates.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: It has been the policy of successive Governments that there should be full recovery from fees of the cost of operating the firearms licensing system. As a step towards this end my right hon. and learned Friend laid before Parliament on 27 February the Firearms (Variation of Fees) Order 1990, a copy of which is in the Library.

Voluntary Organisations

Mr. Neil Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will give details, listing the sums provided and the names of the organisations, of all voluntary organisations working in penal affairs to which his Department gives grants and other financial assistance.

Mr. John Patten *[holding answer 13 February 1990]:* I list in the table the voluntary organisations to which the Home Office gives grants for their work with offenders and ex-offenders and the amounts of those grants in 1989-90:

Voluntary after-care accommodation grants scheme

	£
Abbot Housing Society—2 projects	13,951
Adullam Homes Housing Association—3 projects	111,071
Alone in London	17,953
Alpha House	2,153
Base 3 Move-on Accommodation	612
Brighton YMCA	3,085
Bristol Cyrenians	3,219
Caldmore Area Housing Association	6,000
Cardiff Single Women's Housing Group	1,286
Carr-Gomm Society—4 projects	32,766
Central Methodist Church	4,511
Centre Point	15,076
Church Housing Association Ltd.—2 projects	33,507
Churches Housing Association of Dudley and District	14,597
Coventry Cyrenians Ltd.	11,286
Croydon Association for Young Single Homeless	7,372
Croydon Housing For the Young Unemployed	1,613
Cwm Rhymni Housing Association	2,000
Didcot Young Persons Housing	1,810
Doncaster Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders	12,700
Durham Action on Single Housing	1,050
East Bristol Youth Housing Association	3,701
Effra Trust	16,652
Ekaya Housing Association	1,555
Elizabeth Housing Association	4,949
Exeter Shilhay Community	2,500
Grace Tebbutt Housing Trust	15,401
Handsworth Single Homeless Action Group	14,320
Hargrave House	15,340
Harlow Council for Voluntary Services	17,117
Harringey Umbrella Housing Association	8,670
Havant Housing Association	3,502
Haven Project—2 projects	21,504
Homeless Action and Accommodation	15,325
Intake	9,778
Inward House	7,580
Kaleidoscope Youth and Community Project	3,062
Kare Housing Association	17,777
Kenward Trust—3 projects	19,016
Langley House Trust—12 projects	561,229
Leahurst Hostel	2,048
Leeds Housing Concern—4 projects	26,802
Leeds Young Persons Housing Trust—2 projects	19,302
Life for the World Trust	17,462
Macedon Trust	7,072
Margery Fry Memorial Trust—9 projects	131,122
Meta House	23,894
NACRO Community Enterprises—13 projects	139,520
Norcare Ltd.—6 projects	106,477
Norman House—Leicester	16,185
Norman House—Sheffield	3,620
North Devon Housing Society	10,708
North East London Shared Housing	9,374
North West London Housing Association—7 projects	144,370
Nottingham Help the Homeless Association	1,828
Outlet Ltd.	1,650
Oxford Cyrenian Community	11,010
Patchwork Community Ltd.	18,204
Penrose Charity—3 projects	15,560
Phoenix House—5 projects	153,814
Potteries Housing Association—2 projects	32,871
Richmond Fellowship	154,440
Riverpoint Single Homeless Ltd.	9,213
Rossendale (Devon) Ltd.	7,576
Rotherham District Council for Voluntary Services	17,630
Rugby Mayday Trust	17,378
St. Anne's Management Committee	2,675
St. Basil's Centre—4 projects	9,927
St. George's Community Trust	69,127
St. George's Crypt	2,437
St. Helen's Accommodation Project	1,215
St. James Management Committee	8,057
St. Martin of Tours Housing Association Ltd.	115,915
St. Mary's Tyndalls Park Trust	1,355
St. Mungo Community Housing Association—7 projects	59,941
Salford Aid to the Single Homeless	1,725
Saltash Housing Society Ltd.	7,422
Selcare Trust—7 projects	152,180
Self Help Organisation for Ex-Prisoners	1,796
Sheffield Hostels	15,835
Sheffield and Rotherham Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders	49,346
Sheffield Youth Development Trust Ltd.—2 projects	17,677
Shepherd House Project	9,331
Short Stay Young Homeless Project—2 projects	9,774
Single Homeless on Tyneside—2 projects	8,704
Single Homeless Project	17,149
Society for the Care of Irish Youth	480
Society of St. Dismas	1,912
Society of St. Vincent de Paul	11,644
South Wales Federated Housing Association	3,572
Spectrum Housing SocietyLtd.	6,138
Stonham Housing Association Ltd.—110 projects	1,782,113
Surrey Community Development Trust	44,941
Tameside Community Involvement Council—4 projects	30,434
The Portland Project	3,140
The Coke Hole Trust—3 projects	42,353
The Cranstoun Projects—5 projects	113,070
The Kipper Project	2,978
The Rainer Foundation—2 projects	22,105
Third House Trust	14,917
Timball Housing Project	4,151
Turning Point—2 projects	33,010
Ty John Rowley Trust	1,268
UK Housing Trust	19,872
Warrenhurst Flats Management Committee	2,664
West London Mission	19,562
West London Cyrenians	14,546
Women's Royal Voluntary Service	10,138
York Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders	15,349
YWCA	1,027
59 Greek Street	36,217
Total	4,954,911
Non-hostel grants	
Apex Trust	75,680
Burnbake Trust	19,053
Circle Clubs (London)	45,920
City Roads Projects	28,800
Hampshire Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders	6,430
Lancashire Constellation	4,320
Leicester Anchor Association	11,220
Lifeline Project (Manchester)	30,785

	£
National Association of Voluntary Hostels	43,200
New Bridge	27,270
North East London St. Leonards Soiety	1,925
Prisoners Wives and Families Society	5,140
Prisoners Wives Service	6,820
Society of Voluntary Associates	60,840
Specialist Information Training Resources Agency	6,560
Southwark Day Centre	5,640
York Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders	17,482
Total	397,085
Pilot Projects	
Barge Project Ethel	1,568
CAST (London)	6,503
Chi Centre	5,450
Feltham Open Door	1,836
Henry Asplen Day Centre (Doncaster)	6,760
Moss Side Initiative	6,448
Nottingham Black Initiative	2,766
Peoples Place	4,680
Unit 51	4,160
Total	40,171
Projects linked with Part II of the Green Paper "Punishment, Custody and the Community"	
Total grants to date; other grants likely to be made before 1 April 1990	
CSV	40,000
Durham Training Enterprise	25,000
Norcare	42,000
The Rainer Foundation	15,500
The Rainer Foundation and CARP	25,350
Unit 51	20,500
Total	168,350
Prison Service Grants	
National Association of Prison Visitors	8,000
Community Service Volunteers	152,000
Assisted Visits to inmates etc.	1,564,000
Prison Visitors Centres	49,000
Total	1,773,000
Other Criminal Department Grants	
Pilot Projects on Young Adult Offenders	150,000
Prisoners Abroad	27,000
Total	177,000
Grants to NACRO (excluding accommodation projects)	
Grant-in-aid (core-funding)	824,000
Prisons Link Unit	134,000
Management Development Officer	31,000
Education Advisory Service	31,000
Black Initiatives Unit	70,000
Training (of residential staffs)	148,684
Total	1,238,684

Privatisation

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the total sum paid out in fees to outside organisations in the furtherance of privatisation by his Department in 1979-80 and in each subsequent year; and what is his estimate for 1990-91.

Mr. Waddington *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* For information up to 1988-89, I would refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my hon. Friend the Member for Grantham (Mr. Hogg) on 6 April 1989 at column *240*. In 1989-90 payments in respect of preliminary expenses on the privatisation of the Independent Broadcasting Authority's transmission system are expected to total £237,000. Parliamentary authority for such payments amounting to £752,000 in 1990-91 will be sought in the supply estimates.

Management Consultants

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what were the total fees paid out by his Department to management consultants in 1979-80 and in each following year; and what is his latest estimate for the current year and budget for 1990-91.

Mr. Waddington *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* For information prior to 1987-88 I would refer the hon. Member to the reply given my hon. Friend the Member for Grantham (Mr. Hogg) on 6 April 1989 at column *240*. The equivalent estimate of payments made for the financial year 1988-89 is £1,257,000; the latest estimated expenditure for 1989-90 is £1,547,525 and the budget for 1990-91 is £2,159,300.

John Harker

Mr. Devlin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if his inquiries into the case of Mr. John Harker are now complete; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: No. The case is still under consideration. I will write to my hon. Friend as soon as we have been able to complete our inquiries.

Asylum

Mr. Wells: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if in the light of the decision of the High Court to override the immigration authority's decision not to permit Lebanese asylum seekers staying over in Britain en route for a third country to remain here, he will either appeal against the decision or introduce legislation to plug this loophole.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The High Court found that in the particular circumstances of these applications directions could not be issued requiring removal to Brazil. My right hon. and learned Friend has decided that the Government will not appeal against this judgment and the claims for asylum will now be considered in this country.

We shall keep the position under review in case any changes in procedures, or legislation become necessary.

Special Constables

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will set out by reference to police forces the number of special constables in post in 1985 and in 1989.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The number of special constables in post as at 31 December in each police force in England and Wales was as follows:

	1985	*1989*
Avon and Somerset	480	503
Bedfordshire	215	137
Cambridgeshire	216	169
Cheshire	252	219
Cleveland	131	139
Cumbria	182	210
Derbyshire	275	251
Devon and Cornwall	791	852
Dorset	297	218
Durham	172	149
Dyfed Powys	143	189
Essex	367	445
Gloucestershire	185	209
Greater Manchester	392	473
Gwent	112	95
Hampshire	480	362
Hertfordshire	249	203
Humberside	277	249
Kent	510	500
Lancashire	408	432
Leicestershire	220	327
Lincolnshire	345	365
Merseyside	373	296
Norfolk	178	269
Northamptonshire	203	240
Northumbria	606	538
North Wales	215	175
North Yorkshire	311	334
Nottinghamshire	516	485
South Wales	289	253
South Yorkshire	261	316
Staffordshire	513	566
Suffolk	323	329
Surrey	252	174
Sussex	653	530
Thames Valley	715	568
Warwickshire	344	347
West Mercia	633	542
West Midlands	724	673
West Yorkshire	486	568
Wiltshire	232	268
City of London	75	60
Metropolitan	1,560	1,362
Total	16,161	15,589

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has any plans to review the training programmes for special constables.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The training of special constables is to be reviewed by the central planning and training unit, commencing this spring.

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the total annual cost of special constables.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The total annual cost of special constables as recorded by police authorities for 1988-89 was £2,456,561.

Avon and Somerset Constabulary

Mr. Hayward: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will ask for a report from the chief constable of Avon and Somerset constabulary on the events outside Bristol council house on 6 March.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: I understand from the chief constable of Avon and Somerset that in the early afternoon of 6 March demonstrators began to gather outside the council house in Bristol where the city council was meeting to consider the level of community charge. By 3.30 pm the crowd had grown to around 600 people. The crowd included some supporters of Militant and the Anti-Poll Tax Federation. At 3.45 pm a number of demonstrators attempted to force their way into the council house. They were prevented from doing so by the police.

Further sporadic outbreaks of disorder occurred throughout the afternoon and early evening as elements of the crowd tried unsuccessfully to break the police lines. Missiles were thrown from the crowd and officers were kicked and punched. The demonstrators began to disperse at around 7.30 pm when the council meeting was concluded. A section of the crowd then proceeded to march into the city centre causing serious traffic congestion. A number of cars were damaged and three shops had their windows broken. A number of demonstrators returned to the council house and held a short meeting outside. These demonstrators had dispersed by 9.15 pm. Twenty-one people were arrested, mainly for public order offences. Five police officers were injured, three requiring hospital treatment.

Penal Establishments

Mr. Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the penal establishments in England and Wales, by security category, giving the number of inmates in each, at a convenient date in *(a)* 1979 and *(b)* 1989.

Mr. Mellor: Prison service establishments are classified by main function; subdivision into security category is practised only for male training prisons. A list of all establishments in England and Wales with their inmate populations on 31 December each year has been deposited in the Library. For a variety of reasons, training prisons may hold a number of inmates whose individual security classification is lower than that of the establishment itself.

Police Rent Allowance

Mr. Shersby: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement concerning the outcome of representations he has received on his decision to set aside certain elements of the police negotiating board's recommendations on rent allowance.

Mr. Waddington *[pursuant to his reply, 25 January 1990, columns 884-85]:* Amending regulations were laid before both Houses of Parliament on 9 March. I have received representations from several quarters about the effect of these on officers in police forces whose maximum limits of rent allowance were last reviewed in 1988, on the grounds that they are at a disadvantage as compared with officers whose forces had a review date in 1989. I have therefore decided that officers whose allowances were last reviewed in 1988 and who are due to have their rent allowances protected at their existing amounts on 31 March should have those amounts increased as from 1 April by the movement in the retail prices index since their force maximum limit was last reviewed. Further amending regulations to give effect to my decision will be made as soon as possible.

This is in addition to the arrangements already provided for in the amending regulations whereby no officer in receipt of rent allowance on 31 March will receive less after that date than he was getting then.

I have also decided that officers in accommodation provided by their police authorities should receive a transitional allowance of £300 a year for three years. This is provided for in the amending regulations already laid. This decision is in recognition of the fact that up till now such officers have occupied their accommodation free of rates.

HEALTH

Population Statistics

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what are the current estimates and projections of the population aged 16 years and over, men and women, by standard region including Greater London for June each year from 1975 to the current year;

(2) what are the current estimates and projections of the population of working age, men and women, by standard region including Greater London for June each year from 1975 to the current year.

Mr. Freeman: I have placed the information in the Library.

Community Care

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what provision is being made to provide community facilities for the mentally ill and handicapped.

Mr. Freeman: It is for health authorities and social services authorities to collaborate to provide, within reasonable resources, community facilities for mentally ill and mentally handicapped people. Subject to the enactment of current legislation, resources will be augmented by a transfer from social security to local authorities and by the introduction of a specific grant to help increase the social care available for people with a mental illness.

Psychotherapy

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what National Health Service in-patient facilities exist, other than the Cassel hospital, Richmond, Surrey, to provide psychotherapeutic treatment for severely disturbed patients and families.

Mr. Freeman: This information is not held centrally.

Cassel Hospital, Richmond

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received about the proposal by the Riverside health authority to close the Cassel hospital, Richmond.

Mr. Freeman: I have received letters from a number of hon. Members and others and responded for the Government in an Adjournment debate moved by my hon. Friend the Member for Richmond and Barnes (Mr. Hanley) on 9 February at columns 1201-08.

Hospital Beds

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will give for each Yorkshire and Humberside health authority the total available patient beds for each year since 1979.

Mr. Freeman: The information requested is given in the table.

Average daily available beds, wards open overnight, NHS hospitals, 1979 to 1988-89

Health Authority	*1979*	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	*1987-88*	*1988-89*
Hull	2,145	2,128	2,024	1,955	1,948	1,935	1,934	1,862	1,827	1,791
East Yorkshire	2,184	2,113	2,004	1,934	1,951	1,904	1,871	1,676	1,455	1,384
Grimsby	797	800	806	800	807	800	957	970	914	854
Scunthorpe	993	983	962	936	931	913	933	921	859	834
Northallerton	437	448	448	444	413	406	404	405	408	390
York	2,985	2,959	2,933	2,847	2,548	2,473	2,377	2,278	2,066	1,858
Scarborough	689	701	674	688	694	682	676	650	621	606
Harrogate	995	927	954	959	1,142	1,068	1,027	955	910	860
Bradford	2,721	2,719	2,724	2,711	2,680	2,621	2,510	2,480	2,330	2,197
Airedale	1,528	1,533	1,501	1,464	1,402	1,376	1,353	1,312	1,250	1,223
Calderdale	1,370	1,385	1,344	1,357	1,302	1,258	1,228	1,214	1,144	1,106
Huddersfield	2,625	2,389	2,391	2,391	2,321	2,235	2,059	1,903	1,693	1,540
Dewsbury	777	778	785	756	761	752	736	733	708	632
Leeds Western	—[1]	—[1]	—[1]	3,327	3,218	3,172	3,156	2,969	2,809	2,723
Leeds Eastern	—[1]	—[1]	—[1]	2,734	2,726	2,698	2,561	2,495	2,404	2,256
Wakefield	2,607	2,505	2,473	2,321	2,309	2,273	2,128	1,974	1,810	1,723
Pontefract	854	848	873	865	883	904	885	881	827	788
Barnsley	962	1,013	1,014	971	1,032	1,073	1,134	1,127	1,110	1,110
Doncaster	—[1]	—[1]	—[1]	1,946	1,954	1,929	1,879	1,847	1,681	1,747
Rotherham	—[1]	—[1]	—[1]	1,244	1,250	1,246	1,251	1,271	1,258	1,262
Sheffield	—[1]	—[1]	—[1]	4,922	4,800	4,799	4,771	4,677	4,679	4,071

[1] Comparable figures not available due to National Health Service restructuring in 1982.

Disabled People

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will place a final copy of the report made under section 11 of the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986 in the Library.

Mr. Freeman: Copies are available in the Library.

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if, in the light of the findings of the SSI report, "Developing Services for Disabled People", he plans to

ring-fence the money allocated for the remaining sections of the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986.

Mr. Freeman: No money has been allocated for the remaining sections of the Act. In general, we believe that Government support for local authority expenditure is best provided through the revenue support grant, to ensure maximum local accountability.

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if, in the light of the findings of the SSI report, "Developing Services for Disabled People", he plans to ring-fence the money for community care services for disabled people under his new arrangements for community care; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: No. We believe that Government support for community care expenditure, as with other important local authority functions, is best provided through the revenue support grant. This will ensure maximum local accountability and encourage value for money by enabling local authorities to make decisions about community care based on local factors.

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for Health on what date he expects to lay a final draft of the report to Parliament under section 11 of the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986 before Parliament; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: The report was laid before Parliament on 21 December 1989.

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for Health on what date the first meeting with local authority associations was held to discuss implementation of sections 1, 2 and 3 of the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986.

Mr. Freeman: The implementation of these sections of the Act was discussed in the course of a meeting with the local authority associations on 4 July 1988, when it was agreed that work on other sections should take priority. Officials have now written to the associations to seek their views on the cost and other implications of these sections, and intend to arrange a further meeting with them to discuss these issues in due course.

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he expects to publish the findings of the SSI monitoring of sections 5 and 6 of the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986; and what steps he will be taking to publicise its findings.

Mr. Freeman: The social services inspectorate's report "Developing Services for Disabled People", published on 6 February, gave the results of an inspection of all sections of the Act in force, including sections 5 and 6. The findings of a more specific study of the progress of six authorities towards implementation of sections 5 and 6 are due to be published shortly, and copies will be placed in the Library.

Overseas Treatment

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information he has on the average cost incurred by United Kingdom passport holders who, when falling ill abroad, required treatment.

Mr. Freeman: No information on this subject is collected or held centrally.

Wakefield DHA

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Wakefield of 8 March, *Official Report*, column *827*, if he will make it his policy to make privately available to the hon. Member for Wakefield a copy of the director of audit's report relating to Wakefield district health authority's cook-chill catering system, when it is completed.

Mr. Freeman: No. If a report is issued it will be sent for consideration by Wakefield district health authority, Yorkshire regional health authority and the Secretary of State.

General Practitioners

Mr. Michael Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what allowance will be made for general practitioner remuneration in the light of his Department's non-issue of the child health surveillance fee claim;

(2) what steps his Department is taking to ensure that general practitioners receive sufficient supplies of child health surveillance fee claim forms by 30 March.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Stocks of the new child health surveillance fee claim form were issued to all family practitioner committees by 5 March 1990 for distribution to general practitioners.

Mr. Kennedy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many electoral wards would qualify for general practitioner deprivation payments if a score of 16 rather than 30 had been chosen as the trigger point for payment; and what would be the extra cost.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley *[holding answer 5 March 1990]:* The number of wards (1981 boundaries) which have a Jarman score of 16 or more in England is 1,249. If deprivation payments were to be made at this level (16 or more) the cost would have to be met by reducing other fees and allowances within the remuneration system, to ensure that the average net income incurred by GPs did not exceed the level recommended by the doctors and dentists' review body and accepted by the Government. If the payment rate proposed for the band 30-39 was extended down to 16, some £30 million at April 1990 rates would have to be found by reducing other fees and allowances.

Mr. Kennedy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the electoral wards where general practitioners will qualify in England for deprivation payments; and if he will indicate what their Jarman index score is.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley *[holding answer 5 March 1990]:* I have placed information in the Library showing the wards (1981 boundaries) in England which have a score of 30 or more and the appropriate local authority district. The table shows that there are 269 wards with a score between 30 and 39 which will attract deprivation payment from April 1990 of £4·90 per patient per annum, 112 wards with a score between 40 and 49 (deprivation payment of £6·40 per annum) and 73 wards with a score of 50 or more (deprivation payment of £8·50 per annum) giving a grand total of 454 wards.

Medicines Control Agency

Mr. Michael Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what provision there is to abate or reduce the fees of the Medicines Control Agency for orphan drugs.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: A reduced fee (currently £13,600 instead of £68,000) is payable for a major product licence application covered by paragraph 5 of chapter III of part 3 of the annex to EC directive 75/318.

The term "orphan drug" is of United States origin and has no direct counterpart in United Kingdom or EC legislation. It is considered that the above directive provision (which deals with situations where comprehensive data on therapeutic safety and efficacy cannot be provided) covers the concept of "orphan drugs".

Prescribed Medicines

Mr. Michael Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he intends to publish the recent research for his Department on the attitude of pharmacists to the prescribed medicines taken by the elderly.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: I assume that my hon. Friend is referring to the study "Elderly people, their medicines and their doctors" by Ann Cartwright and Christopher Smith which was published by Routledge in 1988. I am arranging for copies to be placed in the Library.

One element of the research was an assessment by a clinical pharmacologist and two pharmacists of the appropriateness of the prescribed medicines taken by the elderly people in the study. They found that 31 per cent. of the prescribed medicines were assessed as pharmacologically open to question, for example because of potentially harmful interactions or inappropriate dosages.

Ambulance Workers, Dewsbury

Mrs. Ann Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information he has on how many ambulance workers in Dewsbury are trained paramedics; and how many paramedic ambulance workers have been trained by Dewsbury health authority.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: This information is not held centrally. The hon. Member may like to contact the chairman of Yorkshire regional health authority, Sir Bryan Askew, for further information.

E111

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will take urgent steps to ensure that all post offices and sub-post offices in the Wakefield constituency have an adequate supply of his Department's form E111.

Mr. Freeman: A further supply of forms E111 was received in the post office stores in Swindon on 12 March. Post offices and sub-post offices should apply for stocks through their usual channels.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if the exemption from the community charge, to be given to mentally ill people, will be dependent on the definitions laid down in the Mental Health Act 1983; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: Exemption from the community charge will not be dependent on the definition laid down in the Mental Health Act 1983.

Provided that a person is in receipt of one of the qualifying benefits listed in schedule 1 (paragraph 4) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (as amended by the Personal Community Charge (Exemptions) Order 1989, SI 1989/442, and the Personal Community Charge (Exemptions for the Severely Mentally Impaired) Order 1990, SI 1990/462) and is in receipt of a certificate from a registered medical practitioner stating that he is severely mentally impaired he will be exempt from the community charge.

Food Poisoning

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health to what factors he ascribes the continued increase in reported food poisoning incidents; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Michael) on 8 February at columns *773-74*.

Children (Employment)

Mr. Watson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many prohibition orders under section 2(3)(a) and requirement orders under section 2(3)(b) of the Employment of Children Act 1973 have been served by *(a)* local education authorities in England and Wales and *(b)* education authorities in Scotland since the Act became law.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley *[holding answer 14 March 1990]:* The Employment of Children Act 1973 has not been implemented. In England and Wales, equivalent provisions to sections 2(3)(a) and (b) of the Act are available in section 59 of the Education Act 1944. This enables local education authorities to serve a notice on an employer to prohibit or to impose restrictions on the employment of any child. In addition, section 18 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933 provides for local authorities to make byelaws which regulate the employment of children and which prohibit children from being employed in any specified occupation. All local authorities (except Isles of Scilly) have such byelaws.

Figures notified to the Home Office for prosecutions and convictions under sections 18, 19 and 20 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933 are as follows:

	Prosecutions	*Convictions*
1979	23	18
1980	26	25
1981	24	22
1982	17	16
1983	12	12
1984	12	9
1985	11	9
1986	2	2
1987	8	8
1988	28	22

Matters relating to the employment of children in Scotland are for my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland.

Personal Data

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the report by Kathleen Murray entitled "Personal Data in Social Services Records, Access and Disclosure Policy in Practice" commissioned by his Department was completed; and when he expects to publish it.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley *[holding answer 14 March 1990]:* Kathleen Murray's report on access to personal social services records was completed last year. The report is a substantial piece of work and is being given careful consideration with a view to publication.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Mortgage Arrears

4. **Mr. Litherland** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the number of people with mortgage payments six to 12 months in arrears in 1988 and 1989.

35. **Mr. Rooker:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many mortgages are in arrears in *(a)* the building society and *(b)* the banking sectors.

Mr. Major: Around 37,000 in 1988 and around 58,000 in 1989—less than ½ per cent. of all home owners.

Independent Taxation

8. **Mr. Cunliffe:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what effect independent taxation will have on low-income households.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Almost 400,000 married couples with combined incomes below £10,000 a year will pay less tax as a result of the change to independent taxation.

Exchange Rate Mechanism

9. **Mr. John P. Smith:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received from business and industry about British membership of the European exchange rate mechanism.

10. **Mr. Randall:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received from business and industry about British membership of the European exchange rate mechanism.

Mr. Major: I have received a number of representations.

45. **Mr. McCrindle:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he has had recent discussions with his German counterpart regarding the timing of the United Kingdom's entry into the exchange rate mechanism of the European monetary system.

Mr. Ryder: The German Government are well aware of the United Kingdom's position on sterling's participation in the exchange rate mechanism of the European monetary system.

26. **Mr. Geraint Howells:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the average inflation rate of countries in the exchange rate mechanism of the European monetary system.

Mr. Ryder: It is 4·2 per cent. in December if owner-occupiers' housing costs are excluded.

16. **Mrs. Ann Taylor:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent discussions he has had with other European Finance Ministers about British participation in the exchange rate mechanism.

Mr. Lilley: Our conditions for entry are well known.

Gas and Electricity Prices

15. **Ms. Armstrong:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what will be the effect of proposed price increases in the gas and electricity industries on the retail prices index.

Mr. Norman Lamont: British Gas has announced average price rises of 7½ per cent. from 1 March. Given the weight of gas of 2·2 per cent., this should have an impact of between 0·15 and 0·2 per cent. on the retail prices index, once the new tariffs have been fully implemented. The electricity boards are in the course of announcing their prices for 1990-91.

Mortgages

19. **Mr. Snape:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what he estimates to be the effect on the average mortgage of an increase in mortgage rates from 9·5 per cent. to 15·5 per cent.

20. **Mr. Sean Hughes:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what he estimates to have been the effect on the average mortgage of the increase in mortgage rates from 9·5 per cent. to 15·5 per cent.

Mr. Lilley: In July 1988, when the mortgage interest rate was 9·8 per cent., the monthly interest payment on the average mortgage, net of basic rate tax relief, was £128·63. At an interest rate of 15·5 per cent., the payment would be £203·44, if the level of outstanding capital was unchanged.

Non-oil GDP

21. **Mr. Parry:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportion of non-oil gross domestic product non-oil taxes and national insurance contributions represented in *(a)* 1978-79 and *(b)* 1989-90.

Mr. Ryder: Non-oil taxes and national insurance contributions amounted to 34·1 per cent. of non-oil GDP in 1978-79, and 37·1 per cent. in 1988-89, the latest available year.

Value Added Tax

23. **Mr. Foulkes:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what percentage of gross earnings value added tax took up for a family on average male earnings with two children in 1978-79 and 1989-90.

Mr. Ryder: Approximately 2·7 per cent. and 5·0 per cent. respectively. Over the same period his real take-home pay has risen by 32 per cent.

49. **Mr. Anthony Coombs:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many new businesses have registered for value added tax in the latest year for which figures are available.

Mr. Ryder: The number of new VAT registrations processed by Her Majesty's Customs and Excise in the calendar year was 261,783. This represents a 50 per cent. increase over 1980.

41. **Mr. Harry Ewing:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what percentage of gross earnings value added tax took up for a family on average male earnings with two children in 1978-79 and 1989-90.

Mr. Ryder: A family consisting of a married man on average male earnings, his wife and two children would have paid approximately 2·7 per cent. of gross earnings in VAT in 1978-79 and will pay about 5·0 per cent. in 1989-90. Over the same period his real take-home pay has risen by 32 per cent.

Economic Growth

24. **Mr. Amos:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on United Kingdom economic and productivity growth since 1979.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Both gross domestic product and whole economy productivity have grown by over 20 per cent. since 1979.

Earnings

25. **Mr. Dunn:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the growth in real take-home pay of a married man with two children on male average earnings during the 1980s.

Mr. Lilley: A married man with two children on average male earnings enjoyed an increase in real take-home pay of over 26 per cent. between 1979-80 and 1989-90.

Inflation

27. **Mr. Amess:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the current rate of inflation.

Mr. Ryder: The all-items RPI annual inflation rate in January was 7·7 per cent. The underlying inflation rate, as measured by the RPI excluding mortgage interest payments, was 6·1 per cent.

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many European countries have a higher inflation rate than the United Kingdom.

Mr. Ryder: Four EC countries have higher inflation rates than the United Kingdom when estimates of home owners' costs are excluded so as to bring the published figures on to a more comparable basis.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if his Department has undertaken any study into the effect of the change in arrangements for local taxation on the rate of inflation.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The change in the arrangements for local taxation is one among many factors which will affect the rate of inflation. A forecast for RPI inflation will be published in the forthcoming "Financial Statement and Budget Report".

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the overall inflation rate, based on the retail prices index, in each month from January 1986 to the latest available date.

Mr. Ryder: The information may be obtained from the latest issue of *Employment Gazette* and the latest annual supplement to *Economic Trends* (1989 edition).

Dr. Kim Howells: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he expects to have zero inflation.

Mr. Ryder: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given earlier today by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the hon. Member for City of Durham (Mr. Steinberg).

Charities

28. **Mr. Cyril D. Townsend:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much money was raised through value added tax on charities in 1989; and what was the comparable figure in real terms 10 years ago.

Mr. Ryder: For the value added tax paid by charities in 1989, I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to him on 15 February [*Official Report*, column *338*]. It is estimated that 10 years ago charities paid at today's values between £100 million and £150 million in value added tax.

Interest Rates

29. **Mr. Salmond:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he has received any representations about the impact of interest rates from *(a)* Scottish businesses, *(b)* local authorities, *(c)* fishermen's organisations, *(d)* council tenants and *(e)* home owners.

Mr. Ryder: My right hon. Friend has received a number of representations on this subject from a wide variety of sources.

44. **Mr. Knox:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement about the current level of interest rates.

Mr. Ryder: Bank base rates are 15 per cent.

42. **Mr. Yeo:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent representations he has received regarding the present level of interest rates.

Mr. Ryder: My right hon. Friend has received a number of such representations.

57. **Mr. Beaumont-Dark:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what were long-term interest rates in *(a)* the United Kingdom *(b)* West Germany and *(c)* Japan (i) 12 months ago and (ii) currently.

Mr. Ryder: The information requested is as follows:

Long term interest rates[1]

	March 1989	*6 March 1990*
United Kingdom	9·9	12·2
West Germany	6·9	9·0
Japan	5·1	7·0

[1] Yields on ten year government bonds.

Source: Bank of England.

Gross Domestic Product

30. **Mr. Mills:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the growth in gross domestic product during the 1980s *(a)* in the United Kingdom and *(b)* in other European Community countries.

Mr. Ryder: Between 1980 and 1988 growth averaged 2·7 per cent. a year in the United Kingdom and 2·1 per cent. in other European Community countries.

Caravan Sites

31. **Mr. Bellingham:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received from caravan site owners in respect of value added tax.

Mr. Ryder: A delegation from the two national trade associations representing caravan park owners saw the then Economic Secretary shortly after the changes in the taxation of holiday caravan pitch rentals were introduced from 1 April last year. My hon. Friend confirmed the Government's decision to tax these pitch rentals but was able to give some reassurances about the impact on charges made by caravan park owners for electricity, water, gas and rates.

Business Investment

32. **Mr. Paice:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received on his latest forecast for the share of gross domestic product taken by business investment.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The success of this Government in encouraging business investment is widely recognised. Business investment as a proportion of gross domestic product is expected to have been the highest ever recorded in 1989.

Manufacturing Investment

33. **Mr. Hind:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he has any plans to meet the director-general of the Confederation of British Industry to discuss investment in manufacturing industry; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont: My right hon. Friend will be addressing the Confederation of British Industry's annual dinner on 17 May.

Mr. Macdonald: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the level of manufacturing investment was in the fourth quarter of 1989; and what percentage change this was on the third quarter.

Mr. McFall: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the level of manufacturing investment was in the fourth quarter of 1989; and what percentage change this was on the third quarter.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Provisional estimates of manufacturing investment in the fourth quarter of 1989 and estimates for earlier quarters are contained in the press notice CSO (90) 25 0, "Capital Expenditure by Manufacturing Industries", issued on 15 February 1990. Copies of this notice are available from the Library of the House. Revised estimates will be included in the GDP press notice for release on 16 March.

Bank of England

34. **Mr. Beith:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he last met the Governor of the Bank of England; and if he will make a statement.

36. **Mr. Oppenheim:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he last met the Governor of the Bank of England; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. Ryder: My right hon. Friend meets the Governor of the Bank of England from time to time to discuss a variety of matters.

Inheritance Tax

37. **Mr. John Townend:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the cost to the Exchequer if inheritance tax liabilities in respect of shares in closely held unquoted trading companies were rolled over until the shares were realised for cash or the company was converted into a public company.

Mr. Lilley: I would refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe) on 15 January 1990, *Official Report*, column *96*.

Exchange Controls

38. **Mr. Adley:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the effect of the removal of exchange controls on confidence in the currency; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ryder: The removal of United Kingdom exchange controls in 1979 has had a wholly beneficial effect on the economy.

Self-employment

39. **Mr. Rowe:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent representations he has received on his plans to encourage self-employment.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Self-employment has increased by 72 per cent. since 1979 as a result of the Government's policies to encourage enterprise. My right hon. Friend has recently received a large number of representations on these policies.

Personal Savings

40. **Mr. Wallace:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received on measures required to boost personal savings.

Mr. Lilley: My right hon. Friend has received a number of representations concerning the subject of saving.

Public Expenditure

43. **Mr. Janman:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received on his latest forecast for the percentage of gross domestic product to be taken by general Government expenditure for 1989-90.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Several representations have been received.

Tax Revenue

46. **Mr. Gill:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportion of total revenues emanates from *(a)* taxes on consumption and *(b)* taxes related to employment and wealth creation.

Mr. Lilley: In 1988, taxes on consumers' expenditure (net of subsidies) accounted for 30 per cent. of total taxes and national insurance contributions. There is no unambiguous definition of taxes related to employment and wealth creation.

Investment and Consumption

47. **Mr. Brazier:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the growth in total investment and in total consumption during the 1980s.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Total fixed investment grew by 42 per cent. in volume terms between 1980 and 1988, the latest full year for which estimates are available. Over the same period, the volume of total domestic final consumption grew by 26 per cent.

Exports and Imports (Non-oil)

48. **Mr. Ian Taylor:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the underlying trend for the growth in non-oil export volume; and what it is for import volume.

Mr. Norman Lamont: In the three months to January, export volumes (less oil and erratics) were 4 per cent. higher than in the previous three months, while import volumes (less oil and erratics) fell by 1 per cent. Export volumes were 11 per cent. higher than in the same period a year earlier, but import volumes were only 2 per cent. higher.

Corporation Tax

50. **Mr. Stevens:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the corporation tax rate in the United Kingdom and other European Community countries.

Mr. Lilley: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Bournemouth, West (Mr. Butterfill) on 18 January 1990, *Official Report*, columns *400-02*.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was corporation tax as a percentage of gross domestic product in 1978-79 and 1988-89.

Mr. Lilley: The information is as follows:

	Per cent.
1978-79	2·3
1988-89	4·0

Manufacturing Productivity

51. **Mr. Hague:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the growth during the 1980s of manufacturing productivity in *(a)* the United Kingdom and *(b)* other major industrial countries.

Mr. Ryder: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary gave earlier today to my hon. Friend the Member for Bosworth (Mr. Tredinnick).

Privatisation

52. **Mr. Robert G. Hughes:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many representations against his privatisation programme have been received from employees of companies already privatised.

Mr. Lilley: I have no way of knowing by whom those who write to the Treasury are employed. But the popularity of the privatisation programme with the employees of privatised industries is amply demonstrated by the large numbers of those employees who apply for shares in their companies on privatisation. Most recently, some 37,500 employees (over 85 per cent. of those eligible) applied for shares in the water offers.

Workplace Nurseries

53. **Mr. Rathbone:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received recently about the taxation treatment of workplace nurseries.

Mr. Lilley: My right hon. Friend has received a number of representations on this subject.

European Monetary System

54. **Mr. Alex Carlile:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will indicate the appropriate conditions for full United Kingdom membership of the European monetary system.

Mr. Ryder: I refer the hon. and learned Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister to my hon. Friend the Member for Harrow, East (Mr. Dykes) on 28 November 1989, *Official Report*, column *195*.

Economic and Monetary Union

55. **Mr. Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on developments towards economic and monetary union within the Community.

Mr. Ryder: Measures to improve the co-ordination of member states' economic and monetary policies were discussed at the Council of Economic and Finance Ministers on 12 March, about which I reported to the House on 14 March.

Preparation for the intergovernmental conference on economic and monetary union, which will begin at the end of the year, is taking place in the Council and its committees.

Mr. Battle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what discussions took place at the most recent meeting of ECOFIN about the implementation of stage 1 of the Delors report on economic and monetary union.

Mr. Ryder: I refer the hon. Member to the written answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Edmonton (Dr. Twinn) on 14 March.

Civil Servants

56. **Mr. Harry Greenway:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many civil servants were in his Department in 1975, 1979 and at the latest date for which statistics are available; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ryder: There were 1,065 civil servants employed in the Treasury at 1 January 1975 and 1,052 at 1 January 1979. In November 1981 a number of additional functions were transferred to the Treasury from the Civil Service Department, increasing Treasury numbers to 4,177 at 1 January 1982. The number employed at 1 February 1990 was 3,155.

Mortgage Tax Relief

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, further to his written reply to the hon. Member for Great Grimsby of 8 January, *Official Report*, columns *553-56*, on mortgage interest relief by range of income, whether he will provide a breakdown for each region.

Mr. Lilley: The information requested is not available for each region. The regional distribution of mortgagors and mortgage interest relief can be estimated from the family expenditure survey (FES), but the sample size for the FES is not large enough to provide more detailed estimates for each region. The table provides the available estimates:

Regional share of mortgagors and mortgage interest relief based on FES data for 1986 and 1987

	Mortgagors (per cent.)	*Mortgage interest relief (per cent.)*
Northern	5·1	4·3
Yorkshire and Humberside	8·6	7·5
North West	12·0	10·5
East Midlands	7·8	6·8
West Midlands	8·3	7·4
East Anglia	3·6	3·7
Greater London	10·9	13·3
Other South East	22·6	26·0
South West	8·1	8·2
Wales	5·2	4·6
Scotland	6·3	6·4
Northern Ireland	1·5	1·3
United Kingdom	100·0	100·0

Mr. Maxton: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many individuals in Scotland are currently receiving mortgate interest tax relief; and what were the comparable figures for 1973-74, 1978-79, 1983-84, 1988-89 and 1989-90;

(2) what is the current cost to the Exchequer of paying mortgage interest tax relief in Scotland; and what was the cost in 1973-74, 1978-79, 1983-84, 1988-89 and 1989-90.

Mr. Lilley: Precise estimates of mortgagors and mortgage relief in Scotland are not available. The 1986 and 1987 family expenditure surveys indicate that 6·3 per cent. of all mortgagors are in Scotland and they claim 6·4 per cent. of all mortgage interest relief. This would imply about 600,000 mortgagors receiving £450 million mortgage interest relief in 1989-90. The equivalent figures for 1988-89 are 570,000 and £350 million. Information for the earlier years is not available.

Company Taxes

Mr. Allen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what percentage of company income went in taxes in 1978-79 and 1988-89.

Mr. Lilley: The information requested is as follows:

Year	*Per cent.*
1978-79	38·9
1988-89	38·7

Taxes comprise corporation tax, petroleum revenue tax, employers' national insurance contributions, national insurance surcharge and business rates.

Company income, including public corporations, in the calendar year is as defined in the national accounts, net of interest payments.

Trade Deficits

Mr. Cox: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer which OECD countries had trade deficits that were bigger as a percentage of gross domestic product than the United Kingdom's in 1989.

Mrs. Mahon: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer which OECD countries have, by latest estimates, trade deficits that are bigger as a percentage of gross domestic products than the United Kingdom.

Mr. Ryder: I would refer the hon. Members to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Bradford, West (Mr. Madden) earlier today.

TUC

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he last met representatives from the Trades Union Congress.

Mr. Lilley: My right hon. Friend the Chancellor last met representatives from the TUC at the National Economic Development Council on 10 January.

Mortgage Interest

Mr. Boyes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the total amount of mortgage interest paid by owner-occupiers for 1988; and what is the comparable amount in 1989.

Mr. Lilley: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Preston (Mrs. Wise) earlier today.

Visible Trade Balance

Mr. Allen McKay: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his latest estimate for the United Kingdom visible balance.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The information may be found in table 1 of the monthly press notice on the current account of the balance of payments, published on 28 February, copies of which are available in the Library of the House.

Balance of Trade

Mr. John Evans: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the balance of trade and measures to reduce the manufacturing deficit.

Mr. Norman Lamont: In the three months to January there was a deficit in manufactures of £3·1 billion compared with a deficit of £4·3 billion in the previous three months; this is clear evidence that the trade balance is now responding to the tightening of policy.

Productivity

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement about the growth of productivity in the economy as a whole since 1979.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Whole economy productivity has grown by over 20 per cent. since 1979.

Personal Equity Plans

Mr. Beith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the total value of funds in personal equity plans on 5 April 1989.

Mr. Lilley: The total value of funds in plans at 31 December 1988 is estimated at £670 million. Information is not available for 5 April 1989.

Banks (Tax Allowances)

Mr. Allen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, further to his reply of 7 March, *Official Report*, column *652*, what is the latest year for which the Inland Revenue has collected information on the amounts allowable against tax by the banks; and what was the amount for that year.

Mr. Lilley: Discussions between the banks and the Inland Revenue about provisions against Third-world debts allowable for tax for 1987-88 and later years are still going on. Amounts allowed against tax for earlier years were not significant. Estimates of the reduction in mainstream corporation tax receipts for provisions on doubtful sovereign debts are negligible for the years to 1984-85 inclusive, under £50 million, for each of 1985-86 and 1986-87, about £¼ billion for 1987-88, over £½ billion for 1988-89 and about £¼ billion for 1989-90.

Debt Write-offs

Mr. Allen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of revenue lost in respect of write-offs for bad debts incurred in the last year for which figures are available by the main banks in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Lilley: Information about write-offs and provisions for bad debts other than sovereign debt where recovery is doubtful is not collected centrally and cannot be provided except at disproportionate expense.

European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he expects to conclude discussions on establishing the European Community's bank for reconstruction and development.

Mr. Ryder: Discussions on establishing the European bank for reconstruction and development are making good progress. I hope that articles of agreement will be finalised very soon.

Personal Debt

Mr. Alton: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has of the effect of a 1 per cent. increase in interest rates on the total level of United Kingdom personal debt and the average level of debt for each family.

Mr. Norman Lamont: An increase in interest rates encourages saving and discourages borrowing and therefore, over time, leads to a reduction in the rate of growth of personal debt.

Written Answers to Questions

Friday 16 March 1990

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

City Technology Colleges

Mr. Fatchett: to ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what safeguards he is proposing to put in place to ensure that the provisions of section 105(5) of the Education Reform Act requiring capital repayments on discontinuance or change of character of a CTC or CCTA will continue to have effect after termination of the agreement with the Secretary of State and subsequent continuation on a fee-paying basis of the school in the same buildings, and so on.

Mrs. Rumbold: Paragraphs 54 to 59 of the model funding agreement between my right hon. Friend and a city technology college/city college for the technology of the arts provide that, in the event that my right hon. Friend shall give notice of the termination of this agreement in circumstances which include the CTC/CCTA seeking to charge for admission,

"He shall also give notice that the provisions of section 105(5) shall apply, and set out how the CTC/CCTA is to comply with them".

Under this provision, my right hon. Friend will set out a method and timetable, which the CTC/CCTA company would be required to follow to fulfill the provisions of section 105(5) following the termination of the agreement. No further safeguard is necessary in this respect.

Assisted Places

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement about the level of parental contributions to the fees of pupils in the assisted places scheme in 1990-91.

Mr. MacGregor: Subject to parliamentary approval, the parental contribution scales will be adjusted upwards for the school year 1990-91 as set out in the table. Total parental contributions for families with four or more assisted pupils will be limited to the amounts payable at any given level of income by parents supporting three assisted pupils.

Part of relevant income to which specified percentage applies	*One assisted pupil per cent.*	*Each of two assisted pupils per cent.*	*Each of three assisted pupils per cent.*
That part which exceeds £8,034 but does not exceed £8,735	9	6·75	5·25
That part (if any) which exceeds £8,735 but does not exceed £9,449	12	9·00	7·00
That part (if any) which exceeds £9,449 but does not exceed £10,865	15	11·25	8·75
That part (if any) which exceeds £10,865 but does not exceed £13,043	21	15·75	12·25
That part (if any) which exceeds £13,043 but does not exceed £15,885	24	18·00	14·00
That part (if any) which exceeds £15,885	33	24·75	19·25

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Technical Training and Education

Mr. Speller: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Devon, North of 12 March, *Official Report*, column *63*, if he will list the programmes of technical training and education which are being funded over the next three years in Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone and the Gambia.

Mrs. Chalker: The information requested is as follows:

Projects

Nigeria:

Current projects:

—National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) Project

—Federal Technical College Project

—Four Polytechnics Project

(The above three current projects are designed to improve the quality of courses offered at polytechnics and to enhance NBTE's management of Nigeria's technical education programme.)

—Science Teacher Training Project for Junior Secondary School Teachers

—English Language Training Project for university teaching staff (in all disciplines)

—Middle-Level Agricultural Education Project

Projects under consideration

—University Laboratory Equipment Maintenance Project

—Polytechnic Laboratory Equipment Maintenance Project

—English Language Training Project (for staff at universities of technology)

Ghana:

—Junior Secondary Schools Teachers Training Project

—"Non-formal education" (basic literacy for adults)

Sierra Leone

Certificate Training Centre, Njala University College (agricultural extension workers)

English Language Teacher Training Project
(to improve teaching and learning of English in Primary and Secondary Schools and teacher colleges)

Primary Mathematics Education Project
(to improve mathematics teaching methodology in primary schools)

Primary Education Support Project
(through the NGO Action Aid, in service training through workshops to improve the quality of teaching and learning in primary schools.

The Gambia:

Gambia College Project (teacher training)

Curriculum Development Project (concentrating on English, Mathematics and Science at primary and

secondary level)
Gambia Technical Training Institute Project: and Vocational Technical Training Project (both projects designed to improve the quality of technical education)

Training
UK Training Awards 1989-90
Nigeria about 660—funded from all FCO-ODA schemes
Ghana about 220—funded from all FCO-ODA schemes
Gambia about 99—funded from all FCO-ODA schemes
Sierra Leone about 129—funded from all FCO-ODA schemes
Total 1,108
We plan to continue to offer such training, funded from all FCO/ODA schemes.

TRANSPORT

Severn Bridge

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if non-United Kingdom consortiums will be allowed to bid for the new Severn bridge infrastructure project; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Atkins: Applications from consortia wishing to bid for the second Servern bridge project were invited in December 1988. There was no restriction on the nationality of bidders.

Blind People

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he has any plans to introduce provisions whereby blind people travelling within the EEC by any form of transport will be allowed a travelling companion to accompany them free of charge.

Mr. Portillo: Such provisions already exist for rail travel and, in some cases, for ferries in countries within the European Community. Concessionary schemes on other forms of public transport, where they exist, are of national or local application only.

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what provisions exist in the EEC enabling blind people travelling by rail across internal EEC national boundaries to be accompanied by a sighted companion free of charge; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: Reciprocal rail travel concessions for blind people are available between member states of the European Community. These allow a companion to travel free of charge with a blind person who has purchased a ticket (subject to some restrictions on the type of ticket).

Concessionary Fares

Mr. Patchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will now introduce legislation to make it mandatory for local authorities to provide a uniform concessionary free bus scheme for those aged over 60 years in their area; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: Local authorities are best placed to decide what is appropriate for their area, and they already have powers to provide concessionary fares on local bus services for those of state pensionable age.

We have no plans to interfere with these arrangements.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Storm and Flood Damage

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will give consideration to a special scheme for compensation for damage to farmers and horticulturalists arising from the storm and floods in February.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The Government do not normally compensate for losses which are insurable or which are the result of weather abnormalities.

Health and Social Services Boards (Appointments)

The Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will take steps to advise health and social services boards that intrusive or inquisitive questions irrelevant to the requirements of the post should not be put to candidates in interviews.

Mr. Peter Bottomley *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* We should be grateful for information of any specific complaint.

Rev. Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what guidance he has issued to health and social services boards regarding the information which they require from applicants for medical staff appointments and research fellowships; what guidance his Department issues as to whether health and social services boards should require from applicants information on the primary school attended;

(2) what information he has as to the inclusion by health and social services boards of questions as to the primary school which a person may have attended in application procedures for medical staff appointments and research fellowships.

Mr. Peter Bottomley *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* None. As a result of the Fair Employment (Northern Ireland) Act 1989, health and social services boards in Northern Ireland are required to monitor the religious composition of all those who apply to fill vacancies for employment.

Monitoring must be carried out in accordance with regulations made under the Act and guidance on the provisions is contained in the code of practice issued by the Department of Economic Development and which came into operation on 31 December 1989. Copies of the code have been made available to each health and social services board.

Cattle

Mr. Molyneaux: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the figures recently supplied to him by the Ulster Farmers Union on the financial position in relation to the finishing of beef cattle in Northern Ireland during last winter and the present winter.

Mr. Peter Bottomley *[holding answer 13 March 1990]:* The figures supplied by the Ulster Farmers Union were extracted from "Farm Business Data 1989" which was published by the Department of Agriculture for Northern Ireland in May 1989.

The figures require adjustment in the light of actual price levels and prevailing market conditions during the autumn and winter. When adjusted in this manner and interest charges excluded, the figures show an overall positive gross margin for autumn-purchased stores last winter and a break-even this winter when account is taken of beef special premium payments.

Mr. Molyneaux: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he intends to take to improve the financial returns to the finishers of beef cattle in Northern Ireland in respect of cattle finishers during the present winter season.

Mr. Peter Bottomley *[holding answer 13 March 1990]:* The Government are seeking a substantial devaluation of the United Kingdom green pound in the context of this year's price-fixing round. We have sought to optimise beef intervention in Northern Ireland in recent months.

Substantial tonnages of beef have been taken off the market recently. This should help to raise producer prices.

HEALTH

Nurses

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many trainees entered the nursing profession in 1989; how many nurses are at present employed by the National Health Service; and what is the estimated number of nurses necessary to staff the National Health Service.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: 20,877 people entered pre-registration nurse training in England during the year ended 31 March 1989. At 30 September 1988, the latest date for which this information is available, there were 241,800 (whole-time equivalent) qualified nurses and midwives employed in the National Health Service in England. The planning and setting of staffing levels is a matter for individual health authorities. Decisions on appropriate levels of staff must be based on local needs and priorities.

NHS Employees (Private Practice)

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he expects to issue guidelines to National Health Service employees with private practice interests in potential competition with their work in income-generating departments in the National Health Service.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: As I stated in reply to the hon. Member on 5 February, at column *489*, we are currently considering whether further guidance is needed in this field.

Inspection Units

Mr. Brazier: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what provision is being made for independent inspection units as proposed in the White Paper "Caring for People".

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will give details of progress in implementation of his plans for independent inspection units proposed in the White Paper "Caring for People".

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: I refer my hon. Friends to the reply I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Great Yarmouth (Mr. Carttiss) on 24 January at column 714.

Psychotherapy

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* individual patients and *(b)* families are on waiting lists for admission for in-patient psychotherapy treatment (i) in the North West Thames region and (ii) nationally.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Information about the numbers of patients awaiting specific types of treatment is not collected centrally.

Cassel Hospital, Richmond

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he has received any proposal for the Cassel hospital, Richmond, to become a self-governing hospital trust.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: No.

Nurses (Grading)

Sir John Farr: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will introduce a standard set of guidelines in relation to the clinical grading structure for nurses;

(2) if he will issue a standard set of guidelines agreed by both management and unions on the clinical grading structure for nurses; and if he will include a provision that Macmillan nursing sisters be on grade H.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The grading definitions in the clinical structure introduced in 1988, and any joint guidance relating to them, are a matter for the Nursing and Midwifery Staffs Negotiating Council. Following prolonged discussions, it was not possible to reach agreement on such guidance between the staff and management sides of the council. It is for health authorities to decide how particular posts should be graded, including those occupied by Macmillan nursing sisters, in the light of the grading definitions agreed by the council, the management guidance which has been issued, and the specifications of the particular post.

Sir John Farr: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will take steps to establish a timetable for negotiations for those still appealing at district or regional level to deal with the cases of nurses throughout the country who are still awaiting appeals into their grading;

(2) if he will take steps to speed up the grading appeals process into the new clinical grading structure for nurses.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The procedures for handling NHS appeals are a matter for the General Whitley Council, not Ministers. Health authorities are making efforts to operate the appeals process as quickley as possible.

NHS Staff

Ms. Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what are the current staff vacancy levels and staff turnover rates for the pathology MLSO grades in the National Health Service.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: We do not hold this information centrally. At 30 September 1988, the latest date for which data are available, there were 15,180 (whole-time equivalent) medical laboratory scientific officers (including unqualified grades) in post in the NHS in England.

Income Generation Unit

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the aims of the income generation unit, together with the costs of its operation and details of its staffing levels.

Mr. Freeman: The unit's aims are to develop policy on income generation; provide a central source of advice on this for health authorities and the private sector; assist health authorities to develop and implement income generation projects; monitor their achievements; and disseminate information and good practice.

The income generation unit's running costs in 1989-90 will be approximately £152,200. This is calculated using the average salaries, plus on-costs for accommodation, office services, travel etc. for each staff grade in the unit. In addition, almost £35,000 will be paid for outside consultancy work resulting in operational costs for the unit of approximately £187,200 in 1989-90.

Current staffing levels for the income generation unit are 0·5 grade 5, 2 grade 7s, 1 higher executive officer, 1 executive officer and 0·5 administrative officer.

NHS Reform

Mr. Patchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many, and what representations he has received from general practitioners in south Yorkshire about the proposed changes in the National Health Service; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: We have received a number of representations from a wide variety of sources. Many ask questions, and many are in favour of some or all of our proposals. Others comment only on specific elements. However, it is not possible to distinguish them in the way the hon. Member requests.

Waiting Lists (Trent)

Mr. Patchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what are the latest waiting list figures within the Trent regional health authority for persons *(a)* waiting more than one month for an urgent operation, *(b)* waiting more than one year for non-urgent operations and *(c)* awaiting out-patient consultations.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Following the implementation of the recommendations of the steering group on Health Service information (the Korner committee), starting in April 1987, no distinction is now made between urgent and non-urgent cases since the committee regarded such distinction as unreliable. On 31 March 1989, there were 54,870 patients on surgical specialty waiting lists in the Trent regional health authority of whom 20 per cent. had been waiting more than one year. No information is held centrally on numbers awaiting out-patient appointments.

Mr. Patchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the latest figure for hospital waiting lists in the Trent regional health authority; and what it was for each of the last five years.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The information requested is given in the table.

In-patient waiting lists at 31 March—Trent Regional Health Authority

Year	*Number waiting*
1984	67,314
1985	64,055
1986	61,877
1987	57,711
1988	54,894
1989	56,918

Source: 1984-86 form SBH203.
1987-89 forms KH06, KH07, KH07A.
Note: The numbers exclude self-deferred cases.

Residential Homes

Mr. Patchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information he has as to how many local authorities are closing down part III accommodation for the elderly and transferring residents to private homes and as to the number of such local authority homes closed in the last five years.

Mr. Freeman: This information is not collected centrally.

Pay Beds (Trent)

Mr. Patchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the number of private patients using pay beds in the Trent regional health authority; and what was the corresponding figure for each year since 1980.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The information requested is given in the table.

Private patients treated in NHS hospitals in Trent Regional health authority.

Year	*Numbers of patients[1] using pay beds*
1980	5,065
1981	4,584
1982	3,834
1983	3,976
1984	2,979
1985	2,837
1986	3,012
[2]1987-88	3,503

[1] Discharges and deaths recorded on form SBH211 for 1980-86.
[2] Finished consultant episodes recorded on form KP21 for 1987-88.

Care in the Community

Mr. Patchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to ensure that local authorities are delivering care in their communities; and what further measures he is taking to improve co-ordination between all the various agencies involved.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The White Paper "Caring for People", the proposals of which are currently before the House in the NHS and Community Care Bill, made it clear that local authorities will have to draw up and publish plans for community care services. Those plans will have to be open to inspection by the social services inspectorate. Directions and guidance concerning personal social services will be issued to local authorities to help ensure the proper delivery of community care.

In drawing up their plans for community care, local authorities will be required to consult health authorities and other interested agencies. In the case of services for mentally ill people co-ordination between the local authority and the health authority will be encouraged by the payment of a specific grant for the social care of such people. This grant will be payable through regional health authorities as the agents for the Secretary of State for Health on the basis of plans for the development of social care agreed between social services authorities and the matching district health authorities.

Cardiothoracic Surgery

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list by district and regional health authority the location of each regional specialist unit carrying out cardiothoracic surgery; what was the number of patients treated in 1987-88 and 1988-89 in each; and what was the total annual expenditure incurred by each of these units in dealing with their annual patient load for each year.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley *[holding answer 6 March 1990]:* The number of cases treated by specialists in cardiothoracic surgery for the years requested are shown as follows by district health authority. The hospitals named in the second column are those where a specialist cardiothoracic unit is located. Activity in a district may not be confined to the specialist unit.

Information on expenditure by individual specialities within hospitals is not collected centrally.

Cases treated, cardiothoracic specialty, by DHA, 1987-88 and 1988-89

Region and district health authority	*Hospitals known to have cardiothoracic units*	*1987-88*	*1988-89*
Northern RHA			
Newcastle	Freeman Hospital	2,286	2,708
Yorkshire RHA			
Hull		780	1
East Yorkshire	Castle Hill Hospital	1,616	1,548
Bradford		945	1,116
Leeds Western	Leeds General Infirmary	557	748
Leeds Eastern	Killingbeck Hospital	1,468	1,170
Trent RHA			
Leicestershire	Groby Road Hospital	1,186	1,328
Central Nottinghamshire		0	1
Nottingham		1,249	1,139
Sheffield	Northern General Hospital	1,596	1,487
East Anglian RHA			
Cambridge		10	1
East Suffolk		285	357
Norwich		761	814
West Norfolk and Wisbech		2	5
Huntingdon	Papworth Hospital	1,645	1,721
North West Thames RHA			
Barnet		0	1
Hillingdon	Harefield Hospital	3,143	3,404
Riverside		343	168
Parkside	St. Mary's Hospital	214	300
North East Thames RHA			
Basildon and Thurrock		1	0
Hampstead		34	31
Bloomsbury	Middlesex Hospital	754	791
City and Hackney	St. Bartholomew's Hospital	717	766
Tower Hamlets	The London Hospital	614	804
Haringey		30	0
South East Thames RHA			
Brighton		72	70
Eastbourne		17	26
Hastings		26	18
South East Kent		9	11
Canterbury and Thanet		11	8
Maidstone		37	38
Greenwich	Brook General Hospital	1,278	1,267
West Lambeth	St. Thomas's Hospital	439	411
Camberwell	King's College Hospital	543	445
Lewisham and North Southwark	Guy's Hospital	962	1,072
South West Thames RHA			
South West Surrey		414	379
Wandsworth	St. Georges Hospital	768	1,007
Wessex RHA			
East Dorset		8	1
Southampton and South West Hampshire	Southampton General Hospital	1,794	1,763
Basingstoke and North Hampshire		77	58
Oxford RHA			
Oxfordshire	John Radcliffe Hospital	180	150
South Western RHA			
Bristol and Weston	Bristol Royal Infirmary	689	727
Frenchay		1,183	1,014
Cornwall and Isles of Scilly		590	592
Exeter		800	716
Plymouth		528	423
West Midlands RHA			
North Staffordshire	North Staffordshire Royal Infirmary	803	779
Central Birmingham	Birmingham Childrens Hospital and Queen Elizabeth Hospital	980	767
East Birmingham		1,747	1,816
Coventry	Walsgrave Hospital	1,120	1,097
Walsall		0	33
Wolverhampton		196	170
Mersey RHA			
Chester		0	34
Liverpool	Broadgreen Hospital and Royal Liverpool Children's Hospital	2,058	1,910
South Sefton		512	534
North Western RHA			
Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde	Victoria Hospital	680	746
Central Manchester	Manchester Royal Infirmary	837	854
South Manchester	Wythenshawe Hospital	3,700	3,668
Salford		55	56
Wigan		2	0
Special Health Authorities			
The Hospitals for Sick Children	Hospital for Sick Children	984	1,269
The National Heart and Chest Hospitals	Brompton Hospital and London Chest Hospital	3,392	3,460
Hammersmith and Queen Charlotte's	Hammersmith Hospital	355	290

ENVIRONMENT

Local Government Finance

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what arrangements will be made for inner-city funded posts under the new local government finance arrangement *(a)* for posts within the first three years' funding and *(b)* for posts for which funding will end during the next financial year.

Mr. David Hunt: The new local government finance arrangements will have no effect either on posts currently funded by urban programme revenue grant or on the freedom of local authorities to choose to continue funding those posts when grant aid expires.

Mr. Atkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the increase in the commercial rate for Bournemouth between 1979 and 1989 in real terms.

Mr. Chope: The increase in the commercial rate for Bournemouth between 1979 and 1989, in real terms, was 9·4 per cent.

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any plans to bring forward legislation to ensure that private landlords reduce rate-inclusive rents by an appropriate amount with the introduction of the poll tax on 1 April.

Mr. Chope: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to my hon. Friend the Member for Taunton (Mr. Nicholson) on 8 February (*Offical Report*, Vol. 166 column 756).

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what are his best estimates of the amount that private landlords will gain when tenants pay rate-inclusive rents with the introduction of the poll tax on 1 April; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: I have made no such estimate. Most tenants paying rates-inclusive rents can ensure that they do not continue to pay the rates element after 1 April.

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what consideration he has given to the position of YTS trainees with special training needs endorsements and their liability for the poll tax.

Mr. David Hunt: The position of YTS trainees with special needs endorsements is similar to that of other YTS trainees. They receive the same allowances and may in addition be paid wages by the employer with whom they are placed. Virtually all non-employed trainees, and a proportion of employed trainees, would be entitled to community charge benefit where their income is low.

Sir John Stanley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will reproduce in the *Official Report* the mathematical calculation of the assumed personal community charge of £227·69 per head in Tonbridge and Malling for the purpose of the transitional relief scheme.

Mr. David Hunt: The assumed personal community charge of £227·69 in Tonbridge and Malling for the purpose of the transitional relief scheme was calculated in accordance with the formula in paragraph 2.2 of the Community Charge Transitional Relief Report (England). The relevant figures are:

			£
	A	Assumed spending including assumed county precept less business rate income and revenue support grant (before adjustments)	17,437,972
Less	B	Safety net adjustment	−74,871
Less	C	Low rateable value area grant	0
Less	D	Inner London education grant	0
Equals		Assumed revenue to raise	17,512,843
Divided by		Relevant population	76,916
Equals		Assumed charge	227·69

Sir John Stanley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will state for each charging authority in Kent the percentage amount by which its assumed personal community charge for the purpose of the transitional relief scheme is less than the average assumed community charge of £278 per head.

Mr. David Hunt: The table shows the percentage amount by which the assumed personal community charge for each charging authority in Kent for the purpose of the transitional relief scheme is less than the community charge for standard spending of £278:

	Amount by which assumed personal community charge is less than CCSS Per cent.
Ashford	19·7
Canterbury	20·2
Dartford	15·7
Dover	28·4
Gillingham	26·9
Gravesham	21·5
Maidstone	24·2
Rochester upon Medway	34·4
Sevenoaks	16·6
Shepway	6·7
Swale	23·6
Thanet	17·4
Tonbridge and Malling	18·1
Tunbridge Wells	18·6

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list for each London borough *(a)* the amount levied per head of its adult population for the precept of the Metropolitan police; *(b)* the relevant borough community charge; and *(b)* as a percentage of *(a)*.

Mr. Chope *[holding answer 14 March 1990]:* This information is not available.

Housing Associations

Ms. Primarolo: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what information he has on the proportions of housing association schemes which are represented by *(a)* rehabilitation work and *(b)* purchases of new-build schemes from builders; and whether there has been any change in each proportion over the past two years;

(2) what is the percentage reduction in rehabilitation work undertaken by the Housing Corporation in 1989-90 in the south-west.

Mr. Chope: Relevant information available to the Secretary of State is set out in the table. It shows housing

association rehabilitation work as a proportion of the Housing Corporation's programme of new approvals nationally and in its west region.

No comparable information is currently available on the number of new-build schemes purchased by housing associations direct from builders. However, this was not a normal procurement method for associations in years before 1989-90.

The figures relate to Housing Corporation-supported housing association activity only. Housing associations also receive support from local authorities but comparable figures for that sector are not available.

	Year	*All Housing £s*	*Rehabilitation £s*	*Rehabilitation as percentage of all*
West Region[3]	1987-88[1]	56,963,843	19,108,904	33·5
	1988-89[1]	67,738,562	21,167,858	31·2
	1989-90[2]	70,423,562	16,986,562	24·1
Total England	1987-88[1]	776,294,337	374,407,327	48·2
	1988-89[1]	885,089,043	371,755,120	42·0
	1989-90[2]	889,240,541	302,627,541	34·0

Notes:
[1] Value of schemes approved
[2] Value of funds allocated at beginning of 89-90—final scheme approvals will not be known until the end of 89-90
[3] HC West Region includes counties of Avon, Berkshire, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Oxfordshire, Somerset and Wiltshire.

Planning Applications

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether a planning application which concerns land falling within more than one local planning authority's area constitutes one of more than local importance.

Mr. Moynihan: Not necessarily. In any event, a development proposal falling in the area of more than one local planning authority would require more than one planning application.

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) whether a planning application which gives rise to objections on the ground that an European Community directive or international treaty is likely to be breached constitutes one which raises issues of greater than local importance in the context of criteria for call-in of planning applications under section 35 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971;

(2) whether a planning application which gives rise to objections on the ground that an European Community directive or international treaty might be breached constitutes one where the interests of foreign Governments are involved.

Mr. Moynihan: Whether to call in a planning application for the Secretary of State's decision is a matter of judgment to be exercised in each case against the criteria to which the hon. Lady refers.

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) whether a planning application which threatens irreversible damage to all or part of a site of special scientific interest constitutes one which might conflict with national policy on important matters;

(2) whether a planning application which threatens irreversible damage to all or part of a site of special scientific interest constitutes one which raises issues of greater than local importance in the context of criteria for call-in of planning applications under section 35 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971.

Mr. Moynihan: Such a threat might conflict with national policy on an important matter, and would be a material consideration in deciding whether to call in a planning application. The scale of the proposal and the extent of its effect on the site would also be relevant considerations.

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether national planning policies relating to the determination of planning applications affecting sites of special scientific interest apply within the geographical area known as the Serplan East Thames Corridor Initiative.

Mr. Moynihan: Yes.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether it remains his policy that it would not, in general, be acceptable for one area of a site of special scientific interest to be traded off in exchange for the protection of the rest; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: Planning authorities are advised to consider each case on its merits in accordance with the guidance in departmental circulars and policy guidance notes.

Safety Net Grant (Tameside)

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will review Tameside safety net grant for the community charge and the effect of the housing revenue account contributions being used twice.

Mr. Chope: Before making the Revenue Support Grant Report (England) 1990-91 and the other reports associated with the 1990-91 settlement, which were approved by the House on 18 January, my right hon. Friend considered all the representations he had received including those on Tameside's safety net grant and the effect of the housing revenue account contributions. He is satisfied that his decisions on the 1990-91 settlement are fair and reasonable.

Association of County Councils

Mr. Anthony Coombs: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he last met the Association of County Councils; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. Chope: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State met the Association of County Councils on 26 February. The Association of District Councils and the Association of Metropolitan Authorities were also present. They discussed environmental matters.

Departmental Houses (Greater Manchester)

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many houses are in the ownership of his Department in each district in Greater Manchester; and what percentage of these are empty.

Mr. Chope: The Department of the Environment does not own any houses in the Manchester area. There are, however, three flats held for the Lord Chancellor's Department, of which one, a caretaker's flat in Manchester Crown court, is vacant. Due to improvements in the Crown court security system there is no longer a need for a caretaker, but as the flat has no separate access it is not possible to offer it on the open market.

Stairlifts

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give details of the advice issued by his Department to destrict councils on the awarding of grants under the procedure introdure by the Local Government and Housing Act for the processing of applications for the county council to fit stairlifts.

Mr. Chope: We are considering the final form of our advice to local housing authorities on stairlifts in the light of reponses from organisations consulted on the draft circular, "House Adaptations for Disabled People". We shall issue this before the new disabled facilities grant arrangements come into operation on 1 July.

Local Income Tax

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what would be the administrative cost of introducing a system of local income tax in place of the community charge.

Mr. David Hunt: I have no estimate of what the cost would be of introducing a local income tax. However, I believe that the cost of collecting such a tax would be up to twice the cost of collecting the community charge.

Bereavement

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what guidelines his Department issues to local authorities in providing support for widowers of working age with young families in the immediate bereavement period and later.

Mr. Chris Patten *[holding answer 5 March 1990]:* I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Social Security on 5 March *[Official Report,* column *533].*

Irish Sea

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what plans Her Majesty's Government have to ban raw sewage outflow and sewage sludge from being dumped into the Irish sea.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* The announcement my right hon. Friend made on 5 March, set out in his reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Gloucester (Mr. French) *(Official Report,* Volume 168, column *452)* on the elimination of all significant discharges of untreated sewage and the termination of sewage sludge dumping by the end of 1998, applies to all UK coastal waters including the Irish sea.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Sunday Trading

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received on Sunday trading in the past six months.

Mr. Mellor: In the past six months, 111 written representations have been received. Of these, 65 have been broadly in favour and 46 against.

Birmingham Six

Mr. Skinner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a further statement on his consideration of the new material submitted to him on the Birmingham Six.

Mr. John Patten: My right hon. and learned Friend is still considering very carefully the further material presented to him by a solicitor on behalf of the six men, and will decide as soon as possible whether it justifies any intervention on his part.

Neighbourhood Watch

Mr. Riddick: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many neighbourhood watch schemes now operate in England and Wales.

Mr. John Patten: At the end of December 1989 there were estimated to be over 81,000 neighbourhood watch schemes in England and Wales, covering more than 4 million households.

Remand Prisoners

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the practice of obtaining psychiatric reports on prisoners held on remand.

Mr. Mellor: A court requiring medical advice on a defendant's mental condition may remand that person to prison for a report. The Government encourage the use of other means of obtaining such reports including bail or remand to hospital where custody is not necessary in the public interest.

"Victim's Charter"

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what expenditure he has incurred in the production and distribution of the official pamphlet "Victim's Charter".

Mr. John Patten: The cost of the design, printing and distribution of the charter were £26,284.

Real Estate

Mr. Devlin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what information he has about the ownership of real estate and other assets in the United Kingdom by members of the former communist Administrations in *(a)* East Germany, *(b)* Romania, *(c)* Bulgaria and *(d)* Czechoslovakia;

(2) what information he has about the ownership of real estate and other assets in the United Kingdom by members of the present communist Administrations in *(a)* Angola, *(b)* Cuba and *(c)* China.

Mr. Waddington: Such information is not held by my Department.

Sunset Radio

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on Sunset Radio and the future of ethnic minority broadcasting in Manchester.

Mr. Mellor: Sunset Radio was the first of the IBA's "incremental" radio contractors to begin broadcasting. It opened on 22 October 1989, six months after being awarded the contract. It broadcasts on 102·0 MHz (VHF/FM) for 24 hours a day, serving a number of ethnic minority communities within the Manchester area. I understand that some internal reorganisation has taken place recently; this is a matter for the station itself, under overall IBA supervision.

The Broadcasting Bill, which was introduced to Parliament in December 1989, paves the way for further expansion of independent radio. The new Radio Authority will be able to offer licences for many more local stations catering for a range of listeners' tastes and interests, including services for ethnic minorities. The location of the services will depend on demand and the availability of suitable frequencies.

Prisoners

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the number of prisoners in each prison in England and Wales who were employed in prison workshops or kitchens on 5 March.

Mr. Mellor: Information is not collected in precisely the form requested. The average daily number of inmates employed in prison workshops and kitchens during the week ending 27 January, the most recent period for which complete information is available, was as follows:

Establishment	*Workshops*	*Kitchens*
Acklington	108	19
Albany	103	17
Aldington	35	7
Ashwell	97	19
Askham Grange	0	9
Aylesbury	23	11
Bedford	0	11
Birmingham	115	56
Blantyre House	0	7
Blundeston	92	19
Bristol	48	20
Brixton	0	27
Brockhill	0	19
Bullwood Hall	42	6
Camp Hill	60	15
Campsfield House	0	6
Canterbury	36	16
Cardiff	86	27
Castington	24	10
Channings Wood	152	17
Chelmsford	12	16
Coldingley	126	10
Cookham Wood	0	11
Dartmoor	121	19
Deerbolt	10	9
Dorchester	20	8
Dover	0	8
Downview	0	0
Drake Hall	53	15
Durham	124	26
East Sutton Park	0	6
Eastwood Park	0	10
Erlestoke	12	12
Everthorpe	30	11
Exeter	36	16
Featherstone	247	18
Feltham	9	20
Finnamore Wood	0	8
Ford	125	22
Foston Hall	0	6
Frankland	127	22
Full Sutton	129	12
Garth	135	18
Gartree	101	16
Glen Parva	28	20
Gloucester	66	13
Guys Marsh	0	12
Hatfield	0	14
Haverigg	163	16
Hewell Grange	0	8
Highpoint	68	33
Hindley	73	9
Hollesley Bay	20	9
Holloway	16	20
Hull	29	21
Huntercombe	0	10
Kingston	67	7
Kirkham	168	22
Kirklevington	4	2
Lancaster	37	13
Latchmere House	0	8
Leeds	119	40
Leicester	57	17
Lewes	44	18
Leyhill	77	23
Lincoln	167	26
Lindholme	38	28
Littlehey	117	24
Liverpool	213	35
Long Lartin	127	16
Lowdham Grange	44	10
Low Newton	5	10
Maidstone	162	18
Manchester	230	72
Morton Hall	0	11
New Hall	11	12
Northallerton	26	10
Northeye	76	13
North Sea Camp	0	12
Norwich	47	31
Nottingham	54	13
Onley	40	14
Oxford	41	9
Parkhurst	32	9
Pentonville	40	25
Portland	44	21
Prescoed	0	8
Preston	52	22
Pucklechurch	0	0
Ranby	144	31
Reading	49	16
Risley	28	16
Rochester	24	10

Establishment	Workshops	Kitchens
Rudgate	99	19
Send	0	11
Shepton Mallet	75	9
Shrewsbury	58	13
Spring Hill	40	13
Stafford	281	34
Standford Hill	91	15
Stocken	24	14
Stoke Heath	75	10
Styal	34	28
Sudbury	151	18
Swaleside	37	11
Swansea	56	11
Swinfen Hall	28	9
The Mount	22	14
The Verne	99	16
Thorn Cross	0	9
Thorp Arch	40	11
Usk	2	7
Wakefield	293	17
Wandsworth	195	22
Wayland	77	15
Werrington	0	11
Wetherby	0	14
Whatton	0	10
Winchester	22	38
Wormwood Scrubs	0	26
Wymott	385	23

Hepatitis B

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the percentage of prison officers and other prison staff who have been vaccinated against hepatitis B.

Mr. Mellor *[holding answer 9 March 1990]:* No central record detailing this information is maintained. The prison service's present policy is to make available hepatitis B preventive vaccination on request to all staff who routinely come into contact with prisoners.

ENERGY

North Sea Investment

Mr. Colvin: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what was the level of capital investment in the North sea in 1989; and what are the prospects for 1990.

Mr. Wakeham: Capital investment in the production of the United Kingdom's oil and gas in 1989 was £2·6 billion (provisional), an increase of well over 20 per cent. on the level achieved in 1988. The industry has indicated that capital investment in 1990 could reach a massive £3·7 billion.

Nuclear Industry (Subsidies)

Mr. Denzil Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what information he has on the total value, in the latest available year, of national subsidies paid to the nuclear industry in *(a)* the United Kingdom, *(b)* the Federal Republic of Germany and *(c)* France.

Mr. Baldry: The Government have paid no subsidies to the electricity industry in the United Kingdom in respect of nuclear generation, nor have they paid any subsidies to British Nuclear Fuels. I have no information on Government subsidies to the nuclear industries in the other countries mentioned.

Sudbury House and Bankside Power Station

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy, what is the estimated value of Sudbury house and Bankside power station.

Mr. Wakeham: The estimated value of these sites is commercially confidential.

Nuclear Electric (Trading)

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what scale of guarantees are needed to prevent Nuclear Electric from trading while insolvent.

Mr. Wakeham: On 6 March I laid before the House a minute which set out my intention to provide a letter of assurance to Nuclear Electric plc.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Banbury (Mr. Baldry) explained in an answer to the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) on 26 February (*Official Report*, Column *91*), work is currently in hand on the financial structure of the company. Decisions on the extent of any support in addition to the letter of assurance cannot yet be taken. They depend on the outcome of the company's review of accounting policies and its financial performance in 1989-90.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether his Department was consulted about the allocation of *(a)* Sudbury house and *(b)* Bankside power station to Nuclear Electric plc.

Mr. Wakeham: I took the decision that Sudbury house and Bankside power station should be allocated to Nuclear Electric.

WALES

Cancer

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth of 13 March on information on cancer in Wales, for what reason no figures for the incidence in Wales of *(a)* leukaemia, *(b)* lung cancer, *(c)* colon cancer and *(d)* stomach cancer are available for any year since 1984; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave him on 15 March.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Overseas Projects (Environmental Impact)

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what advice is available to United Kingdom industry on the need to consider the environmental impact of overseas projects and investments.

Mr. Forth: The Department provides a full range of overseas market advice to companies as part of the export initiative. More detailed advice on environmental controls and requirements in other countries is available from the environmental inquiry point at Warren Spring laboratory, established under the DTI's environmental programme as a free source of information on environmental concerns in

strategic planning. The Overseas Development Administration has published a manual of environmental appraisal, which is available to companies on request.

Electrical Equipment

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he is taking to secure the safety of electrical equipment made in Europe which does not conform to British safety standards.

Mr. Forth: The safety of most electrical equipment traded throughout the European Community is judged on its compliance with the low voltage directive, implemented in the United Kingdom through the Low Voltage Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1989. Conformity may be established in a number of ways, primarily through harmonised European standards or, in their absence, by compliance with national safety standards. However, neither method is mandatory. The fundamental requirement is for the product to be safe.

Barlow Clowes

Mr. French: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many investors on Barlow Clowes have benefited from the scheme he announced on 19 December.

Mr. Redwood: By 28 February, 13,724 cheques had been dispatched by my agents, totalling £145 million. A further 260 claims were being processed and a further 210 investors appear to have been unable to meet the deadline for claims for understandable reasons, such as absence overseas, and their cases will be considered if there is good reason. Of the remaining 66 cases, some would not appear to qualify because they have already assigned their rights in return for payments from others, while others are being investigated further to establish whether they benefited directly or indirectly from the circumstances leading up to the liquidation.

My agents have received assignments of rights from all the investors who are being paid out. My Department will now obtain necessary information from these investors and will be considering all the claims that may be pursued in order to secure the maximum net recovery for the taxpayer.

EC Industry Ministers

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what subjects he raised at the last Council of Industry Ministers.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 15 March 1990]:* I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Renfrew, West and Inverclyde (Mr. Graham) on Wednesday 14 March at columns 476-77.

Advisers

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list all those organisations who have received fees for advice given to his Department since April 1985, giving in each case the period over which they were retained and the matters on which they advised.

Mr. Forth *[holding answer 13 March 1990]:* My Department uses widely the services of many organisations to give advice on a broad range of issues. The length of period during which the advice is sought and given varies according to the subject.

The information sought by the hon. Member can only be provided at disproportionate cost.

If the hon. Member would care to write clarifying the information he seeks, I shall consider his request.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Tax

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will publish a table showing the number of *(a)* working heads and *(b)* dependants facing marginal tax and benefit withdrawal rates in excess of 40 per cent. in the manner of his answer to the late hon. Member for Kensington on 25 March 1988, *Official Report*, column *244*.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The latest available information is set out in the table. The table shows the number of tax units where the head faces a combined withdrawal rate above 50 per cent., and the total number of individuals, including spouses and children, in their families.

Marginal deduction rates 1989-90
Working heads of tax units (000s) Great Britain
Numbers facing combined rates of over 50 per cent.

Per cent.	*Tax units*			
	Families with children	*Couples and single people*	*Total*	*Individuals (heads, spouse and children)*
90 to 99	35	5	40	125
80 to 89	120	10	130	460
70 to 79	150	35	180	590
60 to 69	*	5	5	15
50 to 59	—	—	—	—

Notes:
(i) Marginal deduction rates shown are for heads of tax units in receipt of family credit or housing benefit where at least one partner works 24 hours or more a week. They incorporate the October 1989 National Insurance contribution changes.
(ii) Estimates based on 1985 and 1986 FES data uprated to 1989-90 levels.
(iii) * denotes an estimate of fewer than 2,500.

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many people face marginal tax rates, both including and excluding social security of *(a)* over 40 per cent., *(b)* over 50 per cent., *(c)* over 60 per cent., *(d)*

over 70 per cent., *(e)* over 80 per cent., *(f)* over 90 per cent. and *(g)* over 100 per cent.; (i) now and (ii) in each year since 1978-79.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Available estimates are set out in the table. The first table shows the number of tax units facing combined marginal tax/benefit withdrawal rates in the requested ranges, in 1985 and as currently projected for 1989-90. These are the only years for which estimates on a comparable basis are available. The second table shows the number of tax units facing marginal rates of income tax in the requested ranges. Estimates are provided for 1985-86 and 1989-90, to be comparable with those provided incorporating social security withdrawal rates, and also for 1978-79.

Table 1: Marginal deduction rates—working heads of tax units, in Great Britain
Numbers with marginal deduction rates in specified range[1]

Percentage	*November 1985*[2] *Thousands*	*1989-90*[3] *Thousands*
100 and over	70	—
90 to 99	60	40
80 to 89	160	130
70 to 79	—	180
60 to 69	160	5
50 to 59	230	[4]
40 to 49	n.a.	30

[1] Marginal deduction rates shown are for heads of benefit units in receipt of family credit (previously family income supplement) or housing benefit where at least one partner works 24 hours or more a week.
[2] Based on 1982, 1983 and 1984 Family Expenditure Surveys.
[3] Projection based on 1985 and 1986 FES. Shows the position post October 1989 national insurance contribution changes.
[4] Denotes an estimate of fewer than 2,500.
n.a. Denotes not available.

Table 2
Marginal rate of income tax—tax units, Great Britain
Numbers with marginal rate of income tax in specified range[1]

	1978-79 thousands	*1985-86 thousands*	*1989-90 thousands*
100 per cent. and over	—	—	—
90 to 99 per cent.	20	—	—
80 to 89 per cent.	50	—	—
70 to 79 per cent.	60	—	—
60 to 69 per cent.	90	—	—
50 to 59 per cent.	170	170	—
40 to 49 per cent.	590	530	—

[1] Estimates based on 1978-79 and 1985-86 Surveys of Personal Incomes. Estimates allow for taxpayers in the aged withdrawal band (where the marginal rate of income tax was 55 per cent. in 1978-79, 50 per cent. in 1985-86 and 37·5 per cent. in 1989-90) and for Investment Income Surcharge rates of 10 per cent. and 15 per cent. in 1978-79.

Benefit Rights (Publicity)

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security whether he has proposals to help make people who are eligible to apply for benefits aware of their rights to claim benefits; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The Government's policy on take-up of benefits is set out in the White Paper on the Government's expenditure plans 1990-91 to 1992-93, chapter 14, paragraph 27, which is in the Library.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Atkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will bring forward plans to raise the capital limit for the community charge benefit.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: We continue to keep under review the capital limits for all income-related benefits.

Mr. Maxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will provide a table for the following household types: *(a)* single pensioner, *(b)* other single adult, *(c)* two adults, *(d)* three or more adults and *(e)* all households listing (i) the number receiving rate bills, (ii) the total value of their gross rate bills, (iii) the numbers entitled to rebates and (iv) the total value of rebates in 1987-88 and 1988-89 in Scotland.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Information is not available in the form or detail requested. The latest available information is in the table.

	Scotland *1987-88*	*1988-89*
Number of households (000s)	1,950	1,967
Gross value of domestic rate bills excluding water rates (£ million)	918	968
Numbers receiving rate rebates (000s)	785	688
Rate rebate expenditure (£ million)	212	170

Sources: Scottish Office statistics. Housing benefit expenditure and caseload return from local authorities.

Mr. Hayward: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what would be the cost of giving the community charge relief at 20 per cent. of full charge to those adults of working age who currently remain at home caring for immediate relatives who are in receipt of attendance allowance.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The information requested is not available.

Social Fund

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is the current refusal rate for social fund applications in each social security office; and what was it in March 1989.

Mr. Scott: Information regarding the numbers of social fund applications processed and awards made is placed in the Library for each month since the start of the scheme. The information sought can be derived from that source.

Mobility Allowance

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many people have had their mobility allowance withdrawn in each of the last 10 years on the grounds that they were no longer deemed to be able to benefit from enhanced facilities for locomotion; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: Very few recipients have their mobility allowance withdrawn on the grounds that they will no longer, from time to time, be able to benefit from enhanced facilities for locomotion. I regret that records of the number of cases are not kept.

Income Support

Mr. Patchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many persons in Barnsley, East, who are in receipt of income support, receive the single parents' supplement.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: In February 1990, there were 1,690.

Source: 100 per cent. count of cases in action, which include a number where benefit payment has ceased but other action is continuing. Data are provisional and subject to amendment.

Mr. Patchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many persons in south Yorkshire, who are in receipt of income support, receive the single parents' supplement.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: In February 1990, there were 19,894.

Source: 100 per cent. count of cases in action, which include a number where benefit payment has ceased but other action is continuing. Data are provisional and subject to amendment.

Occupational Pensions

Mr. Cash: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security when he proposes to appoint a new chairman of the occupational pensions board.

Mr. Newton: I have reappointed Mr. Jeremy Rowe CBE as chairman of the board for a further three years from 6 April 1990.

Community Care Grants (Preston)

Mrs. Wise: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security in how many refusals of community care grants at the Preston social security office one of the grounds for refusal has been insufficient funds.

Mr. Scott: On 21 occasions at the Preston South local office and 318 occasions at the Preston North local office, the social fund officer refused applications for community care grants, giving as a reason that they had insufficient priority to be met from the budget. These figures are provisional and cover the period April 1989 to February 1990.

Occupational Pensions

Mr. Gill: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he has any further proposals concerning occupational pensions; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: There has been a wide welcome for the general aims of the provisions in the current Social Security Bill which seek to give members of occupational pension schemes greater protection.

One of the provisions in the current Social Security Bill requires pension increases to be paid when a scheme winds up. I have received representations saying that I should go further and place a similar requirement for pension increases on schemes which continue as well. Others have pointed to the possible consequences for businesses and have said that the current wind-up provisions could in certain cases lead to employers facing additional contingent liabilities for which they had not been able to plan.

I have carefully considered all these representations, and the discussions in Committee, and have concluded that we can strike a better balance. I shall bring forward an amendment for the Report stage of the Bill.

The amendment will make two requirements. First, in future schemes will have to pay annual increases to members for their pension rights which they build up after an appointed day. In respect of their rights, members will be guaranteed increases in line with the retail price index up to 5 per cent. a year. Schemes will of course continue to be free to pay more than this if they wish, as indeed some already do.

Secondly, where schemes have a surplus of assets over liabilities the first call on such a surplus will be to pay increases to members for pension rights which they have built up before the appointed day (including pensions now in payment). The target rate of increase will be the rise in the RPI up to 5 per cent. a year, but the rate to be guaranteed by each scheme will depend on the amount of its surplus. Employers will not be able to take a contribution holiday or refund until increases are guaranteed at the target rate.

The position when a scheme winds up will follow the general requirements for pension increases. In the event of a scheme winding up employers will have to ensure that members receive increases at the prices—5 per cent. rate for pension rights they have built up after the appointed day. For pension rights based on service before then, increases will depend on *(a)* the extent of increases already guaranteed as a result of the new requirements and *(b)* any additional surplus emerging when the scheme winds up.

We shall consult the industry about implementation, but I intend that these proposals should take effect no later than the end of 1991.

Together with the Bill's other proposals to establish a pensions ombudsman, to improve help and advice for scheme members and control the extent of self-investment, I believe that these revised proposals to strengthen the pension increase rights of scheme members constitute a significant further step forward in the development of occupational pensions.

Administration Costs

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is the total number of staff administering the social security programme per 100,000 claimants for each year from 1978-79 to 1989-90 consistent with the information given in table 14.28 of the current public expenditure White Paper.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard *[holding answer 5 March 1990]:* The total number of staff administering the social security programme per 100,000 receiving benefits for the years 1979-80 to 1988-89 is in the table.

	Number
1979-80	384
1980-81	372
1981-82	353
1982-83	339
1983-84	325
1984-85	311
1985-86	316
1986-87	314
1987-88	326
1988-89	326
1989-90	1

[1] Not available.

Figures for 1978-79 are not available for work on social security administration as a separate item.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Vietnam

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made and what information he possesses concerning changes in the levels of employment and of remuneration following recent changes in economic organisation in Vietnam; and what assessment he has made of their consequential effects on illegal movements to Hong Kong.

Mr. Maude: There are no reliable statistics on current levels of employment and wages in Vietnam. One of the short-term effects of economic reform in Vietnam is likely to be higher unemployment and cuts in real wages. Any changes in the Vietnamese economy will take time to affect clandestine movements of people to Hong Kong. In the longer term, sustained economic improvement, already evident in small businesses, services and rural areas, should begin to deter would-be emigrants.

Drug Abuse

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has on the level of contributions from the United Kingdom and other countries to the United Nations fund for drug abuse control.

Mr. Maude: Since 1982 the United Kingdom has contributed or pledged a total of £11·05 million to the United Nations fund for drug abuse control. This includes an annual contribution to UNFDAC's general purpose fund and contributions (or pledges) to a range of individual country projects. The United Kingdom is the fifth largest donor after Italy, the United States, the Federal Republic of Germany and Sweden.

Hong Kong

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the current position he has arranged with other countries issuing passports to Hong Kong residents.

Mr. Maude: We have for some months been encouraging our friends and partners to follow our lead in providing assurances to Hong Kong people to give them the confidence to remain in the territory. A few countries are already taking action of this kind; the other countries that we have approached have undertaken to consider our proposal.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what negotiations he has had with the Chinese authorities to ensure that they honour passports issued before 1997 to Hong Kong residents when that country takes over the colony.

Mr. Maude: We have had a number of discussions with the Chinese authorities on nationality questions. We have made it clear to the Chinese authorities that the granting of British citizenship to certain Hong Kong residents falls entirely within the competence of the British Government, and is consistent with the provisions of the 1984 joint declaration.

Israel

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations to the Israeli Government, over the use of tear gas and rubber bullets by their security forces to disperse Palestinian women, who staged anti-occupation marches on the West Bank and in Arab East Jerusalem to coincide with International Women's Day.

Mr. Waldegrave: We regularly remind the Israelis of our concern about their excessive use of force in suppressing manifestations of the intifada in the occupied territories.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had, or intends to have, with the Israeli Government on its policy on the establishment of further Jewish settlements in the occupied territories.

Mr. Waldegrave: The Israeli Government are well aware of our view, expressed by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister in her speech to the Board of Deputies of British Jews on 18 February, that the Jewish settlements in the occupied territories, including east Jerusalem, are illegal.

Iraq

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions his Department had with Nizar Hamdoun of the Iraqi Foreign Ministry, during his visit to the United Kingdom attending the conference at Chatham house on Iraq in the 1990s, in respect of the detention and trial for spying of *The Observer* journalist Farzad Bazoft and British nurse Daphne Parish; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: I raised the case of Mrs. Parish and Mr. Bazoft when I met Nizar Hamdoun on 8 March. I expressed our serious concern for the two and emphasised the importance of a fair trial. Mr. Hamdoun took note of these points and emphasised the sensitivity of these cases for the Iraqi authorities. Similar representations were made to Mr. Hamdoun at a senior official level.

East Germany

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has on the establishment of property rights and a coherent law of contract in East Germany.

Mr. Waldegrave: Revising property and contract law seems likely to be one of the priorities of a new GDR Government after elections on 18 March. It is also to be expected that these questions will be covered in discussions between the two German states on a currency union.

Human Rights (Women)

Mrs. Fyfe: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has on those countries where women do not have the vote; and to which of those countries he has made representations on their observance of human rights for women.

Mr. Waldegrave: There are, of course, many countries where neither men nor women have the vote. Women are also under a variety of specific electoral disabilities in a number of different parts of the world. We do not have a complete list of these. Our support for universal suffrage and equal treatment for women is clear from our ratification of the relevant international instruments, particularly the convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, and the international covenant on civil and political rights.

Mrs. Fyfe: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has made representations to the Kuwait Government on their observance of human rights for women.

Mr. Waldegrave: No. As already stated, our position on female suffrage is clear from our ratification of both the convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and the international covenant on civil and political rights.

NATIONAL FINANCE

European Investment Bank

Mr. Allen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what guarantee obligations the Government have in respect of exchange losses on loans given by the European investment bank.

Mr. Ryder: The Government have guarantee obligations against exchange losses on outstanding foreign currency loans from the European investment bank under the official exchange cover scheme and the exchange risk cover scheme for the private sector. However, there has been virtually no borrowing under the official exchange cover scheme since changes in the scheme were announced at the end of 1987, and the scheme for the private sector was closed in 1985.

Income Tax

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many women pay tax on schedule E; and what are their average earnings.

Mr. Lilley: In 1989-90 there are about 7½ million women with earnings taxed under schedule E and their average earnings are approximately £7,750. These estimates include taxpayers with earnings from full-time or part-time work.

The estimates are based on a projection of the 1987-88 survey of personal incomes and are provisional.

Retail Prices Index

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the current retail prices index for the United Kingdom calculated on the same basis as the similar indices are in *(a)* France and *(b)* Germany.

Mr. Lilley: It is not practicable to perform such calculations taking account of the many differences between these countries in methods and concepts used in constructing consumer price indices.

Taxation and Expenditure

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list in the *Official Report*, for the years *(a)* 1978-79, *(b)* 1987-88 and *(c)* 1988-89: (i) the total national tax revenue raised and (ii) the central Government public expenditure spent, in each region of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Lilley: (i) Estimates of the total national tax revenue are not made on a regional basis. However, figures giving a partial coverage are available and include estimates of the income tax liability of residents in the regions. Figures for 1978-79 have been published by the CSO in "Regional Trends" No. 16 and for the latest figures, which are for the year 1987-88, I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave him on 12 February (*Official Report*, column *18*).

(ii) Apart from expenditure which is the responsibility of territorial Departments, all Government expenditure is both planned and controlled on a national basis. Information on expenditure broken down by standard regions within England is thus not available on a consistent basis. Published figures giving a partial coverage are published by the CSO in "Regional Trends". They include estimates of social security cash benefits, current expenditure by regional health authorities and regional preferential assistance to industry.

Taxation

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will introduce legislation to allow United Kingdom shipping companies whose employees work on vessels registered in the United Kingdom to be exempt from paying income tax and national insurance contributions; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lilley: I cannot anticipate the Budget statement.

Mr. Denzil Davies: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what percentage of the earnings of a married man in the present fiscal year, assuming a mortgage of £30,000 and a mortgage interest rate of 14 per cent., would be paid in income tax and national insurance payments if his earnings were *(a)* £15,000, *(b)* £20,000, *(c)* £25,000, *(d)* £50,000, *(e)* £100,000 and *(f)* £250,000.

Mr. Major: The information is in the table:

Percentage of earnings paid in income tax and national insurance contributions[1] by married man[2] at 1989-90 levels of income

Earnings £ per annum	*per cent.*
15,000	16·1
20,000	20·6
25,000	21·9
50,000	29·7
100,000	34·8
250,000	37·9

[1] Based on the post-October 1989 rates.

[2] Calculations assume that the married man has no other forms of income and that he does not receive any tax allowances or reliefs other than mortgage interest relief of £4,200 per annum—the interest paid on his £30,000 mortgage at a rate of 14 per cent.—and the married man's allowance.

European Community Budget

Mr. Denzil Davies: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what percentage of the total budget of the EC, in the latest available year, was made up from the contributions of *(a)* the United Kingdom, *(b)* the Federal Republic of Germany and *(c)* France.

Mr. Major: The information in the table relates to the 1990 European Community budget, which totals 43,815 mecu:

	United Kingdom		*Federal Republic of Germany*		*France*	
	mecu	*per cent.*	*mecu*	*per cent.*	*mecu*	*per cent.*
Gross contribution before taking account of United Kingdom abatement	9,005	20·6	10,899	24·9	8,072	18·4
Gross contribution after taking account of United Kingdom abatement	6,575	15·0	11,383	26·0	8,722	19·9

Girobank

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Derbyshire, North-East of 26 February, *Official Report*, columns *12-13*, if he will arrange for an examination of the operation of the Girobank keyway account.

Mr. Ryder: No. I see no reason to do so.

Mortgages

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what would be the effect on the retail prices index of raising the ceiling on relief on mortgage interest to *(a)* £35,000, *(b)* £40,000 and *(c)* £45,000; and what would be the effect on the retail prices index of restricting relief in each of these cases, and in circumstances where the present ceiling is unchanged, to the standard rate of income tax.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 13 March 1990]:* Using the current calculations, as for the latest retail prices index, the approximate effect of raising the maximum level of mortgage to which tax relief on interest payments applies would be as follows:

Ceiling	*Approximate effect on "all items" RPI at January 1990*
£	*per cent.*
35,000	−0·1
40,000	−0·2
45,000	−0·3

For the purpose of the RPI all tax relief is assumed to be at the standard rate of tax.

DEFENCE

SSBN 007

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to place the order for SSBN 007.

Mr. Neubert: We expect to place the order for the third Vanguard class submarine later this year.

Coolant Water Discharges

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what level of radioactivity, and which radio-nuclides, are released into the Clyde by the Royal Navy, which are the result of nuclear powered submarine coolant water discharges.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Treated liquid containing a small amount of radioactivity is discharged from the Clyde submarine base into Gareloch. The radio-nuclide of principal significance is Cobalt 60. In 1988 the total level of discharge was 0·000029 terabecquerels, which is less than 1 per cent. of the limits agreed with the Scottish Development Department.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what level of radioactivity, and which radio-nuclides, are released into the Irish sea by the United States Navy, which are the result of nuclear powered submarine coolant water discharges;

(2) when the USS Simon Lake (AS33) stopped releasing processed reactor coolant water, from United States nuclear powered submarines, into Holy Loch; and at what depth of ocean it is now the practice to release the processed coolant water;

(3) what volume of processed coolant water from nuclear-powered submarines, on average, is discharged per excursion; and which radio-nuclides, and in what quantities, this coolant contains from the discharges made by the USS "Simon Lake".

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Matters concerning the operation of United States Navy nuclear-powered submarines are for the United States Government. Her Majesty's Government remain satisfied that while in United Kingdom waters the United States Navy continues to operate its nuclear-powered warships in accordance with the recommendations of the International Commission of Radiological Protection (ICRP).

Sultan's Forces, Brunei

Ms. Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether any payment is made by the Sultanate of Brunei for the provision by the United Kingdom of troops and training to the Sultan's forces.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Appropriate payments are made by the Government of Brunei for individuals attending training courses in the United Kingdom and for loan

service personnel serving with the Brunei armed forces. In addition, the Government of Brunei meet the full costs of the British Gurkha battalion stationed in Brunei.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will show *(a)* how many training establishments within the armed services have sought to register trainees as students for poll tax purposes and *(b)* a full list of all those establishments.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The information requested is not held centrally.

THE ARTS

Arts Funding

Mr. Jack: To ask the Minister for the Arts what is the increase in funding for the arts for the year 1990-91.

Ms. Luce: Funding for the arts will increase in 1990-91 by £45,221,000 to £494,193,000.

"Lizzie"

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Minister for the Arts if he will make a statement on his latest actions in relation to "Lizzie", the fossil found near Bathgate, West Lothian.

Mr. Luce: I have nothing to further to add to the answer I gave to the hon. Member on 6 March, *Official Report*, column *585*.

Tourism

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Minister for the Arts what contribution the arts makes to tourism in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Luce: The arts play an important part in United Kingdom tourism. The Policy Studies Institute report, "The Economic Importance of the Arts", published in 1988, calculated that some 42 per cent. of arts attendances in London were by tourists while tourism with an arts ingredient was worth in 1986 £3·1 billion or 25 per cent. of total tourist earnings for that year.

The most recent figures published by the British tourist authority relating to the number of visits to tourist attractions in the United Kingdom in 1988 indicate the continuing importance of museums and galleries to United Kingdom tourism. Of the 10 most popular attractions visited, four are museums or galleries.

SCOTLAND

Technology Academies

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland on what the budget for technology academies in 1989-90 was spent.

Mr. Lang: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 13 March at column *159*.

Capital Allocations

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the total money allowed to local authorities for capital spending in *(a)* 1989-90 and *(b)* 1990-91.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Capital consents issued by the Secretary of State for local authority capital programmes totalled £790 millon in 1989-90. Authorities also have considerable other resources for capital spending. No comparable figure is yet available for 1990-91.

EMPLOYMENT

Northumbria (Tourism)

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what percentage of overseas visitors visited the Northumbrian tourist area in the last five years; and what steps are being taken to encourage visitors to the north-east.

Mr. Nicholls: Estimates of the percentage of overseas visitors who visited Northumbria in the years 1984 to 1988 are as follows:

Overseas visitors to Northumbria tourist board area

	Percentage of overseas visitors
1984	1·9
1985	1·7
1986	2·0
1987	2·1
1988	1·8

Part-time Workers

Mr. Leighton: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what assistance the Government is giving to the training of part-time workers.

Mr. Nicholls: The primary responsibility for training the employed, whether they work full or part-time, rests with the employers. The Government's employment training programme offers part-time training opportunities in certain circumstances for a number of groups of unemployed people. These include people with disabilities, returners to the labour market and lone parents.

Tourism

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment why grant aid for tourism development under section 4 of the Development of Tourism Act 1969 was withdrawn for England; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: The decision to withdraw funding from the section 4 scheme in England was made because of serious doubts about the scheme's continuing value and effectiveness; and in the light of record levels of capital investment in the tourism industry.

Youth Training, Peterlee and Seaham

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many people on Government employment training schemes have left the course before completion in the Peterlee and Seaham areas; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: Information about the number of people leaving employment training before completing their planned training in the Seaham and Peterlee areas is not available.

Youth Training

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many young people over 18 years are on YTS special training needs endorsements.

Mr. Patrick Nicholls: On 31 December 1989, 15,900 young people aged over 18 were on YTS with special training needs endorsements.

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he has any plans to introduce an increase in the youth training allowance; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: The minimum value of the lower and higher levels of the youth training allowance will remain at £29·50 and £35 respectively. However, from 29 May, youth training trainees will be eligible for the higher rate of the trainee allowance when they reach their 17th birthday, instead of after completing a fixed period of training, which is the current rule. In consequence, most trainees will qualify for the higher level of the trainee allowance earlier than is the case now.

An increasing proportion of YTS trainees have been taken on as employees while training, and will be in receipt of a wage from their employer, not a training allowance. Those who remain as trainees (not employees) are increasingly likely to be in receipt of supplementary payments from employers. Both trends are most encouraging and show that employers are accepting more responsibility for bearing the costs of training young people.

Written Answers to Questions

Monday 19 March 1990

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Teachers (Early Retirement)

Mrs. Maureen Hicks: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) how many local authorities are offering early retirement pension schemes to teachers on the grounds of ill health or because they are surplus to requirements;

(2) what is the cost to local authorities of offering early retirement pension schemes to teachers on the grounds of ill health or because they are surplus to requirements;

(3) what is the Government's policy on teachers who have taken early retirement pensions on the grounds of ill health or because they are surplus to requirements taking paid teaching posts with other local authorities.

Mr. Alan Howarth: The Teachers' Superannuation (Consolidation) Regulations 1988 provide that a teacher before the age of 60 can receive retirement benefits if he has become incapacitated, that is, he is incapable for reason of infirmity of mind or body of serving efficiently as a teacher. Applications are made direct to this Department by individual teachers. In the financial year 1988-89, a total of 3,400 teachers in England and Wales were awarded benefits under this provision.

The regulations also provide that a teacher over 50 can receive retirement benefits prematurely where his employer has notified the Secretary of State that his pensionable employment was terminated by reason of his redundancy or in the interests of the efficient discharge of the employer's functions. In the financial year 1988-89, a total of 12,500 teachers in England and Wales received benefits under this provision.

The costs of awarding infirmity benefits are borne by the teachers' superannuation scheme; in the case of premature retirement the employer may award additional benefits. The cost of this is met by the individual employer. No central record of costs is available.

Teachers who have retired under these provisions may at a later date seek further employment. In cases where infirmity benefits were awarded, the employer is responsible for satisfying himself that the teacher is medically fit to teach. In all cases, the pension will be subject to the abatement provision and reduced or suspended according to circumstances.

Lingua Programme

Mr. Fatchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what submissions have been made by his Department for resources from the European Community Lingua programe; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Jackson: The Lingua programme began on 1 January 1990. Its first year is essentially preparatory and the programme will be fully operational from 1 January 1991. Applications for support mainly directed at modern language students have been invited for 1990 and United Kingdom institutions will participate fully. It is planned to seek applications for support under other elements of the programme from autumn 1990. The Government will encourage the widest possible United Kingdom participation.

Vacant School Places (Avon)

Mr. Haywood: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many vacant places there are in secondary schools in Avon; and what proportion of secondary school places this represents.

Mr. Alan Howarth: Information about the number of surplus places in individual local education authorities is not held centrally.

Special Educational Needs

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many children in the school population have been statemented; what this is as a percentage of total school population; how many of those children statemented are in special schools and what is the percentage; and how many are in mainstream schools and what is the percentage.

Mr. Alan Howarth: The information requested for January 1989 in England is as follows:

	Number of children with statements of special educational needs	*As a percentage of the school population*
All schools	155,191	2·1
Special schools	[1]102,064	1·4
Mainstream schools	53,127	0·7

[1] No information is available on the number of children without statements in special schools. It is assumed that all children in special schools have statements.

School Budgets

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) if it is mandatory for local education authorities to reduce their holdback of 10 per cent. of general school budgets to 7 per cent. over the next three years;

(2) whether the 7 per cent. figure of centrally held budget by local education authorities over the next three years is a target figure.

Mrs. Rumbold: Within three years of the introduction of their scheme, LEAs must review the scope of the items they have held back from delegation. In that review we expects LEAs to aim for a target of reducing the total cost of most of the items held back to 7 per cent. of their general schools budget.

Primary School, Landkey

Mr. Speller: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make it his policy to approve capital funding for the provision of a new county primary school at Landkey, north Devon.

Mr. Alan Howarth: The building of a new school, or a significant enlargement to the existing school, at Landkey

will require the publication of statutory proposals. No statutory proposals of this kind are currently before my right hon. Friend for decision. Priority is given in the distribution of annual capital guidelines for new school places needed as a result of population growth.

Advertising Expenditure

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what was the total publicity and advertising expenditure of his Department and public bodies for which his Department has responsibility in *(a)* 1979 and *(b)* 1989.

Mrs. Rumbold: The figures for publicity and advertising expenditure by this Department for the financial years 1979-80 and 1989-90 are provided below. The 1989-90 figure is provisional. Figures for non-departmental public bodies cannot be provided without disproportionate cost.

	Publicity £ *Thousand*
1979-80	103·8
1989-90	2,596·7

Disabled Students

Mr. Norris: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he has any plans to improve the support for disabled students in higher education.

Mr. MacGregor: Disabled students need special help to enable them to take full advantage of higher education opportunities. I propose to improve the arrangements for them in two major ways.

First, subject to parliamentary approval of the necessary regulations in due course, I intend to increase substantially the disabled students' allowance payable within the mandatory award by local education authorities in England and Wales. For the academic year 1990-91 the maximum allowance will be raised from the present £765 to £1,000. In addition, two further allowances will be introduced: one for non-medical personal helpers, such as interpreters for the deaf, up to a maximum of £4,000 a year; and the other for major items of specialist equipment, such as word processors with braille printers, up to a maximum of £3,000 spread over the whole course. The Department will be taking steps to ensure that local education authorities and disabled students are fully aware of the new arrangements. Parallel improvements will be made in the grant arrangements for disabled students from Scotland and Northern Ireland.

When top-up loans are introduced this autumn subject to the passage of the Bill before Parliament, disabled students will also be eligible for relevant social security benefits, as well as for the new disabled students' allowances and for existing allowances for extra travel costs and vacation hardship within the mandatory award system Together with the basic award, these should provide adequate resources to meet disabled students' needs while studying. Indeed, overall, disabled students will have considerable additional resources at their disposal as a result of the introduction of loans on top of their continuing grants and benefits.

Secondly, I accept, however, that disabled graduates' capacity to repay loans may be affected by extra living costs resulting from their disability. Such costs will generally be reflected in social security benefit entitlements. As these benefits are provided specifically in relation to the additional costs faced by the disabled, it would not be appropriate to take them into account in assessing disabled graduates' liability to repay. I therefore propose to disregard disability-related benefits when graduates' income is assessed for the purpose of deferment of loan repayments. This means, in effect, that a graduate whose gross income including disability-related benefits is above the deferment threshold, but whose income net of these benefits is below the threshold, will be able to defer loan repayments.

THE ARTS

Arts Funding, Merseyside

Mr. Alton: To ask the Minister for the Arts if he will ask the chairman of the Arts Council to review the effectiveness of its policy of parity funding in Merseyside.

Mr. Luce: This is entirely a matter for the Arts Council. I am aware that the council attaches importance to the participation of local authorities in the funding of arts organisations in their area.

Mr. Alton: To ask the Minister for the Arts if he will provide direct financial assistance to help pay the deficits and secure the future of the Liverpool Playhouse.

Mr. Luce: It remains a matter for the Arts Council to determine the level of grant appropriate to this or any other arts organisations.

Mr. Alton: To ask the Minister for the Arts what representations he has received about funding for the Merseyside Everyman theatre and the Playhouse theatre in Liverpool; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Luce: I am aware of the financial difficulties facing these two companies. It is a matter for the Arts Council to determine the level of grant appropriate to them. I understand that the council is in discussion with the local authorities concerned to try to find a solution. I am aware of the important contribution of both theatres to the cultural life of Liverpool and the surrounding areas.

Museums and Galleries (Maintenance)

Mr. David Martin: To ask the Minister for the Arts how he intends to provide for the maintenance of national museums and galleries in the next 12 months.

Mr. Luce: I am providing £57 million in 1990-91 for the building and maintenance programmes at the national museums and galleries which I sponsor.

This provision will increase to some £60 million in 1991-92 and to £64 million in 1992-93. This will bring the total provision for building and maintenance over the next three years to over £180 million.

Regional Functions

Mr. Caborn: To ask the Minister for the Arts what functions his office carries out at the regional level; where the regional offices are located in each of the regions; what staff are employed and at what grades; what proportion of his office's budget is spent in each of the regions; and what geographical boundaries determine his office's regions.

Mr. Luce: The functions of my office are carried out only in London. Most of its expenditure programme is in the form of support to arts organisations, museums, galleries and other bodies. It is not possible to estimate the proportion that is spent in each region.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Incomes

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the investment income and earned income in (i) 1989-90, (ii) 1988-89 and (iii) 1978-79, expressed in cash terms and in constant prices of *(a)* the bottom 10 per cent., *(b)* the bottom 20 per cent., *(c)* the bottom 30 per cent., *(d)* the bottom 40 per cent., *(e)* the top 50 per cent., *(f)* the top 40 per cent., and *(g)* the top 10 per cent. of all taxpayers; and if he will give the minimum and maximum figures of each income band in this table, together with the minimum and maximum figures for the bands listed in his answer of 20 February, *Official Report*, columns *681-82*.

Mr. Lilley: Available information is given in the tables. Estimates for 1988-89 and 1989-90 are based on projections of the 1987-88 survey of personal incomes and are provisional. These estimates are subject to a large degree of uncertainty since some investment income on which tax is deducted at source is not reflected in the survey.

Information on the investment income of the bottom 10 per cent., 20 per cent., 30 per cent. and 40 per cent. of taxpayers is not available.

Table 1
Total investment income and earned income in cash terms

	[1]1978-79			1988-89			1989-90		
Group of income tax payers[2]	*Total income at cut-off point*[3] *£ p.a.*	*Investment income £ billion*	*Earned income £ billion*	*Total income at cut-off point*[3] *£ p.a.*	*Investment income £ billion*	*Earned income £ billion*	*Total income at cut-off point*[3] *£ p.a.*	*Investment income £ billion*	*Earned income £ billion*
Top 1 per cent.	15,800	1·2	3·8	55,600	4·5	14·7	63,000	5·8	16·2
Top 5 per cent.	9,800	2·3	12·6	30,900	9·1	43·2	34,600	11·6	47·7
Top 10 per cent.	8,100	2·8	21·3	24,000	11·9	68·6	26,700	15·6	75·5
Top 20 per cent.	6,500	3·4	35·8	18,200	15·8	107·6	20,200	20·8	118·5
Top 25 per cent.	6,000	3·5	42·3	16,500	17·2	124·2	18,300	22·7	136·8
Top 40 per cent.	4,800	3·9	58·9	12,800	20·2	166·0	14,100	26·6	182·7
Top 50 per cent.	4,200	4·1	68·3	10,800	21·9	189·1	11,900	29·0	208·1
Bottom 70 per cent.	5,600	1·5	49·5	15,000	9·8	119·4	16,700	12·6	131·9
Bottom 50 per cent.	4,200	1·0	29·3	10,800	6·2	69·9	11,900	7·9	77·1
Bottom 40 per cent.	3,600	n/a	21·0	9,100	n/a	50·1	10,100	n/a	55·5
Bottom 30 per cent.	3,000	n/a	13·9	7,600	n/a	33·7	8,300	n/a	37·2
Bottom 20 per cent.	2,400	n/a	8·2	6,100	n/a	20·0	6,800	n/a	22·3
Bottom 10 per cent.	1,900	n/a	3·5	4,600	n/a	8·7	5,100	n/a	9·9
All taxpayers	—	5·1	97·6	—	28·1	259·0	—	36·9	285·2
Number of taxpayers (millions)	21·4	—	—	21·2	—	—	21·4	—	—

[1] Estimates for 1978-79 are not comparable with 1988-89 and 1989-90 as some income is not fully reported, for example, investment income on which tax is deducted at source and reported earnings are after deduction of occupational pension contributions.
[2] Single people and married couples.
[3] Minimum total income for top X per cent.; maximum total income for bottom X per cent.
n/a—Estimates not available.

Table 2: Total Investment Income and Earned Income in 1989-90 prices[1]

Group of Income Tax Payers[3]	*1978-79*[2] *Total Income at cut-off point*[4] *£ p.a.*	*Investment Income £ billion*	*Earned Income £ billion*	*1988-89 Total Income at cut-off point*[4] *£ p.a.*	*Investment Income £ billion*	*Earned Income £ billion*	*1989-90 Total Income at cut-off point*[4] *£ p.a.*	*Investment Income £ billion*	*Earned Income £ billion*
Top 1 per cent.	36,200	2·7	8·7	59,800	4·8	15·8	63,000	5·8	16·2
Top 5 per cent.	22,500	5·3	28·9	33,200	9·8	46·5	34,600	11·6	47·7
Top 10 per cent.	18,600	6·4	48·8	25,800	12·8	73·8	26,700	15·6	75·5
Top 20 per cent.	14,900	7·8	82·0	19,600	17·0	115·7	20,200	20·8	118·5
Top 25 per cent.	13,700	8·0	96·9	17,700	18·5	133·6	18,300	22·7	136·8
Top 40 per cent.	11,000	8·9	135·0	13,800	21·7	178·5	14,100	26·6	182·7
Top 50 per cent.	9,600	9·4	156·5	11,600	23·5	203·3	11,900	29·0	208·1
Bottom 70 per cent.	12,800	3·4	113·4	16,100	10·5	128·4	16,700	12·6	131·9
Bottom 50 per cent.	9,600	2·3	67·2	11,600	6·7	75·2	11,900	7·9	77·1
Bottom 40 per cent.	8,200	—[5]	48·1	9,800	—[5]	53·9	10,100	—[5]	55·5
Bottom 30 per cent.	6,900	—[5]	31·9	8,200	—[5]	36·2	8,300	—[5]	37·2
Bottom 20 per cent.	5,500	—[5]	18·8	6,600	—[5]	21·5	6,800	—[5]	22·3
Bottom 10 per cent.	4,400	—[5]	8·0	4,900	—[5]	9·4	5,100	—[5]	9·9
All taxpayers	—	11·7	223·7	—	30·2	278·5	—	36·9	285·2

[1] Data inflated by financial year on financial year increase in RPI.
[2] Estimates for 1978-79 are not comparable with 1988-89 and 1989-90 as some income is not fully reported, for example, investment income

on which tax is deducted at source and reported earnings are after deduction of occupational pension contributions.
[3] Single people and married couples.
[4] Footnote 3 for previous table.
—[5] Estimates not available.

Government Staffing Levels

Mr. Riddick: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will set out a table showing for each year since 1979 *(a)* the full-time, *(b)* the part-time and *(c)* the total staffing of central Government.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The information requested is given below. The total figures cover Her Majesty's forces, the National Health Service, the civil service—except trading funds—and other organisations classified to central Government. The component figures, in aggregate, and definitions are contained in an article on employment in the public and private sectors published in the December 1989 edition of "Economic Trends". The full-time/part-time split for 1989 shown below is a later estimate. Figures for the civil service are also shown separately.

Central Government employment (mid year)

Thousands

	Full-time	*Part-time*	*Total full-time equivalent*	*Civil Service total full-time equivalent*
1979	1,885	502	2,188	724
1980	1,879	514	2,196	700
1981	1,903	516	2,225	684
1982	1,880	520	2,198	659
1983	1,862	522	2,181	643
1984	1,852	507	2,149	619
1985	1,844	516	2,144	596
1986	1,817	520	2,116	597
1987	1,779	533	2,091	584
1988	1,777	545	2,084	577
1989	1,750	553	2,072	567

Manufacturing Investment

Mr. Battle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish a table showing for each year since 1974 *(a)* the level of manufacturing investment in cash amounts, *(b)* the level of manufacturing investment at 1985 prices, *(c)* the percentage share of manufacturing investment in gross domestic product, *(d)* the percentage share of manufacturing investment in gross national product and *(e)* the annual growth rate of manufacturing investment.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Estimates of manufacturing investment, gross domestic product and gross national product may be obtained from the CSO database accessible through the House of Commons Library.

Data for 1989 were released by press notice on 16 March, copies of which have been placed in the Library of the House.

Interest Rates

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his assessment of the likely movement of interest rates in the United Kingdom produced as a result of currency union between East and West Germany.

Mr. Ryder: The United Kingdom is watching developments in Germany with interest. However, United Kingdom rates will continue to be kept as high as is needed for as long as is needed to bring down inflation.

Balance of Payments

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* his provisional estimate of balance of payments deficit on current account with the European Economic Community for 1989; and if he will include the figure for invisibles separately.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Information for 1989 is not yet available. It will be published later in the year in the 1990 edition of the CSO Pink Book.

European Community

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the deficit in trade with the EEC in 1989; and what were the comparable deficits in the previous five years.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The latest information is available in table A12 of the monthly review of external trade statistics, available in the Library of the House, or on the Central Statistical Office database which may be accessed through the Library.

Value Added Tax

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he intends to make any changes to the method by which health authorities are compensated for the application of value added tax to construction work.

Mr. Ryder: The Government have decided to compensate health authorities for the application of VAT to their construction work through matching increases in public expenditure. From 1 April 1990 health authorities will no longer be eligible under section 11 of the Finance Act 1984 for refunds of VAT paid on construction contracts. The extra capital provision necessary to ensure that health authority building programmes are not prejudiced by the application of VAT will be granted to the NHS in supplementary estimates for 1990-91 to be presented in due course.

Incomes

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the estimated number of adults whose income is below the income tax threshold; what is the number of those above and below pensionable age distinguishing between single persons and one and two-earner married couples; and whether he will provide a breakdown of the figures for each region.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 1 March 1990]:* Available estimates for 1989-90 are given in the tables. They are based on a projection of the 1987 family expenditure survey and are provisional.

Single people and married couples not liable to tax in 1989-90

(millions)

	Single people		Married couples			Total
	Earning	*Not earning*	*Two earners*	*One earner*	*No earners*	
Non-aged	0·8	3·9	0·2	0·6	1·0	6·5
Aged[1]	0·0	3·0	0·0	0·1	1·3	4·4
Total	0·8	6·9	0·2	0·7	2·3	10·9

[1] Single person or at least one of the married couple over 65.

Single people and married couples not liable to tax in 1989-90 by region

(millions)

Region	*Non-aged*	*Aged*
Northern	0·6	0·3
Yorkshire and Humberside	0·6	0·4
East Midlands	0·4	0·3
East Anglia	0·2	0·2
Greater London	0·5	0·4
Other South East	0·7	0·6
South East	0·4	0·4
West Midlands	0·7	0·5
North West	0·9	0·5
Wales	0·5	0·3
Scotland	0·8	0·4
Northern Ireland	0·2	0·1
United Kingdom	6·5	4·4

Income Tax

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what has been the annual reduction in income tax for a married man on earnings of *(a)* £5,000, *(b)* £10,000, *(c)* £15,000, *(d)* £20,000, *(e)* £30,000, *(f)* £35,000, *(g)* £40,000, *(h)* £45,000, *(i)* £50,000, *(j)* £100,000, *(k)* £150,000, *(l)* £300,000, *(m)* average male earnings and *(n)* three quarters of average male earnings as a result of the changes brought in by the 1988 budget.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 13 March 1990]:* The information is in the table.

Income tax liability in 1989-90 compared with liability under 1987-88 tax rates with allowances and thresholds indexed to 1989-90 for a married man[1]

Earnings £ per annum	*Reduction £ per annum*
5,000	58·40
10,000	158·40
[2]10,920	176·80
[3]14,560	249·60
15,000	258·40
20,000	358·40
30,000	740·75
35,000	1,115·50
40,000	1,615·50
45,000	2,300·25
50,000	3,050·25
100,000	13,045·00
150,000	23,045·00
300,000	53,045·00

[1] Calculations assume that the married man has no other forms of income and claims no reliefs or allowances other than the married man's allowance.

[2] Three quarters average male earnings.

[3] Average male earnings for full time adult males in all occupations in 1989-90; £280·00 per week; in line with the assumptions in paragraph 3.02 of the 1989 Autumn Statement.

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what has been the proportion of income tax receipts received by the Exchequer *(a)* by payment at rates higher than the standard rate and *(b)* from those paying tax at rates higher than the standard rate in (i) 1978-79, (ii) 1987-88 and (iii) 1988-89.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 13 March 1990]:* The information is in the table.

	1978-79	*1987-88*	*1988-89*[1]
Tax liability at higher rates as a percentage of total tax liability	9	18	17
Liability of higher rate taxpayers as a percentage of total tax liability	20	32	33

[1] Based on a projection of the 1987-88 Survey of Personal Incomes and therefore provisional.

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list in the *Official Report* the proportion of income paid in income tax and national insurance combined by a married man with two children aged under 11 years on *(a)* average earnings, *(b)* one-and-a-half times average earnings, and *(c)* twice average earnings, in 1975-76, 1978-79 and the latest year for which figures are available.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 14 March 1990]:* The information is in the table.

Percentage of earnings paid in income tax and National Insurance Contributions by a married man[1]*, with two children aged under 11*

Multiples of average male earnings[2]	*1*	*1·5*	*2*
1975-76	25·8	29·0	31·4
1978-79	20·9	26·2	27·9
1989-90	20·8	23·1	25·7

[1] Calculations assume that the married man has no other forms of income and that he does not receive any tax allowances or reliefs other than the married man's allowance and child tax allowances. Child benefit is treated as negative income tax.

[2] Earnings are for full time males on adult rates in all occupations.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

County Courts

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Attorney-General how long it takes for the county court to clear a cheque in each county court area; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: The period for a county court to obtain clearance of a cheque drawn in sterling on a bank located in the United Kingdom, Northern Ireland and the Channel Islands—identified by a bank sort code on the cheque—is currently a minimum of eight working days for courts using the Bank of England and 14 working days for

courts using the main clearing banks; other cheques, for example drawn on a foreign bank, are subject to individual clearance with no standard clearance period.

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Attorney-General how long it takes to process a bad debt claim in each county court area; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: This information is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

PRIME MINISTER

Sovereignty (Law Enforcement)

Mr. Wray: To ask the Prime Minister (1) if she will make a statement regarding the implications for United Kingdom national sovereignty and legal systems of the United States Supreme Court ruling of 1 March giving law enforcement agents power to act against non-United States of America nationals abroad without permission of the host country;

(2) what representations Her Majesty's Government made to the United States of America Administration regarding the ruling of the United States Supreme Court of 1 March giving United States law enforcement officers power to act against non-United States nationals abroad without permission of the host country.

The Prime Minister: The United Kingdom is aware of the judgment of the United States Supreme Court, given on 28 Februrary, in the case of a Mexican citizen.

The United Kingdom is studying the judgment, although at first sight it appears unlikely to affect the interests of this country. Her Majesty's Government have made it clear to the United States authorities that they do not accept that any foreign county has the right to exercise extra-territorial jurisdiction in the United Kingdom.

King Hussein of Jordan (Meeting)

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Prime Minister if during her meeting with King Hussein of Jordan on 11 March, she raised *(a)* the situation of the journalist Farzad Bazoft in Iraq, *(b)* the threat of nuclear weapons in the middle east and *(c)* the failure of Israel to sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

The Prime Minister: I had a wide-ranging and very useful discussion of the situation in the middle east with King Hussein, who kindly agreed to intercede with the Iraqis over the case of Mr. Bazoft. Our views on the threat posed by nuclear proliferation in the middle east are well known.

Department of Health

Mr. David Hinchliffe: To ask the Prime Minister if she will make it her policy to rename the Department of Health the Department of Health and Personal Social Services in order to more appropriately reflect the Department's responsibilities in its title.

The Prime Minister: No.

ENERGY

Fossil Fuel Levy

Mr. Hardy: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will publish an explanation in plain terms designed to be comprehensible to ordinary consumers of the formulae contained in the Fossil Fuel Levy Regulations 1990.

Mr. Baldry: The algebra used in the Fossil Fuel Levy Regulations 1990 will enable the Director General of Electricity Supply to calculate the rate of the levy as a percentage of the electricity sales revenue. This percentage will then be notified to licensed suppliers and published. Licensed suppliers will not need to apply these formulae; they will calculate the payments due from them in accordance with the rate notified by the Director. They will therefore be in no doubt as to the rate applicable to any particular month.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Aerospace Companies

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what economic contribution aerospace companies make to the United Kingdom industrial production, investment, the balance of payments and corporation tax revenues.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The United Kingdom aerospace industry made contributions to the United Kingdom economy as follows. Its net output—£3,133 million in 1987—provided 2·9 per cent. of the total net output of production industries; capital expenditure—£258 million—amounted to 1·9 per cent. of production industries' total capital expenditure investment and they recorded over £6 billion worth of exports, in 1988, with a balance of trade of about £1·7 billion in the United Kingdom's favour. Corporation tax statistics are not compiled for individual industries.

Laing Properties

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on what grounds he decided not to refer to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission the takeover bid by the Peninsular and Oriental company for Laing Properties.

Mr. Redwood: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State's decision not to refer the proposed acquisition of the P and O Group and Chelsfield plc of Laing Properties plc was taken in accordance with the advice of the Director General of Fair Trading and after consideration of all relevant issues. In my right hon. Friend's view, the proposal did not raise competition or other public interest issues which justified reference to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

Regional Development Grant

Mr. Hind: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) how many regional development grants and at what total amount were awarded to west Lancashire firms in 1988-89; and if he will make a statement;

(2) how many regional selective assistance grants and at what total amount were awarded by his Department in 1988-89 to commercial firms in west Lancashire; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The information requested is as follows:

	Number[2]	*Value*[3] *(£ million)*
Regional development grants[1]	146	7·2
Regional selective assistance grants	10	4·1

[1] Data are only available for the revised RDG scheme, which was introduced on 29 November 1984 and closed to new applications on 31 March 1988.
[2] Approvals of RDG, offers of RSA.
[3] Amount expected to be paid if the projects proceed as planned.

Water Reed

Mr. Speller: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received regarding allegations of dumping from eastern European countries of water reed used for thatching; what investigations he has made into these allegations; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Redwood: I have received no such representations. Investigations into allegations of dumping in the Community are carried out by the European Commission.

Bankruptcy

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is the current minimum amount of debt which has to be incurred before bankruptcy proceedings can be instigated under the provisions established in section 267(4) of the Insolvency Act 1986 (c. 45); and what plans he has to introduce a statutory instrument to increase or decrease that minimum figure.

Mr. Redwood *[holding answer 16 March 1990]:* The minimum amount is £750. There are no current plans to change that figure.

Directorships

Mr. Speller: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the conditions under which a person may be banned from being a director of a private limited company or of a public limited company.

Mr. Redwood *[holding answer 16 March 1990]:* A person may be banned from holding such positions in the circumstances specified in the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986. These are: conviction of an indictable offence in connection with the promotion, formation, management or liquidation of a company, or with the receivership or management of a company's property; persistent breaches of companies legislation; fraudulent trading; fraud in relation to a company while an officer or liquidator of the company or receiver or manager of its property; on summary conviction of an offence specified in the above Act; having been a director of a company which has become insolvent where the court finds that the individual's conduct as a director of that company makes him incompetent to be concerned in the management of a company; and where the court is satisfied, following the investigation of a company under section 437 of the Companies Act 1985, or sections 94 or 177 of the Financial Services Act 1986, or where it appears that such an order should be made in the light of information or documents obtained under section 447 or 448 of the Companies Act 1985 or section 105 of the Financial Services Act 1986 or section 2 of the Criminal Justice Act 1987 or section 52 of the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 1987 or section 83 of the Companies Act 1989, that the person's conduct in relation to a company makes him unfit to be concerned in the management of a company; and where a court has made a declaration under section 213 or 214 of the Insolvency Act 1986 that a person is liable to contribute to a company's assets.

A person may also be disqualified where a court revokes an administration order under section 429 of the Insolvency Act 1986. In addition, a bankrupt person is prohibited automatically from acting as a director and a more limited automatic prohibition applies in the circumstances specified in section 216 of the Insolvency Act 1986.

Securities and Investments Board

Mr. French: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement about the responsibilities of the Securities and Investments Board for monitoring the activities of companies which have had their licences withdrawn by FIMBRA, LAUTRO, IMRO and TSA.

Mr. Redwood: Powers have been transferred by the Secretary of State to the Securities and Investments Board relating to investment business carried on without authorisation, which is an offence under the Financial Services Act 1986. SIB is therefore in a position to investigate and take action in respect of a company carrying on investment business after its membership of a self-regulating organisation has ended. How it exercises those powers is a matter for the board.

Accountancy Bodies

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the steps he is planning to take to promote the involvement of ethnic minorities in the administration of the accountancy bodies incorporated under royal charters.

Mr. Redwood: I have no such plans. It is for the bodies and their members to determine what steps are necessary to ensure equality of opportunity for their members and staff, including those from ethnic minorities.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) how many meetings he or his senior civil servants had with the accountancy bodies in 1988 and 1989;

(2) what meetings his Department has held with the accountancy firms criticised by inspectors; and what was discussed.

Mr. Redwood: I and my officials have frequent contact with members of the accountancy profession to discuss a wide range of matters.

BOM Holdings

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make it his policy to give details of the business connections of the accountant inspector inquiring into BOM Holdings.

Mr. Redwood: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 21 February 1990, at columns 782-83. The accountant inspector is Mr. R. T. Turner of Messrs. Neville Russell.

DTI Inspectors

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) if his Department has any plans to insert a statement showing the inspector's business connections on the first page of each report;

(2) if his Department has any plans to insert the cost of completing an investigation on the first page of each inspector's report.

Mr. Redwood: My Department has no such plans.

Lonrho

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he plans to take any action against Lonrho plc for its failure to comply with schedule 7, paragraph 9, of the Companies Act 1985 in its 1989 and earlier annual reports and accounts.

Mr. Redwood: In accordance with its usual practice in response to specific allegations of non-compliance with statutory disclosure requirements, my Department will look into this.

Wages

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will introduce legislation to amend the Companies Acts to require all companies to publish the lowest annual wage rates applicable in the company.

Mr. Redwood: No.

Accidents

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will introduce legislation to require directors of all large companies to publish the work accident rates and the steps being taken to combat them.

Mr. Nicholls: I have been asked to reply.

There are at present no plans to introduce such legislation.

Auditors

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will introduce legislation to require the auditor's letter of engagement to be filed with the registrar of companies.

Mr. Redwood: No. The letter of engagement is a private contractual matter between the auditor and his client.

External Financial Reporting

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether his Department is undertaking any work in developing a conceptual framework for external financial reporting.

Mr. Redwood: No. We are, however, following with interest the debate in the profession on this subject.

Accounting and Auditing

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether his Department will issue recommendations on the accounting treatment of good will.

Mr. Redwood: No. The Accounting Standards Committee has recently published an exposure draft of a proposed revised standard on accounting for good will, inviting comments by 30 July. My Department is considering the draft and will make any comments in due course.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry why his representative on the auditing practices committee does not have a vote.

Mr. Redwood: The terms of reference set by the Consultative Committee of Accountancy Bodies for its auditing practices committee provide that voting members shall be nominated by their professional accountancy bodies. In addition, up to seven non-voting members, including two Government representatives, may be co-opted.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what consideration he has given to providing a statutory definition of a balance sheet.

Mr. Redwood: Section 228(2) of the Companies Act 1985 states that the balance sheet shall give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company at the end of the financial year, and schedule 4 to the Act sets out rules on the form and content of the balance sheet. These provisions are subject to amendment when part I of the Companies Act 1989 comes into force on 1 April. I do not believe that any further statutory definition is needed.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will take steps to provide a statutory definition of an asset.

Mr. Redwood: No. The definition of an asset is one of the issues which was addressed in the exposure draft ED 42 entitled "Accounting for special purpose transactions" published by the Accounting Standards Committee in March 1988. I understand that a further document will be published in the summer.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he has any plans to legislate to change companies' practice of showing fixed assets in the balance sheet at original cost less depreciation.

Mr. Redwood: Under the alternative accounting rules of paragraph 31 of schedule 4 to the Companies Act 1985, fixed assets may be shown at values or costs other than original cost less depreciation. I have no plans to legislate to change current practice.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Indonesia

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will give details of British aid to Indonesia since 1979.

Mrs. Chalker: The figures for British aid to Indonesia from 1979 to 1988, the most recent year for which figures are available, are as follows. Further details are given in the ODA publication "British Aid Statistics", a copy of which is in the House of Commons Library.

	£ thousand
Gross bilateral aid of which:	169,688
i. Total technical co-operation	46,858
ii. Total financial aid (including debt and disaster relief), of which:	122,829
a. ODA project aid (excluding ATP)	20,636
b. ATP	33,741
c. CDC project aid	47,467

Source: *British Aid Statistics*

South Africa

Mr. Robert G. Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he plans to increase aid to black South Africans in the light of recent political developments; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will today announce in South Africa a new pledge of £10 million for assistance to black South Africans.

Our aid programme there is a practical demonstration of our commitment to ease the transition to a just, democratic and non-racial society in South Africa. I welcome the recent political developments there which bring the prospect of such a society closer.

The new pledge, for expenditure over the next four years, will enable us to provide support for new projects to improve the standard of education, which is the key to enabling black people to play their full part in a post-apartheid South Africa; and for urban and rural development projects. This increase includes an element which honours a commitment we made at the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Kuala Lumpur last October. This was that, rather than contributing to the costs of the independent agency set up to review and report on South Africa's financial links, and of the continuing work of the Commonwealth Committee of Foreign Ministers on South Africa, we would contribute an equivalent amount for additional help for black South Africans.

DEFENCE

Indonesia

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the total value of British arms contracts with Indonesia for each of the last 10 years.

Mr. Neubert: It has been the practice of successive Administrations not to release figures for defence sales to specific countries. Statistics of United Kingdom defence sales by broad geographic regions are set out in volume 2 of the annual Statement on the Defence Estimates.

Atomic Energy

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will set out the specific reasons for the amendments made respectively in each case since 1959 to the 1958 United Kingdom-United States mutual defence agreement on atomic energy matters.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The amendments to the 1958 agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of the United States of America for co-operation on the uses of atomic energy for mutual defence purposes and the reasons for their implementation were:

Cmnd 859 (1959)—to permit the transfer between the two countries of nuclear materials, other than submarine propulsion materials which had been agreed upon in the original agreement, for military purposes.

Cmnd 4119 (1969)—to extend the range of material transfer clauses

Cmnd 4384 (1970)—to extend the duration of the material transfer clauses

Cmnd 6017 (1975)—to further extend the duration of the material transfer clauses

Cmnd 7976 (1980)—again to further extend the duration of the material transfer clauses and also to add a minor change to the wording of the contraints upon each part as applied by the conditions clauses

Cmnd 9336 (1984)—a further extension of the duration of the material transfer clauses, the provision of materials processing services, and a major change to the wording of a number of clauses to ensure the appropriate protection of US "sensitive nuclear technology information" and "controlled nuclear information"—two new classes of US information which had been created by changes in US federal law.

Rapier System

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the cause of the 183·2 per cent. increase in the projected development cost of the Rapier field standard B system noted on page 23 of the minutes of evidence of the Public Accounts Committee, HC483, Session 1988-89.

Mr. Alan Clark: The Rapier field standard B programme now comprises two distinct marks of equipment, known as FSB1 and FSB2. Both are included in current estimates of development cost, whereas the original development estimate comprised only FSB1. The addition of FSB2 explains the bulk of the increase; the remainder is due to increases in the cost of FSB1. The Public Accounts Committee also reported a decrease of almost 26 per cent. in production—where the bulk of the cost lies—for field standard B projects which means that the total cost of development and production for field standard B has increased by 38 per cent. in real terms.

European Fighter Aircraft

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the current estimate of the total expenditure on *(a)* the European fighter aircraft, *(b)* the Trigat medium-range missile and *(c)* the Trigat long-range missile.

Mr. Alan Clark: Total United Kingdom expenditure to date (at current prices) is *(a)* EFA = £308 million; *(b)* medium range Trigat = £23 million; *(c)* long range Trigat = £52 million.

Upholder Submarines

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence why the forecast in-service date for the Upholder class submarines changed from 1988 in the 1987 major project statement to 1989 in the 1988 major project statement.

Mr. Neubert: HMS Upholder's forecast in-service date was revised from 1988 to 1989 primarily as a result of an industrial dispute at the contractor's Barrow in Furness yard.

Aircraft Crash, Berwickshire

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the RAF has concluded its report into the fatal aircraft crash at Fastcastle, Berwickshire, on 13 April 1989, and when he expects to publish the inquiry report.

Mr. Neubert: It is intended to publish a military aircraft accident summary in respect of this accident in the near future.

Royal Hospital, Chelsea

Sir Michael McNair-Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what qualifies a person to be an occupant of the Royal hospital at Chelsea.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The regulations for the Royal hospital, Chelsea, issued under royal warrant stipulate:

"There shall be eligible for admission to the In-pension establishment former soldiers of good character who are:

1. in receipt of
   (a) a service pension or service invaliding pension paid by the Ministry of Defence and awarded in respect of service which included such period of service in the British Army as the Commissioners may in each case in their absolute discretion consider adequate; or
   (b) a disability pension awarded by the Ministry of Defence or the Department of Social Security in respect of disability resulting from service in the British Army; or
   (c) a Victoria Cross or George Medal annuity awarded in respect of bravery while serving in the British Army and who are
2. (a) aged not less than 65 years; or
   (b) in the opinion of the Commissioners incapable of supplementing their pensions by their own exertions owing to the loss of a limb, wounds or other injuries or disabilities resulting from service in the British Army; or
   (c) in the opinion of the Commissioners incapable of supplementing their pensions by their own exertions for reasons other than under paragraph (b) next above provided they are aged not less than 55 years.

In addition, there shall be eligible for admission any former soldier of good character aged not less than 65 years drawing service retired pay awarded as a result of commissioned service in the British Army who rendered at least 12 years' full time service in the ranks of the British Army over the age of 18 years. Preference will be given to those who have borne the best character and rendered the longest service in the British Army.

The commissioners may at their discretion admit such out-pensioners of good character as may from time to time be required for the efficient administration of the hospital, irrespective of their age, length of service or earning capability."

NORTHERN IRELAND

Kilroot Power Station

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when a decision regarding the start date for the second phase of development is likely to be announced for Kilroot power station; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Timing of the Kilroot phase II project will depend on the outcome of investigations currently being made into the potential benefits of establishing an electricity interconnection with Scotland.

It is hoped to clarify the position on these matters within the next few months.

Job Market, Rathcoole

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he will provide funding at an early date to provide for a job market at Rathcoole, Newtownabbey.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: A job market will be established in the Newtownabbey area as soon as suitable accommodation is found.

Farmers (Utilities Supply)

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will take steps to compensate farmers in rural areas in South Down in respect of the cutting off of their electricity and mains water supply during recent storms.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: With sympathy, the answer is no.

Fire Service

Rev. William McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what was the required statutory period within which the Northern Ireland Fire Authority was required to serve notice of appeal on interested parties in the case of Kerr *v* Northern Ireland Fire Authority; and on what date notice of appeal was served.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: These were matters for the fire authority.

Deaf-Blind Children

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many deaf-blind children have been identified in Northern Ireland in the age range *(a)* 0 to 2, *(b)* 2 to 5, *(c)* 6 to 11, *(d)* 12-15 and *(e)* 16 to 19 years.

Dr. Mawhinney: A number of Northern Ireland children have been identified as having both hearing and visual impairment but few are totally blind or totally deaf. The information below relates to children who in a varying degree have a multi-sensory handicap which may, in some cases, be associated with a physical or mental handicap.

Age ranges	*Number*
0 to 2	1
2 to 5	32
6 to 11	32
12 to 15	9
16 to 19	4

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many deaf-blind children in Northern Ireland attend specialist deaf-blind units.

Dr. Mawhinney: There are no such specialist units in Northern Ireland but two pupils from Northern Ireland attend such units elsewhere.

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to issue a policy statement on the education of deaf-blind children in Northern Ireland.

Dr. Mawhinney: The Department of Education (Northern Ireland) is currently considering policy and provision for children with multi-sensory handicaps and will be taking into account the policy statement on this subject issued by the Department of Education and Science.

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what provision is made to ensure the training of teachers of deaf-blind children in Northern Ireland.

Dr. Mawhinney: There are already in Northern Ireland a number of teachers in the education sector who in addition to specific qualifications in deaf education also possess qualifications in visual impairment. Opportunities also exist through in-service and distance learning courses for teachers to extend and develop their expertise in particular spheres, including teaching children with multi-sensory handicaps.

Roads

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what was the capital expenditure on major capital roads provision in Down district council area in each year since 1 April 1977 until 31 March 1989.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The information is as follows:

	£
1977-78	Nil
1978-79	181,000
1979-80	299,000
1980-81	20,000
1981-82	29,000
1982-83	58,000
1983-84	17,000
1984-85	4,000
1985-86	Nil
1986-87	Nil
1987-88	Nil
1988-89	Nil

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what was the expenditure on major capital roads provision in Newry and Mourne district council area in each year since 1 April 1977 until 31 March 1989.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The information is as follows:

	£
1977-78	450,000
1978-79	210,000
1979-80	660,000
1980-81	324,000
1981-82	427,000
1982-83	493,000
1983-84	1,365,000
1984-85	1,320,000
1985-86	839,000
1986-87	1,198,000
1987-88	1,466,000
1988-89	590,000

Agriculture

Mr. Molyneaux: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the structural weaknesses which he has identified in the agricultural industry in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Peter Bottomley *[holding answer 13 March 1990]:* The main structural weaknesses in the beef sector are the pronounced seasonality of production allied to the marketing challenge.

GPs' Contracts

Mr. Hume: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement outlining the proposed formula for deprivation allowances in relation to general medical practitioners' contracts arrived at by the DHSS in Northern Ireland, listing those electoral wards which would qualify for the allowance under that formula and indicating the Government's conclusions regarding that proposal.

Mr. Peter Bottomley *[holding answer 14 March 1990]:* It was agreed with the General Medical Services Committee (NI) that the index of social deprivation should be used as the basis for calculation of the deprivation supplement in Northern Ireland.

Further work has been undertaken to refine the Northern Ireland index.

This work is nearing completion and the results will be the subject of further consultation with the profession's negotiators.

Finishing Beef Cattle

Rev. Ian Paisley: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what representations he has received from the Ulster Farmers Union concerning the financial implications for producers of finishing beef cattle over the recent winter; and how he intends to respond to the Ulster Farmers Union request for special measures to help keep these producers in business.

Mr. Peter Bottomley *[holding answer 14 March 1990]:* I met the Ulster Farmers Union on 17 January 1990 about the difficulties affecting beef producers in Northern Ireland. Subsequently I put the issues involved to my right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, who has given the union an assurance that he will be seeking a substantial devaluation of the United Kingdom green pound in this year's price-fixing round. The Government have also sought to optimise beef intervention in Northern Ireland in recent months and substantial tonnages of beef have been taken off the market recently.

The special measure which the union has sought is a slaughter premium on finished cattle marketed since 1

December 1989. The Government have made it clear that such a measure would be difficult to justify let alone to negotiate in Brussels. The EC Commission and most member states disliked the United Kingdom's beef variable premium scheme and would be certain to oppose any suggestion to reintroduce that kind of end price support. Unilateral action by the United Kingdom would be illegal.

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

Capital Assets

26. **Mr. Simon Hughes:** To ask the right hon. Member for Selby, representing the Church Commissioners, what is the total current value of the capital assets of the Church of England; and what are comparable figures updated to 1990 values, for 1960, 1970, and 1980.

Mr. Michael Alison (Second Church Estates Commissioner, Representing the Church Commissioners): The Church Commissioners' assets produce about 72 per cent. of the Church of England's investment income and, at their last published valuation, at the end of 1988, were worth £2,640 million or £2,860 million at 1990 prices. The comparable figures for the Church Commissioners' assets in 1960, 1970 and 1980 were, at 1990 prices, £2,240 million, £2,700 million and £2,040 million respectively.

Income

27. **Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the right hon. Member for Selby, representing the Church Commissioners, what have been the trends in the Church Commissioners' income over the past 12 months.

Mr. Alison: Although final figures for 1989 are not yet available, it is expected that the commissioners' investment income for that year will have increased by about 14 per cent. over that for 1988.

LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Accountancy Bodies

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Lord President of the Council if he will introduce legislation to ensure that before a recommendation is made for the granting of a supplemental royal charter to the accountancy bodies a formal invitation is issued to the public to comment on the conduct of such bodies.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: Legislation is not necessary for this purpose. As a matter of standard practice, notice of the receipt of any petition for the grant of a supplemental charter is published in the relevant gazette, together with an invitation to anyone wishing to make representations to communicate with the Privy Council Office within a specified period.

Official Duties

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Lord President of the Council, on average, how much of his time has been spent on his duties as *(a)* Lord President of the Council and *(b)* Leader of the House of Commons since 1 January.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: It is not possible sensibly to separate and quantify the duties associated with the two offices referred to, as distinct from my wider duties as a member of the Administration.

Civil Servants (Advice)

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Lord President of the Council if he will issue guidance indicating under what circumstances civil servants in the Official Box can advise and offer briefings to Back-Bench Members during the course of a debate; and if he will make a statement.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: It is the function of civil servants in the Official Box to advise Ministers.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Members' Interests

34. **Mr. Wallace:** To ask the Lord President of the Council whether he proposes to recommend any changes to the rules governing the registration of Members' interests.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I have no proposals to make at this time. However, the hon. Member will recall the motion which I moved, and to which the House agreed, on 7 March.

EEC Affairs

36. **Mr. Teddy Taylor:** To ask the Lord President of the Council if he will take steps to improve the provision of factual information to hon. Members on EEC affairs; and if he will make a statement.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The Government attach great importance to keeping the House informed of developments in the Community and will continue to report promptly on the outcome of Council meetings as necessary. The Government are actively considering the report by the Procedure Committee on parliamentary scrutiny published on 30 November 1989 which covers a wide range of issues concerning the way in which the House deals with European Community legislation.

Leicestershire

37. **Mr. Tredinnick:** To ask the Lord President of the Council how many debates on Leicestershire have taken place since March 1989.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: Three Adjournment debates related specifically to Leicestershire have taken place since 1 March 1989.

Official Visit (South America)

38. **Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Lord President of the Council, pursuant to his answer of 7 March, *Official Report*, column 963, if he will make a statement on *(a)* his visit to Brazil and his discussions on rain forests and *(b)* his discussions with President Menem of Argentina in relation to the Falklands.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I have no plans to do so.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

Staff Numbers

Mr. Wallace: To ask the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed, representing the House of Commons Commission, what was the number of people employed (i) full-time and (ii) part-time *(a)* by the House of Commons and *(b)* by an outside agency but working at the House of Commons as of 1 January 1990.

Mr. Beith *(on behalf of the House of Commons Commission):* A total of 832 full-time and 166 part-time staff, and three agency secretarial staff were employed by the House of Commons Commission on 1 January 1990. In addition, agency staff are employed on a regular basis in the Refreshment Department to cover absences and to assist at functions. An average of 11 such agency staff were employed on each working day during January. These figures do not include full-time and part-time staff employed in the House of Commons by agencies such as the Parliamentary Works Office, the Metropolitan police and Post Office, who are not the direct responsibility of the Commission.

Training

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed, representing the House of Commons Commission, what training opportunities are provided by the House for those employed *(a)* by and *(b)* in the House of Commons.

Mr. Beith: I can reply only for those staff employed by the House. For them training is available either on the job or in external organisations, such as the Civil Service college, the Industrial Society and various academic institutions. Training falls into four broad categories: induction courses; professional training; career development; and educational courses.

Responsibility for the identification and organisation of relevant courses lies in the main with individual departmental training officers who advise their own management and staff of available courses. Certain courses of common interest such as induction and staff reporting and appraisal are, however, organised centrally by the Establishments Office.

Staff undertaking relevant educational courses are assisted financially towards the cost of the course, books, and examination fees and, where necessary, are allowed time off and special leave with pay.

Trade Union and Labour Relations Act

Mr. McLeish: To ask the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed, representing the House of Commons Commission, if he will place in the Library copies of all the correspondence between the House of Commons management and the Association of First Division Civil Servants over the last 15 years concerning the applicability of the Trade Union and Labour Relations Act 1974, and other national employment legislation, to its employees.

Mr. Beith: No. Correspondence between management and trade unions is not written with a view to publication. The applicability of the Trade Union and Labour Relations Act 1974 and the Health and Safety at Work Act 1975 are dealt with in replies given today to other questions from the hon. Member.

Mr. McLeish: To ask the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed, representing the House of Commons Commission, what is the policy of the Commission as to whether the Trade Union and Labour Relations Act 1974 applies in its entirety to employees in the House of Commons service; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Beith: Subject to the right of the House to determine its own actions and the interpretation of the law by the courts, there is no reason to believe that the Trade Union and Labour Relations Act 1974, as amended, does not apply in its entirety to employees in the House of Commons service.

Health and Safety at Work etc. Act

Mr. McLeish: To ask the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed, representing the House of Commons Commission, what progress has been made since 1 November 1989 by the head of the Administration Department in considering whether the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 applies to Commission employees; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Beith *[holding answer 15 March 1990]:* As explained in reply to the hon. Member for Nottingham, North (Mr. Allen) on 19 June 1989, at column 16, it is the policy of the House of Commons Commission to endeavour to comply fully with the requirements of the Act and with all other relevant statutory provisions, subject only to specific exemptions provided for in legislation. Further advice has confirmed that there has been no change in this position.

WALES

Severn (Rail Tunnel)

6. **Mr. Stern:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he has any plans for the construction of a second rail tunnel under the Severn.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: No. This would be a matter for the British Railways Board.

Local Government Finance

7. **Mr. Nicholas Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is the highest and lowest community charge levied in Wales for 1990-91.

Mr. Peter Walker: My information is not yet complete, but the charge set by Clwyd county council is £223 and by Powys £147. The charge set by Cardiff city council is £78, and £7 by South Pembrokeshire. When full details are reported to me I will place in the Library a comprehensive report on the community charges set by all councils in Wales together with details of their expenditure decisions. It will be for the electorate to consider whether explanations given by councils for their decisions are acceptable.

20. **Mr. Denzil Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether he will, as a matter of urgency, meet representatives of Welsh district and borough councils to discuss the implications of the community charge.

Mr. Peter Walker: I meet representatives of Welsh district and county councils on a regular basis in the forum of the Welsh consultative council on local government finance. I have no plans to convene a meeting of the consultative council to discuss the implications of the community charge.

22. **Mr. Anderson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what lessons he has learnt from the process of implementing the poll tax in Wales.

Mr. Peter Walker: I have learnt that, in setting their budgets, some local authorities appear to have acted with insufficient regard for the interests of their charge payers, especially those on low or fixed incomes.

Hospice at Home Movement

17. **Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he expects to make a statement for funding of the Hospice at Home Movement in Wales.

Mr. Grist: I will be meeting representatives of district health authorities and the voluntary hospice movement to discuss the way in which resources for the movement in Wales can best be deployed. A statement will be made after their views have been considered.

Welsh Assembly

18. **Mr. Gow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what representations he has received about the setting up of a Welsh assembly in Cardiff.

Mr. Peter Walker: None for more than a year.

Coal Miners

19. **Mr. Wigley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what information he has as to how many of those coal miners employed in the south Wales coalfield up to and including 1981 are still receiving pensions from their employers.

Mr. Peter Walker: British Coal does not have information in the form requested. It believes, however, that the majority of the 134,000 or so persons who left the south Wales coal industry between 1961 and 1981 will either be receiving pensions now or are entitled to payment in the future.

Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin

21. **Mr. Butler:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what level of support he intends to give to Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin in the coming year.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin is one of many organisations that have applied for Welsh language grant support next year. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will be announcing individual allocations shortly.

Local Government Leaders

23. **Mr. Win Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he next plans to meet the leaders of the organisations representing local government in Wales; and what subjects will be discussed.

Mr. Peter Walker: I meet the leaders of organisations representing local government in Wales as and when required. I have no such meetings arranged at the moment.

Cancer

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when the figures for the incidence of *(a)* leukaemia, *(b)* lung cancer, *(c)* colon cancer and *(d)* stomach cancer in each district in Wales will be published in relation to 1985.

Mr. Grist: As indicated in my answer of 15 March, I expect this information to be published before the end of this year.

Geriatric Patients

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will commission a study into the location of future geriatric patient care facilities in towns and cities in Wales, from the point of view of convenience of access to *(a)* patients, *(b)* relatives and friends and *(c)* medical staff.

Mr. Grist: No. While the Government place great emphasis on responding effectively to local health needs and preferences, and to being people-centred, the detailed planning and development of services is a matter for individual district health authorities in consultation with other key local interests.

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will institute a fire and public safety review of day patient geriatric care wards of wooden construction in actual or prospective use in Wales.

Mr. Grist: Operational responsibility for fire and public safety rests with individual district health authorities which are expected to comply with Firecode, a comprehensive code of guidance on fire precautions in NHS premises issued in 1988 by the Welsh Office. As part of its monitoring function the Department will shortly be asking DHAs to review their compliance with Firecode.

If, in the meantime, the hon. Gentleman is concerned about fire or public safety at a particular hospital, I suggest that he contact the appropriate health authority general manager as a matter of urgency. If he believes that there is a more general problem he should write to me more specifically on the matter.

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make it his policy to institute an analysis and review of the staffing qualifications and training of medical and paramedical staff involved in geriatric patient care in the hospital service in South Glamorgan.

Mr. Grist: No. These matters are the operational responsibility of South Glamorgan health authority.

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make it his policy to meet a deputation concerning the future quality of geriatric patient care in South Glamorgan.

Mr. Grist: I understand that South Glamorgan health authority is proposing to consult on changes to geriatric services in the district. I suggest that the hon. Gentleman should ensure that his views on these proposals are made known to the authority at this stage.

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) what representations he has received regarding the future of St. David's hospital, Cardiff;

(2) what representations he has received regarding the future provision of geriatric patient care in South Glamorgan.

Mr. Grist: My right hon. Friend has not received any such representations since approving the broad thrust of South Glamorgan health authority's draft strategic plan.

South Glamorgan Health Authority

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether he will institute a study into the causes of the revenue shortfall for 1990-91 of the South Glamorgan health authority.

Mr. Grist: We have no plans to do so at the present time. Health authorities have a statutory duty to manage services within available resources. We would therefore expect South Glamorgan health authority to plan accordingly when rolling forward its financial plan and capital programme for the next 10 years and preparing its business plan for 1990-91. These plans will be scrutinised by the Department as part of the annual review process in the course of the next few months; and officials will be seeking to ensure that they are realistically based in terms of prospective resources and provide a clear agenda for the management of the authority's services within those resource assumptions.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Fish Farming

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what information and statistics he has for the turnover of and growth in the trout farming industry in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Curry: The United Kingdom trout farming industry has shown steady and impressive growth and is a major contributor to our aquaculture industry. In 1989, about 16,000 tonnes of farmed trout were produced for consumption whose first sale value was some £40 million. This compares, for instance, with production of 4,500 tonnes in 1979, worth around £6·5 million.

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what representations he has received from the fish farming industry over proposals for the National Rivers Authority on residual flows.

Mr. Curry: We have received a number of representatons from fish farming interests, principally concerning the NRA's plans for the introduction and operation, in England and Wales, of abstraction licences and discharge consents, and charges for these.

Fish Producers

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) when he expects to allocate the sectoral quota management arrangements to the Northern Ireland Fish Producers Organisation;

(2) when he expects to make available the final sectoral quota figures for fisheries management arrangements; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Curry: Following consultation with the industry, Fisheries Departments have agreed to the introduction of sectoral quota management arrangements in the cod, plaice, sole and whiting fisheries in the Irish sea for 1990. Departments will shortly be writing to producer organisations asking them to supply the information necessary to begin the calculations which are likely to be complicated. We would aim to produce provisional allocation figures in May and final figures in June.

Acid Rain

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list by location for the last 10 years the fisheries in Yorkshire and Humberside that have been affected by acid rain; and if he will make a statement as to what effect this has had on their revenue.

Mr. Curry: I am asking the National Rivers Authority to write to the hon. Member with whatever information it has on the impact of acid rain on fisheries in these areas.

EC Surplus Food

Mr. Gill: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what arrangements he has made for implementing the EC surplus food scheme in the United Kingdom in 1990; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Curry: Pending its detailed review of this scheme in 1990, the European Commission has decided to authorise the distribution of surplus food from intervention stocks to the most needy for one further year. The Government continue to believe that such a scheme is an inefficient method both of dealing with surpluses, which are now substantially lower than at the outset of the scheme in 1988, and of assisting those whom it should help. Nevertheless, the Government do not wish to deprive eligible United Kingdom citizens of an opportunity available to their counterparts elsewhere in the Community.

The Commission has allocated 150 mecu to the European Community for this purpose, the same as was allocated in 1989. The United Kingdom has obtained some 22·9 mecu, the same proportion as last year, which represents about £17 million worth of butter and beef. This produce will be distributed in the United Kingdom by charitable and other non-profit-making organisations which meet the prescribed conditions and wish to apply. The scheme applies to certain clearly defined categories of people. Pensioners or the unemployed are eligible only if they fall into one or other of these categories. The coverage of those who are eligible will depend on the extent to which the organisations participate.

I am arranging for further details to be sent to the appropriate bodies, and I will place a copy of this information in the Library.

New Forest

Sir Patrick McNair-Wilson: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he expects to respond to the report of the New Forest review group.

Mr. Curry: The responses of the Government and the Forestry Commissioners to the review group's recommendations will be made public tomorrow. Copies of the document containing these responses will be placed in the Library of the House.

Sheep Premiums

Mr. John Greenway: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the payment of advances of sheep annual premium.

Mr. Curry: The revised sheepmeat regime which my right hon. Friend negotiated last year gives member states the option of making two advances of premium to all sheep producers, or of combining the two advances into a single payment which would be made at the time the second advance was due.

My right hon. Friends and I recognise the advantage to producers of an early advance payment. We also see it as important to ensure that United Kingdom producers are not at a disadvantage compared with producers in other member states. We have, therefore, decided to adopt the system of two advance payments of premium. The precise timing will depend on European Community decisions as well as the speed with which our local offices can complete the various checks which have to take place before payments can be made. By adjusting priorities, we hope to complete the administrative arrangements in time to pay the majority of first advances under this year's scheme by no later than early autumn, with the second advance following in January 1991, and the balancing payment in the spring of 1991. The level of payments will be determined by the European Community Commission in the light of forecasts of income loss.

I am sure that sheep producers will welcome this feature of the new sheepmeat regime which will give them earlier benefit from the sheep annual premium.

Coastal Eutrophication

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if his Department will be represented at the international conference on marine coastal eutrophication on 21 to 24 March.

Mr. Curry: No.

Salmon Net Fishing

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he expects to complete his review of the north-east salmon net fishing.

Mr. Curry: I refer the hon. Member to the reply which I gave on 12 January to the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood) at columns 779-80.

Shellfish

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what steps he proposes to take to ensure a regular and adequate future supply of nephrops suitable for processing into scampi.

Mr. Curry: We have, through EC legislation, adopted conservation measures to maintain and safeguard the renewability of fish stocks including nephrops. It is for the processing industry to arrange for its supplies of nephrops suitable for scampi.

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what temporary financial assistance he is prepared to offer shellfish processors who have to resort to temporary lay-offs and closures because of shortage of prawns, nephrops and other types of shellfish.

Mr. Curry: None.

Mr. Morley: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will amend by-catch restrictions for the use of separator trawls for prawns.

Mr. Curry: Amendments to the bycatch restrictions in the Community's technical conservation regulation EEC Regulation No. 3094/86[1] require the agreement of the Council of Fisheries Ministers. Specific provisions for the use of separator trawls need to take account of the nature of the gear and enforcement aspects as well as the catch composition. Further studies are necessary. At the request of the United Kingdom, the Commission will report on the effects of the use of these trawls which is to be permitted from 1 April 1990 for catching nephrops in the Bay of Biscay.

[1]Official Journal L288/1, 11.10.86.

Mr. Morley: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what plans he has for a one net rule.

Mr. Curry: The recent paper the United Kingdom put to the EC Commission setting out possible improvements in technical conservation measures included a proposal, which was agreed with the fishing industry, for a one-net rule. We expect the idea to be discussed in Brussels shortly as part of the work of the high-level working group which the Council of Ministers asked to report at the end of June.

Mr. Morley: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he has any plans to introduce a comprehensive shellfish licensing scheme.

Mr. Curry: We have no plans at present to introduce such a scheme.

Mr. Morley: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he has any plans to restrict beam and pair trawling within inshore waters, particularly on the Scottish west coast, Orkney and Shetland.

Mr. Curry: We have no such plans.

Common Agricultural Policy

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what estimate he has made of the extra cost to the average family of the additional costs of the common agricultural policy.

Mr. Curry: The magnitude of the costs of the common agricultural policy depends on the nature of the alternative policy envisaged. The Government's aim is to achieve lower levels of agricultural support worldwide, thereby reducing the costs borne by consumers and taxpayers.

Food Safety Bill

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how much of the £30 million per annum extra cost falling on local authorities as a result of the Food Safety Bill he estimates will not be included in central Government grants while being taken into account in setting rate support grants and standard spending assessment levels for 1991-92 and 1992-93.

Mr. Maclean: None.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Sultan of Brunei

Ms. Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what continuing commitments the Government still have arising from the agreement made between the British Government and the Sultan of Brunei in 1985.

Mr. Maude: We know of no agreement between the British Government and the Sultan of Brunei signed in 1985.

East Jerusalem

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make it his policy to oppose any increase in Jewish settlement in East Jerusalem.

Mr. Waldegrave: Yes. We regard Jewish settlements in the occupied territories, including East Jerusalem, as illegal.

China (Foreign Compensation)

Mr. Macdonald: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much has been paid out under the Foreign Compensation (People's Republic of China) (Registration) Order 1980, and to how many claimants; and if he will estimate how much is still owing to current and potential claimants.

Mr. Maude: No compensation was paid to claimants under the 1980 order which merely provided a framework for registering claims against China prior to the start of intergovernmental negotiations.

The China compensation fund was established by the Foreign Compensation (People's Republic of China) Order 1987. In January 1989 an interim distribution of 5 per cent. of the assessed value of a claim was begun by the Foreign Compensation Commission to successful bond claimants. To date, a total sum of approximately £504,000 has been paid in this way to 1,660 such bond claimants. Judicial determination of property claims is a more complex task than determination of bond claims. The payment of the balance owing in respect of bond claims and the full and final payment in respect of property claims will not be made until the final distribution from the fund. It is expected that this will be announced in the autumn.

Only when all claims against the fund have been determined will it be possible to assess the amount payable in relation to the assessed value of each claim. It is expected, however, at this stage that the percentage of the assessed value of a claim received by successful claimants will exceed 10 per cent.

Lithuania

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if Her Majesty's Government recognise the declaration of political independence by the new Parliament of Lithuania.

Mr. Waldegrave: The well-established criteria which we have applied to the recognition of a state are that it should have, and seem likely to continue to have, a clearly defined territory with a population, a Government who are able of themselves to exercise control of that territory, and independence in their external relations. We will therefore continue to watch the situation closely as it develops.

Test Ban Treaty (Conference)

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the current state of planning for the preparatory conference for the amendment conference of the 1963 partial test ban treaty, to be held in January 1991.

Mr. Waldegrave: Parties to the partial test ban treaty have agreed that a preliminary meeting will be held in New York from 29 May to 8 June 1990 to address organisational aspects of the amendment conference. Consultations on the details of the meeting are continuing.

Iraq

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he, or any Ministers or officials in his Department, met or communicated with the deputy Foreign Minister of Iraq, Mr. Nizar Hamdoun, during his visit to the United Kingdom on 8-9 March.

Mr. Waldegrave: I raised the case of Mrs. Parish and Mr. Bazoft when I met Nizar Hamdoun on 8 March. I expressed our serious concern for the two and emphasised the importance of a fair trial. Mr. Hamdoun took note of these points and emphasised the sensitivity of these cases for the Iraqi authorities. Similar representations were made to Mr. Hamdoun at a senior official level.

Mr. Marlow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs to what extent his actions in respect of Iraq have been influenced by his assessment of the likelihood that Mr. Bazoft was involved in espionage.

Mr. Waldegrave: We have seen no proof that Mr. Bazoft was a spy. Our concern in his case has throughout been entirely humanitarian.

Antarctica

Mr. Hardy: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is his estimate of the area covered by permanent ice in Antarctica and in the British area of Antarctica; and what was the comparable area so covered 10, 20 and 30 years ago.

Mr. Maude: The main Antarctic ice-sheet extends to 12 million sq km with attached ice shelves covering an additional 1·5 million sq km. Data are unavailable specifically for the British Antarctic territory. However, the Antarctic peninsula contains a grounded ice-sheet of 0·3 million sq km and ice shelves totalling 0·14 million sq km.

Comparisons with ice cover 20 and 30 years ago are not possible due to the rudimentary survey methods then employed. Satellite imagery since the mid-1970s indicates no discernible changes overall in the areas of grounded ice or ice shelves in the Antarctic. It is estimated, however, that ice shelves in the Antarctic peninsula have decreased by more than 750 sq km in the past 10 years, a reduction of around 0·5 per cent.

Albania

Mr. John Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make it his policy that the Albanian gold bullion held by Britain following the second world war is returned to the Albanian Government only on payment of full compensation at today's value to the families of sailors who died and the survivors of the crews of HMS destroyers Saumarez and Volage sunk by Albanian mines in 1946.

Mr. Waldegrave: Our policy remains that we shall be able to agree to the Tripartite Gold Commission's releasing gold to Albania only when Albania has paid the compensation awarded to Britain by the International Court of Justice in the Corfu channel case. This delay will not, however, penalise the survivors and the families of those killed on board HM ships Saumarez and Volage. All concerned were fully compensated at the time under the regulations then in force.

Germany (Ministerial Meeting)

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if, during his meeting with Ministers and officials of the Federal German Government on 12 March he discussed *(a)* the forthcoming fourth review conference of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty and its final preparatory committee meeting in April, and *(b)* the geopolitical implications for nuclear arms control of an independent Lithuanian state.

Mr. Waldegrave: No.

Katyn Massacre

Dame Jill Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the Government's latest information on who bears the responsibility for the Katyn massacre.

Mr. Waldegrave: There is substantial circumstantial evidence pointing to Soviet responsibility for the Katyn massacre. We urge the Soviet authorities to help establish the facts once and for all.

SCOTLAND

Fishing

Mrs. Ray Michie: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) what representations he has received regarding the state of the fishing industry on the west coast of Scotland;

(2) what measures his Department intends to take to protect the west coast fishing industry;

(3) what measures his Department intends to introduce to restrict fishing effort during 1990 on the west coast of Scotland.

Mr. Lang: Representations have been received concerning the need to protect certain west coast fish stocks from excessive fishing effort. My noble Friend the Minister of State announced on 8 March that a consultation paper on possible conservation measures would be issued soon. It is hoped to do so in the next few days.

Mrs. Ray Michie: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether his Department intends to introduce pressure stock licensing to assist in effort limitation on the fishing of stocks on the west coast of Scotland.

Mr. Lang: Pressure stock licensing already applies to stocks on the west coast of Scotland.

Mr. Morley: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he has any plans to restrict twin and triple rig trawling in the Minch.

Mr. Lang: Fisheries departments will shortly be issuing a consultation paper on a range of measures for conserving stocks on the west coast of Scotland. This will include seeking views on the use of twin and triple rig trawls since some sections of the fishing industry have expressed concern about their impact.

Local Government Finance

Mrs. Fyfe: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what training Scottish Office spokespersons receive in local government finance; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Rifkind: Government press officers receive training in media techniques, which includes communication of information to the press and broadcasters on a wide range of subjects, including local government finance.

Technology Academies

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland where the city technology academy will be sited.

Mr. Lang: The company which was set up to establish the first technology academy in Scotland is actively pursuing the acquisition of a suitable site in Glasgow.

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he expects the opening of a technology academy.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 16 March 1990]:* Progress with establishing a technology academy will depend on a number of factors, and in the first instance on the acquisition of a suitable site.

Disabled Students

Mr. Allan Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what changes he intends to make in the support arrangements for disabled students in higher education.

Mr. Lang: In recognition of their particular needs, I propose for session 1990-91 to increase the maximum allowance for disabled students from £765 to £1,000 per session. In addition, I propose to introduce two new provisions which will provide up to £3,000 to cover the cost of expensive specialist equipment over the period of the course, and up to £4,000 per session for those students requiring non-medical personal help such as readers for the blind and interpreters for the deaf. We will be taking steps to publicise these new arrangements.

Disabled students will continue to be eligible for relevant social security benefits. These, together with the basic award and the new allowances, should fully meet the disabled student's requirements.

When top-up loans are introduced this autumn, subject to the passage of the Bill before Parliament, I accept that

disabled graduates' capacity to repay loans may be affected by additional living costs associated with their disability. I therefore propose to disregard disability related benefits when assessing graduates' income for the purpose of determining when to defer the repayment of the loan.

Infant Mortality

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many post-neonatal death per 1,000 live births there were, for each year since 1975, in *(a)* Scotland, *(b)* the United Kingdom, *(c)* Denmark, *(d)* France, *(e)* West Germany, *(f)* Italy, *(g)* the Netherlands, *(h)* Spain and *(i)* Sweden.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 16 March 1990]:* The information readily available is as follows:

Post-neonatal deaths per 1,000 live births.

Year	*Scotland*	*United Kingdom*
1975	5·4	5·1
1976	4·5	4·6
1977	4·8	4·6
1978	4·1	4·5
1979	4·2	4·6
1980	4·3	4·4
1981	4·4	4·4
1982	4·2	4·6
1983	4·1	4·3
1984	3·9	3·9
1985	3·9	4·0
1986	3·6	4·2
1987	3·8	4·1
1988	3·7	4·1
1989	[1]—	[1]—

[1] Figures not yet available.

Deprivation

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what account has been taken of the work of the Medical Research Council sociology unit in Glasgow in shaping his policies regarding deprivation effects on the health of Scottish people.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 16 March 1990]:* In formulating policy, account is taken of all relevant research.

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what measures the research project into community health promotion in a deprived area, funded by his Department, recommended regarding effects of deprivation on physical and mental health.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 16 March 1990]:* It was concluded that a community development approach to health promotion is feasible and that models, which involve local people, can be developed.

Health Authorities

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what specific measures he has carried out in response to the "Scottish Health Authorities' Priorities for the Eighties" report recommendations.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 16 March 1990]:* The recommendations of the SHAPE report were reviewed in 1988 with the publication of the SHARPEN report (Scottish Health Authorities Review of Priorities for the Eighties and Nineties). This endorsed the broad thrust of SHAPE but stressed the importance of care in the community for the priority groups.

Speech Therapy

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many speech therapy posts are established in the Greater Glasgow health board area; how many are vacant; and for how long they have been vacant.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 16 March 1990]:* Greater Glasgow health board employs 66·1 whole-time equivalent speech therapists. Sixteen vacancies were identified last October and five have since been filled.

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many speech therapy posts are vacant in Scotland.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 16 March 1990]:* Speech therapists are employed almost exclusively by health boards and information about current vacancies is not held centrally.

Terminally Ill People

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what provisions he has made for augmented community care reviews for the terminally ill in his allocation of money to the National Health Service in Scotland in 1990-91; and how much has been allocated to each of the health board areas.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 16 March 1990]:* Health boards are expected to fund the provision of community care services from within their general allocations.

Schools and Colleges

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what surveys he has undertaken on the physical conditions of Scotland's schools and colleges; and what were the findings.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 16 March 1990]:* My right hon. and learned Friend has undertaken no comprehensive survey of the physical condition of local authority schools and other educational buildings in Scotland. It is the responsibility of the authorities and the bodies responsible for the management of colleges to maintain information about the condition of their building stock.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Pensioners

Mr. Andrew Bowden: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what proportion on the basis of the 1987 family expenditure survey of *(a)* all pensioners and *(b)* newly retired pensioners have neither a state additional pension nor an occupational pension.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Information is not available in the form requested. However, the 1987 family expenditure survey shows that 52 per cent. of all pensioners and 73 per cent. of recently retired pensioners receive an occupational pension.

Residential Homes

Mr. Colvin: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) how many people are currently in receipt of income support, living in nursing homes and claiming for accommodation and meals in the categories *(a)* suffering from terminal illness, *(b)* physically disabled, under pensionable age and *(c)* physically disabled, over pensionable age;

(2) how many people are currently in receipt of income support, living in residential care homes and claiming for accommodation and meals, in the categories *(a)* of retirement age, *(b)* very dependent elderly, *(c)* physically disabled, under pensionable age and *(d)* physically disabled, over pensionable age.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to the hon. Member for Sheffield, Brightside (Mr. Blunkett) on 15 February 1990 at columns *375-78*.

Social Security Reform

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will update tables 1.5, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9, 1.10 and 1.11 which appeared on pages 18 to 21 of Reform of Social Security, volume 3, Cmnd. 9519.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Comparable figures for years after 1982 could be produced only at disproportionate cost.

Area Computer Centres

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security who tendered for the contract to run the area computer centre at Livingstone; and to whom it was awarded.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The contract to run the area computer centre at Livingstone was tendered for by two companies and awarded to Electronic Data Systems.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security who tendered for the contract to run the area computer centre at Norcross, Lancashire; and to whom it was awarded.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The contract to run the area computer centre at Norcross was tendered for by Electronic Data Systems, to whom the contract was awarded.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Broadwater Farm (Convictions)

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he intends to seek information from the Police Complaints Authority under the provisions of section 98 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 in relation to the Broadwater Farm convictions; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: We have already carefully considered the reports of investigations supervised by the Police Complaints Authority into complaints against the police arising out of the Broadwater Farm disturbances and can find no evidence from these investigations which casts doubt on the safety of any of the convictions of those concerned.

Road Traffic Offences

Mr. Adley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will estimate the total cost of police time, for each of the last three years, of all activities relating to traffic management, including attendance at accidents and court appearances relating to Road Traffic Act offences.

Mr. Waddington: In 1987, 1988 and 1989, approximately 8 per cent. of the total police strength in England and Wales was deployed on specialist traffic duties. The proportion of non-specialist officers' time spent on traffic matters is not recorded. The total costs could not be reliably estimated.

Vehicle Registration

Mr. Speller: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will take steps to allow police authorities to reveal the keeper of a vehicle when a member of the public has a good reason to seek the information and has details of the vehicle registration number.

Mr. Waddington: The police obtain details of vehicle keepers as necessary for police purposes from the driver and vehicle licensing centre at Swansea. The disclosure of such information to members of the public is a matter for that organisation and there is an established procedure for this purpose. The driver and vehicle licensing centre will, on request from a member of the public and on payment of a charge of £3·50, supply the name and address of the owner of any vehicle registered with it providing that that person can show that he has reasonable cause for his request. It would not be appropriate for the police to assume the responsibilities of the driver and vehicle licensing centre for deciding whether the information should be made available.

Custodial Sentencing

Mr. Stern: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has any plans to reduce custodial sentencing.

Mr. John Patten: Our proposals for statutory framework for sentencing were set out in the White Paper, "Crime Justice and Protecting the Public" (Cm 965), which was published on 6 February. These include restrictions on the use of custody for all but the most serious offenders, together with a wider and more flexible range of strengthened community penalties and reduced maximum penalties for theft and burglary, except burglaries of people's homes.

Prison Privatisation

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the policy of Her Majesty's Government on the privatising of prisons and remand centres; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: We are still considering the outcome of the further studies into the likely cost-effectiveness of contracting out to the private sector the design, construction and operation of remand centres which my right hon. Friend the Member for Witney (Mr. Hurd) announced in his statement on 1 March 1989 at columns 277-78. We hope to make a further announcement soon.

Bingo

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received about the way in which section 42 of the Gaming Act operates in so far as it refers to bingo; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waddington: In the 12 months to 15 March 1990, four hon. Members have asked questions about any plans which we might have to amend section 42 of the Gaming Act 1968 in so far as it provides controls on the advertising of licensed bingo clubs, and we received 102 letters from hon. Members, and one letter from a member of the public, about these controls. The correspondence from hon. Members has mainly been on behalf of constituents employed in the licensed bingo club industry who supported a campaign by the Bingo Association of Great Britain (BAGB) for the complete removal of the controls.

As the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, my hon. Friend the Member for Fareham (Mr. Lloyd), explained in his reply on 17 January—at column 265—to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Bournemouth, East (Mr. Atkinson), we have informed the BAGB that we cannot accept its campaign, but that it is open to it to resume discussions with the Gaming Board for Great Britain on the scope, if any, for some relaxation of the controls. I understand that the board has offered the BAGB a date next month for such discussions.

Terrorist Suspects

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will introduce safeguards to ensure that suspected terrorists who should be interviewed under his two-year experiment at either Bridewell police station, Liverpool or Paddington Green police station, London, will not be taken to other police stations for interview.

Mr. Waddington: No. Main Bridewell and Paddington Green are the stations used whenever possible in terrorist cases by the Merseyside and Metropolitan police respectively. It may be necessary on occasions to use other stations if the accommodation for terrorist suspects is full or out of use, but tape recordings would still be made in such circumstances.

Juvenile Offenders

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the latest number of juvenile offenders in youth custody; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: On 31 December 1989 there were 358 sentenced juvenile offenders in prison service establishments. This compares with 907 sentenced juvenile offenders who were held in prison establishments on 31 December 1984. It is the Government's policy that juvenile offenders should, wherever possible, be dealt with other than by a custodial sentence. Many young offenders are already dealt with under a range of demanding and constructive community-based measures. Under the proposals in the White Paper, "Crime, Justice and Protecting the Public", the courts will have a wider range of powers for dealing with young offenders in the community.

West Midlands Police

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report on the progress of the inquiry into the West Midlands serious crime squad; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. Members for Mansfield (Mr. Meale) and for Dumbarton (Mr. McFall) on 25 January at column *873*. I understand that the investigation team, led by Mr. Shaw, assistant chief constable of the West Yorkshire police, is continuing to examine the files relating to all the arrests made by the squad since 1986, and is also investigating individual complaints made against officers of the squad. It will be some time before all cases have been examined.

Passports

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has any plans to privatise the passport-issuing function of his Department.

Mr. Waddington: There are no such plans, but work is well advanced on arrangements for the proposed conversion of the passport department to an executive agency, and for making use of relevant private sector expertise where this would help to improve standards of service.

Child Crime (Accountability)

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received about his proposals to make parents more accountable for crimes committed by their children.

Mr. John Patten: Since we published the White Paper "Crime, Justice and Protecting the Public" last month, we have received about 10 responses on the proposals to increase parental responsibility. These broadly support the proposals contained in the White Paper. We look forward to receiving more responses in the next few weeks.

Immigration

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the implications of other European Community countries' immigration policies for the Government's policies on immigration and deportation.

Mr. Waddington: While the United Kingdom's policies on immigration and deportation are not determined by those of other Community countries, the Government seek to keep informed of developments in and between Community countries, and is engaged in discussion with them in the context of the implementation of the Single European Act.

Victim Support

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what grants he has made in each of the last five financial years to the National Association of Victims Support Schemes; and what assessment he has made of the effect of actual and planned changes in funding by his Department.

Mr. John Patten: Home Office funding of victim support since 1986 has been as follows:

	Local victim support schemes £	*Victim support headquarters* £	*Total* £	*Annual increase* per cent.
1985-86	—	126,000	126,000	—
1986-87	136,000	150,000	286,000	127
1987-88	1·60 million	103,000	1·70 million	494
1988-89	2·55 million	190,000	2·74 million	61
1989-90	3·70 million	210,000	3·91 million	43

This funding has enabled local victim support schemes to expand to cover 94 per cent. of the population of England and Wales with the following effects on provision of service:

	Number of schemes	*Number of paid co-ordinators*	*Number of referrals*	*Number of Volunteers*
1985-86	293	133	180,000	3,935
1986-87	305	151	257,083	4,200
1987-88	294	180	328,174	5,900
1988-89	299	227	400,810	6,292
1989-90	355	300	[1]420,000	[1]6,800

[1] Estimates.

For 1990-91 the planned level of grant in aid subject to parliamentary approval is £4·47 million for local schemes and £235,000 for headquarters.

Birmingham Pub Bombings

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received from Birmingham city council on the Birmingham pub bombings case.

Mr. John Patten: We are not aware of recent representations from Birmingham city council about the Birmingham pub bombings case.

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has completed his consideration of the new evidence in the Birmingham pub bombings case.

Mr. John Pattern: No. My right hon. and learned Friend is still considering very carefully the further material presented to him by a solicitor on behalf of the six men and will decide as soon as possible whether it justifies any intervention on his part.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has sought the opinion of the Lord Chief Justice on the new evidence in the Birmingham pub bombings case.

Mr. John Patten: No.

Domestic Violence

Mr. Michael Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many special units have been established within the Metropolitan police area dealing with cases of domestic violence.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: There are 33 units operated by the Metropolitan police offering support to the victims of domestic violence, reflecting the priority given to this in the Commissioner's strategy statement for 1990.

Homosexuality Law

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he intends to take in relation to the criminal law on homosexuality in *(a)* Jersey and *(b)* the Isle of Man.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Discussions between the Home Office and the Jersey and Isle of Man authorities are continuing. Both islands have been made aware of the urgent need to amend their current legislation in order to enable the United Kingdom to conform with its international obligations under the European convention on human rights.

Prisoners (Media Interviews)

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he intends to take to prevent the holding of press conferences by, and the sound or television broadcasting of, interviews with persons detained, following conviction, in Her Majesty's prisons; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: Media interviews with prisoners about their individual cases are not permitted. We are reviewing our procedures to try to ensure that, when the media are invited into establishments for a particular purpose, unauthorised interviews do not take place.

Jurors

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has any plans to enrol extra jurors for cases expected to last several months.

Mr. John Patten: We have no present plans to change the law in this respect, although we will keep it under review. A trial can generally proceed so long as nine jurors are still serving. Enlarging the jury beyond 12 at the outset would introduce complexity, and place a greater burden on the pool of jurors. The special procedures introduced in the Criminal Justice Act 1987 for handling serious and complex fraud trials (which the hon. Member may have particularly in mind) were designed to keep the proceedings before the jury as short as possible.

Animal Protection

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make it his policy to extend the scope of the Protection of Animals Act 1911 to afford the same protection to wild animals as that presently afforded to domestic and captive animals; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waddington *[holding answer 15 March 1990]:* Wild animals which are in captivity are protected by the Protection of Animals Act 1911 (1912 in Scotland), but we do not have any plans to extend the scope of this legislation to include animals which are not in captivity.

However, there ar other statutes which provide protection for particular species in the wild, for example, deer, seals and badgers. Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, special protection can be given to certain species which are considered to be in need of it on conservation grounds.

HEALTH

Ambulance Dispute

Mr. Nellist: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information he hs as to the cost to public funds of the ambulance dispute; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The cost of providing military assistance during the ambulance dispute up to the end of January was £3·3 million. The cost of assistance by the police and other agencies has not yet been fully assessed by the authorities concerned.

Free Prescriptions

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will give the total numbers of people entitled to free prescriptions on the ground of low income alone *(a)* on 31 March 1988 and *(b)* on the latest date for which figures are available.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: At 31 March 1988 about 3·8 million people were entitled to free prescriptions on the grounds of low income. The corresponding figure for 31 March 1989, the latest date for which information is available, is estimated to have been 3·4 million.

South West Thames RHA

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions he is to have with officials of the South West Thames regional health authority on the health cuts now being considered by the authority; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: No discussions are planned with officials of the South West Thames regional health authority. Regional health authorities must live within their allocated resources and difficult decisions about priorities have sometimes to be made. South West Thames RHA has received a cash increase of 36 per cent. over the last three years.

RHAs (Resources)

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list, by each regional health authority, the percentage cash increase in resources being made available for the financial year 1990-91, over the financial year 1989-90.

Mr. Freeman: The information requested is shown in the table. The percentage figures shown represent the cash increase in each authority's 1990-91 initial revenue cash limit compared with the equivalent 1989-90 figure.

Regions	*Percentage increase*
Northern	7·3
Yorkshire	7·6
Trent	7·5
East Anglian	9·7
North West Thames	7·1
North East Thames	6·9
South East Thames	8·7
South West Thames	7·7
Wessex	9·5
Oxford	7·4
South Western	9·0
West Midlands	7·3
Mersey	6·2
North Western	6·6

Hormone Replacement Therapy

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent representations he has received on the preventive properties against illness of hormone replacement therapy.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: In recent months I have received representations and have also met and discussed hormone replacement therapy with my hon. Friend and the assistant medical director of the Amarant Trust. I have also met the voluntary organisation, Women's Health Concern. I also had a meeting about osteoporosis with the National Council of Women and affiliated organisations at which we discussed hormone replacement therapy.

Psychotherapy

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make it his policy to retain, within the National Health Service, specialist in-patient psychotherapeutical services for severely disturbed patients and families.

Mr. Freeman: It is national policy that all district health authorities should, as resources allow, develop locally based psychiatric services, the main components of which are summarised in paragraph 7.3 of the White Paper "Caring for People" (Cm 849). Within this overall objective, it is for each authority to determine the exact content of its service, including whether facilities for in-patient psychotherapy should form part.

Psychosocial Nursing

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has for the training of nurses in psychosocial nursing.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: All nurses who are admitted to part 3 of the Professional Register (Registered Mental Nurse) are given training in psychosocial nursing. This aspect of development psychology is encompassed in the knowledge base of the 1982 syllabus of training.

Waiting Lists

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will publish a table showing the number of people on waiting lists for urgent and non-urgent operations for each health authority in Yorkshire and Humberside for each year since 1979.

Mr. Freeman: The available information is given in the table. The Körner committee on health services information felt that the distinction between urgent and non-urgent cases was too subjective to be reliable. The information has thus not been subdivided in this way since 1987.

In-patient waiting list, surgical specialties[1], by district health authority, Yorkshire and Humberside standard region, as at 31 March 1979 to 1989

1979

District Health Authority	Urgent	Non-urgent	Total
Hull	93	7,589	7,682
East Yorkshire	10	2,185	2,195
Grimsby	40	2,627	2,667
Scunthorpe	28	2,563	2,591
Northallerton	0	386	386
York	18	3,352	3,370
Scarborough	28	1,407	1,435
Harrogate	45	2,726	2,771
Bradford	57	5,416	5,473
Airedale	67	1,122	1,189
Calderdale	15	2,172	2,187
Huddersfield	176	3,599	3,775
Dewsbury	2	1,236	1,238
Leeds Western	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—
Leeds Eastern	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—
Wakefield	117	2,912	3,029
Pontefract	17	2,990	3,007
Barnsley	196	3,961	4,157
Doncaster	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—
Rotherham	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—
Sheffield	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—

1980

District Health Authority	Urgent	Non-urgent	Total
Hull	40	6,179	6,219
East Yorkshire	2	1,796	1,798
Grimsby	30	2,668	2,698
Scunthorpe	6	2,089	2,095
Northallerton	0	334	334
York	6	1,985	1,991
Scarborough	37	1,504	1,541
Harrogate	33	2,144	2,177
Bradford	98	4,334	4,432
Airedale	63	1,433	1,496
Calderdale	19	1,372	1,391
Huddersfield	43	2,603	2,646
Dewsbury	3	748	751
Leeds Western	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—
Leeds Eastern	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—
Wakefield	125	2,198	2,323
Pontefract	9	1,942	1,951
Barnsley	72	3,831	3,903
Doncaster	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—
Rotherham	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—
Sheffield	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—

1981

District Health Authority	Urgent	Non-urgent	Total
Hull	24	6,333	6,357
East Yorkshire	8	1,660	1,668
Grimsby	28	2,615	2,643
Scunthorpe	7	2,293	2,300
Northallerton	0	371	371
York	2	1,766	1,768
Scarborough	40	1,703	1,743
Harrogate	25	1,513	1,538
Bradford	60	4,181	4,241
Airedale	17	1,519	1,536
Calderdale	8	1,214	1,222
Huddersfield	0	2,077	2,077
Dewsbury	2	595	597
Leeds Western	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—
Leeds Eastern	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—
Wakefield	69	2,455	2,524
Pontefract	7	1,391	1,398
Barnsley	36	2,777	2,813
Doncaster	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—
Rotherham	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—
Sheffield	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—

1982

District Health Authority	Urgent	Non-urgent	Total
Hull	23	4,550	4,573
East Yorkshire	0	1,444	1,444
Grimsby	8	2,354	2,362
Scunthorpe	32	2,966	2,998
Northallerton	1	434	435
York	0	1,787	1,787
Scarborough	13	1,682	1,695
Harrogate	11	1,065	1,076
Bradford	61	3,995	4,056
Airedale	6	1,457	1,463
Calderdale	10	1,186	1,196
Huddersfield	1	1,962	1,963
Dewsbury	2	668	670
Leeds Western	308	3,162	3,470
Leeds Eastern	659	3,724	4,383
Wakefield	119	1,788	1,907
Pontefract	7	1,542	1,549
Barnsley	60	2,346	2,406
Doncaster	489	2,942	3,431
Rotherham	23	2,675	2,698
Sheffield	992	10,345	11,337

1983

District Health Authority	Urgent	Non-urgent	Total
Hull	55	6,973	7,028
East Yorkshire	0	1,588	1,588
Grimsby	19	2,467	2,486
Scunthorpe	44	5,125	5,169
Northallerton	0	677	677
York	2	3,249	3,251
Scarborough	16	1,988	2,004
Harrogate	6	1,222	1,228
Bradford	110	5,677	5,787
Airedale	196	1,606	1,802
Calderdale	6	1,209	1,215
Huddersfield	4	2,862	2,866
Dewsbury	12	1,127	1,139
Leeds Western	452	3,875	4,327
LeedsEastern	855	5,022	5,877
Wakefield	55	3,353	3,408
Pontefract	64	2,183	2,247
Barnsley	102	3,580	3,682
Doncaster	533	5,221	5,754
Rotherham	168	3,972	4,140
Sheffield	1,391	12,237	13,628

1984

District Health Authority	Urgent	Non-urgent	Total
Hull	78	6,228	6,306
East Yorkshire	1	1,307	1,308
Grimsby	29	1,797	1,826
Scunthorpe	12	4,843	4,855
Northallerton	0	644	644
York	7	2,713	2,720
Scarborough	21	2,061	2,082
Harrogate	0	1,146	1,146
Bradford	206	5,340	5,546
Airedale	155	2,108	2,263
Calderdale	7	1,237	1,244
Huddersfield	1	2,585	2,586
Dewsbury	4	904	908
Leeds Western	428	3,728	4,156
Leeds Eastern	615	4,535	5,150
Wakefield	20	2,601	2,621

District Health Authority	Urgent	Non-urgent	Total
Pontefract	30	1,972	2,002
Barnsley	64	2,813	2,877
Doncaster	376	4,475	4,851
Rotherham	64	4,174	4,238
Sheffield	1,327	10,777	12,104

1985

District Health Authority	Urgent	Non-urgent	Total
Hull	2	7,079	7,081
East Yorkshire	0	1,268	1,268
Grimsby	46	1,491	1,537
Scunthorpe	12	4,120	4,132
Northallerton	0	559	559
York	4	2,751	2,755
Scarborough	29	1,749	1,778
Harrogate	5	1,292	1,297
Bradford	141	5,231	5,372
Airedale	98	2,263	2,361
Calderdale	10	1,232	1,242
Huddersfield	0	2,770	2,770
Dewsbury	8	798	806
Leeds Western	633	3,406	4,039
Leeds Eastern	531	4,628	5,159
Wakefield	16	1,934	1,950
Pontefract	399	1,802	2,201
Barnsley	23	2,032	2,055
Doncaster	337	4,713	5,050
Rotherham	78	3,903	3,981
Sheffield	1,120	10,137	11,257

1986

District Health Authority	Urgent	Non-urgent	Total
Hull	0	6,615	6,615
East Yorkshire	0	1,101	1,101
Grimsby	8	1,237	1,245
Scunthorpe	0	2,030	2,030
Northallerton	0	419	419
York	9	2,656	2,665
Scarborough	43	1,541	1,584
Harrogate	35	1,604	1,639
Braford	181	6,103	6,284
Airedale	101	2,537	2,638
Calderdale	1	985	986
Huddersfield	0	2,697	2,697
Dewsbury	4	652	656
Leeds Western	555	3,650	4,205
Leeds Eastern	595	4,939	5,534
Wakefield	39	2,122	2,161
Pontefract	508	1,671	2,179
Barnsley	90	2,358	2,448
Doncaster	401	4,172	4,573
Rotherham	113	4,060	4,173
Sheffield	1,112	10,300	11,412

1987

District Health Authority	Urgent	Non-urgent	Total
Hull	0	6,908	6,908
East Yorkshire	0	1,410	1,410
Grimsby	27	1,373	1,400
Scunthorpe	0	2,832	2,832
Northallerton	0	676	676
York	11	2,522	2,533
Scarborough	83	1,621	1,704
Harrogate	30	1,827	1,857
Bradford	146	6,925	7,071
Airedale	73	1,990	2,063
Calderdale	5	991	996
Huddersfield	0	2,175	2,175
Dewsbury	2	427	429
Leeds Western	343	3,989	4,332
Leeds Eastern	445	5,523	5,968
Wakefield	47	2,131	2,178
Pontefract	311	1,768	2,079
Barnsley	[4]—	[4]—	2,584
Doncaster	[4]—	[4]—	4,625
Rotherham	[4]—	[4]—	4,435
Sheffield	[4]—	[4]—	10,146

1988[3]

District Health authority	Urgent	Non-urgent	Total
Hull	[4]	[4]	7,357
East Yorkshire	[4]	[4]	1,833
Grimsby	[4]	[4]	1,032
Scunthorpe	[4]	[4]	2,875
Northallerton	[4]	[4]	686
York	[4]	[4]	2,734
Scarborough	[4]	[4]	2,099
Harrogate	[4]	[4]	1,332
Bradford	[4]	[4]	6,294
Airedale	[4]	[4]	2,223
Calderdale	[4]	[4]	1,086
Huddersfield	[4]	[4]	1,793
Dewsbury	[4]	[4]	571
Leeds Western	[4]	[4]	5,300
Leeds Eastern	[4]	[4]	6,644
Wakefield	[4]	[4]	2,282
Pontefract	[4]	[4]	1,701
Barnsley	[4]	[4]	2,382
Doncaster	[4]	[4]	4,452
Rotherham	[4]	[4]	3,087
Sheffield	[4]	[4]	9,713

1989[3]

District Health authority	Urgent	Non-urgent	Total
Hull	[4]	[4]	6,867
East Yorkshire	[4]	[4]	1,579
Grimsby	[4]	[4]	1,746
Scunthorpe	[4]	[4]	2,881
Northallerton	[4]	[4]	663
York	[4]	[4]	2,498
Scarborough	[4]	[4]	2,076
Harrogate	[4]	[4]	1,901
Bradford	[4]	[4]	6,734
Airedale	[4]	[4]	2,452
Calderdale	[4]	[4]	1,053
Huddersfield	[4]	[4]	2,215
Dewsbury	[4]	[4]	781
Leeds Western	[4]	[4]	5,644
Leeds Eastern	[4]	[4]	6,333
Wakefield	[4]	[4]	2,045
Pontefract	[4]	[4]	2,056
Barnsley	[4]	[4]	2,492
Doncaster	[4]	[4]	3,924
Rotherhama	[4]	[4]	3,350
Sheffield	[4]	[4]	9,895

[1] General surgery, Urology, T & O, ENT, Ophthalmology, Oral surgery, Restorative dentistry, Paediatric dentistry, Orthodontics, Neurosurgery, Plastic surgery, Cardiothoracic surgery, Paediatric surgery,Gynaecology, Radiotherapy.

[2] Data are not available, due to NHS restructuring in 1982.

[3] Less self deferred cases.

[4] Data are not available.

Project 2000

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what incentives are being offered to nurses to remain in the nursing profession, in the light of Project 2000; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Our aim is to ensure the Health Service's ability to recruit and retain the staff it needs. We have increased the pay of nursing staff by an average of 43 per cent. in real terms since 1979. The new grading structures for clinical and educational staff allow nurses to be better rewarded for the work they do and provide improved career prospects. The current pilot scheme of flexible pay supplements for nursing and midwifery staff is intended to improve retention and re-entry rates in areas where there are special difficulties. There is also an increased emphasis on the importance of providing flexible working arrangements and improved facilities for re-entry after breaks in service, on which the national steering group on equal opportunities for women in the NHS has published advice.

Community Care

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to ensure that users of community care services are formally consulted when local authorities are drawing up their plans for community care; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: We will be issuing guidance to local authorities on community care plans. This will reinforce our intention, set out in the White Paper "Caring for People", that local authorities should consult representatives of users of services and their carers in drawing up plans.

Salmonella

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what are the sources of his information regarding the number of incidents of salmonella enteritidis-induced food poisoning reported during the first six months of the current year.

Mr. Freeman: The sources of information this year (which is less than three months old) are the same as in past years, and are detailed in annex 1 of the public health laboratory service's evidence to the House of Commons Select Committee on Agriculture in October 1988.

The sources of information for the routine surveillance of human salmonellosis in England and Wales include:

(i.) reports of human isolates to the PHLS communicable disease surveillance centre (CDSC) from public health and other laboratories;
(i.) referrals of human isolates of salmonellas for detailed identification to the PHLS division of enteric pathogens from public health and other laboratories;
(iii.) laboratory reports of outbreaks to CDSC;
(iv.) local authority reports of outbreaks to CDSC;
(v.) outbreaks ascertained by CDSC by other means and verified.

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is his assessment of the future trend in outbreaks of food poisoning through the consumption of eggs infected by salmonella enteritidis.

Mr. Freeman: It is impossible to predict trends in outbreaks of salmonellosis with any degree of certainty. Early indications, however, from data from the PHLS division of enteric pathogens indicate that the levelling off in total salmonella enteritidis phage type 4 isolates seen last year has been maintained in the early part of this year. There is room for cautious optimism that this trend will continue.

Cataract Operations

Mr. Stern: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the average length of the waiting list for cataract operations throughout the United Kingdom.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Information about specific conditions and proposed method of treatment of patients on hospital waiting lists is not collected centrally. On 31 March 1989 the average length of lists for patients awaiting admission for treatment by a consultant ophthalmologist in district health authorities in England was 491. The individual lists, which varied from one in Kettering to over 3,000 in central Manchester, are influenced by the nature of local and neighbouring facilities, the size of the population being served, and the number of consultants providing the service.

Child Abuse Allegations

Mr. Ray Powell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will consider financial assistance to the organisation called Parents Against Injustice which seeks to help those parents who have been falsely accused of abusing their children.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The Department has contributed to the organisation's headquarters administrative expenses each year since 1987. In the current financial year the contribution totalled £24,000. I have agreed to meet representatives of the organisation.

Dental Health

Mr. Colin Shepherd: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the dental experts who were involved in the COMA panel's report on sugars.

Mr. Freeman: The members of the committee on medical aspects of food policy's panel on dietary sugars are listed in the report. The dental member was Professor A. J. Rugg-Gunn of the departments of child dental health and oral biology at the dental school of the university of Newcastle upon Tyne.

A number of submissions on dental and other aspects of health were received and considered by the panel. These are also listed in the report, copies of which are available in the Library.

Mr. Colin Shepherd: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what has been the change in the occurrence of dental cavities in the teeth of five-year-old children over the last 10 years for which figures are available.

Mr. Freeman: Surveys of children's dental health are carried out at 10-yearly intervals by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys on behalf of the health departments. The last survey which was conducted in 1983 showed that the proportion of five-year-olds in England and Wales with dental decay experience fell from 72 per cent. in 1973 to 49 per cent. The average number of teeth estimated to have had some decay, allowing for the condition of missing deciduous teeth, was 4·0 in 1973 dropping to 1·8 in 1983.

Mr. Michael Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make it his policy when considering the findings of the COMA panel report on sugars relating to the reduction of dental caries to assess the findings of the

United States Food and Drugs Administration in 1986, the British Nutrition Foundation in 1987, and the European congress on diet, nutrition and dental caries held in 1988; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: The panel on dietary sugars of the committee on medical aspects of food policy (COMA) took account of these, and other, reports in coming to its conclusions. The COMA report is, we believe, the definitive statement on present knowledge of the relationship between dietary sugars and health.

The COMA report on dietary sugars and human disease was published by HMSO on 12 December 1989. Copies are in the Library.

Mr. Michael Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether any official medical report concerning the incidence of dental caries has distinguished between natural sugars and added sugars in terms of their effects on dental health.

Mr. Freeman: The report on dietary sugars and human disease produced by the committee on medical aspects of food policy included the relationship between sugar and dental caries. It distinguished between sugars naturally integrated into the cellular structure of a food (intrinsic) from those, whether natural or added, which are free in the food (extrinsic).

It argued that this distinction was more logical and comprehensive than distinctions such as that between "added" and "natural" sugars. It noted (para. 2.6) that

"this difference in physical location influenced [the sugars] availability for bacterial metabolism in the mouth . . . ."

and concluded that

"if the prevalence of dental caries in the UK is to be reduced further it will be necessary to reduce the amount and frequency of consumption of non-milk extrinsic sugars" (para. 6.13).

We are not aware of any other official report which has made a distinction between "natural" and "added" sugars.

Visitors (National Health Service Treatment)

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many visitors from overseas were treated by the National Health Service in each year since 1980; and what was the cost.

Mr. Freeman: We do not hold information centrally on the number of overseas visitors treated by the National Health Service or the cost of their treatment. Such visitors are normally charged for hospital treatment unless they are from a country with which we have a reciprocal agreement.

Health Authorities, Yorkshire

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what is hospital expenditure per head for each of the regional health authorities in Yorkshire and Humberside for each of the last 10 years;

(2) if he will give the figures for hospital expenditure per head of population for each Yorkshire and Humberside health authority for each year since 1979.

Mr. Freeman: Figures of revenue expenditure per head of population on hospital services (HS) and on hospital and community health services (HCHS) for the district health authorities providing health services in Yorkshire and Humberside are shown in the table for the years since the establishment of those authorities on 1 April 1982. I should point out that the table includes all the district health authorities comprising the Yorkshire health region with the addition of Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield health authorities which form part of the Trent health region.

Total revenue expenditure per resident for hospital services (HS) and hospital and community health services (HCHS)

1982-1983

£ cash

District health authorities	*HS*	*HCHS*
Hull	126	160
East Yorkshire	149	171
Grimsby	107	126
Scunthorpe	84	102
Northallerton	68	97
York	146	184
Scarborough	91	110
Harrogate	137	154
Bradford	136	159
Airedale	119	139
Calderdale	113	136
Huddersfield	142	170
Dewsbury	98	118
Leeds Western	171	184
Leeds Eastern	156	184
Wakefield	228	259
Pontefract	98	118
Barnsley	98	120
Doncaster	114	133
Rotherham	89	109
Sheffield	200	224

1983-1984

£ cash

District health authorities	*HS*	*HCHS*
Hull	134	171
East Yorkshire	157	181
Grimsby	121	142
Scunthorpe	90	109
Northallerton	73	105
York	144	183
Scarborough	97	117
Harrogate	151	170
Bradford	143	167
Airedale	124	147
Calderdale	119	144
Huddersfield	146	176
Dewsbury	103	123
Leeds Western	184	204
Leeds Eastern	167	192
Wakefield	236	273
Pontefract	107	126
Barnsley	105	127
Doncaster	120	141
Rotherham	95	117
Sheffield	216	241

1984-1985

£ cash

District health authorities	*HS*	*HCHS*
Hull	144	184
East Yorkshire	161	187
Grimsby	129	152
Scunthorpe	98	119
Northallerton	77	111
York	150	191
Scarborough	104	127
Harrogate	156	178
Bradford	149	176
Airedale	132	155
Calderdale	125	152
Huddersfield	154	184

District health authorities	HS	HCHS
Dewsbury	107	130
Leeds Western	196	218
Leeds Eastern	176	205
Wakefield	258	293
Pontefract	111	135
Barnsley	113	138
Doncaster	127	150
Rotherham	103	126
Sheffield	229	256

1985-86

£ cash

District health authorities	HS	HCHS
Hull	152	193
East Yorkshire	165	193
Grimsby	152	176
Scunthorpe	107	130
Northallerton	80	116
York	154	198
Scarborough	111	138
Harrogate	161	184
Bradford	154	182
Airedale	145	170
Calderdale	133	161
Huddersfield	163	195
Dewsbury	114	139
Leeds Western	208	232
Leeds Eastern	190	220
Wakefield	270	307
Pontefract	119	145
Barnsley	120	146
Doncaster	133	157
Rotherham	112	136
Sheffield	243	271

1986-87

£ cash

District health authorities	HS	HCHS
Hull	164	210
East Yorkshire	168	198
Grimsby	165	194
Scunthorpe	110	135
Northallerton	86	125
York	163	211
Scarborough	122	151
Harrogate	171	196
Bradford	165	195
Airedale	152	177
Calderdale	140	173
Huddersfield	171	206
Dewsbury	121	149
Leeds Western	222	247
Leeds Eastern	206	237
Wakefield	282	321
Pontefract	129	159
Barnsley	134	162
Doncaster	145	174
Rotherham	124	152
Sheffield	262	294

1987-88

£ cash

District health authorities	HS	HCHS
Hull	178	236
East Yorkshire	175	212
Grimsby	172	207
Scunthorpe	120	151
Northallerton	94	139
York	167	225
Scarborough	129	167
Harrogate	178	211
Bradford	175	214
Airedale	158	191
Calderdale	149	187
Huddersfield	181	224
Dewsbury	125	162
Leeds Western	246	275
Leeds Eastern	218	263
Wakefield	297	339
Pontefract	135	172
Barnsley	141	178
Doncaster	155	191
Rotherham	137	170
Sheffield	273	322

1988-1989

£ cash

District health authorities	HS	HCHS
Hull	198	265
East Yorkshire	181	223
Grimsby	186	227
Scunthorpe	134	171
Northallerton	99	145
York	179	242
Scarborough	143	185
Harrogate	190	230
Bradford	191	237
Airedale	167	209
Calderdale	163	208
Huddersfield	197	248
Dewsbury	138	181
Leeds Western	260	301
Leeds Eastern	252	301
Wakefield	317	368
Pontefract	141	187
Barnsley	158	199
Doncaster	170	215
Rotherham	151	188
Sheffield	307	357

Sources:

(a) Annual accounts of the named health authorities.

(b) Mid-year estimates of resident populations 1982 to 1988 (Office of Population, Censuses and Surveys).

Notes:

1. Hospital and community health services (HCHS) covers total expenditure including that on hospital, community health and where applicable patient transport (i.e. ambulance), blood transfusion and other services. District capital expenditure and expenditure on family practitioner services is excluded.
2. The table also excludes all revenue and capital expenditure incurred by the Yorkshire and Trent regional health authorities on behalf of their regions as a whole. Such revenue expenditure on health and community health services was equivalent to about £7 and £14 per head for the Yorkshire and Trent regions respectively in 1988-89.
3. Significant variations in expenditure figures per head of population at district level arise principally because:
   (i) people travel across district boundaries for treatment and sub-regional resource allocations reflect the pattern of service provision locally;
   (ii) the population figures used make no allowance for people resident in one district who receive treatment in another or for the differences in morbidity and age/sex structure of particular populations.

Self-governing Hospital Trusts

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the amount of money allocated for assisting self-governing hospital trusts for 1990-91; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The total available in 1990-91 for NHS review-related initiatives is just over £300 million. So far no resources have been allocated to regions specifically for work on NHS trusts.

Personal Social Services

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list for each of the last 10 years *(a)* the gross sum for expenditure on the personal social services in England assumed in the rate support grant settlement and *(b)* the actual outturn; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: The table sets out details of the provision in the rate support grant settlement and actual expenditure on the personal social services in England for the period 1981-82 to 1989-90. Comparable figures for the rate support grant provision are not readily available for earlier years. The outturn figure for 1989-90 is based on local authority budget estimates.

£ million

	Provision	*Outturn*
1981-82	1,551	1,616
1982-83	1,857	1,967
1983-84	2,017	2,132
1984-85	2,156	2,271
1985-86	2,328	2,361
1986-87	2,521	2,628
1987-88	2,843	2,964
1988-89	3,031	3,264
1989-90	3,336	3,603

It is of course the responsibility of each local authority to determine its own spending priorities, in the light of legislative requirements and of its own knowledge of local needs, within the overall resources available.

Hepatitis B

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many health authorities actively offer vaccination against hepatitis B for those identified as belonging to high risk groups.

Mr. Freeman: This information is not held centrally.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make it his policy to include refuse collectors among the high risk groups for whom vaccination against the hepatitis B virus is recommended.

Mr. Freeman: It is not our intention to do so.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what advice his Department has issued to sexually transmitted diseases clinics regarding vaccination of patients and staff against the hepatitis B virus.

Mr. Freeman: The Department has issued the following advice on hepatitis B vaccination to health authorities whose responsibilities include genito-urinary medicine clinics:

(i) Chief Medical Officer's letter 1982—CMO(82)13;
(ii) Executive letter 1988—EL(88)P/125.

Advice on hepatitis B and other vaccinations is also contained in the memorandum "Immunisation against Infectious Disease" which is prepared for the health departments by the joint committee on vaccination and immunisation (JCVI). It is issued free to all doctors, including consultants in charge of GUM clinics.

The Health Education Authority publishes a booklet "Guide to A Healthy Sex Life" which includes information on hepatitis B vaccination. The authority is reviewing this and other publications on sexually transmitted diseases.

Copies of all these documents are available in the Library.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions he has had with organisations representing medical staff regarding the risks of contracting the hepatitis B virus and the availability of vaccination.

Mr. Freeman: No such discussions have been held.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information he has as to the number of drug addicts who have been vaccinated against the hepatitis B virus.

Mr. Freeman: This information is not held centrally.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information he has as to the prevalence of the practice of offering the hepatitis B vaccine after an incident in which the patient may have contracted the virus; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: Reports on needlestick or other injuries where hepatitis immunoglobulin has been given are collated by the PHLS communicable disease surveillance centre. The reports for 1989 (provisional data) show that hepatitis B vaccination was recommended in 62 per cent., not recommended in 11 per cent. and in 27 per cent. this information was not recorded on the reporting form.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information he has regarding incidents in which refuse collectors have been tested for infection by the hepatitis B virus after being wounded by discarded needles in refuse.

Mr. Freeman: This information is not held centrally.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps his Department is taking to ensure that drug addicts dispose of used needles in a safe manner.

Mr. Freeman: The Department of Health has made over £14 million available to health authorities in 1989-90 to enable drug services to expand and develop in such a way as to make contact with more drug misusers in order to offer help and advice on safer behaviour.

Money from this allocation is used to fund exchange schemes, which encourage drug misusers to return their used equipment when obtaining sterile needles and syringes. There are about 120 such schemes in England.

In addition, we are monitoring arrangements in Scotland whereby drug misusers are provided with personal sharps containers for the return of used equipment to a safe disposal facility. Some English drug services are also issuing personal containers. We know of some other experimental disposal facilities such as "hole in the wall" sharps boxes, deliberately located in areas where needles and syringes are discarded.

Cardiothoracic Surgery

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he intends to provide a substantive reply to the question tabled by the hon. Member for Fylde for priority written answer on 6 March about specialist units carrying out cardiothoracic surgery.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: I gave my hon. Friend a substantive reply to his question on 16 March 1990.

Prescribing Analyses and Costs

Mr. Michael Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) why there has been no dispensing information level 1 from PACT since September 1989;

(2) why there has been no prescribing information level 1 from PACT since September 1989.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Level 1 PACT reports are issued on a quarterly cycle to all prescribing and dispensing general practitioners. Reports have been issued on time since September 1989 to all FPCs and GPs.

Drug Costs

Mr. Norman Hogg: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list those drugs which on an average doctor's prescription cost less than the prescription charge.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: A list setting out those preparations which had an average net ingredient cost per prescription of less than the prescription charge in 1988 —the latest year for which figures are available—has been placed in the Library. The list shows preparations in an abbreviated form, but has an explanatory list of abbreviations attached. It is possible to produce a list containing the full names of preparations only at disproportionate cost.

The list contains 2,323 preparations—less than one third of the 7,124 different preparations dispensed by pharmacies and appliance contractors in that year. The net ingredient cost does not represent the full cost to the NHS of dispensing a prescription, this being made up, when prescriptions are dispensed by pharmacies, of the net ingredient cost, less discount, plus dispensing fees, on-cost and container allowance. Because of the extensive exemption arrangements, over 75 per cent. of prescriptions are dispensed free.

Road Accidents

Mr. Adley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will estimate the cost to the National Health Service, for the latest year for which figures are available, of all road accidents.

Mr. Freeman: Data on the actual cost to the National Health Service in England of road accidents is not collected by the Department. However, the Department of Transport has estimated the medical and ambulance costs associated with the treatment of road accident victims in Great Britain at around £160 million in 1988.

Newton Lodge Secure Unit

Mr. O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether, in view of the absconding of a patient on the evening of 11 March from the Newton Lodge secure unit, he will initiate an inquiry into security at Newton Lodge; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: This is a local matter for the health authority concerned. I have written to Sir Bryan Askew, chairman of Yorkshire regional health authority, to alert him that the hon. Member may contact him.

Surrogacy Arrangements Act 1985

Sir Trevor Skeet: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many prosecutions have been undertaken under the Surrogacy Arrangements Act for negotiating commercial arrangements contrary to section 2.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: None.

Sir Trevor Skeet: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what records and information he has of the surrogacy arrangements reached between interested parties.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: None.

Sir Trevor Skeet: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether Her Majesty's Government propose any amending legislation to the Surrogacy Arrangements Act 1985; and whether he is prepared to put into regulations the ethical guidelines issued by the British Medical Association.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill currently before Parliament contains an amendment to the Surrogacy (Arrangements) Act 1985 to make surrogacy contracts unenforceable, an issue referred to in the ethical guidelines recently issued by the British Medical Association. Matters of this kind are generally best left to codes of practice such as that which clause 25 of the Bill will require the new authority to prepare.

Energy Conservation

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what studies he has commissioned into the relative energy conservation merits of *(a)* pre-world war one, *(b)* inter-war, *(c)* post-war and *(d)* new hospital buildings; what further studies he will commission into this subject; and if he will publish any available information or figures.

Mr. Freeman: The monitoring of energy efficiency in NHS hospitals in England and Wales is a continuous process. The data produced by the NHS does not distinguish between the variety of buildings within the estate.

Studies in England have majored on the development of low energy hospital buildings with the object of minimising energy consumption. The results of these studies are being used to promote energy efficiency in all new buildings and where appropriate in existing buildings. In 1985 the Welsh Office assumed responsibility for energy matters in Wales.

Dentists

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement outlining the guarantees which dentists are required to provide to patients on National Health Service work; and if he will further state any conclusions from these responsibilities in respect of dentures.

Mr. Freeman: If after investigation by its dental services committee a family practitioner committee considers that a dentist has acted in breach of his terms of service, it may recommend the recovery from the dentist of any expenses reasonably and necessarily incurred by the patient as a result of the dentist's failure, and pay such sum to the patient.

Any complaint relating solely to the fit and efficiency of a denture may be considered by a denture conciliation committee set up by the FPC. This committee may eventually recommend that the contribution made by the patient to the cost of the denture should be repaid, either wholly or in part, where expenses have been incurred in obtaining dentures from another dentist.

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions he has had recently with the British Dental Association and the Dental Laboratories Association in relation to dentures and denturism; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: We have not had any recent discussions with the British Dental Association or the Dental Laboratories Association about the provision of dentures or denturism, nor have we been requested to do so.

Junior Hospital Doctors

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what currently are the hours of work of junior hospital doctors in each regional health authority area in England and Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* The information is not readily available in the form requested and I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) on 8 February at column *770*. I shall be meeting representatives of the Joint Consultants Committee, the British Medical Association and NHS management before Easter to consider how to take this important issue forward.

Neuroblastoma

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to his answer to the right hon. Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe, *Official Report*, 12 December 1989, column *631*, what is his estimate of the cost of producing the requested information on the number of deaths from neuroblastoma.

Mr. Freeman *[holding answer 14 March 1990]:* Approximately £1,600. National mortality statistics do not routinely identify neuroblastoma as a cause of death, and this figure represents the estimated staff cost of identifying and extracting this information from the death certificates of all children who have died from cancer.

DHA Chairmen

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will place in the Library for each chairman of each district health authority, including new appointments, the curriculum vitae and relevant qualifications submitted in relation to their appointment.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley *[holding answer 15 March 1990]:* District health authority chairmen are appointed on the basis of their personal qualities and experience. We do not look for any specific qualifications. We look for people of ability with the knowledge and drive to provide leadership to the officers of their authority. They must also hold a deep commitment to the NHS. The chairmen's curricula vitae are submitted to us in confidence.

ENVIRONMENT

Crown Suppliers

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the estimated value of the work the Property Services Agency and the Ministry of Defence have guaranteed to award TCS over the next three years.

Mr. Chope: Neither Department has given any guarantees to the Crown Suppliers in relation to future purchases from it of supplies, although PSA is discussing with the Crown Suppliers a commercial agreement which would involve PSA undertaking to buy routine furniture and furnishings for PSA's own offices subject to the requirements of the EC and GATT rules and to PSA's continuing satisfaction on service and prices. The estimated value of such an undertaking is estimated to be £1 million in each of the years 1990-91, 1991-92 and 1992-93. The Ministry of Defence's plans are a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment why the Property Services Agency and the Ministry of Defence were asked to guarantee TCS work.

Mr. Chope: The Property Services Agency and the Ministry of Defence were not asked to guarantee TCS work. They are each discussing commercial agreements with the Crown Suppliers because agreements were considered likely to be to the mutual advantage of the parties involved.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Atkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will state the expenditure of the Dorset county council and Bournemouth borough council for 1989-90 and 1990-91; what the domestic rate poundage and average rate for the Bournemouth ratepayer was for 1989-90 and what it would have been for 1990-91; what the community charge for Bournemouth would have been for 1989-90 and what it is for 1990-91; and if he will make a statement on the outcome taking account of the revenue support grant for both authorities.

Mr. Chope: Paragraphs 3.1(i) to (v) of the Revenue Support Grant Transition Report (England) explain the calculation made of the amount of income received by each local authority in 1989-90 comparable with 1990-91 levels. The calculation produces a 1989-90 income of £257·3 million for Dorset county council and £15·6 million for Bournemouth borough council.

In 1989-90 the average domestic rate poundage in Bournemouth was 219·5p, producing an average domestic rate bill—before any allowance for rebates—of £480.

Illustrative 1989-90 community charges were published in July 1989 and showed a figure of £234 in Bournemouth, after taking account of the transitional arrangements.

Information for 1990-91 based on returns received from local authorities will be placed in the Library shortly.

It is our intention, when community charges are finally set, to say what the increase would have been in domestic rates had that taken the place of the community charge.

Mr. Robert B. Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) whether he will set out a table

showing for Hertfordshire county council *(a)* the budget for net expenditure for 1989-90, *(b)* the budget for net expenditure for 1990-91, *(c)* the increase in net expenditure between 1989-90 and 1990-91, *(d)* the net addition to balances budgeted for 1990-91 and *(e)* the percentage rate increase that would have occurred had the domestic rating system still been in place and no change in domestic rateable value occurred;

(2) whether he will set out a table showing (1) for Durham county council and (2) for Darlington borough council *(a)* the budget for net expenditure for 1989-90, *(b)* the budget for net expenditure for 1990-91, *(c)* the increase in net expenditure between 1989-90 and 1990-91, *(d)* the net addition to balances budgeted for 1990-91 and *(e)* the percentage rate increase that would have occurred had the domestic rating system still been in place and no change in domestic rateable value occurred;

Mr. Chope: Net current expenditure in 1989-90 for these authorities is as follows:

Net current expenditure 1989-90

	£ million
Hertfordshire county council	498·786
Durham county council	313·538
Darlington borough council	8·847

Budgeted net current expenditure and budgeted net additions to balances in 1990-91 are not yet available. It is our intention when community charges are finally set to say what the increases would have been if domestic rates had taken the place of the community charge.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish a table showing for Lancashire the estimated percentage of the adult population, including spouses, now paying rates, the percentage expected to be chargeable to the poll tax and the number expected to contribute the same as or less than at present.

Mr. Chope: The information requested is not available.

Mr. Tredinnick: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what recent representations he has received about the replacement of the community charge with a system of raising local government finance based on a local income tax.

Mr. Chope: I continue to receive representations on a wide range of issues relating to the abolition of domestic rates.

Mr. Hayward: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will list the 10 London boroughs with the largest per capita overspend against his Department's standard spending assessment; and if he will indicate that overspend;

(2) if he will list the 10 metropolitan boroughs with the largest per capita overspending against his Department's standard spending assessment; and if he will indicate that overspend;

(3) if he will list the 10 shire counties with the largest per capita overspend against his Department's standard spending assessment; and if he will indicate that overspend.

Mr. Chope: I intend to place a summary of the information returned from local authorities in the Library of the House after information has been received from all authorities.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give for each district authority of Humberside *(a)* the safety net figure, *(b)* the low rateable value allowance, *(c)* the increase or decrease of standard spending assessment and grant-related expenditure and *(d)* the loss or gain from unified business rate, all on a per capita basis.

Mr. Chope: The information requested is shown in the following table:

£/adult

	Safety net receipt *(a)*	*Low rateable values area grant* *(b)*	*Cash change GRE to SSA* *(c)*	*Business rate income* *(d)*
Beverley	—	—	6	293
Boothferry	70	17	25	293
Cleethorpes	46	—	−1	293
Glanford	23	—	17	293
Great Grimsby	46	—	−5	293
Holderness	33	—	14	293
Kingston upon Hull	74	25	−6	293
East Yorkshire	67	11	12	293
Scunthorpe	65	—	−2	293

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give for each district authority the amount taken out of reserves by that authority and, where relevant, the county authority and per capita effect on the poll tax in that authority area.

Mr. Chope: I intend to place a summary of the information returned from local authorities in the Library of the House after information has been received from all authorities.

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give the estimated total amount of local government spending per head *(a)* for 1989-90 and *(b)* 1990-91 for each of the counties of Somerset, Devon and Dorset, each of the London boroughs of Lambeth, Camden, Islington, Wandsworth and Westminster and each of the metropolitan boroughs of Birmingham, Bradford, Manchester and Sheffield.

Mr. Chope: Following is the available information. I intend to place a summary of the information on 1990-91 budgets in the Library of the House when information has been received from all authorities.

Net current expenditure[2] 1989-90

	Per head[1] £
Somerset	508
Devon	473
Dorset	427
Lambeth	564
Camden	495
Islington	501
Wandsworth	432
Westminster	631
Birmingham	583
Bradford	632
Manchester	704
Sheffield	563

[1] Using Office of Population Censuses and Surveys mid-year estimates of total population to derive per capita values.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he anticipates informing local authorities of his definition of mentally impaired for the purposes of community charge rebates.

Mr. Chope: People who are severely mentally impaired are exempt from the personal community charge providing they are in receipt of one of a number of qualifying benefits and a certificate from a registered medical practitioner, stating that for the purposes of the community charge they are severely mentally impaired.

The Personal Community Charge (Exemption for the Severely Mentally Impaired) Order 1990 was made on 6 March. The order amends the qualifying benefits and the definition of severely mentally impaired, in order to bring in such people as those suffering from Alzheimer's disease and senile dementia. Copies have been sent to charging authorities and placed in the Library of the House of Commons.

People who are exempt from the personal community charge do not need to claim community charge benefit.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when his Department expects to inform local authorities which 19-year-olds are on appropriately defined full-time courses for the purposes of entitlement to community charge rebates.

Mr. Chope: My Department wrote to all charging authorities on 16 November 1989 explaining the range of courses it intends to define in regulations, for the purposes of extending exemption from the personal community charge to certain people under the age of 20 who are in full-time further but not higher education. A copy of the letter is in the Library of the House of Commons. Regulations will come into force by 1 April 1990.

People who are exempt from the personal community charge do not need to claim community charge benefit.

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what estimate he has made of *(a)* the national sum to be collected from ministers of religion and their immediate families in respect of the community charge and *(b)* by how much this is likely to differ from receipts by local authorities from rating demands on them or on church bodies responsible for their accommodation.

Mr. Chope: The information requested is not available.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give for each district authority in England *(a)* the increase or decrease in Government assessment of spending levels, standard spending assessment against grant-related expenditure, for that authority and each authority contributing to the poll tax total, *(b)* his estimate of the number of households qualifying for transitional relief and *(c)* the safety net figure for that authority.

Mr. Chope: I have today placed in the Library a table showing the available information. In calculating the change between adjusted grant-related expenditure and standard spending assessment at column *(a)*, the grant-related expenditures and standard spending assessments of precepting authorities have been allocated between their constituent authorities in proportion to relevant population. I have no estimates of numbers qualifying for transitional relief in individual authorities.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what assumptions he made in setting his estimate of the community charge about the size of the standard charge for second homes.

Mr. Chope: In calculating the community charge for standard spending of £278, my right hon. Friend has made no assumption about the standard charge.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, with reference to paragraph 3.29 of his Revenue Support Grant Distribution Report (England), what effect the choice of the figure of *(a)* £7·11 and *(b)* £1·37 has on (i) the level of the standard spending assessment for Humberside and (ii) his estimate of the level of poll tax for Great Grimsby.

Mr. Chope: The figures referred to in the Revenue Support Grant Distribution Report (England) contributed *(a)* £9 and *(b)* £5 per relevant adult to the standard spending assessment for Humberside. On (ii) I propose to place in the Library of the House a summary of the information returned on community charges for individual authorities, when this information has been received from all authorities.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, with reference to paragraph 3.32 of his Revenue Support Grant Distribution Report (England), what effect the choice of the figure of *(a)* £1,928·93 and *(b)* £13·05 has on (i) the level of the standard spending assessment for Humberside and (ii) his estimate of the level of poll tax for Great Grimsby.

Mr. Chope: The figures referred to in the Revenue Support Grant Distribution Report (England) contributed *(a)* £28 and *(b)* £2 per relevant adult to the standard spending assessment for Humberside. On (ii) I propose to place in the Library of the House a summary of the information returned on community charges for individual authorities, when this information has been received from all authorities.

Mr. Allan Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his estimate of the community charge which each county council would have set if it had been required to do so in respect of *(a)* a budget set according to his Department's guidelines and *(b)* the actual budget determined; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: County councils do not set community charges. Revenue support grant and business rates are

paid into the collection fund in each non-metropolitan area in support of the expenditure by both the county council and the district council. It is not possible to hypothecate these sums to county council or district council spending. As a result it is not possible to calculate hypothetical community charges for county councils.

Mr. Nellist: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has as to how many people in Coventry would be eligible for transitional protection on a poll tax of £394 per person; and if he will outline the methodology used to calculate the level of relief.

Mr. Chope: I have no information on the number of people in individual local authorities who are eligible for transitional relief. The basis for calculating the level of relief is set out in the practice note, "Community Charge: Transitional Relief Scheme for England". Copies of the practice note were placed in the Library when it was published in December 1989.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects to announce his decision on the arrangements for reimbursing local authorities for the costs of the community charge transitional relief scheme.

Mr. David Hunt: Local authorities will be reimbursed in full for the estimated £810 million which they would forgo in community charge income as a result of abating personal community charges for some 7·5 million charge payers over the next three years. Authorities will also be reimbursed for their reasonable costs incurred in preparing for and administering the scheme.

Following a study of these costs by KPMG Peat Marwick McLintock, management consultants, I announced proposals for these costs on 15 February. Following consultation with the local authority associations, I have decided to make the following arrangements.

Authorities' preparation costs for the scheme, largely for computer software, will be reimbursed in full on the basis of the actual expenditure incurred as confirmed by the authority's auditor. I estimate preparation costs to be about £7 million in total.

The general administrative costs which authorities will incur as a consequence of the scheme, in particular dealing with inquiries, will be reimbursed by a single flat rate payment of 27p per charge payer, with an allowance for higher costs in London. In inner London the rate will be 31p per charge payer and in outer London 30p per charge payer. The administrative costs grant will be about £9·5 million in total.

Applications by elderly or disabled persons for extra relief will be reimbursed at a rate of £3 per application made, which includes both successful and unsuccessful applications. In inner London the rate will be £3·60 and in outer London £3·45. Where an authority issues a second bill, which does not relate to a substitute charge, it will be reimbursed at a rate of 50p per bill for the cost of printing and postage.

The total cost of this package of grant aid is about £21 million. I believe that it fulfils the Government's commitment to meet in full authorities' reasonable costs incurred in preparing for and administering the community charge transitional relief scheme.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how much it would cost the Government to exempt all non-employed status YTS trainees with special training needs endorsements from paying the community charge.

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what would be the net cost of exempting all non-employed status YTS trainees with special training needs endorsements from paying the poll tax.

Mr. David Hunt *[holding answers 15 and 16 March 1990]:* The gross cost of exempting all non-employed status YTS trainees with special training needs endorsements would be about £5·6 million. This assumes a total of 15,500 such trainees liable to pay the charge. The information is not available to give a net cost to the Government. Virtually all non-employed trainees, and a proportion of employed trainees, will be entitled to community charge benefit.

Sports Clubs (Rating)

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the representations made to him by cricket clubs and cricket organisations requesting zero rating of cricket clubs for the business rate; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Dunnachie: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what consideration he has given to the position of sports clubs with additional rating relief in relation to the effect of the proposed business rate; and what action he proposes to take in this matter.

Mr. Chope: My right hon. Friend has received a number of representations from cricket and other sports clubs requesting relief from rating.

Charging authorities have discretion to grant up to 100 per cent. relief to sports clubs and certain other non-profit making organisations. Seventy-five per cent. of the cost of any relief given is borne by the national non-domestic rate pool. We have issued a practice note which gives charging authorities guidance on the criteria which they should take into account in the exercise of their powers.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what effect the new business rating system will have on the rate bills for sports facilities.

Mr. McAvoy: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has made an assessment of the effect of the new business rate upon sport and sports clubs; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: Contrary to the impression given recently in the press, the great majority of sports facilities will attract lower rate bills in real terms as a result of the introduction of the uniform business rate and the non-domestic revaluation.

There are 25,331 properties included in the category of sports grounds, sports stadia, playing fields and club houses in England in the draft rating lists deposited with charging authorities on 20 December. In 1990-91 average rate bills for these, including inflation but before transition, will increase by just 2·5 per cent. This is a fall of about 5 per cent. in real terms.

Certain kinds of facilities, many provided primarily on a commercial basis, will attract larger rises. There are 3,272 properties in the category of golf courses, swimming pools and tennis courts. Average rate bills for these facilities will rise by 20·5 per cent. and those for leisure and sports centres, of which there are 2,015 properties, by 30 per cent., again including inflation but before transition.

These figures take no account of rate relief: local authorities will continue to have discretion to grant up to 100 per cent. rate relief on property occupied by non-profit-making bodies. Seventy five per cent. of the cost of any relief given is borne by the national non-domestic rate pool. We have given authorities guidance on the criteria they should use in considering applications for relief.

Local Authorities (Staffing)

Mr. Riddick: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will set out a table showing for each year since 1979 *(a)* the full-time, *(b)* the part-time and *(c)* the total staffing levels of local authorities in England and Wales.

Mr. Chope: The information for England is listed in the table. For information on local authority staffing levels in Wales, I refer my hon. Friend to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

Staffing levels of local authorities in England at June

	Full-time	*Part-time*	*Total*
1979	1,626,362	886,231	2,512,593
1980	1,609,073	865,827	2,474,900
1981	1,577,866	843,090	2,420,956
1982	1,551,960	840,891	2,392,851
1983	1,553,663	851,785	2,405,448
1984	1,551,240	858,321	2,409,561
1985	1,545,469	873,824	2,419,293
1986	1,544,874	903,835	2,448,709
1987	1,549,917	940,601	2,490,518
1988	1,548,059	966,271	2,514,330
1989	1,506,175	947,471	2,453,646

Source: The Joint Staffing Watch for England.

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what were the totals of staff in post, expressed as full-time equivalents, in each of the past five years to the latest date for which figures are available for Somerset, Devon, Dorset, Hereford and Worcestershire, Kent, Essex, Lincolnshire and Norfolk; and how many there were in each case per head of the population on the latest census estimates.

Mr. Chope: Information on full-time equivalents at individual authority level is not collected centrally, but local authorities are required to make this information available locally.

County Councils (Staffing)

Mr. Oppenheim: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give details of the total number of staff employed by each county council in 1981-82 and in 1989-90 or the latest year for which figures are available and the percentage change in the number employed between these dates.

Mr. Chope: The information requested is as follows:

Authority	*Staff numbers*		*Percentage Change*
	June 1981	*June 1989*	
Avon	33,779	33,642	−0·4
Bedfordshire	20,107	19,876	−1·1
Berkshire	22,655	23,136	2·1
Buckinghamshire	20,540	21,905	6·6
Cambridgeshire	20,364	22,295	9·5
Cheshire	35,617	36,720	3·1
Cleveland	24,041	26,424	9·9
Cornwall and Scilly	13,621	15,514	13·9
Cumbria	18,192	19,029	4·6
Derbyshire	35,368	43,186	22·1
Devon	31,169	32,494	4·3
Dorset	17,777	19,524	9·8
Durham	23,488	24,690	5·1
East Sussex	22,065	21,716	−1·6
Essex	48,449	53,085	9·6
Gloucestershire	18,214	18,380	0·9
Hampshire	48,669	51,152	5·1
Hereford and Worcester	21,976	20,233	−7·9
Hertfordshire	37,894	[1]37,667	[1]−0·6
Humberside	33,229	36,026	8·4
Isle of Wight	4,134	4,211	1·9
Kent	45,903	43,040	−6·2
Lancashire	50,075	53,452	6·7
Leicestershire	28,444	33,278	17·0
Lincolnshire	17,347	17,322	−0·1
Norfolk	22,043	24,183	9·7
Northamptonshire	17,823	21,039	18·0
Northumberland	11,548	12,007	4·0
North Yorkshire	23,896	24,967	4·5
Nottinghamshire	35,332	39,028	10·5
Oxfordshire	18,604	16,796	−9·7
Shropshire	13,804	15,058	9·1
Somerset	14,572	17,546	20·4
Staffordshire	38,593	39,650	2·7
Suffolk	19,656	21,267	8·2
Surrey	28,263	26,350	−6·8
Warwickshire	17,873	18,456	3·3
West Sussex	20,039	21,693	8·3
Wiltshire	19,179	20,805	8·5

[1] June 1988 data used.

Source: Joint Staffing Watch for England.

The figures above are for general services only; they do not include law and order services. In some of the non-metropolitan counties the police function is carried out by a joint police authority.

Pollution (North Sea)

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he authorised a special briefing for the *Sunday Express* newspaper on the levels and causes of pollution of the North sea in advance of its issue of 4 March.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: With my approval, officials have given general background briefing on the North sea conference to a wide range of journalists.

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has on the contribution of pollution derived from the United Kingdom to the problem of algal blooms in the North sea.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: Eutrophication and algal blooms are a problem only in certain parts of the North sea along the eastern coastal seaboard, particularly in the Skaggerak. It is generally accepted that nutrients present in local run-off from intensive agriculture and discharges of sewage effluent can be a determining factor especially when receiving waters are shallow and slow moving.

Recent studies carried out by the Natural Environment Research Council's Institute of Oceanographic Science show that the United Kingdom does not contribute to this problem as continental seaboard water is kept separate from the rest of the North sea by more saline water flushing through from the English channel.

In addition, inputs of nitrogen, the most important nutrient to the sea from the United Kingdom, have shown no increasing trend in recent years and the IOS study shows that the central North sea, which would be influenced by United Kingdom nutrient inputs, show low levels, even in winter, when other areas have high levels.

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will outline his Department's responsibilities in respect of the North sea.

Mr. Trippier *[holding answer 15 March 1990]:* The Department has overall responsibility for co-ordinating the Government's policy input to the series of North sea conferences as well as housing the United Kingdom's North sea scientific task force co-ordinator who manages our scientific input into international work in preparing a fully updated quality status report for the North sea. This reflects the Department's general co-ordinating interest in respect of marine environmental matters, including those which lie within the responsibility of other Departments.

In addition, the Department also has specific policy responsibility for the water sewage industry, for bathing waters and for control of waste discharges by pipelines to rivers and coastal waters.

West Country Councils

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what was *(a)* the total spending and *(b)* the total amount of Government grant in Somerset, Devon and Dorset county councils in each of the past four years; what was the total amount raised in non-domestic rates in those years for each county; and what are his estimates of (i) spending, (ii) the total of Government grant and (iii) redistribution from the national business rate for each in 1990-91.

Mr. Chope: The available information is given in the table. Revenue support grant and receipts from the national non-domestic rate pool are not paid to county councils.

	Net current expenditure £ million	*Revenue grants*[1] *£ million*	*Non-domestic rates*[2] *£ million*
Somerset County Council			
1986-87	173·350	82·845	41·662
1987-88	193·597	89·608	45·687
1988-89	208·231	81·969	52·546
1989-90	232·345	93·550	59·102
Devon County Council			
1986-87	372·467	188·496	86·399
1987-88	407·749	204·013	94·374
1988-89	435·854	213·313	105·990
1989-90	483·103	211·710	115·651
Dorset County Council			
1986-87	219·597	75·080	59·160
1987-88	237·217	94·635	66·896
1988-89	263·430	92·349	73·177
1989-90	280·229	85·814	78·234

[1] Comprising block grant, specific and supplementary grants.
[2] Non-domestic contribution to the amount raised by the precept, gross of rate rebates.

Capital Finance Regulations

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will consider extending the list entitled "New Land or Building used for the Same Purposes in Schedule 2 of the draft Capital Finance Regulations" to include dwellings with particular reference to dwellings which need to be disposed of to facilitate a commercial redevelopment.

Mr. Chope: No.

Community Charge

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received about community charge capping.

Mr. Chope: The Department has received many representations about capping from hon. Members, local authorities and from the public, the vast majority of which have been to urge us to use our capping powers next year.

Red List

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the dangerous chemicals and substances currently on his Department's red list.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The following dangerous substances are currently on the red list:

Mercury and its compounds
Cadmium and its compounds
Gamma-Hexachlorocyclohexane
DDT
Pentachlorophenol
Hexachlorobenzene
Hexachlorobutadiene
Aldrin
Dieldrin
Endrin
Polychlorinated Biphenyls
Dichlorvos
1, 2-Dichloroethane

Trichlorobenzene
Atrazine
Simazine
Tributyltin compounds
Triphenyltin compounds
Trifluralin
Fenitrothion
Azinphos-methyl
Malathion
Endosulfan

Radiation (Cumbria)

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what were the environmental consequences in terms of spots of high radiation in Cumbria arising from the uranium fire in B/30 decanners in the 1970s.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The incident and its consequences are described by the National Radiological Protection Board in its report on "The Risks of Leukaemia and Other Cancers in Seascale from Radiation Exposure" (NRPB —171) prepared at the request of Sir Douglas Black's independent advisory group. I am arranging for a copy to be placed in the Library of the House.

Westminster City Council

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment in what way Westminster city council's role in funding the English National Opera and English National Ballet is reflected in its revenue support grant and uniform business rate funding in 1990-91; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: The revenue support grant and NNDR entitlements for 1990-91 for Westminster city council have been calculated on the same basis for all other charging authorities. The fact that they fund these two organisations has no bearing.

Mortgaged Property

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any plans to review the rights and obligations of mortgage lenders and borrowers in respect of renting out mortgaged property.

Mr. Chope: No. Arrangements for the letting of mortgaged property are essentially a matter for agreement between lender and borrower.

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has plans to bring forward legislation to prevent people from being evicted if they rent houses from others who fail to meet mortgage commitments.

Mr. Chope: No.

Property Services Agency

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what assessment he has made of the likely impact of the privatisation of the activities of the Property Services Agency on its staff; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: The terms and conditions of service of staff will be protected. Privatisation will not itself affect the number of staff required, and future staff numbers will depend on the success of the company in competition.

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will detail the measures being taken to ensure the commercial viability of those activities in which the Property Services Agency is currently involved and which it is the intention of the Property Services Agency Bill to privatise, prior to their privatisation; and if he will make a statement;

(2) whether any proof of commercial viability is required as a prerequisite to privatisation of the activities of the Property Services Agency; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: Departments will be untied from PSA from 1 April 1990. PSA will provide its services in competition with the private sector, and its future success will depend on the work which it wins. When PSA is privatised, any buyer will have satisfied himself that the company has a viable future.

Land Registers (Pollution)

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any plans to introduce legislation to ensure that local authorities compile comprehensive registers of land contaminated with toxic wastes and polluting chemicals.

Mr. Trippier: I shall shortly have before me a departmental working party report on the feasibility of establishing registers of contaminated land. My assessment of that report will include consideration of any matters that might require legislation.

Lake Baikal

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if, following the experience gained in the United Kingdom with the Red List of chemicals developed for pollution control, he has any plans to offer assistance to the Soviet Union in cleaning up Lake Baikal.

Mr. Trippier: The Government share the international concern about the state of Lake Baikal and are well aware of USSR thinking on plans for tackling the problem. A representative from Her Majesty's Government will be attending a meeting in Irkutzk organised by the USSR authorities starting on 5 April. We will be studying the report of that meeting very carefully.

Chlorofluorocarbons

Mr. Tredinnick: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what new measures he has taken recently to encourage the safe disposal of chlorofluorocarbons and their containers.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: My hon. Friend the Minister for the Environment and Countryside recently visited ICI in Runcorn to launch its nationwide network to recycle the chlorofluorocarbon from the refrigerant in domestic refrigerators.

K factor

Mrs. Anne Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what assumptions about infrastructure charges were made for the purposes of setting the K factor for the water and sewerage undertakers.

Mr. Trippier: My right hon. Friends the Secretary of State and Secretary of State for Wales determined Ks for

the 10 water and sewerage undertakers on the assumption that infrastructure charges would be payable on all new connections for domestic purposes in accordance with the limits set by the Secretary of State. The infrastructure charge limits for the 10 companies are as follows:

Water services companies: water and sewerage infrastructure charges (at 1990-91 prices)

	Water £	*Sewerage* £
Anglian Water Services Limited	479	597
Southern Water Services Limited	365	485
Thames Water Utilities Limited	403	337
Yorkshire Water Services Limited	529	626
Northumbrian Water Limited	111	240
North West Water Limited	198	338
Severn Trent Water Limited	498	356
South West Water Services Limited	654	557
Dwr Cymru Cyfyngedig	259	332
Wessex Water Services Limited	551	983

Bristol Channel (Sewage Discharge)

Mr. Speller: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many permits for the discharge of new or part-treated sewage into the Bristol channel he has authorised; how long these permits last; and if he has any plans to renew them.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: It is for the National Rivers Authority to issue consents for the discharge of sewage to the Bristol channel. Details of consents are held on the NRA register established by section 117 of the Water Act 1989.

Local Authority Employees (Pension Rights)

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he intends to publish guidelines governing the treatment of former periods of part-time service in assessing the pension rights of local authority employees.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: It is expected that draft regulations on this subject will be published for consultation in the next few weeks with the object of making regulations by the summer. The regulations will be retrospective in effect.

Local Authorities (Company Interests)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what progress his Department has made in preparing for the implementation of part V of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (Local Authority Interests in Companies).

Mr. David Hunt: My Department is today sending to the local authority associations a draft of an order under part IV and an extract of a draft order under part V of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 which deal with the application to companies in which the local authority has an interest of the new capital finance system for local authorities.

These drafts make it clear that the new system of regulation of local authority interests in companies will apply from 1 July 1990, rather than from 1 April 1990 as earlier envisaged.

A draft of the remainder of the order under part V and of the directions for exemption and approval under that part will be sent to the local authority associations for comment shortly.

Estuaries

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what studies his Department has commissioned into the environmental effects of constructing barrages in English and Welsh estuaries; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory *[holding answer 13 March 1990]:* Studies on the environmental effects of constructing barrages in English and Welsh estuaries are being undertaken as part of a wide-ranging programme of research and development related to the proposals for barrages on the Mersey and Severn in England and Cardiff bay and Conwy in Wales. This work is funded by the Government, the electricity industry and the barrage promoters. The Nature Conservancy Council has also undertaken relevant work and my Department is kept informed on the progress of these environmental impact studies.

Eutrophication

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list, for each year since 1987, all the monitoring controls for eutrophication carried out on the coasts of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory *[holding answer 13 March 1990]:* As a consequence of the second North sea conference in London in November 1987, the Department of the Environment and the Scottish Development Department wrote to water authorities in England and Wales and river purification boards in Scotland to establish if evidence of eutrophication could be found in coastal waters. Similar surveys were made by the Department of Agriculture for Northern Ireland. These surveys have shown that evidence of eutrophication is confined to a handful of small, localised inshore locations.

For this reason no regular and formal monitoring of eutrophication—algal blooms—is conducted or planned in the United Kingdom. Attention instead is being focused on trends in nutrients levels in coastal waters and detailed examination of fluxes of nutrients through estuaries. A regular monitoring programme is maintained by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food along the eastern coast of the United Kingdom for paralytic shellfish poisoning in mussels. This is caused by blooms of certain algal species which produce natural toxins. The occurrence of paralytic shellfish poisoning on this coastline has a long but intermittent history and is not believed to be linked to eutrophication.

Caravan Sites Act

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has now received all outstanding views following consultation relating to the application from Bradford council for designation under the Caravan Sites Act 1968; when he expects to reach a decision on the application; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope *[holding answer 15 March 1990]:* I have now received the views of all bodies consulted as part of Bradford's application for designation and it is my intention to announce my decision very soon.

Carbon Dioxide Emissions

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what are the current and projected carbon dioxide emissions for the United Kingdom, broken down by fuel source, in the sectors *(a)* industrial, *(b)* commercial, *(c)* public sector, *(d)* residential, *(e)* transport and *(f)* other.

Mr. Trippier *[holding answer 15 March 1990]:* Emissions of carbon dioxide by the sectors requested and by fuel type for 1987 are given in the table below. Estimates of carbon dioxide in the future will depend on a large number of factors which are difficult to predict. Forecasting models are being developed by Warren Spring laboratory on DOE's behalf, but no data are yet available.

Estimated emissions of carbon dioxide as carbon in the United Kingdom by type of fuel and emission source (million tonnes), 1987.

Emission source	*Fuel type*			
	Solid[1]	*Liquid*[2]	*Gas*[3]	*Total*
Industrial[4]	8·2	6·8	6·5	31·5
Commercial and public[5]	1·4	3·1	4·6	9·1
Domestic	6·6	1·6	16·5	24·7
Transport[6]	0·003	28·3	0·0	28·3
Other[7]	51·4	6·2	2·4	60·0
Total	67·6	46·0	40·0	[8]153·6

Source: Warren Spring laboratory.

[1] Solid fuel includes coal, coke, anthracite, smokeless solid fuels (SSF) and petroleum coke.

[2] Liquid fuels include motor spirit, DERV, fuel oil, burning oil, petroleum gas and other petroleum.

[3] Gas is primarily natural gas but includes small amounts of liquified petroleum gas, other petroleum gas, coke oven gas, blast furnace gas, and town gas.

[4] Includes collieries, iron and steel, production of SSF, coke and town gas, and other industry.

[5] Includes public services, other non-industrial and miscellaneous.

[6] Includes shipping and civil aviation.

[7] Agriculture, power stations and refineries.

[8] Excludes emissions from non-fuel incineration, gas flaring and cement.

Genetically Engineered Organisms

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has made an assessment of the impact on the environment of releases of genetically engineered organisms in other countries.

Mr. Trippier *[holding answer 15 March 1990]:* Information on such releases is available via the European Communities, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the United Nations environment programme, and other international fora in which the United Kingdom participates. This information is monitored on a regular basis and has been taken fully into account in developing proposals for the control of the release of genetically modified organisms in this country.

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has had in respect of the plans announced in the Environmental Protection Bill to regulate genetically modified organisms.

Mr. Trippier *[holding answer 15 March 1990]:* A wide range of representations were received in response to the consultation paper on the matters which form part VI of the Bill—genetically modified organisms; hon. Members have made various representations in the course of debates on the Bill; and my Department has continued to benefit from the views of the Royal Commission on environmental pollution.

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he last discussed the regulation of genetically engineered organisms with his European Community counterparts; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier *[holding answer 15 March 1990]:* My Department has participated fully in discussions on the Council directives on the deliberate release to the environment of genetically modified organisms and the contained use of genetically modified micro-organisms, most recently at the Environment Council on 19 September 1989, at which a political agreement was reached on the deliberate release directive.

Standard Spending Assessment

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will place in the Library the indicator values used in the calculation of standard spending assessment for 1990-91 for all shire counties in England and Wales.

Mr. Chope *[holding answer 16 March 1990]:* I have placed in the Library today a set of tables giving the required information for English shire counties. The equivalent information for the shire counties in Wales is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he intends to produce a green book on standard spending assessment similar to that for grant-related expenditure assessment.

Mr. Chope *[holding answer 16 March 1990]:* My right hon. Friend has made no decision yet on this matter. He intends to seek the views of local authority representatives shortly.

Bankside Power Station

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has on the archaeological significance of the site of Bankside power station.

Mr. Trippier *[holding answer 16 March 1990]:* Discoveries made during the construction of the power station comprised pockets of Tudor debris as well as evidence of leather manufacturing but no finds of significance.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether Bankside power station is a listed building.

Mr. Trippier *[holding answer 16 March 1990]:* No.

Covent Garden

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received about the possible archaeological significance of works in Covent Garden proposed by the Royal Opera House.

Mr. Trippier *[holding answer 16 March 1990]:* None.

Rugby League (Taylor Report)

Mr. Stott: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he intends to meet representatives of the Rugby League to discuss the Taylor report.

Mr. John Patten: I have been asked to reply.

We shall be writing to the Rugby League shortly inviting it to discuss the implications of Lord Justice Taylor's recommendations, including those on providing all-seated accommodation at rugby league grounds. We shall also be inviting representatives of other sports to similar discussions.

Hooliganism

Mr. Hunter: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a further statement on the policies which he intends to implement regarding football hooliganism and related issues.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: I have been asked to reply.

The Government are vigorously supporting the police in their operations against football hooliganism. We are developing the full potential of the newly formed national football intelligence unit to enable the police to target more effectively their resources on hooligan ringleaders. We are encouraging the enhancement of optical evidence-gathering systems at football grounds in this country and the training of their operators.

British police have been and will remain in close liaison with the Italian authorities on policing supporters from this country during the World cup in Italy in June and July. Currently about 60 carabinieri are visiting the Police Staff college and local forces to familiarise themselves with the policing of British football supporters.

Part II of the Football Spectators Act 1989 will be implemented shortly. This will enable courts to impose restriction orders on those convicted of football hooliganism to prevent them from travelling to key matches abroad.

In his final report on the Hillsborough inquiry Lord Justice Taylor recommended the creation of some new offences specific to behaviour at football grounds, and recommended that consideration be given to applying attendance centre orders and electronic tagging to convicted football hooligans. The Government are considering these matters urgently and sympathetically.

TRANSPORT

Lighthouse Dues

Mr. Macdonald: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when the Ports Authority is to publish its report on lighthouse dues for yachts; and what representations he has received on the matter.

Mr. McLoughlin: I understand the British Ports Federation report will be ready shortly. My right hon. Friend expects to invite views on the report from interested parties before reaching any conclusions.

Network SouthEast

Mr. Evennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he next expects to meet the Central Transport Consultative Committee: and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: My right hon. Friend is meeting the Central Transport Consultative Committee on 26 March. It was a pity that the report on Network SouthEast did not highlight that British Rail's plans are for an increase in train miles to be operated.

Mr. Evennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received from the Central Transport Consultative Committee concerning overcrowding on Network SouthEast services.

Mr. Portillo: I have received its recent report on BR's 1990 corporate plan.

Mr. Speed: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the current investment projects in Network SouthEast which have been approved by his Department.

Mr. Portillo: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport calls in for approval only a selection of projects costing over £10 million. The remainder are authorised by the board. In the last two years, the Government have approved the following major investment projects for Network SouthEast:

Portsmouth to Southampton electrification
324 class 319/321 electrical multiple unit vehicles
(for services north of the Thames and Thameslink)

Cambridge to King's Lynn electrification
180 class 165 Networker vehicles
(for Thames and Chiltern lines)

400 class 465 Networker vehicles
(a further 276 approved in principle)
(for Kent and inner surburban lines)

Bradford Trolleybus Project

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make it his policy to consider what assistance he can give to the West Yorkshire passenger transport authority to secure the Bradford trolleybus project; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: We have already allocated credit approvals to enable the passenger transport authority to invest in this project, and will consider any further proposals which are put to us on their merits and subject to the availability of resources.

Foreign Railway Systems

Mr. Adley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the foreign railway systems on which he has travelled in his official capacity since assuming his present position.

Mr. Portillo: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State travelled on the Washington metro in January. I have travelled on the French train à grande vitesse.

Prestwick

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart), of 6 March, *Official Report*, columns *550-51*, what indications he has received from the BAA about keeping open the passenger terminal at Prestwick airport.

Mr. McLoughlin: In its response to my Department's consultation document on Scottish lowland airports policy, BAA plc stated its firm intention to keep Prestwick open. Following my right hon. Friend's announcement of a less restrictive policy for the lowland airports, the BAA chairman said that appropriate terminal and passenger facilities would be provided at Prestwick to meet the demands of the airlines.

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart), of 6 March, *Official Report*, columns *550-51*, whether Prestwick airport will be maintained as a diversion airport beyond 1991.

Mr. McLoughlin: BAA plc has stated its firm intention of keeping Prestwick open. The level of rescue and fire services provided at the airport, which is dictated by the size of aircraft normally using it, will determine its availability to aircraft on diversion.

London Underground

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how many incidents have been reported of tube doors opening between stations on each line on the London underground for each of the last 12 months; and what measures exist to prevent this happening;

(2) how many incidents have been reported of tube doors opening on the wrong side of the platform on each line on the London underground for each of the last 12 months; and what measures exist to prevent this from happening.

Mr. Portillo *[pursuant to his reply, 23 February, Official Report, column 931]:* Railway accidents, and some incidents involving failure of railway works and equipment, are reported to the railway inspectorate within the terms of the Railways (Notice of Accidents) Order 1986. In the case of unintentional door openings, London Underground Ltd (LUL) is required by the order to report cases where any door irregularity results in death or injury. It must also report instances of electrical or mechanical failure which are likely to cause an accident or to kill or injure any person. LUL is not required to report occasions where doors are opened due to staff error and do not result in fatality or injury.

In 1989 LUL reported the one incident referred to in my previous answer because it involved malicious damage. LUL did not consider that any other incident was covered by the requirement to notify the Department but I now understand that there were 32 other other instances when the doors of underground trains opened either on the wrong side or when the train was in motion.

EMPLOYMENT

Employment Training

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many ET training agents, ET training managers and YTS managing agents have *(a)* had their contracts terminated and *(b)* gone into receivership for each year since 1987 and in the case of ET, since the programme started.

Mr. Nicholls: The information for ET is given in the following table:

Year	*Training agents*		*Training managers*	
	Contracts Terminated	*Providers in Receivership*	*Contracts Terminated*	*Providers in Receivership*
1988	None	None	None	None
1989	2	None	12	1
1990 to 14-3	None	None	1	None

The information for YTS is not available and can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Training and Enterprise Councils

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the value of development funding awarded to TECs in England and Wales and LECs in Scotland *(a)* in total and *(b)* by each TEC/LEC.

Mr. Eggar: To date, a total of £6·973 million in development funding has been awarded to TECs in England and Wales and to LECs in Scotland. A breakdown by TEC/LEC is given in the table. TECS in their development stage whose funding has not yet been confirmed are not included.

Development Funding awarded to TECs in England and Wales and LECs in Scotland

TEC/LEC	*Award (£)*
South East	
Essex	110,000
Hampshire	149,000
Heart of England (Oxfordshire)	110,000
Hertfordshire	110,000
Isle of Wight	85,000
Kent	158,000
Milton Keynes	110,000
Thames Valley	125,000
London	
AZTEC (Kingston/Merton/Wandsworth)	111,000
London East	195,000
South West	
Avon	115,000
Devon/Cornwall	190,000
Dorset	95,000
Gloucestershire	112,000
Somerset	110,000
West Midlands	
Birmingham	139,000
Coventry/Warwickshire	114,000
Dudley	98,000
Sandwell	115,000
Staffordshire	113,000

TEC/LEC	Award (£)
Walsall	104,000
Wolverhampton	88,000
East Midlands and Eastern	
Central and South Cambridgeshire	116,000
Norfolk/Waveney	149,000
North Nottinghamshire	120,000
Suffolk	106,000
Yorkshire and Humberside	
Calderdale/Kirklees	106,000
Leeds	120,000
North Yorkshire	125,000
Rotherham	90,000
Sheffield	138,000
Wakefield	109,000
North West	
Bolton/Bury	110,000
Cumbria	115,000
East Lancashire	118,000
Manchester	150,000
Oldham	81,000
Rochdale	75,000
South and East Cheshire	106,000
St. Helens	75,000
Stockport/High Peak	110,000
Wigan	94,000
Northern	
County Durham	94,000
Northumberland	92,000
Teesside	127,000
Tyneside	136,000
Wearside	90,000
Wales	
Gwent	100,000
Mid Glamorgan	104,000
North East Wales	98,000
North West Wales	110,000
South Glamorgan	100,000
West Wales	110,000
Scotland	
Scottish Enterprise	
Dumbartonshire	100,000
Dumfries and Galloway	50,000
Fife	100,000
Forth Valley	100,000
Grampian	100,000
Lanarkshire	88,000
Lothian and Edinburgh	100,000
Renfrew	100,000
Highland and Islands Enterprise	
Skye and Lochalsh	30,000

Notes:

1. Figures have been rounded to the nearest £1,000.
2. Development funding for LECs in Scotland is jointly provided by the Department of Employment and the Scottish Office.

YTS

Mr. Leighton: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the weekly public cost of each YTS trainee in 1989-90; and what it will be in 1992-93.

Mr. Nicholls: The average cost to the Exchequer of YTS in 1989-90 is expected to be £50 per trainee week. New arrangements for youth training will be introduced from 29 May and youth training will increasingly be delivered by training and enterprise councils. As the result of the funding flexibilities which training and enterprise councils will have for youth training, it will be possible to secure higher levels of employer contributions towards training costs than has been the case under YTS. Consequently, by 1992-93, the average cost to the Exchequer of youth training is expected to be £33 per week.

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many participants there are in YTS schemes and employment training in the Peterlee and Seaham areas.

Mr. Nicholls: There were 846 people on the youth training scheme at the end of January and 600 on employment training at the beginning of March in the Peterlee and Seaham areas.

Mining Inspectors

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the present complement of coal mines inspectors; and if he has any proposals to increase the number of mines inspectors.

Mr. Nicholls: The Health and Safety Executive's mines inspectorate inspects all mining operations, including coal mines. On 1 March 1990, the latest date for which figures are available, there were 48 mines inspectors in HSE. The executive has no plans to increase this number.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what has been the change in the number of unemployed males and females over the age of 50 years in the Seaham and Peterlee areas over the last five years.

Mr. Nicholls: The information in the table is also available in the Library.

Unemployed claimants aged 50 years and over—Unadjusted[1]

	Seaham		Peterlee	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
January				
1985	391	91	555	101
1990	207	55	147	53
Change	−184	−36	−408	−48

[1] Direct comparisons are affected by the changes to the unemployment count over the period.

Mr. Hind: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many people were employed in the Lancashire, West parliamentary constituency in March 1986, March 1987, March 1988, March 1989 and March 1990; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: Information about employment in parliamentary constituencies is available only from the census of employment. The most recent figures are for September 1987. There were then 31,000 employees in employment in the Lancashire, West constituency. This compares with a figure of 30,400 in September 1984 when the previous census of employment was taken. These figures exclude the self-employed and members of Her Majesty's forces.

Mr. Hind: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many people were unemployed in the parliamentary constituency of Lancashire, West in March 1986, March 1987, March 1988, March 1989 and March 1990; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: The information is available from the Library. March 1990 figures are not available until April. Between March 1986 and February 1990 the number of unemployed claimants fell by 2,932, or 40·6 per cent., in Lancashire, West parliamentary constituency. The table gives the remaining information requested. The figures are affected by seasonal influences as well as by changes to the count over the period.

Unadjusted unemployment in Lancashire, West parliamentary constituency for March of each year

Year	*Total*
1986	7,225
1987	6,882
1988	5,565
1989	4,293

Earnings

Ms. Primarolo: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the proportion of female and male part-time workers in the south-west and in Avon, respectively, whose hourly earnings, exclusive of overtime, fell below *(a)* £2·80, *(b)* £3·00, *(c)* £3·20, *(d)* £3·60, *(e)* £4·00 and *(f)* £4·50 in April 1989.

Mr. Nicholls: The estimated percentages of part-time adult female employees earning below specified amounts in the new earnings survey sample in April 1989 were:

Hourly earnings less than (£)	*Avon (per cent.)*	*South West (per cent.)*
2·80	41	44
3·00	48	53
3·20	57	61
3·60	68	73
4·00	78	80
4·50	86	86

Note:
Hourly earnings excluding overtime, earnings not affected by absence.

Equivalent figures for part-time males are not available.

Job Clubs

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will give details of the location of existing job clubs available for people living in the Stretford constituency; and if he will make a statement on the future of these clubs.

Mr. Eggar: There are currently two job clubs in Stretford. A number in other parts of Manchester are within easy travelling distance.

There are no plans to change the number of job clubs in Stretford, although the location of one of the clubs will change.

Welding and Fabrication Work

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on proposed changes to British standards and European Community regulations governing welding and fabrication work.

Mr. Nicholls: Discussions are now well advanced within the European Standards Organisation (CEN) in connection with the production of up-to-date standards for welder approval and weld procedure approval. These draft standards, now out for public comment, will be based on United Kingdom standards, as modified to take account of the views of other countries. Although such standards are unlikely to be the subject of a specific EC directive on welding, they may be called up in support of directives where weld quality is important in ensuring the integrity of fabricated components.

Mr. Porter: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the supply of British qualified trainers in welding and fabrication after 1992.

Mr. Nicholls: The supply of British qualified trainers in welding and fabrication after 1992 is primarily for industry and training providers to determine.

The Government are helping to improve the quality of trainers generally by establishing an industry-led group to define the standards of competence required by qualified trainers and by initiatives to improve the quality and development of trainers.

Earnings

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment (1) in which sectors of employment or industries a fixed national minimum wage is existent; and if he will make a statement;

(2) which sectors of employment and industries are covered by wage councils; at what levels the current basic pay is set under the influence of these institutions; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: There is no national minimum wage in this country which is applicable to all workers. Wages councils set minimum rates of pay in certain trades and industries. The rates apply to all workers covered by the councils. Full descriptions of the relevant industries and operations are listed in statutory instruments. The legal minimum requirements of the councils are set out in wages orders which also contain a summary of the industries and operations covered. Copies of the instruments and current wages orders have been placed in the Library.

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the official definition of low pay in the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: There is no official definition of low pay. Pay is relative. At any time, and by whatever measure, some people will always be lower paid than others.

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what were average earnings by region for the last 10 years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: The information is available from the annual new earnings survey reports, copies of which are in the Library.

Hazardous Substances

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many workers have died of asbestos-induced diseases attributable to their exposure at work in each year since 1979.

Mr. Nicholls: Three diseases are known to be associated with asbestos: asbestosis, mesothelioma, and lung cancer.

The incidence of lung cancer is heavily influenced by other factors, most notably smoking, and it is not possible to give accurate figures for asbestos-related lung cancer deaths. Asbestosis is uniquely caused by asbestos exposure, but it is estimated that about 100 cases of mesothelioma may occur each year from other causes.

The following table lists the number of death certificates mentioning mesothelioma or asbestosis for the years 1979 to 1988. The figures for 1989 are not yet available.

Year	*Mesothelioma*	*Asbestosis*	*Total*
1979	434	102	536
1980	458	102	560
1981	472	137	609
1982	504	128	632
1983	573	121	694
1984	624	129	753
1985	615	140	755
1986	700	166	866
1987	807	144	951
1988	815	146	961

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will initiate a study on the health effects of the use of toxic chemicals in the micro-electronics industry in England.

Mr. Nicholls: The Health and Safety Executive is aware of the concerns surrounding the use of hazardous substances in the micro-electronics industry and is working with the micro-electronics semiconductor manufacturing joint working group to develop guidance relevant to the industry. Guidance in special gases has already been published and further guidance on hazardous substances and monitoring is in preparation.

The Health and Safety Executive is also assessing the feasibility of conducting a study of the reproductive health of women working in the semiconductor industry in the United Kingdom including sites in England and Scotland.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many occupational hygiene health audits have been carried out in Wales under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Act since legislation came into force; and how many firms in Wales have yet to conduct control of substances hazardous to health audits.

Mr. Nicholls: There is no requirement under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations for companies to carry out occupational hygiene health audits.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how may control of substances hazardous to health audits have been conducted on companies registered to make micro-electronics in Scotland.

Mr. Nicholls: There is no requirement under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations to notify to the Health and Safety Executive the completion of the assessments required under those regulations. The information requested is therefore not available.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will conduct an investigation into the health effects of use of acids and toxic chemicals at the Seagate Microelectronics plant in Scotland.

Mr. Nicholls: In May 1989, the HSE investigated a complaint about the storage and use of chemicals at Seagate Microelectronics and concluded that the complaints were substantially unjustified. It is not considered that any further investigation outside normal inspection activities at Seagate Microelectronics is appropriate at this stage.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will initiate a study into the health effects on workers of working in the Scottish micro-electronics industry.

Mr. Nicholls: The Health and Safety Executive is aware of the concerns surrounding the use of hazardous substances in the micro-electronics industry and is working with the micro-electronics semiconductor manufacturing joint working group to develop guidance relevant to the industry. Guidance in special gases has already been published and further guidance on hazardous substances and monitoring is in preparation.

The Health and Safety Executive is also assessing the feasibility of conducting a study of the reproductive health of women working in the semiconductor industry in the United Kingdom, including the sites in England and Scotland.

Advertising Expenditure

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the total publicity and advertising expenditure, including for privatisation, of his Department and public bodies for which his Department has responsibility in *(a)* 1979 and *(b)* 1989.

Mr. Eggar: Total publicity and advertising expenditure figures for my Department in *(a)* 1979-80 financial year could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

The planned expenditure by my Department on total publicity in *(b)* 1989-90, to include that for the Training Agency, remains as stated in table 7.29 on page 25 of the public expenditure White Paper, CM607, published in January 1989. No further detailed information is yet available.

Health and Safety Executive

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Stretford of 13 March, what leak inquiries have been undertaken by the Health and Safety Executive since 1 January.

Mr. Nicholls: None.

Child Care

Mr. Ralph Howell: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what studies of day care, to enable mothers to take up employment, have been undertaken.

Mr. Nicholls: The Department constantly monitors research in this area and is aware of a number of such studies. Main studies include: (1) Brannen, J. and Moss, P. "New Mothers at work". Unwin, 1988, (2) Cohen, B. "Caring for children". Commission for the European Communities, 1988, (3) Institute of Manpower Studies Commentary number 43 "Retaining women employees, 1990", (4) Institute of Personnel Management "Work and

the family, 1990", and (5) Moss, P. "Childcare and equality of opportunity". Consolidated report to the European Commission, 1988.

Journals such as "Equal Opportunities Review" and "Industrial Relations—Review and Report" have also conducted their own small surveys.

Action for Jobs

Mr. Terry Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how much of the expenditure on Action for Jobs in addition to expenditure on television advertising and printed material in 1988-89 was spent through the Central Office of Information.

Mr. Eggar: In addition to Action for Jobs expenditure on television advertising and printed material, £175,000 was spent through the Central Office of Information in 1988-89.

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 20 March 1990

HOME DEPARTMENT

Deputy Secretaries

Mr. Tom Arnold: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the responsibilities of each of the deputy secretaries in his Department and the numbers and ranks of staff reporting to each.

Mr. Waddington: The responsibilities of the deputy secretaries and the numbers of their staff are as follows:

Responsibilities	*Number of staff*[1]
Broadcasting and miscellaneous department, equal opportunities and general department, immigration and nationality department, and passport department	5,100
Criminal justice and constitutional department, criminal policy department, research and statistics department	500
Establishment department, finance and manpower department, fire and emergency planning department	2,000
Legal adviser's branch	27
Police department	2,400
Prison service	32,400

[1] To the nearest hundred, except for legal adviser's branch.

The deputy secretaries have staff reporting to them in a wide variety of grades; detailed information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Secure Unit, Wakefield

Mr. O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what guidance has been issued on the practice of courts sending offenders to the Newton Lodge, Wakefield secure unit; what information he has on the current practice; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: Courts have powers under the Mental Health Act 1983 to authorise the detention of accused and convicted persons in hospital if the relevant requirements of the Act are met. The Home Office has issued circulars on the provisions of the Act in 1983 and 1984, but we do not provide guidance on the use of these powers in relation to individual secure units. We maintain regular contact with the Newton Lodge unit whose management is the responsibility of the district health authority.

Metropolitan Police

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what requests or instructions have been given to the Metropolitan police by the Government concerning development of revenue-earning potential.

Mr. Waddington: No such approach has been made to the Metropolitan police by the Government. However, the Commissioner announced in his strategy statement for 1990 that he has initiated a study of the scope for increasing receipts to the force as part of his concern to see that the best possible use is made of available resources. Any proposals which emerge will be put to me as police authority.

Car Clamps

Mr. Leighton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of the Police of the Metropolis on what steps are being taken to end unlawful parking in Green street and Katherine road in the London borough of Newham and as to how many parking offenders had their cars clamped in the London borough of Newham in the last 12 months.

Mr. Waddington: I understand from the Commissioner that traffic wardens patrol the area daily and these roads are among those in the area targeted for enforcement by the area traffic unit. Vehicle removal teams are also deployed in the area from time to time. Wheelclamping may take place only in areas where it has been authorised by order by the Secretary of State. It has not been authorised in the borough of Newham.

Wandsworth Prison

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many incidents of violence have been reported as having occurred at Wandsworth prison during each of the years 1984 to 1989, inclusive.

Mr. Mellor: Information is not available in the form requested.

The table shows numbers of charges of assault on which prisoners were found guilty on adjudication:

Year	*Staff*	*Assault on inmate*	*Other*	*Fighting*
1984	151	30	3	—
1985	146	26	1	—
1986	78	31	—	—
1987	61	30	—	—
1988	65	30	—	—
1989	87	17	2	62

The figures include cases of gross personal violence, which ceased to be a separate offence on 31 March 1989, and charges of attempt—and also, since 1 April 1989, incitement and assisting another prisoner—to commit an offence. The new offence of fighting also came into force on 1 April 1989. The 1989 figures are provisional.

In the following numbers of other incidents, acts of violence by a prisoner on a member of staff or another person were reported:

Year	*Escape/ attempted escape from escort*	*Hostage taking*	*Concerted indiscipline*	*Miscellaneous other incidents*
1984	1	—	—	—
1985	—	—	—	1
1986	1	1	—	—
1987	1	—	—	1
1988	2	—	1	—
1989	—	—	1	2

Private Interest Registration

Ms. Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what are the requirements laid down for members appointed by him to bodies such as the Independent Broadcasting Authority to register their private interests; and where the register of interests is kept.

Mr. Mellor: Under parargraph 4 of schedule 1 to the Broadcasting Act 1981, I have to be satisfied, before appointing a person to be a member of the Independent Broadcasting Authority, that he has no financial or other interest likely to prejudice the discharge of his duties as a member. This applies in particular to interests in programme contractors, advertising agencies and manufacture or sale of wireless or other telegraphic equipment.

Assurances are sought from potential new members and repeated annually for existing members. Other broadcasting bodies are generally covered by comparable arrangements.

Uncharged Prisoners

Mr. John P. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been placed in custody without being charged with any offence for more than a year in *(a)* the last five years and *(b)* the last 10 years, in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Mellor: All persons in prison service establishments are held following a charge, conviction or sentence for a criminal offence, except for persons committed to prison for contempt of court and for certain civil debts and those detained under the Immigration Act 1971 and for a maximum of seven days under the Prevention of Terrorism Act 1976. Information for all years on non-criminal prisoners held in prison service establishments could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. However, according to records held centrally no non-criminal prisoners in prison service establishments in England and Wales on 31 December 1979, 1984 or 1989 had been held for more than one year.

The information requested on persons detained under the Immigration Act 1971 in immigration detention centres is not available. However, no person currently detained solely under Immigration Act powers in the United Kingdom has been held for more than a year. Such cases are very rare.

Persons held in police custody prior to charge are subject to the provisions of either the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, which places an upper limit of 96 hours on the period of detention; or the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1989, which enables them to be detained for up to 48 hours on police authority and for up to an additional five days on that of the Secretary of State.

Fire Precautions

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he proposes to publish his comprehensive Guide to Fire Precautions in Existing Places of Public Entertainment and Like Premises.

Mr. John Patten: Our "Guide to Fire Precautions in Existing Places of Entertainment and Like Premises" was published on 8 March. Copies have been placed in the Library.

Internal Audit

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the subject matter of the internal audit report that was drawn to the attention of a Minister in his Department in 1989.

Mr. Waddington: The internal audit report was of a systems review of Her Majesty's fire service inspectorate.

Crime (London)

Mrs. Fyfe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many crimes involving indecency were reported to the police in London during 1989; and if he will give the number in each of the categories used by the police force;

(2) how many crimes of malicious damage and vandalism were reported to the London police during 1989;

(3) how many crimes of violence against the person (non-sexual) were reported to the police in London during 1989; and if he will give the number in each of the categories used by the police force;

(4) how many drugs offences were reported to the London police during 1989;

(5) how many thefts by housebreaking and attempted housebreaking were reported to the London police during 1989.

Mr. John Patten: Information about crime in London in 1989 will be available later this month when the regular annual statistical bulletin on recorded crime is published. The corresponding information for 1988 was published in table S3.1 of "Criminal statistics, England and Wales, Supplementary tables 1988, Vol.3", a copy of which is available in the Library.

Risley Remand Centre

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will give the dates on which Her Majesty's chief inspector of prisons or any member of his staff has visited Risley remand centre since the inspection of February 1988; what reports were compiled following such visits; and whether copies of such reports have been placed in the Library.

Mr. Mellor: Her Majesty's chief inspector of prisons has not visited Risley remand centre since his full inspection in 1988. One inspector visited Risley on 20 April 1989 as part of his review of the working of remand centres. He briefed Her Majesty's chief inspector of prisons on his return, but no report was submitted either to my right hon. Friend the Member for Witney (Mr. Hurd) or to my right hon. and learned Friend.

Pensions

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what is the pension that an inspector in the police force will receive, having completed maximum years' service, on retirement at the end of March; and what is the pension currently received by inspectors with similar service who retired in March 1980 and March 1970;

(2) what is the value at current prices of the average pension received by police of all ranks on their retirement in *(a)* 1979 and (b) 1969;

(3) what is the value at current prices of the average pension received by fire brigade personnel on their retirement in *(a)* 1979 and *(b)* 1969;

(4) what is the value, at current prices, of the pension received by an ex-police inspector with maximum years' service who retired in *(a)* March 1970 and *(b)* March 1980;

(5) what was the average pension paid to fire brigade personnel who retired in 1989; and what is the average pension currently received by fire brigade personnel who retired in *(a)* 1979 and *(b)* 1969;

(6) what was the average pension paid to police of all ranks who retired in 1989; and what is the average pension received currently by police of all ranks who retired in *(a)* 1979 and *(b)* 1969.

Mr. Waddington: Particulars of average police and fire service pensions are not held centrally and this information could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. The information requested about the relative pension position of police inspectors retiring at certain dates is given in the table.

Retirement date	*Current annual pension* £
31 March 1970	7,337
31 March 1980	9,023
31 March 1990	13,238

Police Consultative Committees

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which London boroughs are not members of the local police consultative committee; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Five London borough councils have refused to nominate representatives to their local police-community consultative group: Brent, Ealing, Hackney, Haringey and Lambeth.

We deplore the fact that these five groups are obliged to operate without the support of their local council and without the resources which other councils make available. I hope that they will reconsider their position. The fact that these groups nevertheless operate effectively reflects great credit on all of those involved.

HIV

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many male and female prisoners in England and Wales have been found to have contracted the human immuno deficiency virus since monitoring commenced in March 1985; and how many prisoners are currently HIV positive.

Mr. Mellor: On 19 March 1990 the prison population of England and Wales included 61 male and seven female prisoners reported as having been identified as HIV antibody positive. On the same date the numbers of identified cases reported since March 1985 were 242 males and 42 females.

Prisons (Syringes)

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many needles or syringes, contrary to prison rules, have been found in prison establishments in England and Wales during the past three years.

Mr. Mellor: The following numbers of finds were reported by prison service establishments in 1987-89:

	Needles	*Syringes*
1987	49	92
1988	77	114
1989	98	187

NORTHERN IRELAND

Health and Social Services

Mr. Kilfedder: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what additional funding will be allocated for health and social services boards in Northern Ireland for the financial year beginning on 1 April; what is the basis of the calculation on which the allocations are made to the separate boards; and how much will be allocated to the Eastern health and social services board.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: In 1990-91 the health and social services boards will have available to them an extra £55 million. In addition they will have the proceeds of their cost improvement programmes amounting to some £9 million. These resources are being allocated to boards to enable them to cover the forecast level of inflation, to advance services in a number of priority areas and to continue progress towards the regional strategy objectives through their operational plans. The 1990-91 allocations also continue the process of progressive equalisation of resources between boards.

The Eastern health and social services board's allocation for 1990-91 will be £386,804,000. In addition it will receive the major share of some £5·85 million which has been reserved for key developments including regional medical services.

Fair Employment

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the code of practice mentioned in his reply of 21 February, *Official Report*, column *768*, to the hon. Member for Londonderry, East has been agreed with the Fair Employment Commission.

Mr. Cope: Although the code of practice has not been agreed with the Fair Employment Commission, which came into being on 1 January 1990, it was agreed with its predecessor, the Fair Employment Agency in 1985.

Railways

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is his estimate of the cost of police and Army time spent in protecting, checking and clearing explosives from the tracks of Northern Ireland railways in each of the last five years.

Mr. Cope *[holding answer 27 February 1990]:* The information is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Equal Opportunities

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what child care provision his Department provides for pre-school age children of employees; what child care provision for school holidays or after-school care is provided for employees' children aged five years or over; what plans there are for increasing provision in the next five years; and how these are to be funded.

Mr. Cope *[holding answer 5 March 1990]:* The Northern Ireland Civil Service is considering with the trade unions whether child care facilities for under five-year-olds can be provided for its staff. Two holiday playschemes, which were funded by parental fees and grants from the Northern Ireland Civil Service, were established on a pilot basis during the 1989 summer holidays and one scheme in the 1989 Christmas holiday. These schemes are now being evaluated to gauge their success and to consider if further playschemes should be developed.

The small home Civil Service part of the Northern Ireland Office which comprises about 200 staff divided between London and Belfast, does not provide child care facilities of its own. Staff can, however, link into schemes already set up by larger Departments, both in London and Belfast and we hope to continue to be able to take advantage of any new schemes.

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what measures he has implemented to ensure that recruitment and promotion policy in his Department does not directly or indirectly discriminate against applicants who were mature students or women returning to work following a career break due to child care.

Mr. Cope *[holding answer 5 March 1990]:* It is the policy of the Northern Ireland Civil Service and home Civil Service that all eligible persons shall have equal opportunity for employment and promotion on the basis of their ability, qualifications and aptitude for the work.

The detailed policy statement on equality of opportunity issued by the Northern Ireland Civil Service makes it clear that any advertisements, whether internal or external, must not indicate or appear to indicate any intention to discriminate in selection for recruitment and promotion. It also states that opportunities to obtain information on careers in the Civil Service must be readily available to all existing and potential applicants and that the eligibility criteria for recruitment should be formulated to ensure that they are related to job performance and are non-discriminatory.

There is no age limit for recruits except in the case of administrative trainees (age limit 36) and direct entrant executive officers II (age limit 50). These limits are necessary in order that recruits can realise the career expectation associated with recruitment to the grades in question.

There are no age limits which preclude officers from considerations for promotion. In pursuance of its equal opportunity policy, an equal opportunities unit has been established within the Department of Finance and Personnel. The unit has introduced a detailed monitoring system which includes recruitment and promotion. Details of its work are contained within three published reports; copies of which are available in the Library.

Equal opportunity policy in the small home Civil Service element of the Northern Ireland Office is kept under regular review. An equal opportunities guide for staff which emphasises its commitment, is near completion. Internal promotion procedures for this group are also currently under review.

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what proportion of civil servants in his Department are women at each of the grades *(a)* seven, *(b)* six, *(c)* five, *(d)* four, *(e)* three, *(f)* two and *(g)* one.

Mr. Cope *[holding answer 5 March 1990]:* The proportion of staff who are female in each of the following grades in the Northern Ireland Civil Service is:

Grade	*Per cent. Female*
7	6·0
6	7·9
5	5·5
4	—
3	2·9
2	—
1	—

With regard to the home Civil Service part of the Northern Ireland Office, female staff account for 4 to 5 per cent. of the total at grade 7 level; there are currently no female staff at grades 1 to 6.

Privatisation

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what was the total sum paid out in fees to outside organisations in the furtherance of privatisation by his Department in 1979-80 and in each subsequent year; and what is his estimate for 1990-91.

Mr. Cope *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* The information is as follows:

	£
1979-80	Nil
1980-81	Nil
1981-82	Nil
1982-83	Nil
1983-84	Nil
1984-85	Nil
1985-86	52,380
1986-87	4,298
1987-88	2,411
1988-89	1,549,937
[1]1989-90	2,760,488
[1]1990-91	1,800,000

[1] Estimated

PRIME MINISTER

Mr. Colin Wallace

Q51. **Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will refer the circumstances surrounding the case of Colin Wallace to the Security Commission under Lord Griffiths of Govilon or the security services tribunal under the chairmanship of Lord Stuart-Smith.

The Prime Minister: No.

Arts Institutions

Q52. **Mr. Jessel:** To ask the Prime Minister which arts institutions she has visited officially since 1 January.

Q112. **Mr. Devlin:** To ask the Prime Minister which arts institutions she has visited officially since 1 January.

Q138. **Mr. Gerald Bowden:** To ask the Prime Minister which arts institutions she has visited officially since 1 January.

Q170. **Dr. Goodson-Wickes:** To ask the Prime Minister which arts institutions she has visited officially since 1 January.

The Prime Minister: On 24 January I visited the Tate gallery, and on 28 February I went to the National Museum of Photography, Film and Television in Bradford. On 1 March I attended a performance of "Don Pasquale" at the Royal Opera House, and the following day I visited the Arts Council. I also visited the Burrell collection in Glasgow on 10 March.

Scottish Islands

Q63. **Dr. Godman:** To ask the Prime Minister when last she travelled officially on a passenger ferry between the Scottish mainland and one of the Scottish islands; and if she has any plans to undertake such a journey in the near future.

The Prime Minister: I hope to do so if a suitable opportunity arises.

Quangos

Q120. **Mr. Harry Ewing:** To ask the Prime Minister how many quangos were in being in June 1979; and how many there are at the present time.

The Prime Minister: On 1 April 1979 there were 2,167 non-departmental public bodies and on 1 April 1989 there were 1,555.

Zimbabwe

Q192. **Mr. Hunter:** To ask the Prime Minister on what occasions since 1980 Her Majesty's Government have made representations of concern to the Zimbabwean Government about the abuse of human rights in Zimbabwe; and what has been the cause of this concern.

The Prime Minister: We are opposed to abuses of human rights wherever they occur. We have made a number of representations since 1980 on behalf of individuals detained without charge in Zimbabwe, including most recently Mr. Lewis-Walker, Mrs. Brown, Mr. Clive Harding and Mr. Ivor Harding, all of whom were subsequently released.

Foreign Bases

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Prime Minister if she will state the Government's policy in relation to the use of bases in the United Kingdom which are in control of other countries for military purposes elsewhere in the world and on prior consultation concerning such use.

The Prime Minister: Under long-standing arrangements, the use by the United States of bases in the United Kingdom in an emergency would be a matter for joint decision by Her Majesty's Government and the United States Government in the light of the circumstances prevailing at the time. No other country has operational military facilities made available to it in the United Kingdom.

Advertising Expenditure

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Prime Minister what was the total publicity and advertising expenditure including for privatisation of her Department and public bodies for which she has responsibility in *(a)* 1979 and *(b)* 1989.

The Prime Minister: Expenditure for 1979 is not available except at disproportionate cost. The estimated total expenditure on publicity and advertising by the Cabinet Office and those public bodies for which I am responsible in 1989-90 is £2,543,290. None of it is for privatisation. Over 84 per cent. of the total represents recruitment advertising by the Civil Service Commission.

NHS Hospitals

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Prime Minister when she next expects to pay an official visit to a National Health Service hospital.

The Prime Minister: I have visited various National Health hospitals eight times during the past year including Dewsbury hospital last month.

New York

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Prime Minister when she next expects to pay an official visit to New York.

The Prime Minister: I have no plans to visit New York.

Engagements

Mr. Rathbone: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 20 March.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 20 March.

Mr. Stern: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 20 March.

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 20 March.

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 20 March.

The Prime Minister: This morning I presided at a meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House, I shall be having further meetings later today. This evening I hope to have an audience of Her Majesty the Queen.

WALES

Cancer

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what target date it is his policy to set for the publication of the figures for the incidence of leukaemia, lung cancer,

colon cancer and stomach cancer *(a)* for Wales generally and *(b)* for each district in Wales following the end of each year.

Mr. Grist: As indicated in the answer I gave the hon. Gentleman on 15 March there is no set target date for the publication of this data. The Department is, however, considering what steps might be taken to ensure prompt publication of this information in future.

New Dwellings

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will estimate the number of new dwelling units which will be built in 1990-91 in *(a)* the private sector and *(b)* the public sector.

Mr. Grist: No estimates are available for the number of new dwelling units to be built in 1990-91.

Teachers

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will commission a study into the number of mid-career teachers in primary and secondary schools in Wales giving notice of their resignation in 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989 and 1990.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: No. The Department of Education and Science maintains records of the number of mid-career teachers in primary and secondary schools in Wales who have actually resigned.

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will commission a study into the numbers and percentages of head teachers, deputy heads and teachers in primary and secondary schools in Wales who applied for early retirement in 1990, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988 and 1989.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: No. The Department of Education and Science maintains records of the number and percentages of head teachers, deputy heads and teachers in primary and secondary schools in Wales who have actually left on early retirement terms.

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will institute a study into the numbers of applications for deputy headships and headships in *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools in Wales in 1990, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988 and 1989.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: No.

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what are the most up-to-date estimates available to him of the numbers of teachers applying for vacant deputy headships and headships in *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary education in Wales covering the period 1985 to 1990.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: This information is not held centrally.

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what progress has been made on implementing the licensed teachers and articled teachers schemes.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: Although education support grant was made available to support the training of licensed teachers in 1990-91, no local education authority in Wales submitted a bid. One authority in Wales has shown an interest in the articled teachers scheme, but it was not possible to support the consortium of which it was a member. We are currently considering whether to make local authority training grant money available to support these schemes in 1991-92.

School Buildings

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what allowance he proposes to make in the setting of tests for children at seven, 11, 14 and 16 in pursuit of the national curriculum where education has been disrupted for six weeks or more by natural or man-made disasters affecting the availability of school buildings.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The School Examinations and Assessment Council is currently considering the range of circumstances in which exceptional arrangements may need to apply and its further advice is awaited.

Flats, Porthcawl

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what representations he has received concerning the Stoneleigh Club and Dunraven Court flats in Porthcawl; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: No representations concerning the Dunraven Court flats in Porthcawl have been recorded since the Dunraven (Porthcawl) Housing Society Ltd. went into voluntary liquidation in July 1984. I shall write to the hon. Gentleman about the Stoneleigh Club.

Welsh Language

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many primary school Welsh language units are currently recognised in each county in Wales; and what is his Department's policy relating to *(a)* Welsh medium units and *(b)* Welsh medium schools as a means of providing Welsh language education.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: There is no standard definition of a Welsh language unit. The number of schools having classes where Welsh is the sole or main medium of instruction of first and second language pupils in each county is set out in the table:

	Numbers
Clwyd	32
Dyfed	117
Gwent	6
Gwynedd	138
Mid Glamorgan	29
Powys	20
South Glamorgan	9
West Glamorgan	17

Welsh Office policy on Welsh medium education was set out in the publication "Welsh in Schools" (July 1981) which encouraged local education authorities to make available bilingual education for pupils whose parents desired it for them. The means of making this provision would be a matter for individual local education authorities to determine.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will undertake a review of the funding of Welsh medium schools and units in Wales.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: Funding of schools is a matter for the LEAs. The publication of school budget and outturn statements under LMS will help in identifying any extra costs associated with bilingual education.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Polytechnic Designations

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science which higher education establishments have expressed an interest in receiving polytechnic designation; which are likely to meet the new criteria which he has issued; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Jackson: My right hon. Friend has accepted the criteria proposed by the Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council for the designation of new polytechnics and has invited the council to advise him before the end of May whether any colleges currently meet, or whether there is a clear prospect that they will meet within the next two years, its criteria for polytechnic designation. It is now for the council to consider evidence from individual institutions and advise my right hon. Friend.

The higher education establishments which, I understand, have expressed an interest in receiving polytechnic designation are as follows:

Anglia Higher Education College
Bolton Institute of Higher Education
Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education[1]
Derbyshire College of Higher Education
Dorset Institute of Higher Education
Ealing College of Higher Education
Humberside College of Higher Education
Luton College of Higher Education
Southampton Institute of Higher Education
Thames Valley College of Higher Education

[1] To be formed by the merger of Gloucestershire College of Arts and Technology (HE) and the College of St. Paul and St. Mary, Cheltenham on 1 April 1990.

The London Institute has expressed an interest in receiving the status of a polytechnic, but not the name.

Parenting

Mr. David Martin: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is the Government's policy on promoting the teaching of parenting skills and the care of children in schools.

Mr. Alan Howarth: Section 1 of the Education Reform Act places a duty on the Secretary of State, local education authorities, school governors and head teachers to ensure that the curriculum as a whole prepares young people for the responsibilities and experiences of adult life. The science order within the national curriculum, being implemented under the Education Reform Act, requires that pupils should understand the factors necessary for the well-being of young children in the early stages of their development.

Mr. David Martin: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what steps he has taken to ensure that there is sufficient time available for schools to include in the curriculum parenting skills and the care of children.

Mr. Alan Howarth: Section 4(3) of the Education Reform Act precludes the Secretary of State from requiring schools to allocate particular periods of time to any aspect of the national curriculum.

Secondary Admissions (Bromley)

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will obtain details from the London borough of Bromley of its secondary schools admissions policy.

Mr. Alan Howarth: The Department has received some details from the London borough of Bromley about its school admissions policy and these are currently under consideration.

Training Grants

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science on what date in 1989 he published the amount of the training grants available for each local education authority; when he expects to publish the figures applicable to the financial year 1990-91; and what advice he has given to these authorities in respect of determination of their education budgets and related revenue decisions.

Mr. Alan Howarth: Indicative maximum amounts of expenditure which my right hon. Friend had it in mind to support in each priority area in each local education authority (LEA) under the LEA training grants scheme in 1990-91 were first set out in a circular issued on 18 August 1989. Final allocations were notified in letters to each LEA sent on 15 December 1989. The financial arrangements governing the training grants scheme for 1990-91 were explained in the August 1989 circular.

Pupil-Teacher Ratio

Mr. Gregory: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what was the primary and secondary school pupil-teacher ratio for 1979, 1983, 1987 and the most recent year for which information is available; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: The pupil-teacher ratios in maintained primary and secondary schools in England in 1979, 1983 and 1987 and 1989 were as follows:

	Primary	*Secondary*
1979	23·1	16·7
1983	22·3	16·5
1987	21·9	15·6
1989	22·0	15·3

The pupil-teacher ratio in both primary and secondary schools has improved since 1979. It is for local education authorities and schools to make the best use of the available teacher resources.

Nursery Education

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what estimate he has made of how much it would cost to provide full-time nursery education for all three and four-year-olds in the United Kingdom in 1991-92.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend's responsibilities for schools do not extend beyond England. The Department has not attempted detailed costings of the introduction of universal, full-time nursery education for

three and four-year-olds in England. However, a broad extrapolation from the estimated cost per pupil for all forms of provision made by local education authorities for the under-fives[1] suggests an annual recurrent cost of the order of £1·65 billion in 1989-90 prices. In addition there would be a substantial capital cost; and costs would also be incurred in training or retraining the additional teaching and ancillary staff who would be needed.

[1] Table 11.2, DES Chapter of the Public Expenditure White Paper 1990 (Cm 1011).

Food Research

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he has made an assessment of the implications for that element of food safety research, which may be of benefit to the consumer but is unlikely to offer a worthwhile return to industry, of the Government's decision to withdraw from near-market funding.

Mr. Jackson: The policy decision to withdraw from funding near-market research has not altered the Government's commitment to basic and strategic research in the area of food safety. Funding for such research has been increased in real terms.

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what discussions he held with the Agricultural and Food Research Council in respect of the Bristol laboratory of the Institute of Food Research, prior to the decision by the Agricultural and Food Research Council to close it; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Jackson: The Agricultural and Food Research Council is an independent body which is grant-aided by Government. The council announced its intention to concentrate physical restructuring of its institutes, including the Institute of Food Research, in its corporate plan 1989-94, published in February 1989. The council kept the Department informed of its consideration of proposals for restructuring but the evaluation of those proposals and the decisions taken concerning it were entirely a matter for the council.

School Education, Bradford

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is the total number of children being educated in first, middle and upper schools in the metropolitan district of Bradford in the current academic year.

Mr. Alan Howarth: The number of pupils on roll in January 1989 in first, middle and upper schools in Bradford was 78,555, the latest year for which figures are available.

Internal Audit

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what was the subject matter of the two internal audit reports that were drawn to the attention of Ministers in his Department in 1989.

Mrs. Rumbold: The internal audit reports covered controls over adult education grants and education support grants both of which were taken into account in policy reviews.

Middle Schools

Mr. Dunn: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science which local education authorities intend to retain middle school systems; and which have proposals to change status from middle school systems to transfer to secondary provision at 11 years.

Mr. Alan Howarth: The local education authorities that operate middle school systems are listed in the table:

Barnsley
Bedfordshire
Berkshire
Birmingham
Bradford
Buckinghamshire
Cambridgeshire
Devon
Doncaster
Dorset
Dudley
Ealing
East Sussex
Hampshire
Harrow
Hereford and Worcester
Hertfordshire
Humberside
Isle of Wight
Kent
Kirklees
Leicestershire
Leeds
Merton
Newcastle-upon-Tyne
Norfolk
North Tyneside
North Yorkshire
Northamptonshire
Northumberland
Nottinghamshire
Oxfordshire
Rochdale
Sheffield
Shropshire
Somerset
Staffordshire
Suffolk
Surrey
Wakefield
Warwickshire
West Sussex
Wiltshire

Of these authorities, only Leeds has published statutory proposals to change to a system of primary-secondary provision which are currently under consideration. In addition, the Secretary of State has approved proposals for Shropshire, Humberside, Rochdale and Barnsley LEAs which are still to be implemented, all in September 1990.

University College of Wales (Grant)

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) what is his most up-to-date estimate of the date, terms and conditions of the repayment of the repayable grant made by the University Grants Committee to University College of Wales, Cardiff in 1988;

(2) what representations he has received concerning the date and terms of repayment of the £4·4 million repayable grant made by the University Grants Committee to the University of Wales College at Cardiff in 1988;

(3) if he will review the terms of the special £4·4 million repayable grant made by the University Grants Committee to the University of Wales College at Cardiff in 1988.

Mr. Jackson: A repayable grant of £4·4 million was made available by my right hon. Friend the then Secretary of State for Education and Science to University College, Cardiff in September 1988. The covering agreement requires the college and its successor to apply the net proceeds from the disposal of surplus assets towards repaying the grant. To date some £270,000 has been repaid. My right hon. Friend has received no representations about the agreement, and has no plans to review it.

Student Loans

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what he estimates will be the cost of student loans in Scotland in 1990-91, 1991-92 and 1992-93.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 19 March 1990]:* I have been asked to reply. The estimated cost of loans for Scottish domiciled students is as follows:

	£ million
1990-91	15·7
1991-92	25·5
1992-93	25·6

DEFENCE

Holy Loch

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what approaches have been received from the United States authorities concerning the deployment of a United States Navy submarine tender ship to Holy loch certified to handle, load, store and maintain nuclear and conventional Tomahawk submarine-launched cruise missiles;

(2) what discussions have taken place, or are under way, concerning the continued use of Holy loch by the United States Navy after the date when United States Poseidon ballistic missile-carrying submarines based at Holy loch are decommissioned;

(3) what information he has on the effect of United States plans for the future of its Poseidon SSBNs on the future of the facility at Holy loch.

Mr. Neubert: The long-term use of the Holy loch facility is a matter for discussion between the United Kingdom and United States Governments. No decision has yet been taken.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what facilities exist at Holy loch for the maintenance, repair, storage and transfer of Tomahawk submarine-launched cruise missiles.

Mr. Neubert: A normal range of facilities exist at Holy loch for the logistic support of United States Navy nuclear-powered submarines.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if current agreements between the British and United States Governments require the United States authorities to seek permission or inform his Department before a visit is made by a United States Navy attack submarine to the Holy loch submarine facility;

(2) if the current agreements between the British and United States Governments concerning the use of the Holy loch submarine facility require the United States authorities to seek and obtain the permission of the British Government before the replacement of the current submarine tender with another vessel certified to load, maintain and store submarine-launched cruise missiles;

(3) if the United States authorities informed his Department before replacing the previous submarine tender at the Holy loch with the USS Simon Lake.

Mr. Neubert: The Governments of the United Kingdom and the United States maintain the closest links over the use of the facilities at Holy loch.

Nuclear Weapons (Transportation)

Mr. John Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what are the annual running costs for the transportation of nuclear weapons in road convoys; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Neubert: The number of nuclear weapon movements is kept to a minimum. However, it is the long-standing policy of this and previous Governments not to comment on the methods of transportation of nuclear weapons.

Running Costs

Mr. John Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what are the annual running costs of storing and maintaining the Chevaline nuclear weapon and the air-launched WE177 weapon; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Neubert: It would not be in the national interest to reveal such information.

Intellectual Property Rights

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he will place in the Library the relevant extracts of the contracts, or a summary of them, relating to the improved United Kingdom air defence ground environment which relate to intellectual property rights; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Clark: No. The contracts are commercially confidential.

Atomic Weapons Establishments

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence at what date he expects the proposed contractorisation of atomic weapons establishments to commence and to be completed.

Mr. Neubert: The invitations to tender for the interim AWE management contract due to commence later this year will be issued shortly. The timing of the subsequent transfer to full contractorisation is dependent on the passage of legislation but will not be before 1992.

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent discussions his Department has had with the

trade unions representing personnel in the atomic weapons establishments; and if he will guarantee their pension rights when these establishments are contractorised.

Mr. Neubert: A consultative document was issued to trades unions on 5 December 1989. Although no formal response has yet been received, a preliminary consultative meeting with the non-industrial trades unions took place on 11 January and joint consultative committees are being set up to discuss the Government's proposals for the future of AWE.

Staff who are transferred out of the Civil Service cannot remain in the principal Civil Service pension scheme (PCSPS). It is the Government's intention to make available to AWE staff at the time of contractorisation new pension arrangements which would provide benefits which, taken as a whole, would be no less favourable than those of the PCSPS. Proposals for future pension arrangements will be subject to full consultation with trades unions.

MOD Vehicle (Road Accident)

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the accident in January between a Ministry of Defence vehicle carrying radioactive material and a bus on the Dumfries-Annan road.

Mr. Neubert: We have no knowledge of any such incident.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Nuclear Test Ban

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what current proposals there are for hearings on a comprehensive nuclear test ban in the United Nations permanent conference on disarmament.

Mr. Waldegrave: Discussions are under way at the conference on disarmament about the possible establishment of an ad hoc committee on a nuclear test ban.

Namibia

Mr. Robert Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the extent to which the Namibian independence constitution abides by the principles formulated by the western Governments on 12 July 1982; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: We have only just received a copy of the constitution as passed by the Namibian constituent assembly and are still studying it. The United Nations Secretary-General reported to the Security Council on 16 March that he was satisfied that the constitution complied with the constitutional principles.

Sudan

Mr. Robert Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what diplomatic exchanges have taken place with the Government of the Sudan on humanitarian matters.

Mr. Waldegrave: We are in frequent touch with the Sudanese Government about humanitarian issues. We continue to press, together with other donors, for an early and effective resumption of the relief operation in Sudan.

Coto Donana National Park, Spain

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the EEC infraction proceedings against Spain in relation to the Coto Donana national park.

Mr. Maude: We strongly support the work of the European Commission in ensuring that EC environmental legislation is respected throughout the Community. We welcome the recent decision to publicise the record of member states in this area. But, except where United Kingdom interests are directly at stake, we would not wish to comment on individual cases.

European Bank

Sir David Steel: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the total capital investment currently proposed for the European bank for reconstruction and development; and when it is expected to commence operations.

Mr. Maude: We hope that the articles of the bank will be agreed in the near future and that the bank will commence operations as soon as possible thereafter. The size of the capital stock is still under discussion, but the figure currently under consideration is 10 billion ecu, 30 per cent. of which might be paid in.

Privatisation (Eastern Europe)

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has on the progress of privatisation of industries in (i) Poland, (ii) Czechoslovakia and (iii) Hungary; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: We understand that legislation is in place in Hungary enabling state enterprises to be transformed into private companies: some privatisations have taken place. In Poland privatisation legislation has been approved by the Government and is now being considered in parliamentary committee prior to submission to the full Parliament. The Czechoslovak Government are considering legislation.

Internal Audit

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what was the subject matter of the internal audit report that was drawn to the attention of a Minister in his Department in 1989.

Mr. Sainsbury: The contents of the report are the subject of investigations which are not yet complete.

THE ARTS

Advertising Expenditure

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Minister for the Arts what was the total publicity and advertising expenditure of his office and its predecessor and public bodies for which his office, and its predecessor, has responsibility in *(a)* 1979 and *(b)* 1989.

Mr. Luce: Press and publicity work for the Office of Arts and Libraries and the Office of the Minister for the

Civil Service is carried out by the Cabinet Office press office, whose budget for 1989-90 is £205,650. My office did not incur any expenditure on advertising in 1989. Comparable information is not available for 1979. Nor is such information available for public arts bodies.

CIVIL SERVICE

Obligations to the Crown

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Minister for the Civil Service, pursuant to his answer of 5 March, what action he is taking on the issue of the obligations to the Crown in Parliament, as a result of the meeting on 7 February, when the head of the home Civil Service met the Civil Service unions.

Mr. Luce: No such action is necessary. The constitutional position of civil servants remains unchanged; civil servants are responsible to Ministers and Ministers are responsible to Parliament.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Capital Allowances

Mr. Beith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the tax relief granted on capital allowances granted in the financial year 1987-88 on *(a)* plant and machinery, excluding private use motor vehicles, and *(b)* in respect of investment incurred in the first year for which capital allowances were due.

Mr. Lilley: The direct revenue cost of capital allowances for plant and machinery, including vehicles, claimed in accounting periods ending in 1987-88 is provisionally estimated at £6·6 billion. No separate estimates are available for private use motor vehicles, or for new investment in the year.

Beaulieu Group of Companies

Mr. Allen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to his reply of 27 February, *Official Report*, column *104*, what stage proceedings against four directors of the Beaulieu Group of Companies have reached; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ryder: Jan De Clerck, Dominiek De Clerck, Luc De Clerck and Francis De Clerck are next due to appear upon a remand before the Harrogate justices on 26 April 1990. The prosecution will seek to pursue committal proceedings on a date to be fixed by the court following representations by the parties at the remand hearing.

European Investment Bank

Mr. Allen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, further to his answer of 13 March, *Official Report*, column *160*, to whom the European investment bank loan was made.

Mr. Ryder: The European investment bank loan, referred to in my reply of 13 March, was made to Eurotunnel Finance SA and Eurotunnel Finance Ltd.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether European investment bank loans which are not repaid can be written off against tax as bad debts.

Mr. Lilley: The European investment bank is exempted from all direct United Kingdom taxes by virtue of articles 3 and 22 of the protocol on the privileges and immunities of the European Communities. The question of relief for bad debts does not therefore arise.

Czechoslovak Finance Minister

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he has any plans to meet Mr. Vaclav Kaus, Czechoslovakian Finance Minister.

Mr. Ryder: My right hon. Friend the Chancellor has no plans to meet the Czechoslovak Finance Minister.

Rateable Values, Lancashire

Mr. Jack: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what information was collected for each of the Lancashire district councils at the last revaluation on the number of rateable domestic dwellings at rateable values of (i) up to £50, (ii) £51 to £75, (iii) £76 to £100, (iv) £101 to £125, (v) £126 to £150, (vi) £151 to £175, (vii) £176 to £200, and up to (viii) £250, (ix) £300, (x) £350, (xi) £400, (xii) £450, (xiii) £500, and (xiv) £500 plus.

Mr. Lilley: This information could not be produced without a disproportionate expenditure of time and resources.

Civil List

Mr. Hague: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish the total amount payable under the Civil List Acts to the royal family in the calendar years 1989 and 1990.

Mr. Major: The information on amounts payable to the royal family in the present and previous calendar year is as follows:

	1989 £	*1990* £
The Queen's Civil List	4,658,000	5,090,000
HM Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother	404,000	439,500
HRH The Duke of Edinburgh	225,300	245,000
HRH The Duke of York	155,400	169,000
HRH The Prince Edward	20,000	20,000
HRH The Princess Royal	140,400	154,500
HRH The Princess Margaret, Countess of Snowdon	136,700	148,500
HRH Princess Alice, Duchess of Gloucester	55,400	60,500
HRH The Duke of Gloucester	110,000	119,500
HRH The Duke of Kent	148,500	161,500
HRH Princess Alexandra, The Hon. Lady Ogilvy	141,600	154,000
Total	6,195,300	6,762,000
Refunded by Her Majesty The Queen	400,100	435,000
	5,795,200	6,327,000

Mortgages

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what has been the total loss or gain to the average mortgagor who is *(a)* a one-earner couple with two children and *(b)* a two-earner couple with two

children claiming mortgage interest relief resulting from changes since the 1988 Budget in (i) direct taxation, (ii) increases in the rate of interest on mortgages and (iii) interest payments net of mortgage tax relief in all cases counting child benefit as a negative tax.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 8 March 1990]:* Information for a one-earner married couple with an average mortgage was given in my reply to the hon. Member for Newcastle upon Tyne, East (Mr. Brown) on 26 February, *Official Report*, column *13*. The changes in income tax and NIC for a two-earner married couple with an average outstanding mortgage of £17,000 in 1987-88 and with average gross earnings of £22,500 are given in the table on the same basis as my previous reply. There has been no change in child benefit since the 1988 Budget.

	[1] *1987-88*	*1989-90*	*£ per year change*
Income tax and NIC[2]	6,141	5,444	−697

[1] After indexation.
[2] Before relief due under MIRAS and assuming that the income is all earned with the husband earning £18,000 and the wife £4,500, that no allowances or reliefs are available other than the married man's allowances and the wife's earned income allowance, that they are both contracted into SERPS and that the post-October 1989 NIC rates and limits apply for 1989-90.

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what has been the total loss or gain to the average new mortgagor in 1988 claiming mortgage interest relief resulting from changes since the 1988 Budget in *(a)* direct taxation, *(b)* increases in the rate of interest on mortgages and *(c)* interest payments net of mortgage tax relief.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 8 March 1990]:* I regret that information is not available on the changes in taxation of the average new mortgagor in 1988. I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Newcastle upon Tyne, East (Mr. Brown) on 26 February, *Official Report*, column *13*, for the gain to the average mortgagor.

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the gain to the average family on an average mortgage from changes made in the Budgets of 1988 and 1989; and what is their estimated increase in mortgage repayments, on the basis of the same assumptions used in the answer to the hon. Member for Islington, South and Finsbury, of 13 February, *Official Report*, column *128*.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 13 March 1990]:* I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Newcastle upon Tyne, East (Mr. Brown) on 26 February, *Official Report*, column *13*.

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list in tabular form and at constant prices the amounts which would be payable each month at 15·4 per cent. on a standard repayment mortgage repayable over 25 years of each of the regional average new mortgages listed in his answer of 19 February, *Official Report*, column *518* to the hon. Member for Nottingham, North (Mr. Allen).

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 19 March 1990]:* The monthly interest payments, after deduction of basic rate tax relief, are given in the table.

Region	*Average new mortgage*[1] £	*Monthly payment*[2] *15·4 per cent. interest rate* £
Northern	28,400	273·35
Yorks and Humberside	29,600	284·90
East Midlands	34,700	349·07
East Anglia	44,600	476·12
Greater London	60,900	685·30
South East	53,200	586·48
South West	43,700	464·57
West Midlands	33,800	337·52
North West	31,300	305·43
Wales	30,200	291·32
Scotland	26,500	255·06
Northern Ireland	24,200	232·93
United Kingdom	38,300	395·27

[1] Third quarter 1989.
[2] Assuming endowment mortgage.

Taxation

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer at what level of income *(a)* a single person and *(b)* a married man currently pays a greater proportion of their income in income tax and national insurance contributions than they did in equivalent circumstances in 1978-79.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 13 March 1990]:* Since income tax rates have been reduced and the main personal allowances increased by substantially more than the rate of inflation, taxpayers will now pay a lower proportion of their income in tax than in 1978-79 unless their incomes have risen even more rapidly than allowances. Average earnings have risen rather more than this.

For taxpayers of working age whose incomes have increased in line with average earnings, average rates of income tax and national insurance contributions are lower than in 1978-79 for everyone except some married men with earnings up to and including three quarters of the average. On the same basis, real take-home pay is higher than in 1978-79 at all levels of earnings.

Company Cars

Mr. Pike: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent representations he has received on *(a)* company car taxation and *(b)* company car parking places taxation.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 19 March 1990]:* My right hon. Friend has received a number of representations on the taxation of the benefit to employees of the private use of a company car and the use of company car parking places.

BES Tenancies

Mr. Battle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what monitoring his Department conducts of the *(a)* range and *(b)* average rental cost of BES tenancies per month; and what information he has on the proportion of tenants in BES properties who receive housing benefit *(a)* in inner London, *(b)* in outer London, *(c)* in other metropolitan areas and *(d)* in the country as a whole.

Mr. Chope: I have been asked to reply.

This information is not available at present. The Department has, however, commissioned research into

BES funded assured tenancy schemes, which will investigate, inter alia, the rents charged and the characteristics of tenants, including their incomes, savings and the benefits they receive.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

County Courts

Mr. Lawrence: To ask the Attorney-General what financial resources will be made available to the county courts to enable them to take over High Court work under the Courts and Legal Services Bill.

The Attorney-General: The Lord Chancellor has already announced his intention to increase the number of court staff by around 350 in the next financial year and subsequently by up to a further 100 during the transitional period while new initiatives are being introduced. In addition the introduction of a computerised summons production centre in January and, from next month, the curtailment of the county court banking function will, over time, release staff time savings equivalent to around 350 staff.

The injection of resources will take place during 1990-91 and will put the courts in a strong position to implement from 1991 onwards the new case allocation arrangements, and other reforms flowing from the civil justice review and the Children Act.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Advertising Expenditure

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what was the total publicity and advertising expenditure of the Overseas Development Administration and public bodies for which it has responsibility in *(a)* 1979 and *(b)* 1989.

Mrs. Chalker: The figures are as follows:

	1979-80	*1989-90*
ODA	215,000	820,000
Crown Agents	—	95,000
CDC	—	267,000

EC Aid

Sir David Steel: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs by how much has the European Community aid to developing countries increased from the 1989 to the 1990 budget; how much European Community food aid has been provided to eastern Europe in that period; and from which budget it was taken.

Mrs. Chalker: Provision for aid spending in the 1989 European Community budget was just under 980 mecu (about £660 million). The corresponding figure for 1990 was 1,102 mecu (£742 million). These figures exclude aid to developing countries under the Lome convention, which is financed direct by member states and not from the Community's budget. This rose from 1,299 mecu (£875 million) in 1989, to 1,319 mecu (£888 million) in 1990.

In 1989 and 1990 the European Community has also provided free food worth 158 mecu (£106 million) to Poland and 40 mecu (£27 million) to Romania. This has been financed from the agricultural guarantee fund of the European Community budget.

UNHCR (Budget)

Mr. Sillars: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what has been the total United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees budget in the period 1980 to the nearest available full year.

Mrs. Chalker: The figures are as follows:

	US$ million
1980	497
1981	474
1982	407
1983	398
1984	444
1985	458
1986	441
1987	460
1988	552
1989	570

Source: UNHCR.

Mr. Sillars: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what was the British contribution to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for each of the last 10 years.

Mrs. Chalker: The figures are as follows:

	£ million
1980	6·98
1981	9·21
1982	7·50
1983	10·80
1984	13·52
1985	15·24
1986	16·90
1987	17·72
1988	21·94
1989	19·37

TRANSPORT

East London Assessment Study

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress he has made in collating and analysing the *(a)* letters, *(b)* petitions, *(c)* signatures on those petitions and *(d)* other representations he has received about the east London assessment study; and when he expects to be able to report how many were in favour and how many against.

Mr. Atkins: The responses on all four assessment studies are being reviewed as quickly as possible and an announcement on the way forward will be made soon.

Transport Infrastructure

Mr. Leighton: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what proposals have been made by the European Community Commission for *(a)* railway policy, *(b)* combined transport and *(c)* transport infrastructure.

Mr. Portillo: The European Commission's most recent proposals for railways policy and combined transport are

contained in its document COM(89) 564 final (Council reference 4478/90), "Commission Communication on a Community Railway Policy", dated 5 February 1990.

For transport infrastructure, the latest proposals are set out in COM(89) 238 (Council reference 7435/89), "Communication on the concentration of budgetary means in the field of transport infrastructure, including a modified Proposal for a Council Regulation for an action programme with a view to the completion of an integrated transport market in 1992", dated 16 June 1989.

Copies of both of these papers have been deposited in the Library.

Channel Tunnel

Dame Peggy Fenner: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will institute a noise standard level for existing railways, before the opening of the Channel tunnel and the Channel tunnel links.

Mr. Portillo: I am about to establish a departmental committee to recommend a noise insulation standard for new railways which is comparable to the standard currently set by regulation for new highways. The aim is to provide equity of treatment for those affected by noise from railways and those affected by noise from roads. Since noise insulation is not provided for intensification of use in the case of roads, the committee's terms of reference will not take in the intensification of use of existing railways.

A6 Disley-High Lane Bypass

Mr. Tom Arnold: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many objections he has now received from individuals and organisations who are opposed to the line of route of the A6 Disley-High Lane bypass.

Mr. Atkins: Some 250 representations have been received from local councils and members of the public. Most expressed concern about the decision to proceed with the shortened brown route.

East London Roads

Ms. Gordon: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will make it his policy urgently to implement and finance traffic calming and displacement measures in Bow, east London, proposed by his consultants in the east London assessment study;

(2) what discussions he has had with the emergency services in London with regard to their policies on traffic calming and displacement measures in residential areas; and what were the results;

(3) what funds he will make available for traffic calming and displacement measures in Bow, London E3.

Mr. Atkins: All these matters must await decisions on the assessment studies.

Ms. Gordon: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what information he has on morning peak traffic flows westbound leaving the northern Blackwall tunnel approach road at its junction into Tredegar road.

Mr. Atkins: My Department does not collect data on the numbers of vehicles making these turning movements. However, the relevant local authority (Tower Hamlets) has estimated that in the morning peak period about 1,000 vehicles per hour turn from the Blackwall tunnel northern approach road, A102(M), into Tredegar road.

A580

Mr. Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) by how much it is intended to widen the A580 east Lancashire road envisaged in the recently published roads report;

(2) what is the objective of the plan to widen the A580 east Lancashire road as outlined in the recently published roads report.

Mr. Atkins: We are considering widening the surface of each carriageway by about 1·5 m, without taking extra land, as one element of the £15 million improvement scheme. The other element covers work on improved drainage, lighting and accesses, further safety fencing, and refurbishment of the central reservation and the cycleway/footpath.

The objective of these various improvements is to bring this heavily trafficked major route up to modern day standards and to improve its safety and traffic flow, particularly during maintenance operations.

Roads, Greater Manchester

Mr. Tom Arnold: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the road schemes for which he has responsibility in the Greater Manchester county, and the stage which each has reached.

Mr. Atkins: The information is as follows:

	Scheme	*Stage reached*
M56	Widening between junctions 4-6	Early stage of preparation
M62	Widening between junctions 12-17	Preferred route announcement soon
M62	Widening between junctions 17-18	Detailed design nearly complete
M62	Widening between junctions 18-21	Commission not yet let
M62	Improvements of junction 20 (A627(M))	Publication of Orders expected Winter 1990-91
M63	Widening between junctions 7-9	Early stages of preparation
M66	Manchester Outer Ring road (Denton to Middleton section)	Line fixed. Supplementary Orders and Compulsory Purchase being prepared.
Greater Manchester Western and Northern Relief Road:		
	Section 1, M6 to M56	Public Consultation completed
	Section 2, M56 to M62	Alternative routes under consideration
	Section 3, M62 to M66	Alternative routes under consideration
A6(M)	Stockport North South Bypass	Line fixed. Supplementary Orders being prepared
A57	Mottram, Hollingworth, Tintwistle Bypass	Consultants appointed recently
A58	Wigan Hindley and Westhoughton Bypass	Preferred route announcement soon
A580	Liverpool-Manchester corridor improvements	Early stage of preparation

Scheme	Stage reached
Manchester Airport Eastern Link Road (M56-A6(M) Link)	Scheme now responsibility of Cheshire, Stockport MB and Manchester MB with section 272 grant

The Department is also responsible for a number of minor improvement schemes in the area including the A6 Windlehurst road improvement scheme which is due to go out to tender soon.

Company Cars

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will state the results of his commissioned research concerning the proportion of car miles travelled in central London roads where costs are met by sources other than the taxable income of their owners or drivers referred to in his reply to the hon. Member for Newham, South of 13 January 1989 on traffic in London, *Official Report*, column *800*; and what information he possesses on that matter.

Mr. Atkins: I expect to receive the final report on the research into company-assisted travel within the next few months, and to publish the results shortly thereafter.

A428, Bedford

Sir Trevor Skeet: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will publish the most recent figures available about the number of vehicles using the A428 in Bedford and destined *(a)* to pass through the town for destinations elsewhere and *(b)* to move within the town itself; and if he will publish similar figures for the A6.

Mr. Atkins: The one-way traffic flows in autumn 1989 were of the order shown in the following table:

Trunk road	Vehicles per day: Through Bedford (all exits)	Vehicles per day: With destination in Bedford
A6: from north	2,600	7,600
from south	2,200	5,900
A428: from east	4,500	5,500
from west	2,200	3,100

Learner Drivers

Mr. Sumberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what figures he has for the number of *(a)* fatal road accidents and *(b)* other road accidents involving learner drivers where the supervising driver has been (i) under 21 years of age, (ii) in possession of a full driving licence for less than three years or (iii) both.

Mr. Atkins: The police records of accidents, on which national statistics are based, do not include information on the qualifications of supervising drivers. However, I continue to receive letters about accidents involving learner drivers who were under the supervision of young and only newly qualified drivers.

Mr. Sumberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he received in response to his consultation document on the qualifications of those accompanying learner drivers; and when he expects to bring forward proposals for a change in the law.

Mr. Atkins: I have received over 230 responses. I am now considering my proposals in the light of all the comments received from interested organisations and individuals.

Mr. Sumberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what studies have been undertaken by his Department as to the practice adopted in other European Community countries for the supervision of learner drivers.

Mr. Atkins: I refer my hon. Friend to my reply given on 21 December 1989 (*Official Report*, Vol. 164, column *359*).

Local Traffic Area Offices

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to reach a decision on the future of the Leeds local traffic area offices and other such offices; what representations he has received expressing opposition to the closure of local traffic area offices; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Snape: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he has any proposals to close the Birmingham local traffic area office at Five Ways, Birmingham.

Mr. Atkins: In view of the reducing workload for traffic area offices, the organisation is under review. Decisions on individual offices will be based on the need to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the organisation as a whole. A number of representations have been received about particular offices and I have explained that decisions are expected after Easter.

Road Building Programme

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he has made a quantifiable assessment of the increase in road traffic likely to result from the improved road conditions arising from the Government's road building programme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Atkins: Increased traffic demand is primarily a function of economic growth rather than road building. Given an established road network, the total amount of traffic growth is unlikely to be influenced measurably by road improvements. However, there will be redistribution effects as traffic transfers to the improved routes from other, less suitable roads.

British Rail (Grant)

Dr. Michael Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make an announcement about the public service obligation grant to the British Railways Board for 1989-90.

Mr. Portillo: British Rail's 1989-90 claim for public service obligation (PSO) grant, which constitutes the central Government support for Network SouthEast and provincial services, has been settled at £488 million before adjustment. The cash ceiling on the final grant settlement for 1989-90, announced last April, will be increased from £496 million to £504 million. This additional £8 million

will be available only to accommodate the grant-aided sectors' share of additional safety-related expenditure, particularly that arising from Sir Anthony Hidden's report on the Clapham Junction rail accident.

East London River Crossing

Mr. Cartwright: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many residential properties his Department has so far acquired in connection with the east London river crossing; how many are currently in use; and how many more will need to be acquired before construction can be started.

Mr. Atkins *[holding answer 19 March 1990]:* By 14 March 1990, the Department had acquired 111 residential properties in connection with the east London river crossing scheme. Of these 102 are currently let to local councils, housing associations and individual tenants. The Department is in the process of acquiring a further 11 properties. Another 150 will need to be acquired to enable construction of the scheme to start.

Mr. Cartwright: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will set out the most up-to-date estimates of the cost of the east London river crossing for each of the individual elements of the project.

Mr. Atkins *[holding answer 19 March 1990]:* The latest estimate of the total cost of the scheme at average 1984 prices is approximately £195 million, of which the Thames bridge would cost approximately £62 million. When converted to mid-1989 prices the estimates become £300 million and £98 million respectively.

Mr. Cartwright: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is his latest anticipated starting date for the construction of the east London river crossing.

Mr. Atkins *[holding answer 19 March 1990]:* Assuming the remaining statutory procedures are completed satisfactorily and without undue delay, construction could start in autumn 1992.

Mr. Cartwright: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects the second public inquiry into the east London river crossing to be opened; and how long he anticipates it will last.

Mr. Atkins *[holding answer 19 March 1990]:* The public inquiries into the proposed design changes to the section of the east London river crossing between the A13 and A2016, including the proposed changes in the design of the Thames bridge, are planned to begin on 3 July 1990. The inspector plans to hold two pre-inquiry meetings in April and May to consider procedural and other arrangements for the inquiries. It would not be appropriate for me to speculate how long the inquiries will last.

"Action for Cities"

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list in the *Official Report* for each of the "Action for Cities" target areas the amount of transport supplementary grant allocated for schemes in those areas in 1990-91.

Mr. Atkins *[holding answer 19 March 1990]:* The amount of transport supplementary grant (TSG) allocated for major schemes over £1 million in each of the "Action for Cities" target areas in 1990-91 is given in the table. TSG for programmes for minor works is also listed.

Transport supplementary grant for action for cities target areas in 1990-91

	Major schemes £'000	*Minor works £'000*
Bristol	5,042	[1]144
Plymouth	971	[2]148
Birmingham	7,540	355
Coventry	1,286	188
Dudley	460	116
Sandwell	926	127
The Wrekin	288	[3]73
Walsall	2,694	58
Wolverhampton	3,052	116
Blackburn	1,250	[4]330
Bolton	270	94
Burnley	74	[4]330
Manchester	4,283	450
Oldham	1,050	139
Preston	5,516	[4]330
Rochdale	0	189
Salford	2,350	199
Halton	0	[5]147
Knowsley	717	180
Liverpool	1,550	100
Sefton	282	87
St. Helens	2,818	124
Wigan	0	167
Wirral	1,023	102
Gateshead	895	152
Newcastle upon Tyne	1,722	191
North Tyneside	0	153
South Tyneside	625	100
Sunderland	1,125	147
Hartlepool	0	[6]121
Langbaurgh	0	[6]121
Middlesbrough	3,595	[6]121
Stockton on Tees	1,807	[6]121
Barnsley	832	188
Bradford	3,203	240
Doncaster	773	159
Kirklees	15	120
Leeds	2,811	221
Rotherham	1,116	128
Sheffield	5,299	298
Kingston upon Hull	2,645	[7]216
Derby	0	[8]156
Leicester	1,780	[9]200
Nottingham	670	[10]247
Brent	0	182
Greenwich	554	140
Hackney	0	186
Hammersmith and Fulham	0	148
Haringey	2,780	116
Islington	0	168
Kensington and Chelsea	461	149
Lambeth	0	154
Lewisham	2,418	170
Newham	2,376	191
Southwark	1,201	199
Tower Hamlets	0	91
Wandsworth	1,100	461

[1] Total grant for minor works, Avon county council.
[2] Total grant for minor works, Devon county council.
[3] Total grant for minor works, Shropshire county council.
[4] Total grant for minor works, Lancashire county council.
[5] Total grant for minor works, Cheshire county council.
[6] Total grant for minor works, Cleveland county council.
[7] Total grant for minor works, Humberside county council.
[8] Total grant for minor works, Derbyshire county council.
[9] Total grant for minor works, Leicestershire county council.
[10] Total grant for minor works, Nottinghamshire county council.

Cars (Pollution)

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if his Department's representatives at the recent Geneva motor show obtained any new technological information on the use of electronic controls to reduce pollution discharges from cars.

Mr. Atkins *[holding answer 19 March 1990]:* The Department was not formally represented at the Geneva motor show, although officials did visit while in Geneva on other business. No new technological information on this subject was obtained. However, electronic controls are likely to be used extensively in the future to reduce emissions, in conjunction with catalysts.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Adley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how many people in his Department are involved in planning and safety issues in *(a)* roads and *(b)* railways;

(2) how many people in his Department, including regional officers, are involved in all matters relating to *(a)* roads, *(b)* railways and *(c)* other.

Mr. Atkins *[holding answer 19 March 1990]:* I regret that the information is not available in precisely the form requested. However, the Department's staff are deployed broadly as follows:

	Staff
Highways (including Buses/Taxi Policy)	550
Road Safety	100
Freight (including Traffic Examiners)	300
Regional Offices	1,500
Traffic Area Staff (excluding those counted elsewhere, for example driving examiners)	1,000
Railways (including Railway Inspectorate)	200
Transport and Road Research Laboratory	600
Driving Standards Agency	2,000
Vehicle Inspection Agency	1,600
Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency	5,500
Aviation	350
Shipping	950
Others (includes senior staff; management support services, personnel, economics and statistics, international work etc.)	1,800
Broad Total[1]	16,500

[1] Rounded to nearest 500.

The numbers of staff engaged in safety or planning-related work cannot readily be assessed. However, it should be borne in mind that in addition to its general policy responsibilities the Department has an executive function in relation to trunk roads which it does not have for railways and other forms of transport, for which the operators are themselves responsible.

Consultation

Mr. Adley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the organisations which he or his officials regularly meet to discuss road transport matters.

Mr. Atkins *[holding answer 19 March 1990]:* Road transport matters concern a wide range of interests, with which there are regular contacts. The list of such interests is long but includes industry associations such as the Bus and Coach Council, CBI, freight transport, motor manufacturers, road haulage and chemical industries associations, the police, British Standards Institution, trade unions, training board and the local authority associations, various road safety and environmental organisations and the motoring associations.

Road Tolls

Mr. Adley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which European countries have implemented a policy of charging tolls for use of public roads.

Mr. Atkins *[holding answer 19 March 1990]:* European countries which have recently constructed toll-financed roads, bridges or tunnels, or are planning to do so, include Austria, France, Irish Republic, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom. In Switzerland, access to the motorway network requires a supplementary licence (vignette), which may be regarded as a form of toll.

Road Numbers

Mr. Corbett: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he will take urgent steps to ensure that all road signs indicating the former A361 road from junction 25 of the M5 through Taunton to Barnstaple now show its new road number of B3227.

Mr. Atkins *[holding answer 19 March 1990]:* Following the completion of the new north Devon link road in July last year, the fomer A361 trunk road from junction 25 on the M5 through Taunton to Barnstaple was reclassified and renumbered B3227. Signs on this road are the responsibility of the highway authorities—Devon and Somerset county councils—which assure me that all signs on it now show its new number.

Speed Limits

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects a decision to be taken on Essex county council's highway committee's application of October 1988 to extend the 30 mph and 40 mph speed limit zones in Danbury; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Atkins *[holding answer 19 March 1990]:* Following a protracted correspondence with Essex county council we now have all the information that we require. We expect to be able to process the application shortly.

Road Programme

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent representations he has received regarding funding of his Department's road programme.

Mr. Atkins *[holding answer 19 March 1990]:* We received a steady stream of representations about the programme and its funding, and the Transport Select Committee has commented on the subject in its recent report, "Roads For the Future".

Vehicle Excise Duty

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent studies his Department has undertaken on the possibility of transferring vehicle excise duty to petrol.

Mr. Atkins *[holding answer 19 March 1990]:* The arguments for and against replacing vehicle excise duty with an additional duty on fuel are well understood and are kept under review.

HEALTH

Abortifacient Drug

10. **Mr. Ken Hargreaves:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent representations he has received concerning the abortifacient drug RU486.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Some in favour, some against and nearly as many seeking information.

103. **Mr. Nicholas Winterton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make it his policy not to license for use in the United Kingdom the abortifacient drug RU486.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: All medicinal products in the United Kingdom are subject to the provisions of the Medicines Act 1968. Before licensing any individual product the licensing authority must be satisfied as to its safety, quality and efficacy.

Dental Charges

26. **Mr. McKelvey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will now review his policy of charging for dental checks.

64. **Mr. McAllion:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will now review his policy of charging for dental checks.

107. **Mr. McCartney:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will now review his policy of charging for dental checks.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: I refer the hon. Members to the reply that I gave earlier today to the hon. Member for Glasgow, Rutherglen (Mr. McAvoy).

104. **Mr. Geraint Howells:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent representations he has received about charges for dental treatment.

Mr. Freeman: Over the period from December 1989 to the end of February 1990, we have received 32 letters from Members of the House raising questions about charges for dental treatment, and have answered six questions in this House. In the same period, we have received 15 letters from members of the public on the same subject, and one from the chairman of the general dental services committee of the British Dental Association.

Residential Care

16. **Mr. Dunnachie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the future of local authority residential care for the elderly.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the future of local authority residential care for the elderly.

45. **Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the future of local authority residential care for the elderly.

140. **Mr. Cunliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the future of local authority residential care for the elderly.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: We have always stressed that we are seeking a mixed economy of care and within that local authority residential care for the elderly has a vital part to play. With private and voluntary residential accommodation, this will provide a wide choice for clients and a value for money service.

70. **Mr. Clelland:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to ensure that individuals in need of care are not asked to leave residential homes because of their inability to meet the required fees.

76. **Mr. Ronnie Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to ensure that individuals in need of care are not asked to leave residential homes because of their inability to meet the required fees.

109. **Mr. Clay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to ensure that individuals in need of care are not asked to leave residential homes because of their inability to meet the required fees.

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to ensure that individuals in need of care are not asked to leave residential homes because of their inability to meet the required fees.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: For people under pension age, local authorities can already top up other sources of income to meet fees in independent residential homes. They can also at present sponsor people of any age and meet the full fees in such homes. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Security announced in the House on 13 March that he is considering whether there are further steps he could take in relation to social security payments towards the cost of residential care in independent homes.

GP Budgets

18. **Mr. Butler:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what indications he has as to the proportion of eligible general practices which is applying for budget-holding status.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: Over 850 practices have registered their interest in the practice funding scheme. While not all of these practices are likely to meet the full eligibility criteria and opt to take part in the scheme, we are clearly on course to meet our target of a few hundred practices choosing to participate from April 1991.

134. **Mr. Hind:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of general practitioners have applied to manage their own indicative budgets; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: All general practitioners are intended to have indicative prescribing budgets from 1 April 1991 unless they choose to become practice fund holders and meet the eligibility criteria for that scheme.

Competitive Tendering

19. **Mr. Morley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on competitive tendering within the National Health Service.

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on competitive tendering within the National Health Service.

127. **Mr. Morgan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on competitive tendering within the National Health Service.

139. **Mr. Nellist:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on competitive tendering within the National Health Service.

Mr. Freeman: Over 40 per cent. of support services in the NHS—to a value of £1¼ billion a year—are now routinely subject to some form of competitive tendering. The White Paper "Working for Patients" provides a framework for further widening the scope for competition. Within that framework it is for each health authority to determine where the most fruitful opportunities arise for using competition to achieve increased effectiveness and value for money at local level.

35. **Mr. Illsley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many contracts awarded through the competitive tendering process within the National Health Service have not been renewed at the end of the period concerned.

56. **Mr. Leadbitter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many contracts awarded through the competitive tendering process within the National Health Service have not been renewed at the end of the period concerned.

62. **Mr. James Lamond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many contracts awarded through the competitive tendering process within the National Health Service have not been renewed at the end of the period concerned.

117. **Mr. John Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many contracts awarded through the competitive tendering process within the National Health Service have not been renewed at the end of the period concerned.

Mr. Freeman: Information is not held centrally on the results of routine renewal of the wide range of NHS contracts which are subject to competitive tendering. This is a contractual matter for the health authority concerned.

Cervical Cancer Screening

20. **Mr. George Howarth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on cervical cancer screening.

36. **Mrs. Fyfe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on cervical cancer screening.

66. **Mr. Hood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on cervical cancer screening.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: I refer the hon. Members to my reply to the hon. Member for Cumbernauld and Kilsyth (Mr. Hogg) earlier today.

Portsmouth and South East Hampshire DHA

21. **Mr. Viggers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he has any plans to visit Portsmouth and South East Hampshire district health authority.

Mr. Freeman: Not at the present time. I am, however, always willing to consider an invitation.

Core Services

22. **Mr. Hague:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will set out his powers in relation to core services provided by National Health Service trusts.

122. **Mr. Moss:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what are his powers in respect of specifying the core services.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I do not anticipate any need to use powers of compulsion to secure the provision of necessary local services by National Health Service trusts. Nevertheless, as a last resort, paragraph 6(1) of schedule 2 to the National Health Service and Community Care Bill provides me with the necessary powers of direction to secure contractual provision.

Huddersfield Health Authority

23. **Mr. Riddick:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what was the total amount of money allocated to the Huddersfield health authority in 1979 and 1989; and what was the percentage change in that period.

Mr. Freeman: This information is not held centrally. Only expenditure figures are available to the Department centrally. These can be obtained from annual accounts. My hon. Friend may wish to contact the chairman of the Yorkshire regional health authority for the proper answer.

The Huddersfield health authority was established on 1 April 1982. Total revenue expenditure recorded in the authority's annual accounts for 1982-83 was £36·3 million and in 1988-89 was £52·4 million representing an increase in real terms of 7 per cent. (measured at 1988-89 prices by the use of the gross domestic deflator).

Hospital Medical Staffing

24. **Mr. Alan W. Williams:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received regarding the contents of the interim report on patterns of hospital medical staffing.

77. **Mr. David Young:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received regarding the contents of the interim report on patterns of hospital medical staffing.

81. **Mr. Watson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received regarding the contents of the interim report on patterns of hospital medical staffing.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: No written representations have been received regarding the contents of the interim report on patterns of hospital medical staffing, but reference has been made to it in recent meetings I have had on the subject of junior doctors' hours.

Wessex RHA

25. **Mr. Ian Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what increase there has been in resources to Wessex regional health authority since 1979.

Mr. Freeman: Total revenue expenditure recorded in the annual accounts of the health authorities comprising the Wessex region increased in cash terms from £223·6

million in 1978-79 to £671 million in 1988-89, representing an increase in real terms of 36·5 per cent. (measured at 1988-89 prices by use of the gross domestic product deflator). The figures exclude expenditure on family practitioner services which is accounted for by family practitioner committees and which cannot strictly be attributed to particular regions.

British Medical Association

27. **Mr. Strang:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he last met the British Medical Association; and what subjects were discussed.

84. **Mrs. Ray Michie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he last met representatives of the British Medical Association; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I refer the hon. Members to the reply I gave the hon. Members for Kilmarnock and Loudoun (Mr. McKelvey), for Glasgow, Rutherglen (Mr. McAvoy), for Fife, Central (Mr. McLeish) and for Gordon (Mr. Bruce) on 20 February at column 1172.

AIDS

28. **Mr. Ian Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what current action is being taken in the fight against AIDS.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The Government continue to attach great importance to action to prevent the spread of HIV infection. We are supporting a wide range of programmes to achieve this through local authorities and health authorities, voluntary bodies and the Health Education Authority, whose latest mass media campaign was launched on 14 February 1990. Further details of the Government's approach can be found in "AIDS: Response by the Government to the Seventh Report from the Social Services Committee Session 1988-89" (Cm 925), published last November, a copy of which is available in the Library.

NHS Trusts

29. **Mr. Dykes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on developments in hospital independent trust proposals within the National Health Service.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: A total of 191 National Health Service units have, to date, expressed an interest in National Health Service trust status and I understand that some 80 units are currently undertaking preparatory work with a view to submitting applications for National Health Service trust status at an early stage. Subject to the passage of the necessary legislation, we intend to invite formal applications for trust status shortly after Royal Assent. We intend that the first trusts should become fully operational in April 1991.

78. **Mr. Patchett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how may district health authorities have resolved to have a ballot on the question of the formation of self-governing trusts.

120. **Ms. Primarolo:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many district health authorities have resolved to have a ballot on the question of the formation of self-governing trusts.

138. **Mr. Pendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many district health authorities have resolved to have a ballot on the question of the formation of self-governing trusts.

Mr. O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many district health authorities have resolved to have a ballot on the question of the formation of self-governing trusts.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Formal consultation on proposals to establish NHS trusts cannot take place until applications are made; that is after the necessary legislation has received Royal Assent. I am aware that self-governance and other NHS review issues will have been discussed by health authorities, but the results have not been formally requested or recorded by the Department. When details become available and formal applications are prepared, regional health authorities will ensure that they are given local publicity and will seek the views of all those with an interest including health authorities, staff, patients, GPs, CHCs, and the local community. My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State shall consider these views alongside the application. However, no one group will have a veto.

98. **Mr. Burns:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many units have now expressed interest in becoming National Health Service hospital trusts.

143. **Mr. Barry Field:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many expressions of interest he has now received from hospitals or units wishing to obtain National Health Service hospital trust status.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: A total of 191 units have, to date, expressed an interest in NHS trust status.

99. **Mr. Ashby:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what will be the status of National Health Service trusts within the National Health Service.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The National Health Service and Community Care Bill provides for NHS trusts to be established as separate bodies corporate. They will remain an integral part of the NHS.

Newcastle DHA

30. **Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he next proposes to meet members of the Newcastle district health authority; and what he proposes to discuss.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: My right hon. and learned Friend has no plans at present to meet members of Newcastle district health authority.

Mentally Handicapped People

Mr. Buckley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to improve the availability of day care facilities for the mentally handicapped.

31. **Mr. Bradley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to improve the availability of day care facilities for the mentally handicapped.

105. **Mr. Boyes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to improve the availability of day care facilities for the mentally handicapped.

Mr. Caborn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to improve the availability of day care facilities for the mentally handicapped.

Mr. Freeman: Over the last 10 years there has been a 26 per cent. increase in the number of day centre places for people with a mental handicap. We look to a continued expansion of such places as resources allow and commend to social services authorities the recent social services inspectorate report "Inspection of Day Services for People with a Mental Handicap" as a useful guide to good practice.

48. **Mr. Brandon-Bravo:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made in the provision of services for the mentally handicapped since 1978-79.

72. **Dame Jill Knight:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made in the provision of services for the mentally handicapped since 1978-79.

Mr. Caborn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to improve the availability of day care facilities for the mentally handicapped.

Mr. Freeman: Considerable progress has been made in developing community-based services for mentally handicapped people.

Net expenditure by local authorities on residential accommodation and adult training centres increased by 88 per cent. in real terms to £271 million in 1987-88, and overall the number of places in residential homes, including those provided by the private and voluntary sectors, has doubled over the period (to 28,500), while the number of places in adult training centres and day centres has increased by 26 per cent. (to 53,000). The number of mentally handicapped people in hospital fell from 46,900 in 1978 to 27,700 in 1989 and by that year 11 out of the 14 regions had no mentally handicapped children in long-stay care in hospital. Despite this reduction, expenditure on hospital and community health services had grown by 11 per cent. in real terms (to £497 million) by 1986-87, the last year for which information is readily available, reflecting improved standards.

83. **Mr. Robert G. Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether any assistance will be given to health authorities for the provision of community services for the mentally ill and handicapped.

Mr. Freeman: Regional health authorities will make provision for community health services for the mentally ill and handicapped from within their main allocations together with any resources made available from the planned run down and closure of long-stay mental hospitals.

NHS Reform

32. **Sir Peter Emery:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether there will be any changes in doctors' rights to refer patients for treatment as a result of the proposals in the National Health Service and Community Care Bill.

115. **Mr. Sims:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what effect the provisions of the National Health Service and Community Care Bill will have on general practitioners' freedom to refer patients for the most appropriate treatment.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The provisions of the National Health Service and Community Care Bill will allow the introduction of contract funding of health care. This will bring GP referrals and the allocation of resources more closely into line. For example it will avoid problems that arise currently where the choices open to GPs may be constrained if the preferred hospital is a victim of its own success and cannot accept additional patients because of budgetary constraint.

In future district health authorities will be expected to let contracts which secure the referral patterns which their local GPs prefer, unless there are compelling reasons for not doing so. In this way resources will be directed to the units which GPs and their patients wish to use.

GPs who take part in the new practice funds scheme will have resources for certain hospital procedures which they can deploy directly.

42. **Mr. Tim Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress is being made in implementing the National Health Service review changes.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: For a detailed explanation of all the progress we have made in putting into action the changes outlined in the White Paper "Working for Patients" I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave him and my hon. Friend the Member for Maidstone (Miss Widdecombe) on 20 February at columns *714-15*.

Since then, other important steps have been taken towards implementing our proposals. First, on 27 February I announced the funding of a further 65 consultants for the NHS between now and 1992. This fulfils our commitment in the White Paper to the creation of 100 new consultant posts over three years. These posts will help reduce waiting times in districts and specialities with particularly long waiting lists. They will also help reduce the working hours of junior doctors, and improve the career structure in the respective specialities.

On 1 March, further information was published about how the new contracting system will operate.

On 14 March, Duncan Nichol, NHS chief executive, launched a new management development drive for 80,000 NHS managers and professionals, including doctors and nurses, with management responsibilities. The 14 regions are committed to developing their own support programmes with particular emphasis on improving the skills needed to implement the major changes that will be required in the post-reform NHS.

The chief executive also announced the next phase of the management communication programme to improve communications with staff. This is based on the results of a survey of communications carried out among general managers with particular emphasis on those at unit level where most staff ar employed and most patients are treated.

60. **Dr. Goodson-Wickes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent representations he has received from the British Medical Association on the implementation of his White Paper.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: We have not received recent representations from the British Medical Association on the White Paper "Working for Patients". There is, however, a growing understanding among the medical profession and others of the positive benefits to patients that will flow from these reforms.

68. **Mr. Bidwell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he last met representatives of local authority associations to discuss the provisions of the National Health Service and Community Care Bill.

102. **Mr. Bell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he last met representatives of local authority associations to discuss the provisions of the National Health Service and Community Care Bill.

111. **Mr. Harry Barnes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he last met representatives of local authority associations to discuss the provisions of the National Health Service and Community Care Bill.

129. **Mr. Battle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he last met representatives of local authority associations to discuss the provisions of the National Health Service and Community Care Bill.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: I met with representatives from the Association of Metropolitan Authorities (AMA) and Association of County Councils (ACC) on 5 February to discuss implementation of community care. Officials have also been meeting with officers of the local authority associations over recent months to discuss a range of community care issues. We shall continue to engage in consultation with the local authority associations as we carry forward our plans for implementation.

86. **Mr. Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many doctors in Cornwall have indicated their support for the Government's National Health Service reforms.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: We have received many comments on the Government's proposals to improve the Health Service from a wide variety of sources. Many ask questions, many support all or some of the proposals, and some only refer to specific points. It is not possible to distinguish them in the way the hon. Member requests.

136. **Mr. Neale:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what effect the proposals in the National Health Service and Community Care Bill will have on the distances patients will travel for treatment.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Surveys have shown that a majority of patients are willing to travel to get earlier or better treatment. Under the new funding arrangements for hospital services, the financial problems previously associated with accepting patients from outside the home district will be alleviated because hospitals will be funded directly for the patients they treat, wherever they come from. No patient will be made to travel long distances for treatment against his will.

141. **Ms. Walley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the implications the National Health Service and Community Care Bill will have for current prescribing policies by general practitioners.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: When the proposals for indicative prescribing budgets contained in the National Health Service and Community Care Bill are implemented, GPs will remain free to prescribe all medicines which are clinically necessary for their patients. Indicative prescribing budgets will encourage GPs to examine their prescribing habits and costs more closely and to prescribe more effectively.

Regional Chairmen

33. **Mr. Rathbone:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he last met regional chairmen; what matters he discussed; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I last met regional health authority chairmen on 17 January. I shall be meeting them again tomorrow morning for our regular bimonthly meeting when we shall be discussing a range of Health Service issues, including the ambulance dispute, rehabilitation services, income and expenditure in the NHS and the continuing progress of the NHS reforms.

Prescription Charges

34. **Mr. Alex Carlile:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make it his policy to include cancer sufferers within the categories of people exempt from prescription charges.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Over 75 per cent. of prescriptions are now dispensed free. The Government's policy is to direct help with prescription charges to those who are likely to have difficulty in paying charges on financial grounds. To extend the small list of medical conditions which confer exemption from charges would not be making the best use of NHS resources.

58. **Mr. Ashley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he intends to make any further increases in prescription charges.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: I announced on 1 March that the NHS prescription charge will be increased to £3·05 with effect from 1 April. There are no immediate plans for a further increase in the charge.

133. **Mr. Fearn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received on the level of prescription charges.

Mr. Freeman: A number have been received from hon. Members and others.

69. **Mr. Roy Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what was the cost of a prescription in 1979; how many subsequent increases there have been; and what has been the percentage increase overall.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Currently over 75 per cent. of all items dispensed in the National Health Service are free from prescription charges. In 1979, the figure was around only 60 per cent. The number of items attracting the standard prescription charge has fallen from around two in every five items to less than one during this time. In 1979, a total of 304·6 million items were dispensed at an ingredient cost of £592·1 million. In 1989, some 352 million items were dispensed at a cost of around £1,883 million. The average cost per item rose during this time from £1·94 to about £5·35.

On 16 July 1979, the National Health Service prescription charge was increased to 45p. Since then the charge has been increased on 10 occasions to its present level of £2·80. This represents an increase of 522 per cent. in cash terms or 209 per cent. in real terms.

Childhood Immunisation

37. **Mrs. Maureen Hicks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the current level of childhood immunisation; and if he will make a statement.

61. **Mr. David Porter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the current level of childhood immunisation; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: I refer my hon. Friends to the reply I gave my hon. Friend the Member for Edmonton (Dr. Twinn) on 8 March at columns *825-26*.

General Practitioner Contracts

38. **Mr. Pike:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received from general practitioners and the British Medical Association on effects on general practitioner services arising from contractual charges in general practitioner conditions of service.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: There have been some 4,000 letters concerned with the general practitioners' new contract. No accurate breakdown of this total can be provided, but most of these representations have been made by general practitioners.

73. **Rev. Martin Smyth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he has any plans to revise the general practitioner contract in the light of representations he has received from doctors and patients regarding the cost of long-term care.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: We received no representations dealing directly with the effect of the general practitioners' new contract on the cost of long-term care. However, if the hon. Member has in mind the supply of medicines to patients under the general medical and pharmaceutical services, I can assure him that prescribing budgets will not prevent general practitioners prescribing all the medicines needed by their patients, including those requiring long-term care.

93. **Mr. Jessel:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how the new general practitioner contract on services will affect patients.

142. **Mr. Andy Stewart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what effects the new general practitioners' contract will have on services to patients.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The general practitioners' new contract will promote higher standards, a wider range of services and more choice for patients in the family doctor services. Specific changes which will improve services include regular check-ups, particularly for children and people aged 75 and over, greater emphasis on preventative care such as childhood immunisation and screening for cancer of the cervix, more health promotion clinics, more minor surgery in the general practitioner's premises to save patients having to attend hospital and the extension of practice teams to include the services of counsellors, chiropodists, physiotherapists and other health professionals.

Hospital Meals

39. **Mr. Cyril D. Townsend:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the average cost per day of a patient's meals in hospital; what was the comparable figure for each of the last two financial years; and how much Bexley health authority is spending per patient per day at the present time.

Mr. Freeman: It is for individual health authorities to determine how much they will spend per day on feeding patients. Information on health authorities' catering costs is not collected in-year. The following information is derived from annual financial returns submitted to the Department:

Total cost of meals per patient day[1]

	1987-88 £ (Cash)	*1988-89 £ (Cash)*
Bexley Health Authority		
Bexley Hospital	2·87	3·47
Queen Mary's Hospital	4·25	5·22
England		
Average for hospitals	3·45	—[2]

[1] Catering costs include provisions, labour and energy.
[2] Not yet available.

Medical Care

40. **Mrs. Rosie Barnes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps his Department has taken to implement the recommendations contained in the report of the House of Lords Select Committee on Science and Technology: "Priorities in Medical Care".

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The Government published their response to the Committee in December 1989. This announced the creation of a new post of chief of research and development for NHS and Department of Health research. An advertisement for that position has recently been published.

Nurses and Midwives

41. **Mr. Gow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many nurses and midwives were working for the National Health Service in March 1990 and May 1979.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: There were 241,800 wholetime equivalent qualified nurses and midwives (excluding agency staff, learners and unqualified staff) employed in the National Health Service in England in September 1988. This compares to 192,000 wholetime equivalents at 30 September 1979. The 1979 figure has not been adjusted to take account of the reduction in the nurses' working week from 40 to 37·5 hours introduced during 1980-81.

71. **Mr. Sayeed:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what changes have been made in the provision of training for nurses and midwives since 1978-79.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: On training for nurses, I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave my hon. Friend the Member for Gedling (Mr. Mitchell) on 20 February 1990 at column *701*. There have also been important changes in the education and training of midwives. In 1981, as a result of the implementation of EC midwives directives, post-registration midwifery training was lengthened from 12 to 18 months, and pre-registration midwifery courses from two to three years. The Department has provided pump-priming funds for the development of more pre-registration midwifery courses; it is hoped that seven schemes will begin in the autumn of this year. The last decade has also seen the establishment, at Oxford, of the first pre-registration degree course for midwives.

Ambulance Dispute

43. **Mr. Adley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the ambulance dispute.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I am very pleased that the ambulance dispute has now ended. I would like to pay tribute to the chief ambulance officers and those of their staff who remained in post, the armed forces, the police and voluntary services who have helped to maintain accident and emergency services for the public in many parts of the country during this difficult period.

The cost of the settlement can be afforded by the National Health Service without damage to the continued expansion of patient services. It widens the differential between paramedically trained staff and other staff which is a sensible improvement in the pay structure that the management wished to introduce. The settlement will also make it easier for management to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the service at local level by introducing local pay flexibility that will enable managers to devote part of savings actually achieved to improvements in local pay.

Child Care

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action he is taking to ensure that social workers are allocated to all statutory child care cases.

44. **Mr. Flannery:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action he is taking to ensure that social workers are allocated to all statutory child care cases.

101. **Mr. Terry Fields:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action he is taking to ensure that social workers are allocated to all statutory child care cases.

108. **Mr. Fatchett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action he is taking to ensure that social workers are allocated to all statutory child care cases.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: It is the responsibility of local authorities to ensure that their statutory duties in relation to child care cases are properly fulfilled. The social services inspectorate monitors the situation and offers advice and assistance where difficulties arise.

Home Helps

46. **Ms. Short:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the future of the home help service.

87. **Mr. Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the future of the home help service.

106. **Mr. Stott:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the future of the home help service.

146. **Mr. Wall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the future of the home help service.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The home help service is already being developed by some local authorities into a home care service which can provide more personalised care adapted to the needs of the individual.

These services will continue to be an important part of the range of domiciliary and day care services needed to enable people to continue to live in the community.

As the White Paper "Caring for People" said, there is great scope for establishing clear policy framework and guidance for resource use, and for increasing the provision of more flexible and intensive personal care services for people who would otherwise need institutional care.

The social services inspectorate's report "From Home Help to Home Care", a copy of which is in the Library, includes useful guidance on the development of home care services.

GPs (Computers)

47. **Mr. David Nicholson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he plans to publish his proposals relating to the ownership of data held on computer by general practitioners.

Mr. Freeman: We plan to issue a health circular for consultation at the beginning of April.

135. **Mr. Irvine:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement about the recently announced scheme to provide reimbursement for computers in general practice.

Mr. Freeman: I am pleased to tell my hon. Friends and hon. Members that the new direct reimbursement scheme which I announced in my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Hastings and Rye (Mr. Warren) on 28 November 1989, at columns *228-31* will commence from 1 April 1990. From that date, general practitioners will be able to claim up to 50 per cent. direct reimbursement of the costs of purchasing, leasing, upgrading and maintenance of their computer systems, together with 70 per cent. of the initial costs of setting up the systems. These payments will be subject to upper limits based on a sliding scale according to practice list sizes and will take account of systems obtained in 1989-90. The balance of these costs will be reimbursed indirectly. An advance copy of an amendment to the statement of fees and allowances payable to general practitioners giving details of this scheme has been placed in the Library. Additional assistance will be announced shortly for GPs who choose to be fund holders to reflect their special computer needs.

Sheffield Health Authority

49. **Mr. Duffy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he next expects to meet the chairman of the Sheffield health authority; and if hospital closures will be discussed.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State has no plans to meet the chairman of Sheffield health authority.

Community Health Councils

50. **Mr. Win Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the future role of community health councils.

54. **Ms. Gordon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the future role of community health councils.

65. **Mr. Henderson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the future role of community health councils.

113. **Mr. Graham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the future role of community health councils.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: We see no fundamental change in the future role of community health councils. We are considering how that role should be clarified following the proposals for change in the White Paper.

Sir John Wheeler: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the total annual cost of community health councils in England and Wales.

Mr. Freeman: The summarised accounts of regional and district health authorities in England for 1988-89 record revenue expenditure on community health councils totalling £8,004,257. The information relating to Wales is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

Smoking

51. **Mr. Ashton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the current annual number of deaths attributed to smoking.

Mr. Freeman: It is not possible to be precise. Most deaths associated with smoking arise from three diseases: lung cancer, chronic bronchitis and "heart attacks" due to obstruction of the arteries of the heart. However, the proportion of deaths attributable to smoking from each of these diseases varies. Furthermore, smoking is also implicated in certain other conditions where no estimate of the numbers of the deaths caused by smoking is available —for example, obstruction of the arteries of the lower limbs. It is estimated that at least 90 per cent. of deaths from cancers of the lung, lip, oesophagus and larynx, and 90 per cent. of deaths from chronic bronchitis, obstructive lung disease, chronic pulmonary heart disease and aortic aneurysm are attributable to smoking. The total number of deaths from these conditions is given in the table.

England and Wales—1988

ICD[1] code	*Cause*	*Deaths*
162	Malignant neoplasm of trachea, bronchus and lung	35,302
140-149	Malignant neoplasm of lip, oral cavity and pharynx	1,687
150	Malignant neoplasm of oesophagos	4,884
161	Malignant neoplasm of larynx	844
416	Chronic pulmonary heart disease	695
441	Aortic aneurysm	7,914
490-492, 496	Bronchitis and emphysema, chronic airways obstruction, not elsewhere classified	25,993

[1] International Classification of Diseases (ICD) 9th revision.

In 1983, the Royal College of Physicians in its report "Health or Smoking" estimated that perhaps 20 per cent. of deaths due to obstruction of the arteries of the heart were related to smoking. The medical term for this condition is "ischaemic heart disease", but it is commonly referred to as "coronary heart disease". The total number of deaths from this condition for England and Wales is as follows, but the proportion directly attributable to smoking is less certain as this is only one of a number of causes that give rise to obstruction of the arteries of the heart.

England and Wales—1988

ICD[1] code	*Cause*	*Deaths*
410-414	Ischaemic heart disease	153,084

[1] International Classification of Diseases (ICD) 9th revision.

Supra-regional Funding

52. **Mr. David Davis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on implementation of the increase in supra-regional funding.

Mr. Freeman: In 1990-91 we are allocating approximately £61 million to the supra-regional services in England, a cash increase of over £10 million on the current financial year. As in earlier years, funds will be allocated as earmarked amounts within health authority cash limits. A copy of the announcement by my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State has been placed in the Library.

Drug Budgets

53. **Mr. Patrick Thompson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health under what circumstances a general practitioner will be penalised for exceeding his or her indicative drug budget.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: General practitioners who exceed their indicative prescribing budget will not face sanctions on that fact alone. Only where, as now, there is clear evidence of excessive prescribing will the matter be referred for consideration by a professional committee. If the professional committee decides there has been excessive prescribing, the FPC will decide what, if any, financial withholding should be applied. We expect that the application of sanctions will be a process of last resort and will not be commonplace. We intend to publish shortly a second document about the operation of indicative prescribing budgets. This will include detailed information on the sanctions process.

132. **Mr. Andrew Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health to what extent the costs of elderly and chronically ill patients will be reflected in the proposed indicative drug budgets.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Indicative prescribing budgets will take full account of the costs of elderly and chronically sick patients. Indicative prescribing budgets will, initially, be set largely on historic prescribing patterns which already reflect the fact that elderly and chronically sick patients need greater quantities of medicines than others. Practices will be able to discuss their individual budget requirements, including the needs of their elderly and chronically sick patients, with the FPC's medical adviser in advance of the budget being set. This will ensure that the budget is set at a level which takes full account of the needs of the practice and its patients. There will be no financial disincentive for practices to treat such patients or to accept such patients on to their lists.

Demographic Changes

55. **Mr. Colin Shepherd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent representations he has received about the need to have more up-to-date information on demographic change to areas served by district health authorities when assessing their funding needs.

Mr. Freeman: My hon. Friend the Minister for Health met my hon. Friend and the chairman of Hereford health authority earlier this month to discuss population estimates, among other issues relating to that health authority's funding. Additionally, the Department has received a small number of letters on this subject.

Hospital Waiting Lists

57. **Mr. Orme:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to reduce the length of hospital waiting lists in England and Wales.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: I refer the right hon. Member to the reply I gave my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Northfield (Mr. King) on 18 January at columns *403-4*. The information for Wales is the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

89. **Mr. Devlin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress is being made in reducing patient waiting lists in the northern region.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Waiting lists in the northern region have fallen from 47,000 in 1979 to 36,800 in March 1989, a fall of just under 22 per cent.

Next year northern region has been allocated £1·45 million from the waiting list fund. This is in addition to the £5·362 million in the three years to March 1990, which has been used to treat an additional 16,000 in-patients and day cases and 48,000 additional out-patients.

A management team led by John Yates of Inter-Authority Comparisons and Consultancy is examining waiting lists in three northern districts (Newcastle, Durham and East Cumbria). If the team recommends additional funding, allocations will be made in 1990-91 from the £12 million reserved for problem waiting lists.

In addition, we have approved and funded five new consultant posts in northern region from the 100 new consultant posts targeted at districts with long waiting lists.

South West Thames Regional Health Authority

59. **Mr. Soames:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the level of funding of the South West Thames regional health authority.

Mr. Freeman: South West Thames regional health authority's initial revenue cash limit for 1990-91 is £932,831,000, representing a cash increase of 7·7 per cent. over 1989-90.

HIV Infection

63. **Mr. Meale:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on compensation for patients who are not haemophiliacs who have been affected by HIV through National Health Service treatment.

90. **Mr. McLeish:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on compensation for patients who are not haemophiliacs who have been affected by HIV through National Health Service treatment.

95. **Mr. Martlew:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on compensation for patients who are not haemophiliacs who have been affected by HIV through National Health Service treatment.

114. **Mr. Hunter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a further statement on his policy regarding non-haemophiliac National Health Service patients who acquired the AIDS virus through routine blood transfusions during surgery.

128. **Mrs. Mahon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on compensation for patients who are not haemophiliacs who have been affected by HIV through National Health Service treatment.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The basis for seeking compensation for injuries alleged to have been suffered through medical treatment is through litigation in the courts. There has never been in this country under successive Governments a general scheme of no-fault compensation for such cases.

The ex-gratia payments for haemophiliacs with HIV recognise the exceptional combination of circumstances of those persons. There are no plans to extend those arrangements to others infected with HIV.

Medical Services Contracts

67. **Mr. Boswell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made in the introduction of contracts for medical services within the National Health Service.

Mr. Freeman: The introduction of contracts for services provided by National Health Service hospitals and community units is one of the most significant reforms proposed in the White Paper "Working for Patients". Good progress has been made in preparing for the implementation of this major change once it has been approved by Parliament. On 1 March, I announced the publication of "Contracts for Health Services: Operating Contracts". This builds on and supplements guidance issued in September last year in "Contracts for Health Services: Operational Principles". In particular it contains specimen contracts which have been developed within the National Health Service, largely with financial support from the Department. These specimens show what can be achieved already in specifying the nature and quality of services to be provided for patients. Publishing them with the guidance will assist clinicians and managers across the country to develop useful forms of contract for every part of the service. We intend contracts to be in general use from April 1991.

Health Authorities (Resources)

74. **Mr. Summerson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will give further details of the operation of the new system for distributing resources to health authorities.

Mr. Freeman: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Hereford (Mr.

Shepherd) on 23 January at columns *673-74*. Copies of the exposition booklet giving details of the calculation of 1990-91 allocations to regional health authorities have now been placed in the Library.

Eye Tests

75. **Mr. Lofthouse:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will now review his policy of charging for eyesight checks.

145. **Mr. Loyden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will now review his policy of charging for eyesight checks.

147. **Mr. Lambie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will now review his policy of charging for eyesight checks.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: We have no plans to change the current policy on entitlement for free NHS sight tests. We believe it right that those people who can afford to do so should pay for their optical costs. Provision has been made for the more vulnerable in the community, such as children, those in receipt of income support or family credit and people with special medical needs to continue to receive free sight tests under the NHS.

Clinical Regrading

79. **Mr. David Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to meet with the chairman of the North West Thames regional health authority to discuss clinical regrading.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: None.

Northumberland Health Authority

80. **Mr Amos:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he last met the chairman of Northumberland health authority; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: My right hon. and learned Friend has not yet met the chairman of Northumberland health authority.

Information Technology

82. **Mr. Evennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received on working paper No. 11 on information and information technology in the National Health Service.

Mr. Freeman: Seven written responses have been received to date to the consultation, which closes on 30 March 1990. In addition, since publication of the working paper and the associated consultation documents, officials have given a series of presentations in the regions at which views generally supportive of the proposals have been expressed by NHS staff attending. These views will be taken into account in reaching conclusions on the way forward for information systems post-NHS review.

Mental Health Care

85. **Mr. Dickens:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will give details of the central bridging funds provided for health authorities to provide new community services for the mentally ill and handicapped.

88. **Mr. David Martin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made on the capital loan fund for mental health projects.

Mr. Freeman: Details of the £50 million capital loans fund were announced by me on 23 January 1990 at column *672*. Health authorities have been invited to bid by 30 March for the first tranche of £10 million in the coming financial year (1990-91). Additional sums of £15 million and £25 million will be made available in the second and third years of the rolling programme. To date there have been 14 informal inquiries.

Committee on the Safety of Medicines

91. **Mr. Bendall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the members of the Committee on the Safety of Medicines.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The names of the committee members are as follows:

Chairman
Professor A. W. Asscher

Members
Professor C. L. Berry
Professor S. S. Bleehen
Professor T. G. Booth
Professor A. M. Breckenridge
Dr. R. G. Finch
Professor A. T. Florence
Professor E. C. Gordon-Smith
Professor F. Harris
Professor H. S. Jacobs
Dr. W. A. Jerrett
Professor M. J. S. Langman
Professor D. H. Lawson
Mr. F. E. Loeffler
Professor A. E. M. McLean
Professor J. M. Midgley
Dr. S. A. Montgomery
Dr. Celia Oakley
Professor M. D. Rawlins
Dr. D. A. J. Tyrrell
Professor M. P. Vessey

Health Authority Deficits

92. **Mr. John P. Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many district health authorities expect to be in deficit at the end of the current financial year.

124. **Mr. Rees:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many district health authorities expect to be in deficit at the end of the current financial year.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: We do not collect information about the financial position of individual district health authorities centrally.

Cochlear Implants

94. **Mr. Bill Walker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement about progress on the recently announced cochlear implant programme.

Mr. Freeman: Health authorities were asked to submit applications for funding of up to six centres overall for cochlear implants by 28 February. Fifteen applications have been submitted, and are now being considered. I wo[illegible]pe to be able to make an announcement about whi[illegible]tres have been chosen early in April.

Alcoholics

96. **Mr. Atkinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received to ring-fence community care funding for the rehabilitation of alcoholics; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: We have received a number of representations about the special needs of problem drinkers within the proposed community care arrangements including a paper from Alcohol Concern, the national voluntary agency on alcohol misuse. Local authorities will be responsible for drawing up plans to meet community care needs of all groups requiring such care; where appropriate we would expect them to include problem drinkers as one of these groups. Effective planning will require that local authorities respond flexibly to local needs and circumstances.

Inflation

97. **Mr. Hardy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is his estimate for the level of inflation which will be experienced within the National Health Service in 1990; and what funding will be available to cover the additional costs incurred.

Mr. Freeman: The Government do not make estimates of inflation in the National Health Service before the end of the financial year concerned.

Funding for the NHS, as for most other areas of public expenditure, is based on cash plans agreed in the context of the public expenditure survey and detailed subsequently in the "Government's Expenditure Plans 1990-91 to 1992-93" (Cm. 1013).

In 1990-91 the NHS in England alone will have additional resources equivalent to nearly £2·5 billion compared with 1989-90; this includes an extra £166 million announced on 1 February to help meet the additional costs of the 1990 review body pay awards for doctors and dentists and nurses and midwives.

DHA Contracts

100. **Mr. Quentin Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the effect of the proposals for contracts within the National Health Service on services to patients.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on provisions for new district health authority contracts with hospitals outside their area.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The proposals for contract funding for hospitals by district health authorities within the National Health Service will result in better standards of care and more choice for patients. They will enable the district health authorities to use their resources to obtain the best value for money in terms of high quality consumer-responsive services for their population. Districts will have a clear responsibility to ensure that a full range of health care services is available. They will specify the services required from each hospital or other unit, whether or not it is under their direct managerial control. More important, they will also specify the quality standards expected and ensure that these are met.

Social Work

110. **Mr. Worthington:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he last met representatives of the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State has not yet met the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work. However, I met the chairman and director on 27 November 1989 at the annual review meeting of the council.

Hospital Projects

112. **Mr. Anthony Coombs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many hospital capital projects have been completed or programmed since 1979.

Mr. Freeman: Information held centrally shows that 448 health building schemes each costing over £1 million have been completed in England since 1979. There are currently 516 such schemes in regions' capital programmes with a total value of over £5 billion of which 141 are under construction. This represents the largest sustained capital investment ever in the NHS.

Resource Management

116. **Mr. Maples:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress is being made on the implementation of resource management.

Mr. Freeman: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave my hon. Friend the Member for Fylde (Mr. Jack) on 20 February at column *695*.

NHS Service

118. **Mr. Pawsey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on action being taken to improve the quality of service being given by the National Health Service.

125. **Mr. Lee:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action is being taken to improve the quality of service being given by the National Health Service.

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps are being taken to improve the quality of care given by the National Health Service.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: I refer my hon. Friends to the reply I gave my hon. Friend the Member for Gainsborough and Horncastle (Mr. Leigh) on 20 February at column *712*.

Voluntary Groups

119. **Mr. Bowis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what help is being given to voluntary groups working with under five-year-olds.

137. **Mr. Franks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what help is being given to voluntary groups working with under five-year-olds.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: I refer my hon. Friends to the reply I gave my hon. Friend the Member for Stroud (Mr. Knapman) earlier today.

Intensive Care

121. **Sir Michael McNair-Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he directs regional health authorities to maintain a ratio of intensive care beds per thousand of their population.

Mr. Freeman: No. It is for health authorities to determine the facilities required in the light of local needs.

Hepatitis B

123. **Mr. Litherland:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he has any proposals for the future funding of an educational campaign for hepatitis B high-risk groups; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: The Department recognises the seriousness of hepatitis viruses. A new edition of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisations' memorandum "Immunisation Against Infectious Disease" will be published shortly and this includes advice on hepatitis B. The Health Education Authority is also reviewing its educational material about sexually transmitted diseases, including hepatitis B.

We are pleased to note a welcome decline in the incidence of hepatitis B from 1,785 reported cases in 1985 to approximately 600 cases in 1989.

Medical Audit

126. **Mr. Cash:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress is being made on the proposals for medical audit.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Good progress is being made towards medical audit with the support of the profession. A total of £31 million has been allocated to the National Health Service and national professional bodies.

Draft health circulars setting the organisational framework required for the successful implementation of medical audit programmes in hospital and general practice have been widely circulated for consultation.

Crown Immunities

130. **Mr. Shersby:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the removal of Crown immunities in the National Health Service.

Mr. Freeman: Crown immunity was removed from hospital kitchens and the health and safety legislation was applied to the National Health Service in 1986. We are committed to the extension of this policy to other areas of National Health Service activity wherever it is practicable to do so and provisions to this effect are contained in the National Health Service and Community Care Bill.

The Government propose to retain Crown immunity in only a few areas relating to insurance and finance matters, where it makes sense to do so and, where abolition would impose an additional administrative burden on the Health Service without any extra benefit accruing to patients or staff. In all other matters, for example relating to building standards, health authorities and National Health Service trusts will be legally obliged to meet legal standards and requirements.

Health Care (Southend)

131. **Mr. Teddy Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is Southend health authority's budget for health care; what is the average for other health authorities; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: The initial revenue allocation to Southend health authority for 1989-90 was £57,555,200. The district's gross revenue expenditure rose by over 66 per cent. in cash terms between 1982-83 and 1988-89, equivalent to 23 per cent. in real terms. Financial allocations to district health authorities are decided by regional health authorities. Overall, resources for the National Health Service have risen by £2·5 billion this year. Next year they will rise by nearly £3 billion more. That is a 20 per cent. cash increase in two years, bringing the total spending on the Health Service up to £29·1 billion for 1990-91. This includes £19 billion for hospital and community health services throughout the United Kingdom—some £15·2 billion in England alone.

Speech Therapists

144. **Mr. Wareing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to improve the recruitment and maintenance in post of speech therapists.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Improving recruitment and retention are essentially local issues, but health authorities have been encouraged to consider part-time employment, flexible hours and job sharing. The recent pay settlement gives across the board increases of 9 per cent. over an 18-month period commencing 1 April 1989 and provides for a review of the grading structure to be brought forward with any changes to be implemented from 1 October 1990.

Health Authorities (Finance)

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will publish for each health authority in Humberside and Yorkshire *(a)* the net income from private patients and clinics and *(b)* the amounts written off as bad debts in each year since 1979;

(2) if he will publish for each Yorkshire health authority *(a)* the net income from private patients and clinics and *(b)* the amounts written off as bad debts in each year since 1979.

Mr. Freeman: Following are figures recorded in the 1985-86 to 1988-89 annual accounts of the district health authorities providing health services in Yorkshire and Humberside. The income shown arises from charges to private patients under sections 65 and 66 of the National Health Service Act 1977 and is recorded under each heading net of sums written off in each financial year (which sometimes include amounts due from earlier years). Separate write-off figures for income due under sections 65 and 66 were not collected centrally.

Income from private patients (under Sections 65 and 66 of the National Health Service Act 1977) and related losses

	1985-86				1986-87			
	Income		Amounts written off		Income		Amounts written off	
	In-patients (Section 65)	Out-patients (Section 66)	In-patients (Section 65)	Out-patients (Section 66)	In-patients (Section 65)	Out-patients (Section 66)	In-patients (Section 65)	Out-patients (Section 66)
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
District health authorities								
Hull	112,339	30,434	0	0	81,385	34,250	0	0
East Yorkshire	95,924	16,011	0	0	62,261	14,248	2,685	33
Grimsby	109,282	49,598	485	1,287	98,694	54,149	2,019	1,969
Scunthorpe	119,830	22,889	440	81	92,448	27,063	427	379
Northallerton	57,741	10,153	0	34	64,384	12,081	0	25
York	99,517	53,182	0	86	132,768	47,794	180	157
Scarborough	14,149	6,029	0	12	9,588	10,309	0	157
Harrogate	209,620	16,717	0	67	175,271	19,753	790	190
Bradford	110,416	54,209	175	294	96,515	51,423	583	159
Airedale	303,969	28,730	237	2,098	370,736	36,782	164	117
Calderdale	239,727	26,808	0	394	94,241	22,280	0	3,721
Huddersfield	71,107	24,604	0	622	9,745	28,263	31	208
Dewsbury	39,844	26,939	0	228	27,550	21,310	0	0
Leeds Western	1,012,402	95,536	0	0	996,810	108,550	0	0
Leeds Eastern	275,225	43,550	0	0	220,309	55,795	2,151	0
Wakefield	53,895	17,286	6	960	52,634	20,316	0	197
Pontefract	14,969	10,400	0	170	16,035	10,973	258	60
Barnsley	41,703	16,799	0	16	30,465	17,481	0	112
Doncaster	39,260	22,679	0	0	43,502	27,307	0	257
Rotherham	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sheffield	212,775	76,659	718	320	208,298	75,013	2,681	885

	1987-88				1988-89			
	Income		Amounts written off		Income		Amounts written off	
	In-patients (Section 65)	Out-patients (Section 66)	In-patients (Section 65)	Out-patients (Section 66)	In-patients (Section 65)	Out-patients (Section 66)	In-patients (Section 65)	Out-patients (Section 66)
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
District health authorities								
Hull	120,678	37,096	1	137	128,204	41,128	48	528
East Yorkshire	64,148	11,915	84	0	63,423	9,326	0	144
Grimsby	75,777	42,578	2,769	1,644	52,457	46,376	0	1,175
Scunthorpe	110,150	37,073	1,014	247	194,781	37,496	0	74
Northallerton	76,737	12,176	1	73	97,298	11,690	0	14
York	202,275	41,305	645	257	77,257	32,977	167	86
Scarborough	10,304	9,707	0	246	6,161	10,526	0	90
Harrogate	186,485	19,084	956	183	242,649	23,584	0	189
Bradford	55,456	61,304	655	508	58,011	61,187	1,892	0
Airedale	341,600	48,814	4,420	963	432,680	68,115	0	2,115
Calderdale	43,396	19,269	620	656	21,057	15,403	3,261	124
Huddersfield	16,354	23,185	680	358	12,152	30,556	0	0
Dewsbury	18,697	15,318	0	0	10,549	11,087	0	0
Leeds Western	1,128,573	143,212	2,290	466	1,249,793	190,012	2,563	493
Leeds Eastern	301,276	52,699	2,055	446	348,600	87,460	1,634	787
Wakefield	50,935	21,146	8,366	658	53,102	22,865	147	377
Pontefract	12,267	14,356	0	156	13,527	7,157	0	106
Barnsley	32,344	18,807	0	7	39,065	22,343	0	138
Doncaster	33,525	27,861	0	226	38,038	29,531	43	56
Rotherham	0	3,872	0	0	0	4,708	0	0
Sheffield	222,972	70,923	11,923	3,260	313,542	131,734	3,520	269

Notes to the table:

1. The table includes all the district health authorities comprising the Yorkshire health region with the addition of Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield health authorities which form part of the Trent region.

2. The table excludes income due under Section 58 of the NHS Act 1977 (which arises mainly from services provided to private health care establishments) and which for the authorities shown totalled some £236,800 in 1988-89. Separate write-off figures for this category of income are not collected centrally.

Disabled People

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what representations he has received from Act Now on full implementation of the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986;

(2) what representations he has received on full implementation of the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986 and in particular on section 3 of that Act.

Mr. Freeman: Since the beginning of this year hon. Members have addressed five parliamentary questions on

this issue to my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State. In addition, an amendment to the National Health Service and Community Care Bill was put down in Committee, the effect of which would have been to implement the remaining sections of the Act. Over this period, the Department also received four letters on the subject, one from Act Now. In two instances, representations made particular mention of section 3.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he expects to complete his consultation on sections 1, 2 and 3 of the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986.

Mr. Freeman: It is too soon to give a precise date. Officials wrote to the local authority associations, asking for their comments by 31 May. This will be followed by discussions, the number and length of which will depend on the initial response.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which Minister in his Department is responsible for full implementation of the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986; and if he will take steps to ensure that all correspondence and representations concerning the Act reach the same section of the Department.

Mr. Freeman: My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State has ultimate responsibility for decisions on implementation of legislation relating to health and personal social services. Correspondence and representations concerning the Act are normally directed to designated officials within the Department.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health with which organisations he is consulting on implementation of sections 1, 2 and 3 of the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986.

Mr. Freeman: We are currently consulting the Association of County Councils, the Association of Metropolitan Authorities, and the Association of Directors of Social Services.

Dental Health

Mr. Marland: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the conclusions of the chief medical officer's annual dental health report published last month.

Mr. Freeman: In the dental section of his annual report the chief medical officer noted that in common with many other industrialised countries, a substantial improvement in dental health had taken place in the United Kingdom in recent years. This had been manifested particularly in children where a marked decline in dental caries had occurred since the early 1970s. The report went on to detail the changes that had occurred and to consider demographic variations in current levels of disease. Reasons for the changes were discussed and some international comparisons on caries levels were presented. In discussing future prospects for further improvements in the dental health of the population, the report stressed the importance, among other things, of the dissemination of more information to guide the public on dental care, including the labelling of food products to show their sugar content.

Mr. Marland: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information he has as to what national or international medical studies on dental caries have suggested concerning *(a)* the frequency of sugar consumption and *(b)* the amount, in contributing to tooth decay; and which studies have recommended a reduction in sugar consumption.

Mr. Freeman: Scientific literature on the relationship between sugar and dental caries was extensively reviewed by an expert panel of the Committee on Medical Aspects of Food Policy in its report "Dietary Sugars and Human Disease" which was published in late 1989. The section devoted to sugars and dental caries contained no fewer than 61 references to world literature. We are not aware of any official report which has not recommended a reduction in sugar consumption.

Regional Functions

Mr. Caborn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what functions his Department carries out at the regional level; where the regional offices are located in each of the regions; what staff are employed and at what grades; what proportion of his Department's budget is spent in each of the regions; and what geographical boundaries determine his Department's regions.

Mr. Freeman: The Department of Health is not organised on a regional basis. Three functions are, however, provided from a number of locations across England chosen so that the functions may be performed effectively and economically. These are the regional medical service (RMS 170 staff), provided by senior medical officers and medical officers; social services inspectorate (130 staff) provided by assistant chief inspectors and inspectors: and NHS audit (about 200 staff) provided by 10 statutory auditors at principal level and scheduled to become part of the Audit Commission at 1 October 1990. All of these functions are also supported by administrative staff who are included in the figures quoted. The functions of the RMS will progressively be transferred to regional health authorities, family practitioner committees and the Department of Social Security from 1 April 1990. The transfer of responsibility will be complete by 1 April 1991.

In addition some 700 DH headquarters staff work outside London. The regionally based staff account for approximately 12 per cent. of the DH's manpower budget. Non-manpower costs are not identified separately.

Infant Mortality

Mr. Robert Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what advice he has received from the medical profession on measures to reduce infant mortality at birth.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The Government's reply to the first report from the Social Services Committee Session 1988-89 on perinatal, neonatal and infant mortality (Cm 741) reflected medical advice. The main measures announced in the report were:

(i) the establishment of a working group to report to the Chief Medical Officer on introducing a form of confidential inquiry into stillbirths and infant deaths;

(ii) a requirement for all Regions to have at least one paediatric pathologist in post by April 1991 and to have reviewed their need for further posts by 1992;

(iii) the introduction in all regions where they do not already exist of epidemiological surveys of stillbirths and neonatal deaths;
(iv) The Medical Research Council to undertake a major review of the literature relating to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome and advise on what new research is needed.

Mr. Robert Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what studies, funded by his Department, are being undertaken into infant mortality.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The Medical Research Council, which receives grant in aid from the Department of Education and Science, is the Government agency responsible for the promotion of bio-medical research.

In addition, the Department of Health funds research on public health and health management issues. Expenditure from these funds on maternity and neonatal services is currently running at about £400,000 per annum. The largest single allocation is to the national perinatal epidemiology unit at Oxford whose programme of research consists of three main elements:

(i) surveys to describe the characteristics of people using the perinatal health services, the care they receive and the mortality and morbidity they experience;
(ii) randomised control trials to assess the relative merits of alternative forms of perinatal care;
(iii) formal syntheses and dissemination of the results of research evaluating the effects of care.

Health Authorities (Capital Charges)

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he is now in a position to publish updated estimates of the capital charges for health authorities under his Department's proposals.

Mr. Freeman: Health authorities are still making good progress in compiling asset registers in preparation for capital charging. Estimates of capital charges will be available when these have been completed and valued, which should be early in the next financial year.

NHS Employees (Outside Interests)

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the hon. Member for Bridgend may expect to receive a substantive reply to his letter of 8 February to the Minister of State in his Department concerning the answers given by her on National Health Service employment on 5 February, *Official Report*, column *489*.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: As the hon. Member will know, I passed his letter to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales and a reply was sent on 12 March. I refer the hon. Member to the answers I gave on 5 February at column *489* and on 16 March at column *383* concerning further guidance.

Psychiatric Care

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people are in psychiatric care *(a)* currently, *(b)* five and *(c)* 10 years ago; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: It is estimated that there were 56,200 in-patients under the care of consultant psychiatrists in National Health Service mental illness hospitals and units in England on 31 March 1989. This compares with 77,300 at the end of 1979 and 66,000 at the end of 1984.

Management Consultants

Ms. Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much has been spent on management consultants by *(a)* the Department of Health and *(b)* National Health Service regions and districts in England in each of the 10 years 1979-89; and what quality controls were used by *(a)* the Department of Health and *(b)* the National Health Service to ensure that these expenditures are good value for money.

Mr. Freeman: We cannot apportion expenditure between the Departments of Health and Social Security prior to 1985-86. The estimated expenditure for each succeeding financial year from 1985-86 on fees and expenses for management consultants on health matters is as follows:

	£ million
1985-86	0·479
1986-87	2·103
1987-88	1·244
1988-89	1·584
1989-90	4·870

The figures are approximate since expenditure up to and including the 1988-89 year was from a joint health and social security budget. In some cases expenditure has been apportioned where consultants have been engaged on both health and social security matters. The figures also include social services consultancy and some computer consultancy where these cannot be identified separately.

The figure for 1989-90 is estimated expenditure.

The Department of health controls and monitors the use of management consultants in line with the requirements laid down from time to time by the Treasury.

The employment of management consultants by the NHS is a matter for individual health authorities. Their accounts do not separately identify any expenditure incurred.

Breast Cancer Screening

Ms. Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health in the light of clinical and economic evidence produced since the publication of the Forrest report on breast cancer screening, what is the current cost/quality adjusted life year estimate for this procedure.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave her on 16 November at column *432*. We have received the report describing the computer model that has been developed as part of the economic evaluation of the United Kingdom trial of the early detection of breast cancer. We understand that one further specific report is planned: on the use of diagnostic resources and costs of treatment. The various elements will then be incorporated into a final report on the economic evaluation of the trial.

In the interim the Department has been looking at the mortality reductions reported in the trial. These suggest that the cost per quality adjusted life year quoted in the Forrest report was of the correct order.

Pensioners (Monitoring)

Ms. Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research has been undertaken and what conclusions reached on whether annual monitoring of the over 75-year-olds is cost effective.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: There is wide support for the over-75s being seen regularly, at least once a year and preferably in their own homes; the objective being to establish whether there are any medical or social conditions which would otherwise go unreported, but are easily remediable.

Such interventions are intended to minimise disability and hence improve the quality of life and to attempt to avoid "crisis" admissions to hospitals.

There are clear cost-effective benefits if the well-being of patients is maintained or improved as a result of the marginal costs involved.

In introducing the requirement in the new contract for general practitioners to offer an annual check-up and a home visit for their patients aged 75 and over, we considered the extensive literature in the field of care of the elderly that is available both in this country and internationally.

Mersey Regional Health Authority

Mr. John Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he has any plans to increase the budget of Mersey regional health authority.

Mr. Freeman: Mersey regional health authority's initial revenue cash limit for 1990-91 is £722,571,000. This is an increase of £42,291,000 over that authority's initial 1989-90 revenue cash limit.

"Working for Patients"

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much has been spent on press and public relations and publicity material in connection with "Working for Patients" *(a)* since it was launched and *(b)* estimated for 1990-91.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke *[holding answer 9 March 1990]:* We spent £138,000 on the production of leaflets informing the general public about the White Paper. No further expenditure on public information has been incurred since. The press office of my Department has handled press relations on the subject as part of its ordinary responsibilities.

I do not regard expenditure on communications with and information for the staff of the National Health Service about the implications of the proposed changes for them and their hospitals, as expenditure on press and public relations or publicity.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Benzene

Mr. Butler: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what information he has about the presence of benzene in irradiated beef.

Mr. Maclean: Benzene is present quite naturally in a wide range of common foods. Information on its presence in irradiated food is limited to one report on beef, which found minute quantities to be present. The levels reported were not only well below those occurring naturally in other foods but were found in a study using a much higher dose level than is proposed for the commercial treatment of foodstuffs.

Animal Medicines

Dame Peggy Fenner: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether it remains his policy not to charge industry for the EEC review of the pre-1984 product licences for animal medicines.

Mr. Maclean: No licence fee is charged for a veterinary medicinal product submitted for re-assessment under the terms of the licence review, but the cost of ensuring that these older products meet current standards is recovered through the graded annual fee.

Environmentally Sensitive Areas

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what financial resources are presently devoted to each environmentally sensitive area in England and Wales; and what is the annual expenditure on the scheme.

Mr. Maclean: Total payments to farmers throughout the United Kingdom under the environmentally sensitive areas schemes (ESAs) in the financial year 1989-90 is forecast to be £12·6 million. The total costs of agreements signed by 31 December 1989 in individual ESAs in England and Wales are:

	£
England	
Broads	1,741,000
Pennine Dales	946,000
Somerset Levels and Moors	814,000
South Downs	578,000
West Penwith	340,000
Breckland	457,000
North Peak	687,000
Shropshire Borders	555,000
Suffolk River Valleys	871,000
Test Valey	26,000
Wales	
Cambrian Mountains	646,000
Lleyn Peninsula	249,000

Total financial resources devoted to the schemes are a combination of payments to farmers and administration costs. The latter, which include a substantial element attributable to ADAS advice, cannot be calculated separately for each ESA without disproportionate effort.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many of his Department's and Agricultural Development Advisory Service staff are allocated to each environmentally sensitive area in England and Wales; and what is the total staff allocation for the scheme nationally.

Mr. Curry: None of our staff is wholly allocated to a specific environmentally sensitive area. Details of the total manpower expected to be deployed (in man years) in 1989-90 is shown in the table:

MAFF Unit	*ESAs Designated in Region*	*Man years Admin*	*Man years ADAS*
Eastern Region	The Broads Suffolk River Valleys Breckland	5·9	12·5
Midland and Western Region	North Peak[1] Shropshire Borders	3·2	10·3
Northern Region	North Peak[1] Pennine Dales	3·2	10·9

MAFF Unit	ESAs Designated in Region	Man years Admin	Man years ADAS
South East Region	South Downs Test Valley	3·5	8·9
South West Region	West Penwith Somerset Levels and Moors	6·4	10·5
Wales	Lleyn peninsula Cambrian Mountains	[2]—	11·2
Sub-total		22·2	64·3
Headquarters	aspects of all ESAs	6·0	4·7
Total	—	28·2	69·0

[1] The North Peak ESA is administered by two MAFF regions.
[2] Administrative staff in Wales are the responsibility of the Secretary of State for Wales.

British Nutrition Protection Board

Mr. Michael Morris: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement about the role and functions of the British Nutrition Protection Board.

Mr. Maclean: I have no knowledge of this organisation, its membership, its role or its functions.

Salmon Dealers

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the Government's reasons for not introducing a salmon dealer licensing scheme in Great Britain.

Mr. Curry: I refer the hon. Member to the reply which I gave on 6 February to my hon. Friend the Member for Warrington, South (Mr. Butler) *Official Report*, column *575*.

Agro-food Industry Conference

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if his Department participated in the conference on energy innovation and the agro-food industry, in Amiens on 21 to 23 March.

Mr. Curry: No.

Biotechnology

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the implications for the farming industry of the legal protection afforded to biotechnological inventions.

Mr. Maclean: Discussions are still taking place on the European Community proposal for a directive on the legal protection of biotechnological inventions. We expect consumers and the food and farming industries to benefit from the introduction of such inventions in the same way as they have already benefited from other new technology.

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the appearance of symptoms similar to those exhibited by cattle affected by bovine spongiform encephalopathy in antelopes in British zoos; and if he has any plans in the light of this development to take further action to eliminate bovine spongiform encephalopathy.

Mr. Maclean: Five antelopes in British zoos have been confirmed as being affected by a spongiform encephalopathy. The disease occurred in a nyala in 1986 and a gemsbok in 1987, both of which are mentioned in the published report of the Southwood working party on BSE, and in an oryx, a kudu and an eland in 1989. The probable source of infection was via commercial feedstuffs. The use of ruminant protein in ruminant (which includes animals of this kind) feedstuffs has been prohibited since July 1988.

Dairy Produce Quotas Regulations

Mr. Gill: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what plans he has for amending the dairy produce quotas regulations.

Mr. Gummer: I have laid before Parliament today the Dairy Produce Quotas (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 1990.

The regulations provide a basis for making additional allocations of milk quota to producers with outstanding tribunal awards, small family farms and producers in remote areas, as described in the reply which I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Torridge and Devon, West (Miss Nicholson) on 13 March (*Official Report*, columns *192-93*). These allocations are intended to help those categories of producer who have suffered disproportionately from the introduction of quotas and subsequent cutbacks in production.

The proposals which we originally put to the Commission contained provision for the loan of quota to new entrants. The Commission's view, however, is that no satisfactory basis exists in Community law for the issue of quota to new entrants on temporary and conditional terms. We have considered whether quota should instead be granted outright to new entrants but have decided against this course. In reaching this conclusion we took into account the strong opposition of the National Farmers Union to the gift of quota to new entrants. We have therefore decided to allocate the 22·5 million litres of quota originally earmarked for a new entrants scheme to family-type farms, which will now receive an increase of 4 per cent. of their existing wholesale quota, and to holders of development awards, which will be made up to approximately 80 per cent. of the original figure after abatement to take account of subsequent across-the-board quota cutbacks.

By ensuring that almost all of the quota is allocated before the end of the current quota year we shall also reduce the potential burden of supplementary levy on all over-quota producers. This represents a potential saving to the industry of £29 million.

The amendments also provide for priority treatment to be given to producers affected by restriction orders served because of the lead contamination of animal feed. Many of those affected will have had to keep animals on farm longer than they otherwise would and their milk production will have increased accordingly. Provision is made for them to receive a priority reallocation of unused quota at year-end subject to the same conditions as producers affected by restriction orders served for animal health reasons.

EMPLOYMENT

Respiratory Illness

148. **Mr. Blunkett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what information his Department has on the connection between work within the steel industry and development of chronic respiratory illness.

Mr. Nicholls: The Health and Safety Executive is aware of reports suggesting a link between work in the steel industry and the development of chronic respiratory disease, but is not satisfied that there is conclusive evidence that the link is causal rather than due to other non-occupational factors.

Training and Enterprise Councils

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what representations he has received about his draft proposals to cut funding for training allowances paid in respect of training and enterprise council allowances.

Mr. Eggar: I have received a number of representations from training and enterprise councils (TECs) on general funding issues. TECs will receive agreed resources to carry out their plans and my officials are currently in discussion with individual TECs about the resources that will be made available.

Mr. Fatchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many people working in education have been appointed to the board of training and enterprise councils; and if he will list them.

Mr. Eggar: A number of people working in education have been put forward as prospective training and enterprise council (TEC) board members. Each TEC will list in its corporate plan its final board of directors and this will be a public document once the plan is approved.

Skills Training Agency

Mr. Leighton: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how much Deloitte Haskins and Sells was paid for work in connection with the sale of the Skills Training Agency.

Mr. Eggar: The amounts, paid to Deloitte Haskins and Sells as at 16 March 1990 were £132,425 for the initial feasibility study, £124,229 for work by Deloitte Corporate Finance as the Secretary of State's main sale adviser, and £42,903 for accountancy work by Deloitte Haskins and Sells. The figures exclude expenses and VAT.

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what response the Minister of State has had about his offer to meet representatives of the trade unions about position papers prepared by bidders for the Skills Training Agency, together with assessments by the Government Actuary's Department of the successful bidders' pension proposals.

Mr. Eggar: Representatives of the STA trade unions have indicated they would like to take up my offer to meet them. I hope that a date for a meeting can be fixed very shortly.

Youth Training Scheme

Mr. Jack Thompson: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment (1) how many young people aged over 18 years are on YTS with special needs (STN) endorsements;

(2) if he has any plans to introduce an increase in the YTS allowance, age-related for 18-year-olds and over, in line with the principle set in April 1988 for income support claimants when rates liability was introduced.

Mr. Nicholls: I refer the hon. Gentleman to a reply that I gave to the right hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, South (Mr. Ashley) on 15 March 1990, *Official Report*, column *340*.

Workplace Health and Safety

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many accidents involving three or more days off work due to back strain or injury were recorded in each year from 1979 to the most recent practicable date.

Mr. Nicholls: The available information is given in the table:

Numbers of reported[1] occupational back injuries[2] to employees and self employed persons in Great Britain resulting in absence from work for more than three days[3]

	Number
1979	44,012
1980	37,746
1981	74,097
1982	66,634
1983	[5]
1984	[5]
1985	[5]
[4]1986-87	29,635
[4]1987-88	30,002
[6] [4]1988-89	29,783

[1] Injuries reported to Health and Safety Executive's factory and Agricultural Inspectorates for the years 1981 to 1988-89 and to the factory inspectorate only for 1979 to 1980.

[2] Injuries notified under the Notification of Accidents and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1980 (NADOR) for 1981 to 1982, and the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1985 (RIDDOR) for 1986-87 onwards. Data for the years 1979 to 1980 are based on reports made under various legislation. Because of the changes in reporting arrangements data for these three periods are not directly comparable.

[3] Includes non-fatal major injuries as defined under the Notification of Accidents and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations and the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations which are assumed to involve absence from work for over three days. Also includes other injuries causing absence from work for more than three days reported directly to enforcing authorities for the years 1979 to 1980 and 1986-87 onwards, and injuries resulting in claims for industrial injury benefit for the years 1981 to 1982. Figures for 1983 to 1985 not available owing to the cessation of industrial injury benefit.

[4] Years beginning 1 April.

[5] Not available.

[6] Provisional.

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment (1) if he will introduce legislation to remove the discrepancies between maximum weights lifted by agricultural workers and textile workers; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will make a statement on the position regarding manual handling guidance notes; when he expects these to be issued by the Health and Safety Executive; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: The Health and Safety Commission issued a consultative document in October 1988 proposing

new regulations and guidance to protect all workers from injury during manual handling of loads. The effect of these proposals would be to remove discrepancies between the treatment of workers in different industries.

Also in that year the Commission of the European Communities published a draft directive to set minimum standards of protection for workers engaged in manual handling. The directive reached common position on 30 October 1989 and adoption is expected during 1990. The consultation on its proposals helped the Health and Safety Commission in formulating a view on the draft directive and it has now incorporated its own work, including the preparation of guidance, into its plans for implementation of the directive which the current draft requires by 31 December 1992.

Skill Centres

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how much money has been paid by Astra Training Services Ltd. to the Government for skill training centres; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: The sale of the training business to Astra Training Services Limited will involve a payment from the Government to Astra of some £11 million. This is a price determined in the sale process after open competitive bids and subsequent negotiations. It reflects the costs of turning around a business which is currently unprofitable and creating training businesses with good prospects of viability.

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment under what terms of the information memorandum issued by Deloitte Corporate Finance on his behalf the skill centres have been disposed of by his Department; what revenue is expected from sites in the three categories A, B and C; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: Under the agreed terms of sale, at 42 skill centres and the Sheffield head office the training business purchaser will take the Government's interest in the site, or a new lease from the landlord. At 10 skill centres the purchaser will take a type A, B or C lease along the lines set out in appendix IV of the information memorandum (a copy of which was placed in the Library on 19 December). These leases will provide for rents to be phased in as set out in the information memorandum, with the total rent for all 10 leases reaching £1,098,600 p.a. in year three. I propose to sell the Government's interests in these 10 sites, subject to the leases to be granted to training business purchasers, later this year, so expect to receive the rental revenue from the leases for only a period of months.

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the cost of advertising and securing the sale of skill centres; what fee was received by Deloitte Corporate Finance; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: The cost of advertising the offer for sale of the Skills Training Agency was £13,337. Fees paid to Deloitte Corporate Finance as at 16 March 1990 were £124,229 for its work as the Secretary of State's main sale adviser. In addition, fees of £132,425 had been paid to Deloitte Haskins and Sells in respect of the initial feasibility study, and £42,903 in respect of accountancy work associated with the sale. The figures exclude expenses and VAT.

Figures for the total fees payable to Deloittes and other advisers in respect of the sale will become available once the sale has been concluded and final invoices have been agreed.

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment when those directors of Astra Training Services Ltd. who are civil servants will be expected to assume full-time duties with the company; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: The three directors of Astra Training Services Limited who are civil servants will cease to be civil servants and assume full-time duties with the company at the time the sale to Astra is completed. I expect this to be in April or May.

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment who conducted negotiations with his Department for the purchase of skill centres by Astra Training Services Ltd.; and if they were civil servants at the time of the negotiations.

Mr. Eggar: Negotiations for the purchase of a training business by Astra Training Services Limited were conducted between Astra's professional advisers and the Government's main sale advisers, Deloitte Corporate Finance. At the time of the negotiations the directors of Astra were civil servants; their professional advisers were not.

Internal Audit

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the subject matter of the three internal audit reports that were drawn to the attention of a Minister in his Department in 1989.

Mr. Eggar: The three areas drawn to attention of Ministers through senior management were the accuracy of payment of unemployment benefit, employment training overpayments and section 4 tourism grants.

Schools (Wood Treatment Chemicals)

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment (1) if he will review the guidelines for the use of lindane, tributyltin, and other anti-rot wood treatment chemicals for use in the construction of schools and other buildings for subsequent occupation by children, subsequent to the problems at Ysgol Gymraeg Treganna, Radnor road, Canton, Cardiff in 1989;

(2) if he will issue new guidelines to education authorities in Wales regarding the use of lindane, tributyltin and other similar anti-rot wood treatment chemicals in the refurbishment of the timbers of old school buildings, following the problems at Ysgol Gymraeg Treganna, Radnor road, Canton, Cardiff in 1989.

Mr. Nicholls: Wood preservatives are approved by Ministers subject to rigid conditions of use which appear on the label of the product. Ministers are advised by the independent advisory committee on pesticides, which, as part of an on-going programme, is currently undertaking reviews of lindane and tributyltin oxide in wood preservatives. I understand that investigations at Ysgol Gymraeg Treganna were unable to establish a link between incidences of sickness and the use of wood preservatives at the school.

SCOTLAND

Law Courts (Television Links)

Mr. Lawrence: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what consideration he is giving to the provision in Scottish courts of law of live television links from abroad.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: My noble and learned Friend the Lord Advocate has recently carried out a consultation on whether a provision should be enacted for Scotland to enable evidence to be given in Scottish criminal trials direct from other countries by live television links. There was general support for this proposal. Accordingly an amendment enabling this procedure was tabled on 15 March for consideration at the Committee stage in the House of Lords of the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill.

Fish Farms (Crown Estate)

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when the Crown Estate Commissioners fish farming advisory committee was established; when it was first convened; how many times it has sat; how many cases it has heard; what the outcome of those cases has been; and how many times statutory bodies have called for a case to be referred to the advisory committee.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: My right hon. and learned Friend announced the establishment of the fish farming advisory committee by way of written reply on 19 December 1988. He announced the appointment of the chairman and vice-chairman in May 1989. I understand from the Crown Estate Commissioners that the advisory committee was formally constituted in December 1989 following the nomination of representatives by the statutory authorities in Scotland, and will meet on 19 March to agree procedures. I also understand that there were requests for cases to be referred to the committee before it was formally constituted but none since.

Lowland Airports

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what assessment he has made of the effect of the change in Scottish lowland airports policy on economic development in Scotland; and if he will make available the evidence on which it is based.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Many of the responses to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport's consultation paper on Scottish lowland airports policy addressed in detail the possible economic effects of the policy options. All points made were assessed and taken fully into account in the review, and it was concluded that the "open skies" decision as subsequently announced would offer greatest benefit to the Scottish economy.

We do not intend to publish the submissions made in response to the consultation paper.

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what planned improvements in road and rail services to Prestwick airport he had approved before 6 March; and whether any changes are now being considered.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: My right hon. and learned Friend gave approval, in September 1989, to proposals for the Ayr road route scheme. This is a joint project between Strathclyde regional council and the Scottish Development Department and, when it is complete, it will be possible to drive from Edinburgh and Glasgow to Prestwick airport entirely on motorway, dual carriageway or four-lane carriageway. I understand that Strathclyde regional council plans to start advance works on its section in June this year. Two further schemes are planned which will upgrade the remaining four-lane sections to dual carriageway.

Discussions will continue between the Scottish Office, Strathclyde passenger transport executive and British Rail about the possibility of building a new station at Prestwick airport. No decision will be taken, however, on whether such investment would be justified until we are in a position to assess the trends in passenger numbers at Prestwick in the light of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport's recent announcement of the outcome of the review of Scottish lowland airports policy.

Local Government Finance

Mrs. Ray Michie: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the figure for the estimated yield of 1p on the basic rate of income tax for Scotland used in the written answer on local income tax to the hon. Member for Glasgow, Cathcart (Mr. Maxton) on 27 February, *Official Report*, columns *117-19*.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The figure was £106 million.

General Practitioners

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list in the *Official Report* those general practitioner practices which have declared an interest in applying for budgetary status.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Forty-one practices in Scotland have so far indicated an interest in the GP funding scheme. Detailed information is not centrally available but the breakdown by health board is given in the table. This is firm evidence that this policy initiative is widely supported by the profession at large.

Health Board	*Number of Expressions of Interest*
Ayr and Arran	3
Argyll and Clyde	4
Dumfries and Galloway	2
Forth Valley	1
Grampian	12
Lanarkshire	3
Lothian	6
Greater Glasgow	3
Tayside	7
	41

Internal Audit

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the subject matter of the internal audit report produced in the Lord Advocate's Department and drawn to the attention of the Minister in 1989.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The subject matter of the internal audit report which was drawn to the attention of my noble and learned Friend the Lord Advocate was the revision of procedures for the collection of and accounting for fines and fixed penalties imposed in Scottish district courts.

New Dwelling Units

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will estimate the number of new dwelling units which will be built in 1990-91 in *(a)* the private sector and *(b)* the public sector.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: No such estimates are made by the Scottish Office. Regional and islands councils in Scotland are responsible for making forward projections for housing in their areas through their structure plans.

Western Scottish Omnibuses Limited

Mr. Graham: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether the Clydewest 2000 employee buyout group is treated as a legitimate potential bidder for Western Scottish Omnibuses Limited; and whether it is allowed the same free access to financial information for the employee buyout bid as is being allowed Western Scottish Omnibuses Limited.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: It is the responsibility of the Scottish Transport Group to implement the

Scottish Bus Group disposal programme. After Western Scottish Omnibuses Limited is advertised for sale in due course, an information memorandum, which will include financial information, will be made available to all prospective purchasers of that company who can demonstrate that they have sufficient financial backing, or the prospect of sufficient backing, to mount a serious bid and provided that they have signed and returned a confidentiality undertaking in relation to the use of the information memorandum. I understand that Clydewest 2000 has registered its interests in Western Scottish with the Scottish Transport Group, and the group will therefore contact Clydewest 2000 when the company is being offered for sale.

EC Aid for Rural Areas

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what advice he has received from the European Economic Community Commissioner about the levels of aid for rural areas after 1991; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Rifkind: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to him today by my hon. Friend the Minister responsible for industry and enterprise. The Scottish rural areas eligible for assistance are the Highlands and Islands and Galloway. My hon. Friend the Minister and I will make further representations as necessary in an effort to secure adequate and acceptable EC funding for the areas concerned.

Schools (Assisted Places)

Mr. Allan Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will announce the statistics for the assisted places scheme in the 1989-90 school session in Scotland and the income scale which will apply to the scheme in school session 1990-91.

Mr. Lang: At the beginning of the current school session there were 2,689 pupils receiving assistance under the assisted places scheme. Additional pupils will be admitted to assisted places throughout the 1989-90 session and I expect that the final total will be about 2,800. This is in line with our plans to increase the total number of pupils benefiting to about 3,000 by the 1991-92 school year. Eighteen new schools were admitted to the scheme in the current school session, which has widened significantly the choice of school available to parents seeking assistance from the scheme.

The scheme continues to concentrate assistance on lower-income families. In 1989-90 1,106 pupils (41 per cent. of those in the scheme) will be receiving full fee remission because they have a family income of £7,584 per annum or less. A further 179 pupils (7 per cent.) have family incomes between £7,585 and £8,500 per annum and 183 (7 per cent.) between £8,501 and £9,500.

For school session 1990-91 I propose to lay regulations before the House in due course providing for progressive parental contributions for one assisted pupil in relation to family income as follows:

Part of relevant income to which the specified percentage applies	*Parental contribution (percentage)*
That part (if any) which exceeds £8,034 but does not exceed £8,735	9
That part (if any) which exceeds £8,735 but does not exceed £9,449	12
That part (if any) which exceeds £9,449 but does not exceed £10,865	15
That part (if any) which exceeds £10,865 but does not exceed £13,043	21
That part (if any) which exceeds £13,043 but does not exceed £15,885	24
That part (if any) which exceeds £15,885	33

The relevant income scale is open ended, but the remission can of course be given only where the parental contribution is less than the school tuition fee.

Earnings

Mrs. Mahon: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish tables showing the proportion of (i) manual, (ii) non-manual and (iii) all full-time employees earning less than *(a)* £160, *(b)* £150, *(c)* £170, *(d)* £120 and *(e)* £110 per week for (1) men, (2) women and (3) all full-time employees, excluding overtime pay, in Scotland.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 9 March 1990]:* The information requested is given in the table:

Distribution of average gross weekly earnings (excluding overtime) of full-time employees on adult rates, whose pay was not affected by absence, April 1989

Scotland	*Percentage earning less than*				
	£110	*£120*	*£150*	*£160*	*£170*
Males					
Manual	8	14	37	45	54
Non-manual	4	6	12	15	19
All	6	10	26	31	38
Females					
Manual	41	52	80	86	91
Non-manual	17	25	47	54	59
All	22	31	55	62	67
All					
Manual	15	21	45	53	62
Non-manual	10	15	29	35	39
All	12	18	36	43	49

Source: New Earnings Survey: April 1989.

Speech Therapy

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what plans he has for improving the supply of speech therapists in Scotland.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 16 March 1990]:* A new manpower planning steering group has been set up; regular staffing surveys are undertaken; employment initiatives to improve the retention and recruitment of staff are being developed; limits on the recruitment of students have been lifted and the provision of places is regularly monitored; refresher courses for returners are planned. Regular meetings are held with the profession about training and other manpower issues.

Gaelic Language

Mr. Macdonald: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what information is available, following analyses of the 1981 census on *(a)* the marriage of Gaelic speakers

and non-Gaelic speakers to Gaelic-speaking and non-Gaelic-speaking partners, *(b)* the incidence of Gaelic-speaking ability amongst the children of Gaelic and non-Gaelic-speaking parents and *(c)* the incidence of Gaelic language speaking abilities in each socio-economic group; and what plans there are to publish such information.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 19 March 1990]:* Information from the census is either included in reports laid before Parliament and subsequently published or is produced at the discretion of the Registrar-General in response to a request from a customer, who is required to pay the cost of production.

No information of the type mentioned was included in the published Gaelic report and there are no plans for further publications. I understand that the Registrar-General has received a customer request for such information and is currently considering the technical and resource implications. Provided there are no insuperable difficulties and agreement can be reached on the cost, the Registrar-General will provide the information.

District Councils (Borrowing Powers)

Mrs. Fyfe: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is his policy on increasing the borrowing powers of district councils which have no further disposable assets to sell.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 19 March 1990]:* In determining non-housing capital allocations to district councils my right hon. and learned Friend takes into account all factors known to him, including councils' patterns of receipts raised in recent years and their own forecasts of receipts likely to be raised in future.

Glasgow District Council

Mrs. Fyfe: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations he has received from Glasgow district council seeking further general services capital allocation to meet commitments given by the council at the request of the Office of Arts and Libraries.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 19 March 1990]:* My officials have received a letter from the City of Glasgow district council about its general services capital consent allocation which mentions, among other things, commitments made by the council in 1986 when it accepted nomination as the European City of Culture.

Education Spending

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much money would not have been spent on Scottish education if regional councils had kept to Government guidelines in each of the years since 1979-80.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 19 March 1990]:* The guidelines which the Government issued to local authorities for the greater part of this period were in respect of their total expenditure. Spending decisions on individual services, such as education, are as they always have been entirely a matter for local authorities themselves.

Child Care Facilities

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what plans he has to make extra child care facilities available in Scotland to meet the need for extra women workers.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 19 March 1990]:* The Government are encouraging employers to consider provision of child care as part of their measures to attract women into employment, as numbers of young people becoming available for work decline. Private sector employers may themselves provide child care facilities, which are allowable against corporation tax, or act in partnership with other employers, public authorities and voluntary organisations.

We continue to give grants to voluntary organisations concerned with child care and through revenue support grant we contribute to the provision made by local authorities.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Inspectors' Reports

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will make it his policy to include in the annual report published by his Department in accordance with section 729 of the Companies Act 1989 *(a)* details of the non-departmental inspectors appointed by him and *(b)* the cost of each published report.

Mr. Redwood: I have no objection in principle to including in the companies annual report the names of inspectors appointed by me, in those cases where the appointment is announced, together with the cost of each published report. Such information will be considered for inclusion in the next report.

Company Accounts

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will introduce legislation to amend section 15 of the Companies Act 1989 to require all summary financial statements to include a warning to investors that such financial statements cannot be relied upon for making investment decisions.

Mr. Redwood: I refer the hon. Member to regulation 5(e) and (f) of the Companies (Summary Financial Statement) Regulations 1990 (SI 1990/515) which were laid before Parliament on 9 March.

Accounting and Auditing

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what consideration his Department has given since June 1979 to setting up an independent body to regulate the accounting and auditing industry.

Mr. Redwood: A comprehensive review of departmental papers since June 1979 has not been attempted. However, in 1986 the Department issued a consultative document which made a number of suggestions on how the eighth EC company law directive on the qualifications of auditors might be implemented in the United Kingdom. Among these was the possibility that a statutory body broadly along the lines of the General Medical Council

might be created and have conferred upon it the task of supervising professional accountancy bodies and ensuring that they complied with the directive.

In the light of the responses to that document, the Government decided that the legislation implementing the directive should confer the necessary powers on the Secretary of State, but that he should be able to set up a statutory body and transfer to it many of those powers. Part II of the Companies Act 1989 provides for this arrangement. As the Government made clear during the passage of the Companies Bill, however, we have no present intention to set up a statutory body.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he plans to bring into operation section 121 of the Companies Act 1989.

Mr. Redwood: Section 121 will come into force on 1 April. We plan to make regulations under the new section 390B of the Companies Act 1985 (which is inserted into that Act by section 121) in the summer.

Waste Water and Waste Disposal

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if his Department will be represented at the international trade fair on waste water and waste disposal on 22 to 26 May.

Mr. Forth: There will be no ministerial visit to the ninth international trade fair for waste water and waste disposal: sewage, refuse, recycling, public cleansing, street maintenance and winter road service (IFAT '90), Munich, 22-26 May 1990. However, official representatives from my Department will be attending.

House of Fraser

Ms. Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry why he has decided not to implement the recommendations in the House of Fraser Holdings plc report relating to *(a)* clear demarcation of responsibility, *(b)* knowledge of one's client, *(c)* appropriate procedures for advisers, *(d)* relationships with the media, *(e)* relationships with the regulatory authorities and *(f)* loopholes in the code: 25.1.3 (p503).

Mr. Ridley: I refer the hon. Member to the answers to her questions Nos. 111 to 134 and 137.

Ms. Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry why he has decided not to implement the recommendations in the House of Fraser Holdings plc report relating to false evidence to inspectors: 1.29, p. 11.

Mr. Ridley: The giving of false evidence orally on oath or under affirmation is an offence under section 1 of the Perjury Act 1911. Similarly where false information has been submitted in written form but is subsequently adopted under oath, there is also an offence under section 1 of the Perjury Act 1911.

There is no present need to amend the legislation.

Ms. Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) why he has decided not to implement the recommendations in the House of Fraser Holdings plc report relating to the Companies Act 1985 as amended that the statutory language needs to be reconsidered in the context of the power to require oral evidence: 1.26 p. 10;

(2) why he has decided not to implement the recommendations in the House of Fraser Holdings plc report relating to the powers of inspectors to require the production of documentary evidence: 1.26. p. 10;

(3) why he has decided not to implement the recommendations in the House of Fraser Holdings plc report relating to the powers of inspectors to require the production of documentary evidence.

Mr. Ridley: Contrary to the implications of these questions, the concerns expressed by the inspectors in paragraph 1.26 of their report have been met by section 56(3) of the Companies Act 1989.

Ms. Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry why he has decided not to take any action in response to the House of Fraser Holdings plc report which —25.1.2 p. 503—concluded that to give Government clearance to a controversial bid, such as that for the House of Fraser, put intolerable strain on the Office of Fair Trading and the Department of Trade and Industry.

Mr. Ridley: I am satisfied that under present legislative and administrative arrangements both my Department and the Office of Fair Trading are equal to the demands placed on them in scrutinising mergers, controversial or otherwise, which qualify for investigation.

Ms. Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) why he has decided not to implement the recommendations in the House of Fraser Holdings plc report relating to advisers who give evidence or references to the Office of Fair Trading and the Department of Trade and Industry: 25.6.3. p. 515;

(2) why he has decided not to implement the recommendations in the House of Fraser Holdings plc report relating to the role and responsibilities of parties appearing before the Office of Fair Trading: 25.6.3. p. 515;

(3) why he has decided not to implement the recommendations in the House of Fraser Holdings plc report relating to the Office of Fair Trading time and limits for the provision of evidence on identified public interest issues: 25.6.3. p. 515.

Mr. Ridley: With regard to the recommendation on time limits in paragraph 25.6.3(ii), there is always a balance to be struck between allowing enough time to weigh up the facts and acting quickly to remove market uncertainty. Within these constraints, it is for the Director General of Fair Trading to determine when he is in a position to submit his advice to me. New procedures under the Companies Act 1989 are to come into force next month under which companies which voluntarily pre-notify mergers can usually expect a decision from the Secretary of State within 20 days of notification.

The recommendation in paragraph 25.6.3(iii) relates to the role and procedures to be followed by advisers. It contains good advice which I am sure advisers will wish to consider and act upon.

Ms. Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry why he has decided not to implement the recommendations in the House of Fraser Holdings plc report relating to the procedures available to inspectors to ensure the confidentiality of their proceedings: 1.30, p. 12.

Mr. Ridley: Experience shows that the circumstances which can arise vary widely from case to case and the need

for legislation is not readily apparent and in any event might be difficult to enforce. However, in the light of the inspectors' comments, the position will remain under review.

Ms. Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry why he has decided not to implement the recommendations in the House of Fraser Holdings plc report relating to the role of the Secretary of State: 25.6.3. p. 516.

Mr. Ridley: I entirely agree with the suggestion that I should reach my decisions on merger situations on the basis of facts found by others. That is what already happens.

Ms. Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) why he has decided not to implement the recommendations in the House of Fraser Holdings plc report relating to the need for a practice note by the takeover panel on the standards of care in the preparation of offer documents: 25.7.9, p. 517;

(2) why he has decided not to implement the recommendations in the House of Fraser Holdings plc report relating to standards of care in the preparation of offer documents: 25.7.9, p. 517.

Mr. Ridley: One of the general principles set out in the takeover code states that any document about an offer must, as is the case with a prospectus, be prepared with the highest standards of care and accuracy. This is supplemented by specific rules about offer documents. These rules are clear and are well understood, including by financial advisers. The question of an additional practice note is a matter for the takeover panel.

Ms. Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry why he has decided not to implement the recommendations in the House of Fraser Holdings plc report relating to the giving of false evidence to Companies Act inspectors: 1.31, p. 12.

Mr. Ridley: Where, under section 8 of the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986, a court has to determine whether a person's conduct in relation to a company makes him unfit to be concerned in the management of a company, the court will have regard to the matters mentioned in part I of schedule 1 to that Act. Among the matters there mentioned are

"any misfeasance or breach of any fiduciary duty or other duty by the director in relation to the company".

However, schedule 1 is not an exhaustive list of categories of unfitness and the court could also take other conduct in relation to the company into account in determining a person's unfitness.

Ms. Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) why he has decided not to implement the recommendations of the House of Fraser Holdings plc report relating to the internal procedures to be followed by financial advisers: 25.4.6. p.511;

(2) why he has decided not to implement the recommendations in the House of Fraser Holdings plc report relating to the position of a financial adviser acting on his client's behalf—specifically: 25.3.7. p.508;

(3) why he has decided not to implement the House of Fraser Holdings plc report on the recommendations relating to the financial advisers' acceptance of instructions from clients: 25.4.5 p.510;

(4) why he has decided not to implement the recommendations of the House of Fraser Holdings plc report relating to the process of taking on new clients: 25.4.2 p.509;

(5) why he has decided not to implement the recommendations of the House of Fraser Holdings plc report relating to the acceptance of written material from other advisers: 25.4.4 p.510;

(6) why he has decided not to implement the recommendations of the House of Fraser Holdings plc report relating to the process of financial advisers taking on clients' references: 25.4.3 p.509;

(7) why he has decided not to take any action to implement the House of Fraser Holdings plc report which concluded—25.2.6 p.506—that more care will have to be given in future to defining more clearly the respective roles and responsibilities of each adviser, and to define more clearly what is, or what ought to be, expected of them in the role, in relation to the City code and the interaction with the regulatory authorities and more generally;

(8) why he has decided to take no action to respond to the conclusion in the House of Fraser Holdings plc report —25.3.3 p.507—that there is a need for a clear definition of the extent of the responsibilities of the financial adviser to be sure of his facts before he makes such statements in the name of his bank.

Mr. Ridley: These recommendations are not addressed to the Government. They concern the role and procedures to be followed by professional advisers in relation to their clients. They contain good advice which I am sure advisers and those responsible for setting standards of conduct for advisers will wish to take into account.

Ms. Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry why he has decided not to implement the recommendations in the House of Fraser Holdings plc report relating to the Office of Fair Trading: 25.6.3. p.515 and public interest issues, other than competitions, in a proposed merger.

Mr. Ridley: It is already the practice of the Office of Fair Trading to discuss with the parties any public interest issues relevant to a merger, not just competition aspects.

Ms. Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry why he has decided not to implement the recommendations in the House of Fraser Holdings plc report relating to the need for the City code to apply to non-corporate owners of shelf companies: 25.7.2 p.516.

Mr. Ridley: The takeover code does not lay down specific rules for offers by non-corporate owners of shelf companies. However, following a review of the provisions of the code, the takeover panel has for some time in practice required non-corporate offerers to provide more information about their finances and the key individuals. I understand that the panel's existing guidance on this will shortly be reflected in amendments to the code.

Ms. Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry why he has decided not to implement the recommendations in the House of Fraser Holdings plc report relating to the powers of inspectors to have access to private bank accounts in order to trace money which has gone out of or into a company: 1.28, p. 11.

Mr. Ridley: Contrary to the implications in this question, the concerns expressed by the inspectors have

been met, so far as is possible under United Kingdom law, by amendments to section 434, 436 and 452 of the Companies Act 1985 introduced by section 56(3) and (6) and section 69(3) of the Companies Act 1989 and by the repeal of section 435 of the 1985 Act.

Ms. Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) why he has decided not to implement the recommendations of the House of Fraser Holdings plc report relating to the need for a code of standards of responsibility to be observed by advisers appearing before the Office of Fair Trading: 25.6.2. p. 514;

(2) why he has decided not to implement the recommendations in the House of Fraser Holdings plc report relating to the operation of the Office of Fair Trading: 25.6.2. p. 514.

Mr. Ridley: Section 151 of the Companies Act 1989, which will come into effect on 1 April, makes it a specific criminal offence to mislead the competition authorities. This should strengthen the position of the Office of Fair Trading. The question of a code of standards is a matter for the Director General of Fair Trading.

Additionally, as paragraph 25.6.3 of the report makes clear, it is the duty and responsibility of advisers to give evidence or references only about facts of which they have knowledge. I am sure that they and their professional bodies will wish to consider and act upon this advice.

Mr. Shore: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what consideration he gave in deciding not to use his discretionary powers under section 8 of the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986 against the directors of House of Fraser plc to whether the public interest aspects were affected by the absence of outside shareholders in that company; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ridley *[holding answer 15 March 1990]:* I gave appropriate consideration to the shareholder position and to other factors.

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on how many occasions and for what role Kleinwort Benson has been commissioned by his Department since he received the report on the House of Fraser.

Mr. Ridley *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* None.

Unit Trusts

Mr. Irvine: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he expects to be able to publish revised proposals for new kinds of authorised unit trusts.

Mr. Redwood: A further consultation document including revised draft regulations was published yesterday. Comments are invited by 30 June 1990.

The draft regulations take account of comments received since proposals for new kinds of funds were announced in 1987. In particular, the earlier proposal for "mixed funds" is to be delayed until experience in operating futures and options and properties funds has been established. Further views are being sought on the scope of the provisions dealing with efficient portfolio management, the idea of two classes of futures and options funds (low and high exposure funds), and a new class of fund investing in warrants.

EC Aid to Rural Areas

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what advice he has received from the European Economic Community Commissioner about future levels of aid for rural areas after 1991; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The European Commission has proposed a total "indicative appropriation" of 335 mecu for 1989-1993 grants to United Kingdom rural areas from the Community's three structural funds under their "objective No. 5(b)" (the development of rural areas). The proposal implies in particular that the United Kingdom rural areas concerned would receive no new European regional development fund assistance after their present programmes of grant from that fund expire in 1991 or 1992.

The Government have therefore asked the Commission to reconsider its proposal. Discussions between Government Departments and the Commission are continuing, and I cannot predict the outcome. My right hon. Friends and I will make further representations to the Commission, as necessary, at the appropriate stage.

Grants under the funds' objectives Nos. 3 (combating long-term unemployment), 4 (integration of young people into employment) and 5(a) (adjustment of agricultural structures) are also available in the areas concerned, and are not at issue.

Eastern Europe

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if, during his recent visit to Poland, he raised the potential for the United Kingdom to provide pollution abatement technology and technical advice of how to clean up polluted land and water.

Mr. Forth: Yes. This issue was raised by the director of my Department's east European branch during a meeting with Mr. Kwiat Kowski at the Ministry for Environmental Protection and Natural Resources. The problems are daunting, but we made the Polish authorities aware of particular ways in which British companies could contribute to cleaner industrial processes. Both the Davy Group and John Brown plc were represented.

Aircraft Radios

Mr. Churchill: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what has been the percentage increase in the charges most recently announced by his Department in respect of the licensing of aircraft radios; and why it was decided not to increase the charges in line with inflation.

Mr. Forth *[holding answer 15 March 1990]:* For nearly 4,000 aircraft the Wireless Telegraph Act licence fee remains unchanged at the level set in 1986 (£25). For about 400 aircraft with maximum approved take-off weights between 2,730 and 5,700 kg the fee was increased by 1,000 per cent. on 1 November 1989, and for about 1,000 larger aircraft an increase of 2,000 per cent. was made.

These increases were introduced to ensure recovery of the full costs of the work done by my Department for civil aviation use of radio. The needs of commercial aircraft operators account for a large share of these costs. It was therefore considered that those best placed to meet these costs would be the operators of larger aircraft. Because

there are relatively few aircraft in these categories the sum of money involved, though small in itself (some £600,000 a year), necessarily involved large increases when shared among only 1,400 aircraft.

Shipbuilding

Mr. Clay: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, pursuant to the reply by the hon. Member for Grantham (Mr. Hogg) to the hon. Member for Sunderland, North on 2 March, *Official Report*, column *345*, what legal basis in the example given the European Commission has to approve or disapprove the sale of land other than the shipbuilding site where closure aid has been allowed.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 14 March 1990]:* The wider remedial package for Sunderland was approved under the Commission of the European Communities' sixth directive on aid to shipbuilding and under articles 92-93 EEC. It is under these instruments that the Commission may reach a view on the use of land for shipbuilding in Sunderland outside the immediate confines of the former shipbuilding site.

Investment

Mr. Clay: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list, area by area and industry by industry, each case where Her Majesty's Government have a policy of opposing investment in a specific industry in a specific area.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 14 March 1990]:* Subject to observance of the United Kingdom's EC or other international obligations, Her Majesty's Government have no such policy, although planning requirements may impact upon specific developments in specific areas.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Community Charge

Mr. Maxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many people in Scotland who are eligible for a rebate of the community charge will not receive the rebate because it falls under the minimum amount payable; and what is the total sum involved in 1989-90.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: It is estimated that 23,000 additional benefit units (approximately 32,000 individuals) might receive community charge rebate in Scotland in 1989-90 if there was no minimum amount payable, at a total cost approaching £450,000.

Mr. Maxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is *(a)* the amount and *(b)* the proportion of net incomes after rebates, adjusted for family size, which households paid in domestic rates in 1987-88; and what estimates he has made of what these figures would be if the community charge were in operation in 1987-88, broken down into decile groups.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Figures are not available for Scotland alone. The information for 1987-88, on a Great Britain basis, is set out in the table. The figures requested by the hon. Member for the community charge are not available.

Average weekly equivalised household rates by decile of equivalised household income
1987

Decile	*Average household rates*	*Percentage of net income paid in rates*
Lowest	3·30	8·2
2	4·20	7·9
3	4·90	7·9
4	4·80	6·8
5	4·30	5·3
6	4·30	4·6
7	4·50	4·1
8	4·70	3·7
9	5·20	3·3
Highest	6·90	2·5
Total	4·70	4·4

Notes:
1. Household income is defined as income from all sources less income tax and national insurance contributions.
2. Values are of equivalised household rates, ie adjusted for household size and composition, and scaled so that the rates for a single person household remain the same. Thus the cash figures, though averaged across the whole population, are equivalent to £ per week for a single adult household.

Source: Family expenditure survey.

War Pensions

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many individual claims for war pensions are currently outstanding; what is the average interval from receipt of application to decision; and what was the comparable figure in each of the previous five years.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: At 9 March 1990 there were 20,418 claims for war disablement pension outstanding. The average time taken to clear a claim at the end of February 1990 was 35·5 weeks. War pensions work is complex and it takes time to gather the necessary evidence often going back over 40 years; the obtaining of service documents and consultants' reports in particular take considerable time. Comparable figures for each of the previous five financial years were:

	weeks
1988-89	29·5
1987-88	27·3
1986-87	42·4
1985-86	22·6
1984-85	20·8

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what compensation other than backdated payments is available to those allocated a war pension after more than two years has elapsed between applications and decisions.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: There is no statutory provision for compensation when payment of a war pension or a social security benefit has been delayed. However, ex-gratia compensation can be considered in certain circumstances where there has been clear and unambiguous departmental error.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what happens to the backdated payments of war pensions if the person to be in receipt of such payments dies while his Department is processing the application.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: If a claim for war pension is under consideration when a claimant dies the arrears of any subsequent award are normally paid to his next-of-kin.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is the longest time his Department has taken between receipt of a war pension claim and final decision to award a war pension.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: I regret that the information is not available.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security when his Department received the 13 May 1988 application for war pension of Mr. Joseph Davies of 30 Aspley Park Drive, Aspley, Nottingham; and when he will give Mr. Davies his reply.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Mr. Davies's claim for a war pension was received on 19 May 1988. The Department's doctors advised that in order to give a decision on his claim it would be necessary for Mr. Davies to be examined by a consultant. Unfortunately, considerable difficulty has been experienced in arranging a consultant's examination, but I understand that he is now due to be seen next month. Mr. Davies will be given a decision as soon as possible after the examination. The delay in bringing this matter to a conclusion is very much regretted.

Benefits

Mr. Ralph Howell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what were the numbers and percentages of *(a)* women and *(b)* men in receipt of one-parent benefit (i) in 1979 and (ii) in 1989.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Before 1981 one-parent benefit was known as child benefit increase. The information requested is set out in the table.

Child Benefit Increase/One Parent Benefit: Male and Female Claimants

	Women		*Men*		
	Number	*Per cent.*	*Number*	*Per cent.*	*Total*
1979	334,000	87	50,000	13	384,000
1989	637,000	91	60,000	9	698,000

Notes:
1. Figures are for 31 December of each year and are rounded.
2. *Source* Departmental records.

Hospital Visits (Travel Costs)

Sir John Farr: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what assessment he has made of the effect on parents of recent changes in the social fund and community care grants reimbursement of travel costs to parents of children in hospital; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: There have been no such changes.

Social Security Spending

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security when he expects to give a substantive answer to the questions of the hon. Member for Oldham, West, tabled for priority written answer on 5 March, on information on *(a)* the percentage of and real terms increase in spending on benefits attributable to an increase in the number of beneficiaries and *(b)* the total number of benefit claimants between 1979-80 and 1989-90.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: I refer the hon. Member to the replies given to him today.

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security, pursuant to his answer of 26 February, *Official Report*, column *64*, what information on the percentage of real terms increase in spending on benefits attributable to an increase in the number of beneficiaries is available to him without incurring disproportionate cost.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard *[holding answer 5 March 1990]:* Increases in the numbers of beneficiaries for particular benefits may have a simple demographic origin, but when more money is spent as a result of a policy change or through a longer effect such as the growth of additional pensions or increasing entitlements to income-related benefits, the extra costs often cannot be attributed simply and straightforwardly to changes in numbers of benefit units. Prior to 1989-90 for instance, real terms increases in expenditure on retirement pension, other than additional pension, will have been primarily attributable to the demographic trend of an aging population whereas for a period from October 1989 changes will have been significantly affected by the abolition of the pensioners earnings rule. Similarly, the introduction of family credit has been associated with a 50 per cent. increase in the number of recipients compared with family income supplement, but it is not easy to categorise the 100 per cent. increase in expenditure that occurred. Full analyses along these lines for individual benefits would involve many arbitrary judgments, and no such analyses are available.

Pensions

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) when he expects to give a substantive answer to the question of the hon. Member for Oldham, West, tabled for priority written answer on 8 January, about the basis of his calculation that average incomes of pensioners had increased by about 23 per cent. since 1979;

(2) when he expects to provide substantive replies to the questions tabled by the hon. Member for Oldham, West for priority written answer on *(a)* 26 February about the proportion of women pensioners receiving national insurance pensions on their husband's contributions and an income support pension; *(b)* 9 February about the savings as a result of the break in the pension uprating and earnings link; *(c)* 23 January about the additional gross and net cost of uprating the basic national insurance pension and *(d)* 22 January about the cumulative increase above inflation on the basic national insurance pension in specified periods;

(3) when he expects to provide substantive replies to the questions of the hon. Member for Oldham, West, tabled for priority written answer on 26 February on *(a)* pensioners' income after the deduction of housing costs and *(b)* net income at 1986 prices of pensioner tax units who obtained all their income from state benefits.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: I am answering today the hon. Member's question about the proportion of women pensioners receiving pensions on their husbands' contributions, and about the costs of uprating the basic

national insurance pension in line with earnings rather than prices over the period 1980 to 1989. I expect shortly to be able to give him a comprehensive answer covering the available information on his question concerning changes in various components in pensioners' incomes, including state benefits, broken down where possible to deciles of income distribution, using the latest information drawn from the 1987 family expenditure survey data now available.

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) if he has any figures available to show the additional gross and net cost of uprating the basic national insurance pension in line with average earnings in each year from 1980 to 1989, inclusive;

(2) what have been the savings each year to the Government since 1979 as a result of the break in the pension uprating and earnings link both at current prices and at constant 1990 prices; and what has been the cumulative saving over the whole of this period.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard *[holding answers 23 January and 9 February 1990]:* The table shows the gross additional cost of uprating retirement pension in line with average earnings since 1980-81. It is not possible to provide net costs for each year, but in 1989-90 the net cost would have been £3·28 billion allowing for reduction of £130 million in income support and £770 million in housing benefit.

It should be noted that any such cost would attract consequent increase in the national insurance contribution. It is estimated that the necessary increase in contribution rate to support the additional cost in 1989 if divided equally between employers and employees would be 1·15 per cent. on the basic rate of both employers' and employees' contributions, increasing them to 11·6 per cent. and 10·15 per cent. respectively. This would have meant for example a contribution increase for an employee on average earnings of £2·70 per week, together with an additional contribution of £3·20 per week for his employer.

Gross cost—1989 prices

	£ billion
1980-81	0·01
1981-82	0·31
1982-83	0·44
1983-84	0·47
1984-85	1·10
1985-86	1·24
1986-87	2·28
1987-88	3·10
1988-89	3·86
1989-90	4·17

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Stafford (Mr. Cash) on 24 January, *Official Report*, column *702*, what was the equivalent increase in pensioners' income after the deduction of housing costs.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard *[holding answer 26 February 1990]:* I regret that information is not available in the form requested, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many and what proportion of women pensioners receive *(a)* a national insurance pension on their husband's contributions and *(b)* an income support pension.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard *[holding answer 26 February 1990]:* Latest available information shows that in March 1989 24·1 per cent. (1,549,080) of women pensioners received a national insurance pension on the basis of their husbands' contributions. In May 1988 18·5 per cent. (1,185,000) of single women aged 60 and over were in receipt of income support.

Benefit Claimants

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what has been the percentage increase in the total number of benefit claimants between 1979-80 and 1989-90; and if he will break this down to give the figures for *(a)* the elderly, *(b)* the sick and disabled, *(c)* families, *(d)* unemployed people, *(e)* widows and orphans and *(f)* others.

Mr. Scott *[holding answer 5 March 1990]:* I refer the hon. Member to my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Norfolk, North (Mr. Howell) on 12 February at columns *84-85*. Information is not available in the form requested, since claimants may receive more than one benefit at any one time.

ENVIRONMENT

Property Services Agency

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many tenders the Property Services Agency has been invited to submit for work at 10 Downing street; and what is the number of contracts arising from those tenders which were secured.

Mr. Chope: PSA is responsible for building works and maintenance services to No. 10 Downing street. Since 1984, Departments have been free to undertake at their expense some minor work including internal decoration using contractors of their choice. PSA has not submitted tenders for such work.

Recycled Newsprint

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what response he has received to his letter to the proprietors of national newspapers on the percentage of recycled paper in newsprint used by them.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: I have received responses so far from the following:

Today
The Guardian
The Daily Telegraph
The Sunday Correspondent
Daily Mail and General Trust
Associated Newspapers
Express Newspapers
Lonrho
News International

The responses to date indicate that there is a substantial variation in the use of recycled paper by newspapers, although differences of definition do not facilitate direct comparisons. We intend to follow up these and any further responses with the proprietors of the newspapers concerned and with the Newspaper Publishers Association and the Newspaper Society.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give the safety net figure for *(a)* Grimsby and *(b)* Hull on a per capita basis; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: Charge payers in Grimsby will each receive £46 from the safety net. Charge payers in Kingston upon Hull will each receive £74. The difference in the receipts reflects the different effects on the domestic sector in each authority of the changes in local government finance from 1 April. The details of the calculation are set out in the Revenue Support Grant Transition Report (England) made on 21 December 1989 and approved by the House on 18 January.

Mr. Speller: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will introduce legislation to substitute a single community charge or a single business rate when the proprietor of a small business lives on the business premises as part of the duties involved in the business.

Mr. Chope: The community charge and the uniform business rate are distinct forms of charging; the former relates to individuals and the latter to the use of non-domestic property. There should be no difference in principle between a proprietor of a business who lives away from his workplace paying the community charge at one address and business rates at another, and that of a proprietor who lives and works at the same address. In the latter case rates will be charged only on the non-domestic use of the property, not on any living accommodation.

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, pursuant to his answer of 7 March, whether he will give the information requested by the hon. Member for Tiverton on 7 March for the financial year 1990-91 only, in respect of *(a)* England and *(b)* Devon.

Mr. David Hunt *[holding answer 14 March 1990]:* When setting the level of total standard spending (TSS) and RSG for 1990-91, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State took into account our best estimates of the costs of the new burdens falling on local authorities as a whole in 1990-91, as well as all other relevant factors. Neither the total for TSS nor that for RSG separately identifies an amount for these costs.

Mr. Jack Thompson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will estimate the cost of exempting all non-employed YTS trainees with STN endorsements from paying the community charge.

Mr. Chope: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Minister for Local Government and Inner Cities to the right hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, South (Mr. Ashley) on 19 March 1990 (*Official Report*, Volume 169, column *482*).

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his current estimate of the number of districts and the number of households in each that will qualify for rebate of poll tax under the Government's undertaking that couples will not be asked to pay more than £156 more than they were paying in rates.

Mr. Chope: I have no estimates of numbers qualifying for transitional relief in the areas of individual local authorities.

My right hon. Friend did not give the undertaking mentioned. With transitional relief two-adult households will pay no more than £156 extra if their community charge is set at or below the assumed charge for their area, set out in the Community Charge Transitional Relief Report (England). Local authority spending decisions may lead households to have larger increases in bills.

Cycling (Royal Parks)

Mr. Summerson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his policy on making cycle routes across London's royal parks part of the 1,000-mile strategic cycle route network in London.

Mr. Trippier: I am happy to consider proposals from the relevant authorities for including the existing cycleways in the royal parks in the strategic cycle route network.

Liverpool (Funding)

Mr. Hind: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how much money has been awarded in grants to Liverpool under estate action in each of the last three years.

Mr. Chope: In the last three years no grants, only additional housing investment programme resource cover, have been awarded to Liverpool under the estate action programme. The total amount is £6,642,008 split 1987-88 nil; 1988-89 £200,000; 1989-90 £6,442,008.

Building Regulations

Mr. Batiste: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has any plans to review building regulations to provide better protection for buildings from damage from high winds.

Mr. Chope: The Building Research Establishment has been asked to investigate the damage caused to buildings during recent gales, as a specific task under the research programme sponsored by the Department. A detailed BRE report on this subject will be produced in the near future and BRE has already published guidance on inspection and appraisal of buildings with lightweight roofs with a pitch of 25 deg or less. If the BRE investigations indicate that amendments may be required to the building regulations, proposals will be issued for consultation in the usual way. The Department has also been in touch with the British Standards Institution about the implications for codes relating to the structural stability of buildings.

New Dwellings

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will estimate the number of new dwellings units which will be built in 1990-91 in *(a)* the private sector and *(b)* the public sector.

Mr. Chope: The Department does not make forecasts of house building completions.

Pensions

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what is the value at current prices of the average pension received by local government officials on their retirement in *(a)* 1979 and *(b)* 1969;

(2) what was the average pension paid to local government officials who retired in 1989; and what is the average pension currently received by local government officials who retired in *(a)* 1979 and *(b)* 1969.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: This information is not available centrally.

Housing Starts

Mr. Gregory: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many new housing starts there were in the York parliamentary division for 1979, 1983, 1987 and the most recent year; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: A total of 209 dwellings were reported as started in the York district council area in 1989. Figures for 1987 and 1983 appear in tables 1.8 and 1.4, respectively, of "Housebuilding in England by Local Authority Areas: 1980 to 1988"; those for 1979 appear in "Local Housing Statistics No. 59" table 4(b). Copies of both publications are in the Library.

Hazardous Waste

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps he has taken to ensure that the Transfrontier Shipment of Hazardous Waste Regulations 1988 are consistently applied in accordance with directives 84/661/EEC and 86/297/EEC.

Mr. Trippier: The Transfrontier Shipment of Hazardous Waste Regulations 1988 implement the provisions of Council directives 84/631/EEC and 86/279/EEC and two related Commission directives. Enforcement of the provisions is primarily a matter for waste disposal authorities and comprehensive advice is contained in circular 16/89 issued by the Department.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps he is taking to revise the operation of the Transfrontier Shipment of Hazardous Waste Regulations 1988; what discussions he has had; and with whom.

Mr. Trippier: The Transfrontier Shipment of Hazardous Waste Regulations 1988 will need modification in due course to implement future changes in Community law which, inter alia, will enable member states to ratify the Basel convention. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has raised the matter in the EC Environment Council and detailed discussions within the Community are under way.

Sports Clubs (Rates)

Mr. Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any plans to introduce legislation to give mandatory rating relief for local sports clubs.

Mr. Chope: No.

Mr. Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has commissioned any studies into the effects on local sports clubs of the uniform business rate.

Mr. Chope: I refer the hon. and learned Member to the answer which I gave on 19 March to my hon. Friend the Member for Basildon (Mr. Amess).

Mr. Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he proposes to issue advice to local authorities as to how they should exercise their discretion to give rating relief to local sports clubs.

Mr. Chope: A practice note on the operation of discretionary rate relief, which included suggested criteria for use by local authorities in considering applications for relief, was issued to authorities in England and Wales in November 1989. A copy is in the Library.

Ballykelly Army Base

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will make a statement on his response to representations that a paramilitary fraud ring has been operating in Ballykelly army base in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Chope: This case is being investigated by the police.

Hindu Temple, Hertsmere

Mr. Robert B. Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he will issue his decision on the appeals by the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) against planning decisions by Hertsmere borough council; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chris Patten: After carefully considering the reports of the inspector following two public inquiries, I have accepted his conclusion that the current use of Bhaktivedanta manor at Letchmore Heath for large-scale public worship and religious festivals is not appropriate in that location, where the local residents can rightfully expect a way of life without such intrusion and disruption. I have also decided that the much larger facilities proposed at Elstree would not be appropriate in that very vulnerable part of the metropolitan green belt. Those decisions do not of course affect ISKCON's existing entitlement to use Bhaktivedanta manor as a residential college with its own shrine.

I fully support the aspirations of members of the Hindu community to worship in their own way and in fitting conditions. I also recognise the religious importance of the temple at Bhaktivedanta manor for the Hindu community. I have therefore been concerned that ISKCON shall have ample opportunity to identify a suitable alternative, either on a new site or by conversion of existing buildings elsewhere. Exceptionally, therefore, I have decided to extend the period recommended by the inspector for compliance with the council's enforcement notice to cease using Bhaktivedanta manor for public worship and religious festivals from six months to two years. That period will also provide added assurance to the residents of Letchmore Heath that the disturbance to their way of life will come to an end within a reasonable time.

I expect ISKCON to make every effort to take advantage of this opportunity to find an alternative which would be more in harmony with its surroundings. I see no reason why such an alternative, with good transport access and satisfactory car parking, cannot be found. It is not open to me as Secretary of State to indicate where such an alternative might be found, but I can assure ISKCON that any application which needs to be referred to me under planning legislation will be considered expeditiously, and with due regard to its special needs. My formal decision is being issued to the appeal parties today.

Councillors (Employment)

Mr. O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether under part V of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 a sitting member of a local authority who is employed by a local authority-controlled company will be able to serve his full time on that local authority; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* Further to the answer which I gave to the hon. Member on Monday 26 February, I have today written to the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North (Mr. McNamara), to say that transitional arrangements will be made to allow members employed by a local authority-controlled company who are elected members of that authority when paragraph 21 of schedule 11 to the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 comes into force, to remain in office until the end of their elected term.

River Systems

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what has been the general rate of improvement or decline over the last 10 years in *(a)* the north-west river systems and *(b)* the south-east river systems; and if he will make a statement about his additional plans for clean-up and tightening of regulations;

(2) which pollutants were present and at what level in the River Mersey system *(a)* in 1980 and *(b)* at the present time;

(3) which pollutants were present and at what level in the River Thames *(a)* in 1980 and *(b)* at the present time.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory *[holding answer 19 March 1990]:* General trends in river water quality between 1980 and 1985 can be established from the report of the 1985 river quality survey of England and Wales, a copy of which is in the Library of the House. More recent information on a directly comparable basis is not currently available, although the National Rivers Authority (NRA) will be conducting another national survey during 1990, the results of which will be published in 1991.

The classification system used for recent river quality surveys gives an overall measure of the levels of pollution in a river: detailed information on levels of individual pollutants can be obtained from the public registers maintained by the National Rivers Authority. These include the results of the analyses carried out of routine samples taken of river water, and the registers available for inspection at the National Rivers Authority's Thames and North West regional offices contain data obtained from sampling at many sites on the Thames and the Mersey respectively.

The responsibility for maintaining and improving river quality now rests with the National Rivers Authority, which will be advising my right hon. Friend on the statutory quality objectives he will be setting in 1992. It will then be for the National Rivers Authority to see that these objectives are achieved.

River Mersey (Pollution)

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment which companies have consent to pollute the River Mersey; what pollutants they are empowered to discharge and at what levels; and what fines were levied on companies and individuals responsible for polluting the River Mersey over the past 10 years.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory *[holding answer 19 March 1990]:* The responsibility for issuing consent to discharges of effluent into the River Mersey now rests with the North West region of the National Rivers Authority (NRA). The particulars of discharge consents granted, including details of substances and quantities which may be discharged, are held on the public register maintained by the NRA and available for inspection at the North West regional office, New Town House, Buttermarket street, Warrington.

Enforcement of water pollution controls under the Water Act 1989 is primarily the responsibility of the NRA. I understand that of those cases brought to court since the NRA's establishment on 1 September 1989, the following fine has been imposed for the offence of polluting the River Mersey:

Offender	*Conviction Date*	*Fine* £	*Costs* £
Shell UK Ltd	22/23 February 1990	1,000,000	6,573·79

(Offence committed under part II of the Control of Pollution Act 1974.)

The following fines were imposed for cases of water pollution in the Mersey catchment that were brought to court by the former North West water authority, between 6 April 1987 and 31 August 1989:

Offender	*Conviction date*	*Fine* £	*Costs* £
J. Slack Limited	6 April 1987	800	100
Manro Products Ltd.	19 August 1987	750	255
Joseph Pickavance Ltd.	22 September 1987	200	230
Kooltherm Insulation Products Ltd.	6 October 1987	1,000	250
UML Limited	22 October 1987	1,000	315
Broadclough Finishing Company Limited	18 April 1988	1,000	395
Manchester City Council	12 May 1988	1,500	460
Brian D. Leever (Poplar Truck Stop)	22 June 1988	200	225
Panocean Transport and Storage Ltd.	26 August 1988	1,000	235
John Cooper	10 November 1988	300	100
Alan Kendrick	10 November 1988	200	90
Cheshire County Council	10 November 1988	250	200
Coloroll Limited, Rainshore Mills	11 November 1988	500	—
Coloroll Limited, Rainshore Mills	11 November 1988	1,000	345
Wardle Fabrics Ltd.	28 November 1988	250	240
East Lancashire Paper Mill Co. Ltd.	30 November 1988	500	345
East Lancashire Paper Mill Co. Ltd.	30 November 1988	500	—
Featley Products Ltd.	2 December 1988	500	220
Toby Restaurants (North) Limited	13 January 1989	1,250	180
Peter Thompson	26 January 1989	600	250
McPherson Polymers Ltd.	30 January 1989	500	350
Brown Brothers (Construction Ltd.)	8 February 1989	1,500	260
Laporte Industries Ltd.	2 March 1989	1,000	197·50

Information about prosecutions prior to 6 April 1987 is not available.

Housing Associations (Water and Sewerage)

Mrs. Ann Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his estimate of the total cost to housing associations of the new infrastructure charges for water and sewerage.

Mr. Trippier *[holding answer 19 March 1990]:* A reliable estimate of the total cost to housing associations of the new system of infrastructure charges is not available.

Crown Suppliers

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the firms which have now made bids for the Crown Suppliers.

Mr. Chope *[holding answer 19 March 1990]:* No; to do so could prejudice the outcome of the sale competition.

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what consultants have been engaged by the Crown Suppliers for the last 12 months; and if he will list the directorships currently and recently held by each individual engaged as a consultant.

Mr. Chope *[holding answer 19 March 1990]:* The consultants employed during the past 12 months by the Crown Suppliers are listed in the table. Information on the directorships held by their staff is not collected.

L A Associates—Design Consultancy

I F F Research—Market Research Consultancy

Peat Marwick McLintock—Computer Audit Consultancy

Deloitte Haskins and Sells—The Buying Agency Consultancy —Phase I

Deloitte Haskins and Sells—The Buying Agency Consultancy —Phase II

G M S Consultancy Limited—Provision of Marketing Manager

G M S Consultancy Limited—Provision of Financial Manager

Accountancy Personnel—Appointment of Finance Manager

Accountancy Personnel—Appointment of Management Accountant

Role Management—Appointment of Finance Manager

J Limington Agency—Provision of two Machine Operators

Deloitte Haskins and Sells—The Buying Agency Computer Consultancy

Executive Interim Management—Provision of Sales Representatives

BIS Applied Systems—Computer Training

Abraxas Computer Services Limited—Computer Programmers

Datapool Consultants Limited—Computer Programmers

Trident Computer Services Limited—Computer Programmers

Zeda Information Management Consultants—Business Analysts

W S Atkins Management Consultants—Project Planners

Yale Management Consultants Limited—Computer Audit

Link Associates—Computer Programmers

DPP Limited—Computer Programmers

Unisys Limited—Computer Hardware

Mouncey and Partners—Business Analysts

Unilinx Limited—Computer Programmers, Computer Managers

OSL—Computer Programmers

Palmer and Webb—Computer Capacity Planners

Public Sector Consultancy—Business Analysts and Training

Steelcase

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what recent representations he has received from Steelcase Stafor concerning Government supply.

Mr. Chope *[holding answer 19 March 1990]:* None.

Leeds Development Corporation

Mr. Fatchett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list those firms which have been subject to or threatened with compulsory purchase order by Leeds development corporation; what are the numbers employed by those firms; and what is the consultative process which took place in each case.

Mr. Moynihan *[holding answer 15 March 1990]:* Urban development corporations have compulsory purchase powers under section 142 of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980. Procedures for making and processing compulsory purchase orders are described in DOE circular 6/85—"Compulsory Purchase Orders: Procedures." Particular advice on CPOs promoted by UDCs is also contained in DOE circular 23/88, "Compulsory Purchase Orders by Urban Development Corporations." In addition to the statutory procedures Leeds development corporation is offering a personal visit to all parties to explain procedures; is willing to be flexible in giving firms time to relocate; is making land acquired by the corporation available for relocations; and is developing a relocation package to assist companies in their move.

I am informed that 67 firms, employing 445 people, have been subject to compulsory purchase orders made by Leeds development corporation. Of these firms, 17 have already reached a settlement with the corporation, safeguarding 114 jobs. Negotiations with the remainder are proceeding. I will write to the hon. Member listing the firms.

Parliamentary Estate

Mr. Terry Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many requests for minor repairs to the parliamentary estate were outstanding at 31 December 1989.

Mr. Chope *[holding answer 19 March 1990]:* I regret that this information is not available.

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 21 March 1990

EMPLOYMENT

Accountants and Engineers

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what information he has on the number of *(a)* qualified accountants and *(b)* qualified engineers in Britain.

Mr. Nicholls: It is estimated from the preliminary results of the 1989 labour force survey that in Spring 1989 there were 139,000 accountants with professional qualifications and 382,000 engineers who performed work normally requiring training of university degree standard in Great Britain, who were either in employment, or were not in employment but had been employed in these occupations in their last job, and had left that job less than three years prior to the survey.

Disabled Workers

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what percentage of employers with over 20 employees have fulfilled their 3 per cent. quota of disabled workers in each of the last five years.

Mr. Eggar: The percentage of employers with 20 or more employees employing their 3 per cent. quota of registered disabled workers in each of the last five years is as follows:

	Per cent.
1985	28·1
1986	26·8
1987	25·3
1988	23·9
1989	22·8

Employment Training

Mr. Ray Powell: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment (1) how many filled employment training places there are in the constituency of Ogmore; and what percentage this represents of the original departmental projections;

(2) what was the total number of unemployed receiving enterprise training within employment training between September 1988 and December 1989 for the Ogmore constituency.

Mr. Nicholls: The information requested is not available for the Ogmore constituency and can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Ray Powell: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the total expenditure on the £10 employment training trainee allowance in December 1989 for the Ogmore constituency.

Mr. Nicholls: The information is not available.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

East European Countries

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he has any information regarding reform of the internal security forces in (i) Poland, (ii) Czechoslovakia, (iii) Hungary, (iv) Bulgaria, (v) the Soviet Union, (vi) Romania and (vii) the Baltic states.

Mr. Waldegrave: The information will take a little time to assemble. I will write to my hon. Friend as soon as possible.

UNESCO

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what were the reasons the United Kingdom left UNESCO; and whether any of them have been resolved.

Mr. Sainsbury: When the United Kingdom left UNESCO we set out in detail the reasons for our withdrawal. Both at the time and since we have made clear that UNESCO should concentrate on the objectives set out in its constitution; it should cut back its proliferation of programmes, alter or abolish those which are inimical to democratic values (such as press freedom and individual human rights), make its delivery of technical assistance more efficient and overhaul its administration.

We are curently conducting a review to consider to what extent these problems have been resolved.

Lithuania

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has on any proposals to privatise industry in Lithuania.

Mr. Waldegrave: We are not aware of specific proposals for the privatisation of industry in Lithuania. A law on property was adopted by the Lithuanian supreme soviet on 12 February 1990 which provides for private, collective and state property, but does not describe how state property may be transferred to private ownership.

Colombia

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he has any information as to whether British mercenaries are operating in Colombia.

Mr. Sainsbury: There have been unconfirmed reports that at least one British citizen has renewed an association with drug traffickers in Colombia. We have discussed the matter with the Colombian authorities and reaffirmed our willingness to co-operate with them in their investigations.

Libya

Mr. Janman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations to the Soviet and German Democratic Republic Governments urging them to withdraw all technical support from the Libyan military immediately.

Mr. Waldegrave: Our position on Libya is already abundantly clear to these and other Governments.

CIVIL SERVICE

Agencies

Mr. Gerald Bowden: To ask the Minister for the Civil Service whether any agency chief executives have been selected from the private sector.

Mr. Luce: Yes. Ten agency chief executives or chief executives-designate were appointed following open competitions and came from outside the Civil Service. This figure includes some who were already in post before the agency was established.

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Minister for the Civil Service how many next steps agency chief executives are women.

Mr. Luce: I have recently appointed the first woman chief executive, Miss Marianne Neville-Rolfe, who is principal and chief executive of the civil service college.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Valuation Offices

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the cost of running the Inland Revenue's valuation offices in England and Wales; and what is the expected reduction in *(a)* cost and *(b)* staff in the valuation offices as a result of introducing the community charge.

Mr. Lilley: The cost of running the valuation offices in England and Wales for the current financial year 1989-90 is £125 million.

(a) When all outstanding domestic rating work has been cleared, the reduction in annual cost, in real terms, as a result of introducing the community charge is expected to be of the order of £17 million;

(b) £17 million represents a saving of about 1,300 clerical staff.

German Economy

Sir Trevor Skeet: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the principal economic data of *(a)* the Federal Republic of Germany and *(b)* a merged Germany.

Mr. Ryder: A wide range of economic data for West Germany are published each month in the IMF's international financial statistics and the OECD's main economic indicators. Data for a merged Germany are not available.

Sir Trevor Skeet: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will state the current expenditure of the Federal Republic of Germany on research and development with separate assessments for the public and private sectors.

Mr. Ryder: Data on research and development expenditure in West Germany are available biannually in the OECD's main science and technology indicators.

European Monetary System

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent representations he has received regarding the impact on the European monetary system of currency union between East and West Germany.

Mr. Ryder: My right hon. Friend the Chancellor has received no representation on the impact on the European monetary system of the proposed monetary union between the two Germanies.

European Community

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what is the level of United Kingdom net contributions to the European Economic Community in 1989, following the appraisal by the Community; and if he will express the sum in sterling per household in the United Kingdom per week;

(2) what were the consequences for the United Kingdom of the appraisal by the European Economic Community of United Kingdom contributions; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ryder *[holding answer 20 March 1990]:* The latest published estimate of the United Kingdom's net contribution to the Community budget in 1989, which appeared in the "Statement on the 1989 Community Budget" (Cm. 680), is £1,966 million. This figure is the equivalent of £1·73 per household per week, on the basis of the estimate of 21·816 million private households in the United Kingdom in 1986 which is contained in "Eurostat: Basic Statistics of the Community" (26th edition). A revised estimate of the United Kingdom's net contribution in 1989 will be published shortly in the "Statement on the 1990 Community Budget", and will be based on a full analysis of all items of revenue and expenditure including the European Commission's reappraisal of the United Kingdom's contributions to the Community budget.

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what estimate he has made of the United Kingdom's net contribution to the EEC in 1989; and what were the totals for each of the previous five years;

(2) if he will make a statement on the nature of the deficit with EEC institutions of £2,301 millions on the balance of payments transfers sheet in the paper issued by the Central Statistical Office; and in what respect this figure differs from the previous figures published in the United Kingdom's net contribution for 1989.

Mr. Ryder *[holding answers 19 and 20 March 1990]:* The latest published estimate of the United Kingdom's net contribution to the Community budget in 1989 which appeared in the "Statement on the 1989 Community Budget" (Cm 680), is £1,966 million. The coverage of that figure differs from the coverage of the figure for the United Kingdom's net contribution to EC institutions published by the CSO. The two numbers are not therefore directly comparable.

A revised estimate for 1989, comparable with the figure of £1,966 million and based on a full analysis of all items of revenue and expenditure will be published shortly in the statement on the 1990 Community budget.

The net contribution to the Community budget for each of the previous five years were as follows:

Net contribution to European Community budget

	(£ million)
1984	656
1985	1,808
1986	572
1987	1,721
1988	1,362

Tax Debts

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many petitions have been presented by HM Customs and Excise in each of the last three years; and what percentage of these were to secure the repayment of value added tax debt.

Mr. Ryder *[holding answer 20 March 1990]:* The total number of petitions presented by the Customs department, as Commissioners of Customs and Excise, in each of the years specified in the table is as follows:

Number of petitions presented in the English and Northern Ireland jurisdiction

Year ending 31 March	*Number*
1987	3,616
1988	3,098
1989	3,862

Number of petitions presented in the Scottish jurisdiction

Calendar year	*Number*
1987	120
1988	109
1989	153

It is not possible to state precisely what percentage of these petitions relate to value added tax, because separate records are not maintained.

Relocation

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list for each year since 1979 the number of civil service jobs which have been transferred from the south-east to areas of high unemployment, and the departments responsible for these transfers; and what plans the Government has over the next five years for a further transfer of work, and which Departments are concerned.

Mr. Ryder *[holding answer 20 March 1990]:* The information requested is not held centrally in the form requested, but I would refer the hon. Member to the reply that I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Richmond and Barnes (Mr. Hanley) on 17 January, 1990, *Official Report*, columns *289-90*.

Inland Revenue Staff

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is *(a)* the total cost of the administration and collection of income tax in 1989-90, *(b)* the number of people employed in the collection and administration of income tax and *(c)* the estimated receipts from income tax in 1989-90.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 20 March 1990]:* The total cost of the administration and collection of income tax in 1989-90 is estimated at £1,070 million. The manyear usage of staff directly employed in the administration and collection of income tax in 1989-90 is about 48,000. For part *(c)* of the question I refer the hon. Member to table 1.2 of the 1990-91 Financial Statement and Budget Report published yesterday.

Civil Servants, Northern Ireland

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish a table in the *Official Report* to show the number of United Kingdom civil servants employed at present and in 1985 in each council area in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Ryder *[holding answer 20 March 1990]:* At 1 April 1989 there were 5,185 civil servants in Northern Ireland. This compares with 5,168 at 1 April 1985. These numbers exclude staff in the Northern Ireland civil service. The table shows the distribution of non-industrial civil servants in the following areas. No information is available about the location of industrial civil servants.

Non-industrial civil servants staff numbers[1]

Council Area	*1985*	*1989*
County Antrim	703	778
County Armagh	175	182
City of Belfast	1,265	1,216
City of Londonderry	66	74
County Down	376	386
County Fermanagh	122	115
County of Londonderry	275	294
County Tyrone	65	78
Total	3,047	3,123

[1] Full-time equivalents—part-timers working for more than 10 hours count as half units.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Namibia

Mr. William Powell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he plans to provide assistance to independent Namibia; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: I am delighted to inform the House that following successful implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 435, Namibia has today achieved independence, and has become the 50th member of the Commonwealth. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is representing Britain at the independence celebrations in Windhoek and will today announce a bilateral aid package of £10 million for commitment over three years.

Our aid will focus on technical co-operation and rehabilitation. Precise details will be agreed with the new Government, but I expect the sectors in which we will provide assistance to include public service reform, education, police training and fisheries management. Following discussions with the Namibian authorities we have already financed initial advisory visits by British experts to see how we might best help, and our assistance with police training and with education is already underway. Namibia will be a high priority for projects jointly funded with British voluntary agencies and Voluntary Service Overseas will also be discussing priorities with the new Government. In addition to our bilateral aid we will be providing substantial assistance through multilateral channels including the European Community and the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation.

I have authorised the Commonwealth Development Corporation to begin operations there, and it will send an exploratory mission in April.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Accounting and Auditing

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether, since June 1979, any of his Department's Ministers or senior civil servants have had any business connections with accountancy firms or the accountancy bodies.

Mr. Redwood: One senior official in my Department is the chairman of the disciplinary committee of the Chartered Association of Certified Accountants. The official holds this position in a private capacity and with the approval of the Department, as there is no conflict of interest. I am aware of no other business connections between the accountancy profession and Ministers and senior officials of my Department. I do not know the interests of all DTI Ministers prior to their appointments.

Insider Dealing

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether, further to the reply that he gave to the right hon. Member for Great Grimsby on 31 January, *Official Report*, column *225*, he will give details of the number of convictions obtained by his Department where the defendants pleaded not guilty.

Mr. Redwood: Two convictions for insider dealing offences have been obtained by my Department after the defendants had pleaded not guilty. In one of those cases the defendant was subsequently acquitted on appeal.

Advertising Expenditure

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what was the total publicity and advertising expenditure, including for privatisation, of his Department and public bodies for which his Department has responsibility in *(a)* 1979 and *(b)* 1989.

Mr. Forth: The Department does not maintain central records of expenditure of this kind by public bodies. The Department's expenditure on paid advertising and promotional materials in 1979-80 was given in an answer to the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) on 13 March 1990, *Official Report*, columns *173-74*. I expect expenditure under the Department's central publicity budget in 1989-90 to be of the order of £21 million. There was no significant expenditure on privatisation publicity by the Department in either year. Figures covering calendar years are not available.

Firework Injuries

Mr. Harris: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will publish the figures of injuries caused by fireworks in 1989.

Mr. Forth: According to reports from hospitals in England, Wales and Scotland, 800 people required treatment for injuries caused by fireworks during the three weeks leading up to 5 November 1989 and the few days after. This represents a very welcome decrease of nearly 9 per cent. over 1988. Particularly encouraging were the sharp falls in serious injuries and casual incidents in the street, where our emphasis on rigorously enforcing the existing law on selling fireworks to the under-16s or misusing them in public seems to be bearing fruit. Also welcome is the fall in sparkler injuries as these tend to affect very young children and was an area where we put a lot of effort during last year's successful firework safety campaign. However, there is no room for complacency and we will be looking for a further reduction in injuries this year. The detailed breakdown for 1989 and the preceding four years is as follows:

Firework Injuries in Great Britain
(4 week period in October-November)

Year	*1989*	*1988*	*1987*	*1986*	*1985*
Total	*800*	*877*	*960*	*846*	*968*
Place of Accident					
1. Family or private party	280	300	260	286	255
2. Semi-public display (eg scouts, cricket club)	71	69	88	72	76
3. Large public display	135	123	155	119	117
4. Casual incident in street etc	247	298	364	299	435
5. Other place	46	65	73	52	64
6. Indoors	21	22	20	18	21
Type of Firework					
1. Banger	136	162	163	161	241
2. Rocket	131	164	174	159	197
3. Roman candle, coloured fire etc.	89	83	96	88	90
4. Home-made or extracted powder	18	17	24	14	27
5. Other proprietary fireworks	125	86	109	118	73
6. Sparklers	83	102	95	80	67
7. Unspecified type	218	263	299	226	273
Severity of Injury					
1. Fatal injury	—	—	—	—	—
2. Detained more than one night	46	69	60	48	53
3. Sufficient to cause absence from work or equivalent	142	167	158	160	231
4. Minor injury	551	587	661	582	632
5. Unspecified injury	61	54	81	56	52
Eye Injuries (included in 2-5)	275	269	312	291	341
Age Group of Injured Persons					
1. Over 20	251	280	252	235	214

Year	1989	1988	1987	1986	1985
Total	800	877	960	846	968
2. 16-20	135	151	168	145	161
3. 13-15	152	166	220	207	271
4. Under 13	262	280	320	259	322

Refrigerator Doors

Mr. Tredinnick: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he has any plans to adopt international standards for fridge doors.

Mr. Forth *[holding answer 16 March 1990]:* I take the reference to international standards for fridge doors to mean those which define suitable door locking mechanisms to prevent the entrapment of people. I understand that these features have been included in British standards since the 1970s for this type of electrical and gas equipment and will shortly be incorporated in a new European harmonised standard. All United Kingdom manufactured goods are now fitted with the appropriate safeguards. I would encourage all other manufacturers to adopt these standards, in so far as they reflect these safety features, so as to reduce the likelihood of another tragic accident.

Indonesia

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what was the value of British trade with Indonesia for each of the last 10 years.

Mr. Redwood *[holding answer 19 March 1990]:* The value of United Kingdom trade with Indonesia during the last 10 years was as follows:

Year	£ million Exports	£ million Imports	£ million Balance
1980	112·2	57·0	+55·2
1981	139·2	73·8	+65·4
1982	212·1	90·7	+121·4
1983	193·6	169·4	+24·2
1984	186·7	181·5	+5·2
1985	175·3	155·9	+19·4
1986	196·5	141·2	+55·3
1987	236·0	144·8	+92·0
1988	203·3	233·8	−30·5
1989	184·0	273·1	−89·1

Eastern Europe

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if, during his recent visit to the Soviet Union, he raised the possibility of providing pollution abatement technology and technical advice on how to clean up polluted land and water.

Mr. Forth *[holding answer 20 March 1990]:* No. The subject was not raised specifically by either side. The supply of western technology in all spheres is hampered by the increasing scarcity of hard currency. During my right hon. Friend's visit he concentrated his discussions on the problems for the Soviet economy as a whole to which this contributes.

PRIME MINISTER

Central Unit on Purchasing

Mr. Colvin: To ask the Prime Minister if she will make a statement on the purchasing progress report 1989 prepared by the central unit on purchasing.

The Prime Minister: The central unit on purchasing's 1989 progress report recorded value for money improvements in central Government Departments' purchasing of over £350 million in 1988-89, excluding the Ministry of Defence. This saving was equivalent to 5·3 per cent. of total reported purchasing expenditure.

The purchasing initiative has now resulted in value for money improvements equivalent to some £850 million since 1985-86.

Although this represents good progress, greater emphasis now needs to be given to increasing professionalism amongst staff engaged in purchasing and supply, and to supporting them with compatible purchasing information and control systems. The central unit on purchasing is actively working with departments on these issues.

A copy of the progress report is in the Library of the House.

WALES

Laura Ashley Company

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what amounts of Government cash and grants have been given to Laura Ashley Company in each year by his Department, the Welsh Development Agency and the Mid Wales Development Board.

Mr. Peter Walker: In addition to assistance offered by other departments, published details of Welsh Office aid to the Laura Ashley company is as follows:

Year	£	Grant
1976	6,000	Interest relief grant
1977	6,000	Interest relief grant
1979	17,000	Interest relief grant
1980	11,000	Interest relief grant
1983	22,000	Interest relief grant
1986	326,000	Regional development grant
1988	40,000	Regional development grant
1989	94,000	Regional development grant

The Laura Ashley company has also received rent concessions from the Welsh Development Agency in the years 1985 and 1986 and a grant from the Development Board for Rural Wales in 1989. It is not those institutions' policy to publish amounts involved in individual cases.

Ysgol Belmont School

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will visit Ysgol Belmont special school.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: Neither my right hon. Friend nor I have any plans to do so.

Competitive Tendering

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what information he has on which services in each district, borough and city council were put under competitive tendering during 1989-90; how many were employed in supplying these services before the commencement of the competitive tendering process; and how many were employed in supplying these services following the completion of the competitive tendering exercise.

Mr. Peter Walker: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the following competition implementation timetable. In addition, local authorities, where relevant, were required to submit 20 per cent. of their ground maintenance service to competition by 1 January 1990. Competition-free allowances available to local authority direct labour organisations in respect of new construction and works of maintenance under the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980 were abolished from 1 October 1989. Information in respect of the numbers of employees in each service is not held centrally.

Local Authority
Phasing in of Competition by Date and Activity

Group 1. Aberconwy: Alyn and Deeside: Montgomeryshire: Preseli Pembrokeshire: Llanelli: Ogwr: Cardiff: Blaenau Gwent: Rhondda
Group 2. Clwyd: West Glamorgan: Colwyn: Arfon: Brecknock: South Pembrokeshire: Swansea: Taff Ely: Torfaen
Group 3. Gwent: Gwynedd: Delyn: Dwyfor: Radnor: Carmarthen: Lliw Valley: Merthyr Tydfil: Monmouth
Group 4. Mid Glamorgan: Powys: Glyndwr: Dinefwr: Port Talbot: Rhymney Valley: Vale of Glamorgan: Ynys Mon-Isle of Anglesey: Newport
Group 5. South Glamorgan: Dyfed: Ceredigion: Cynon Valley: Islwyn: Meirionnydd: Neath: Rhuddlan: Wrexham Maelor

	Refuse Collection	*Building Cleaning*	*School Welfare Catering*	*Other Catering*	*Vehicle Maintenance and Repair*	*Other Cleaning*
1 August 1989	1	4	1	5	3	2
1 January 1990	2	5	2	1	4	3

Note: Numbers refer to groups of authorities.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is the total amount of money which each district borough and city council is likely to get from the poll tax.

Mr. Peter Walker: District councils in Wales are in the process of submitting information to the Welsh Office relating to their community charges and budgets. I shall write to the hon. Gentleman with the information he requested when all the returns have been received and checked.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many community councils there are within each district borough and city council area in Wales; what will be the average poll tax charged for community council purposes for each community council; and how many community councils will be entitled to transitional support during the first year of the poll tax and up to what level in each instance.

Mr. Peter Walker: The number of community councils within each district, borough or city council area is shown in the table:

Districts	*Number of Community Councils*
Alyn and Deeside	13
Colwyn	16
Delyn	21
Glyndwr	35
Rhuddlan	8
Wrexham Maelor	29
Carmarthen	41
Ceredigion	51
Dinefwr	23
Llanelli	9
Preseli Pembrokeshire	52
South Pembrokeshire	26
Blaenau Gwent	5
Islwyn	—
Monmouth	32
Newport	14
Tofaen	6
Aberconwy	18
Arfon	17
Dwyfor	17
Meirionnydd	29
Ynys Mon	40
Cynon Valley	3
Merthyr Tydfil	2
Ogwr	22
Rhondda	—
Rhymney Valley	14
Taff-Ely	10
Brecknock	36
Montgomeryshire	45
Radnorshire	27
Cardiff	5
Vale of Glamorgan	24
Lliw Valley	15
Neath	14
Port Talbot	1
Swansea	14
TOTAL WALES	735

Information about community council precepts for 1990-91 is not yet available.

Transitional relief is awarded in respect of community council areas, rather than community councils. A total of

324 such areas will receive relief in 1990-91, in amounts up to £93 per chargepayer per annum. The amounts for each community area are set out in the Personal Community Charge (Relief) (Wales) Regulations 1990, which were laid before Parliament on 19 February 1990.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many extra part-time and full-time members of staff have been employed by his Department to implement the poll tax in Wales.

Mr. Peter Walker: None.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how much was spent by each district borough and city council in Wales to collect rates during 1989-90.

Mr. Peter Walker: Budgeted expenditure on rate collection by each district borough and city council in Wales during 1989-90, is shown in the table:

Local authority:	*1989-90 Budget (At Outturn Prices) £000*
Alyn and Deeside	123
Colwyn	169
Delyn	179
Glyndwr	173
Rhuddlan	186
Wrexham Maelor	395
Carmarthen	231
Ceredigion	228
Dinefwr	113
Llanelli	201
Preseli Pembrokeshire	174
South Pembrokeshire	136
Blaenau Gwent	219
Islwyn	175
Monmouth	193
Newport	413
Torfaen	245
Aberconwy	281
Arfon	247
Dwyfor	140
Meirionnydd	51
Ynys Mon	327
Cynon Valley	182
Merthyr Tydfil	319
Ogwr	196
Rhondda	320
Rhymney Valley	347
Taff Ely	671
Brecknock	144
Montgomeryshire	170
Radnor	92
Cardiff	1,384
Vale of Glamorgan	467
Port Talbot	196
Lliw Valley	173
Neath	237
Swansea	588
Total Wales	10,087

Bosch Factory

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will institute a study into the effect of the new Bosch alternator factory development at Miskin, south Wales on the overall supply, demand and training facilities for skilled engineering labour in the industrial south Wales region.

Mr. Peter Walker: The employment service and the Training Agency continually gather and assess labour market information and take account of developments such as the new Bosch factory, in order to identify labour supply, demand and training needs.

The prime responsibility for identifying and responding to the training needs of the local labour market will in the future pass to the private-sector-led training and enterprise councils.

HEALTH

Cancer (Records)

Mr. O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will introduce measures to improve the degree to which the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys keeps its records on cancer-related diseases up to date; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: The OPCS publishes annual cancer statistics using data collected by 11 regional registries and the Wales cancer registry which are funded by the regional health authorities.

The timing of publications is largely governed by when the slowest regional cancer registry provides OPCS with data. For 1985, data from the last registry was not received until September 1989. The volume giving 1985 registration data is expected to be published in April 1990, with that for 1986 following in July 1990.

A recent review of the cancer registration system was undertaken, with timeliness of data presentation one of the considerations looked at by the working party. The report of the review is due in April 1990.

Mr. O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to require district health authorities to maintain records on the number of people in their areas who have been diagnosed or treated for cancer or cancer-related diseases, including leukaemia; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: Health authorities already participate in a national scheme, which will continue, for recording the incidence of cancers, including leukaemia. Records on the in-patient and day-care treatment of cancers are held in the information systems of district health authorities.

NHS Staff

Ms. Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what are the current staff vacancy levels and staff turnover rates for the administrative and clerical grades within the National Health Service.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Information on staff vacancy levels is not available centrally. Information on staff turnover rates in the NHS for 1987-88 is published in "Health Service Indicators" which are held in the Library.

In Vitro Fertilisation

Mr. Speller: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what facilities are available for in vitro fertilisation under the National Health Service for residents in south-west England; and what plans he has to provide such a service.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: I understand that in vitro fertilisation (IVF) services in the south-western region are available to residents of Southmead district health

authority, and exceptionally to residents of other districts. Decisions about the priority and resources to be given to infertility services as a whole, and the place of an IVF programme within them, are matters for district health authorities.

Homelessness

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information he has of the number of parents who gratuitously eject their children in the 16 to 21 years age band from the family home; what powers there are to prosecute in such cases where homelessness results; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Information in the form requested is not available. Local authorities have a duty to receive into care children under 17 who are abandoned or deserted by their parents or who are lost. In the year ending 31 March 1987, 100 children aged 16 were received into care for these reasons. There are no specific powers to prosecute parents who eject children aged 16 to 21 from the family home where homelessness results.

Hospitalisation Rates

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will publish in the *Official Report*, for each English and Welsh district health authority, the 1988-89 hospitalisation rates based on the projections for 1991 resident populations, with results, omitting the specialties of maternity and psychiatry, but showing a rate *(a)* weighted by national expenditure rates, *(b)* rated by expenditure rates plus <75 SMR 1984-88, *(c)* weighted by expenditure rates plus <75 SMR (0·5 elasticity) and *(d)* weighted by expenditure rates plus <65 SMR.

Mr. Freeman: I regret the information requested is not readily available. Such information as could be provided would incur disproportionate costs to produce. Information for Wales is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

Medical Services

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what calculations he has made about the rate of inflation on provision of the medical services.

Mr. Freeman *[holding answer 19 March 1990]:* I refer the hon. Member to the reply which I gave the hon. Member for Wentworth (Mr. Hardy) on 20 March at column *559*.

Asthma

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make it his policy to extend to asthmatics the same arangements for free regular prescriptions that now apply to diabetics.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley *[pursuant to her reply, 24 November 1989 c. 40]:* I am pleased to announce that we will shortly be making peak flow meters available on general practitioner prescription. These meters monitor the patient's airways and can prevent potentially serious attacks by giving advance warning so that medication can be adjusted. These will be available to patients as soon as suitable supply arrangements can be completed. The value of peak flow monitoring has been underlined by recent asthma research and as a preventive measure it is seen as comparable to diabetics' use of blood glucose testing strips which were made prescribable some 18 months ago. The Government will also be providing to the National Asthma Campaign £15,000 a year for the next three years to help set up a telephone consulting service.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Fair Employment Commission

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many persons have been appointed to the post of director in the Fair Employment Commission; and how many of these are perceived to be (1) Protestants, (2) Roman Catholics and (3) other.

Mr. Needham: Three persons have been appointed to director posts with the Fair Employment Commission. The commission is currently in the process of recruiting employees and will be submitting a monitoring return in accordance with section 27 of the Fair Employment (NI) Act 1989. Once the final staffing complement has been reached, the commission intends to publish detailed information on the religious composition of its staff and the progress of its affirmative action programme as a follow-up to the information published by the commission on 22 February 1989.

Extradition

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, further to his answer to the hon. Member for Londonderry, East, of 27 February, *Official Report*, column *144*, if he will publish a table to show from 1971 the number of persons extradited in each year from the Irish Republic to Northern Ireland for (1) terrorist offences and (2) non-terrorist offences.

Mr. Cope: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave him on 22 February 1990, *Official Report*, columns *767-68*.

Deaf-blind Children

The Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what support is provided to the families of pre-school deaf-blind children in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Needham: The normal range of primary care and hospital services is available to deaf-blind children and their families. In addition, a child may be assessed for services locally or by a multi-disciplinary team at the Royal Belfast hospital for sick children. Low-vision aids and high-powered hearing aids are supplied as necessary.

Following assessment, social workers arrange for support, counselling and the provision of a range of equipment to assist with daily living. Some parents and their children attend the SENSE centre in west London for specialist information and advice.

Other support can take the form of assistance to parents at home by teachers from special schools or from education and library boards' peripatetic teaching service. Children are also welcome to visit toy and book libraries associated with special schools.

Labour Statistics

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will publish a table in the *Official Report* to show by standard category the umemployment levels in Northern Ireland at the latest available date and at the same period five years ago.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 13 March 1990]:* The number of unemployed claimants in Northern Ireland categorised by industrial sector for February 1985 and February 1990 is set out in the table.

Industrial analysis of the unemployed in Northern Ireland

Industrial classification	*Number of persons February 1985*	*Number of persons February 1990*
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	2,895	2,247
Energy and water supply	445	344
Metal and chemical manufacture	1,951	959
Engineering	6,174	3,661
Food, drink and tobacco	4,089	3,419
Textiles	2,275	1,422
Clothing and footwear	3,199	1,844
Other manufacturing	2,805	1,814
Construction	23,228	18,047
Distribution hotels and catering	12,719	8,638
Transport and communication	2,856	2,325
Finance and business services	2,166	1,627
Education services	2,697	1,837
Health services	2,980	1,995
Other public administration	5,276	3,221
Other services	6,889	12,676
Not elsewhere specified	40,313	32,863
Total	122,957	98,939

GP Contracts

Mr. Hume: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what base data indexes will be used in formulating practice budgets and indicative prescribing budgets for general medical practitioners in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 14 March 1990]:* Indicative prescribing budgets and practice funds will be set at levels which reflect the needs of patients. The precise method of calculation has not yet been determined.

Mr. Hume: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what consideration has been given by the Northern Ireland DHSS to employing the eight Jarman factors to index social deprivation in relation to general medical practitioners' practice budgets and indicative prescribing budgets; what factors the Department would not deem to be appropriate for use in Northern Ireland giving the reasons for this; and what factors it deems to be suitable giving reasons.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 14 March 1990]:* The factors to be taken into account in determining GP indicative budgets and practice funds have not yet been decided. No detailed consideration has yet been given to the use of factors relating to social deprivation.

Mr. Hume: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what social factors will be taken into account in determining practice budgets and indicative prescribing budgets for general medical practitioners in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 14 March 1990]:* Indicative prescribing budgets and practice funds will be set at levels which reflect the needs of patients. The factors to be taken into account in determining the levels and whether social factors should be used have not yet been decided.

Equal Opportunities

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many of his Department's management training courses include sessions on equal opportunities for women; and what proportion of managers at grade six level and above working outside headquarters has received training on equal opportunities for women.

Mr. Cope *[holding answer 5 March 1990]:* In the Northern Ireland Civil Service equal opportunities for women is specifically addressed in the following management training courses:

Leadership Developments for Women and Men
Women in Management—Excellence Network
Women in Management

Six staff at grade level 6 and above have attended the course on leadership developments for women and men. None of these staff work outside headquarters.

In addition, equal opportunities aspects are embodied, where appropriate, in other management training courses including those on recruitment interviewing, promotion interviewing and staff appraisal.

The small home civil service cadre of the Northern Ireland Office does not run its own management training courses. No staff at grade level 6 or above have attended specific courses of training on this subject. However, training needs are considered and all staff are encouraged to attend appropriate courses, some of which include sessions on equal opportunities for women, run mainly by the Northern Ireland civil service or the civil service college.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Trinity College of Music

Mr. Stern: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if a permanent home for the Trinity school of music has yet been decided upon.

Mr. Jackson: This is a matter for the governing body of Trinity college of music. I understand that the governing body will be meeting on 27 March to discuss the future location of the college.

Higher Education

Mr. McFall: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the implementation of differentiated fees in higher education.

Mr. Jackson: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my right hon. Friend to my hon. Friend the hon. Member for Rugby and Kenilworth (Mr. Pawsey) on 23 January 1990, at column *600*.

Primary Schools

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what response his Department intends to make to recent findings by Her Majesty's inspectors of schools relating to the standard of grammar, spelling and punctuation in primary schools.

Mrs. Rumbold: HMI's recent report on "The Teaching and Learning of Language and Literacy" concludes that most primary schools devote sufficient time to the teaching of grammar, punctuation and spelling to enable the majority of their pupils to reach adequate standards in these aspects of language but that only a small proportion —under one fifth—perform really well. The Government have already set about raising standards in these aspects of English. The national curriculum attainment targets and programmes of study, which are being introduced progressively from September 1989, reinforce the practices of the most successful schools in teaching grammar, punctuation and spelling. In addition, substantial funding is being provided, through education support grants, for a three-year English language training programme for all primary teachers and other teachers of English.

Circus Skills

Mr. Stern: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he has any plans to increase the availability of education for circus skills in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Alan Howarth: My right hon. Friend has no such plans.

Modern Languages

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what innovations he intends to introduce to increase the number of children receiving tuition in modern languages.

Mrs. Rumbold: The national curriculum includes a modern foreign language as a foundation subject at secondary level. That means that a modern foreign language will be studied by all pupils between the ages of 11 and 16 in maintained schools in England and Wales.

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what recent representations he has received from the business community regarding the teaching of foreign languages in schools.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend has received no such representations.

School Buildings (Modernisation)

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is his latest estimate of the number of children being educated in schools that are deemed by the local education authority concerned to be in urgent need of modernisation or major repair.

Mr. Alan Howarth: The information requested is not collected centrally by the Department.

Pilot Training

Mr. Colvin: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make it his policy to include professional airline and commercial pilot training in the curriculum of universities, polytechnics and colleges of further education.

Mr. Jackson: Decisions on which courses to include in an institution's portfolio of educational provision are for the academic authorities within the individual institution.

Temporary Classrooms

Mr. Speller: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is his policy on the funding of programmes to replace temporary buildings used for primary school classrooms by purpose-built structures.

Mr. Alan Howarth: It is for each local education authority to decide whether to make provision in temporary or permanent buildings and to determine its policy on the funding of programmes to replace temporary buildings used for primary school classrooms.

Student Loans

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what assessment he has made of the effect of the students' loan scheme on the likelihood of graduates entering mathematics, chemistry and physics teaching in schools.

Mr. Jackson: Top-up loans will offer eligible students additional resources on favourable terms, regardless of their course or their subsequent choice of career. Repayments will not be burdensome and may be deferred when income is less than 85 per cent. of national average earnings: equivalent to about £11,500 in today's circumstances.

University of Wales

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many students entered the university of Wales colleges in *(a)* 1979, *(b)* 1984 and *(c)* 1989; and what percentage of the intake hailed from Wales in each instance.

Mr. Jackson: The numbers of initial entrants to courses at the colleges of the University of Wales are given in the table. The data cover full-timers and part-timers, and postgraduates and undergraduates.

University of Wales	*1979*		*1984*		*1988*	
	Total number	*Per cent. of Welsh domicile*	*Total number*	*Per cent. of Welsh domicile*	*Total number*	*Per cent. of Welsh domicile*
Aberystwyth	1,310	40	1,340	34	1,472	31
Bangor	1,281	26	1,223	26	1,437	26
Cardiff (inc UWIST)	3,531	37	3,656	34	3,797	36
St. David's Lampeter	264	23	257	20	341	18
Swansea	1,773	37	1,821	34	1,879	34

University of Wales	1979 Total number	1979 Per cent. of Welsh domicile	1984 Total number	1984 Per cent. of Welsh domicile	1988 Total number	1988 Per cent. of Welsh domicile
College of Medicine	239	48	138	67	234	47
Total	8,398	36	8,435	33	9,160	33

Source: Universities Statistical Record

UFC (Scottish Committee)

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he intends to meet the chairman of the Scottish committee of the Universities Funding Council to review its activities in its first year of operation.

Mr. Jackson: My right hon. Friend has no such plans.

Vice-Chancellors and Principles

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he last met representatives of the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. Jackson: My right hon. Friend meets representatives of the committee from time to time in the course of normal business.

Examination Results (Inner London)

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement about trends in examination results in inner London since 1975.

Mrs. Rumbold: The table gives the percentage of leavers from the Inner London education authority (ILEA) and for England, obtaining five or more grades at A-C in the GCSE (or its equivalent at O-level and CSE) and one or more A-level passes, since 1976. Although the figures show some improvement in the examination performance of ILEA pupils, the results remain below the national averages. I am sure that the new local education authorities will wish to give a high priority to improving them and will be assisted in this by the Government's education reforms.

Examination attainments of leavers from maintained schools

Percentage of leavers

	5+ graded results at GCSE, O-level and CSE (A-C)[1]		1+ A-level passes[2]	
	ILEA	England	ILEA	England
1987-88	17·5	26·6	12·3	15·2
1986-87	14·7	23·2	10·4	13·9
1985-86	16·2	23·6	10·6	13·6
1984-85	15·2	23·7	11·1	13·9
1983-84	15·3	23·8	11·1	14·3
1982-83	15·2	23·3	10·2	14·4
1981-82	13·8	23·0	10·6	14·1
1980-81	14·2	21·8	10·6	13·5
1979-80	14·1	20·9	9·6	12·6
1978-79	12·7	20·6	10·3	12·6
1977-78	14·9	22·1	11·8	14·0
1976-77	15·8	22·0	13·3	14·1
1975-76	14·9	21·3	12·0	14·3

[1] GCSE grades A-C; O-level grades A-C; CSE grade 1.
[2] Grades A-E.

Notes:

(i) The School Leavers Survey, from which the figures in the above table are derived, is based on a 10 per cent. sample of pupils at each school. Sampling error may lead to distortion in the trends.

(ii) The figures above do not provide the overall picture. There has been a growing tendency among 16 year olds in particular to leave school for GCSE/O-level/A-level study in full-time further education.

UFC (Welsh Committee)

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what representations he has received from the Welsh committee of the Universities Funding Council since its creation; and on what matters.

Mr. Jackson: My right hon. Friend has received no such representations.

Education Reform, Northumberland

Mr. Tredinnick: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the progress of the implementation of the Education Reform Act in Northumberland.

Mrs. Rumbold: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Hexham (Mr. Amos) on 27 February 1990, *Official Report*, column *53*.

Higher Education

Mr. Andrew. F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement about the number of 16-year-olds staying on in full-time education.

Mr. Jackson: In 1988-89, a total of 336,000 16-year-olds stayed on in full-time education in schools and further education colleges in England.

Student Grants

Dr. Hampson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what, at the latest available figures, is the cost of the older student additional allowance to students' mandatory grants; how many were awarded; and when the allowance was last uprated.

Mr. Jackson: In 1987-88, 12,218 assessments totalling £7,546,382 were made for the older students allowance for students receiving mandatory award. The allowance was last uprated with effect from September 1989.

Mr. Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether students who are following a foundation course which is a prerequisite for entry to a non-science and technology degree course are eligible for mandatory maintenance awards.

Mr. Jackson: No.

Drugs

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what was the cost in the latest year for which figures are available for education programmes designed to reduce the demand for drugs.

Mr. Alan Howarth: In 1988-89, the latest year for which figures are available, local education authorities claimed grant on expenditure of £1·6 million under the LEA training grants scheme and £2·6 million under the relevant education support grant in relation to education about drug misuse.

ENERGY

Sellafield

Mr. Cambell-Savours: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is the level of suspended radio nuclides in air in B205, B268 and B30 at Sellafield for each year since 1983 as registered at each non-battery electrically powered air sampling point.

Mr. Baldry: The annual average airborne alpha activity levels in operating areas of B205, B268 and B30, measured by installed air samplers, are given in the table. Activity levels are presented in terms of the intake a worker would receive from the measured activity in the course of a year's work in the plant and are quoted as percentages of the most restrictive annual limit of intake for the particular radionuclide composition on each plant.

Building	*Average airborne activity levels (per cent. ALI)*						
	1983	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	*1987*	*1988*	*1989*
B205	3·0	2·4	3·2	1·6	3·0	2·7	3·4
B268 TDN	6·0	5·5	3·1	6·0	2·6	3·6	9·8
B268 MA Evap	—	1·1	1·0	1·8	1·1	0·8	0·6
B30 Inlet	1·4	2·6	1·8	1·4	2·4	3·0	2·9
B30 Decanner	9·0	8·3	5·7	6·2	4·8	7·0	12·4

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether readings as registered on personal air samplers worn by British Nuclear Fuels plc. employees working on B/205, B/268 and B/30 at Sellafield have ever failed to match readings as registered on non-battery electrically powered air sampling equipment fitted to the same buildings.

Mr. Baldry: Continuously operating air samplers at fixed locations give an average of the aerial radioactivity in the plant and would activate if the levels in the plant rise significantly. Personal air samplers worn by individual employees give a recording of the localised aerial contamination associated with different jobs. The annual exposure recorded by personal air samplers substantially exceeds that measured by installed samplers because individual working practices can generate localised airborne radioactivity which is not expected to be fully recorded by the air sampling equipment.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether, in every case that the alarm monitors in B/205, B/268 and B/30 at Sellafield have been triggered, all personnel have been ordered to leave the area concerned pending suitable clearance by British Nuclear Fuels plc's. health physics department in each year since 1986.

Mr. Baldry: Should an individual air sampler alarm, apparently due to radiation, then employees working nearby are expected to move to an adjacent monitored area whilst the reason for the alarm is investigated by a suitably protected person. Should a number of local air samplers alarm, employees are expected to move out of that part of the plant to a mustering point, whilst other employees, suitably protected, investigate the problem. One case of non-compliance occurred in 1986 when the employee sent to investigate an alarm carried, but did not wear, the respiratory protection provided, and received an exposure in excess of the annual limit of intake. Details of this were reported in the Health and Safety Executive's quarterly statement on nuclear incidents dated 24 July 1987.

Wind Energy

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what participation his Department will have in the 1990 European wind energy conference and exhibition.

Mr. Peter Morrison: My Department in asociation with the energy technology support unit has submitted two papers describing recent developments under the Government-supported United Kingdom wind energy programme. My Department will be providing an exhibition stand in conjunction with the National Engineering Laboratory. Staff from the energy technology support unit are assisting with the selection of papers.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what part his Department will take in the British Wind Energy Association's annual conference.

Mr. Peter Morrison: My Department is a sponsor of the conference. In association with the energy technology support unit it is collaborating with National Power and PowerGen in a joint exhibition stand. Staff of ETSU are co-authors of two papers. More than one third of the papers will be based on work funded by my Department.

Regional Functions

Mr. Cabom: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what functions his Department carries out at the regional level; where the regional offices are located in each of the regions; what staff are employed and at what grades; what proportion of his Department's budget is spent in each of the regions; and what geographical boundaries determine his Department's regions.

Mr. Wakeham: The only regional service my Department provides is the promotion of energy efficiency. The staff concerned are located in the DTI's regional offices. The details are set out in the table:

Region	*Location*	*Staff*
North East	Newcastle upon Tyne	3
North West	Manchester	3
Yorkshire and Humberside	Leeds	3
East Midlands	Nottingham	3
West Midlands	Birmingham	3
East	London (moving to Cambridge)	3
Greater London	London	2
South	London	3
South West	Bristol	3

The staff in each region are one grade 7, one higher executive officer (HEO) and an administrative officer except in Greater London where there is no HEO. The proportion of my Department's running costs accounted for by these staff is 1·75 per cent. which may be roughly equally divided between the regions.

Contributions are also made to the Scottish and Welsh Offices for promoting energy efficiency, the amounts representing about 0·1 per cent. of my Department's running costs in each case.

A breakdown of my Department's total expenditure spent in the regions is not readily available.

Advertising Expenditure

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what was the total publicity and advertising expenditure, including for privatisation, of his Department and public bodies for which his Department has responsibility in *(a)* 1979 and *(b)* 1989.

Mr. Wakeham: Total expenditure by my Department on publicity and advertising in 1979-80 was £131,000. Final expenditure figures for 1989-90 are not yet available but the current forecast is £3,856,000. I am asking the chairmen of the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority, Central Electricity Generating Board, Electricity Council and British Coal to provide their equivalent publicity and advertising figures direct to the hon. Member.

Safety Directorate

Mr. Doran: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy how many inspectors in his Department are required to go offshore in exercise of their responsibilities; how many hold offshore individual certificates; and, in each case, when the individual certificate was issued.

Mr. Peter Morrison: All 44 inspectors currently in post may be required to go offshore in exercise of their responsibilities. Every inspector is issued with appropriate warrants by the Secretary of State for Energy immediately after being appointed.

Mr. Doran: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what elements of his Department's safety directorate's tasks are being postponed as a result of staff shortages.

Mr. Peter Morrison: The overall aims of the safety directorate, within the framework laid down by Parliament, are to encourage and guide the efforts of the offshore industry to prevent accidents, to achieve higher standards of health and safety offshore and to seek to ensure that offshore installations, their equipment, wells and pipelines are structurally sound and fit for their intended purposes, and that they are managed and operated properly. In support of these aims a large number of tasks, of varying degrees of importance, are undertaken. As with any organisation, my safety directorate must prioritise these tasks while ensuring that their aims are met. High priority will continue to be given to offshore inspections and the investigation of accidents offshore; the recruitment campaign currently under way is aimed at ensuring the field inspectorate is brought fully up to strength.

Mr. Doran: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy (1) what is the current number of posts for specialist staff within his Department's safety directorate; what is the current number of staff in place; and what plans he has to fill empty posts;

(2) what is the current number of posts in his Department's safety directorate in Aberdeen and London; what are the current numbers of staff in those posts; and what plans he has to fill empty posts.

Mr. Peter Morrison: There are 63 posts for specialist staff in the safety directorate. Five of which are newly created. Fifty specialist staff are in post.

The total number of posts in the safety directorate is 102, 17 of which are in Aberdeen, 84 in London and one in Great Yarmouth. There are 16 staff currently in Aberdeen, 72 in London and one in Great Yarmouth.

Open and in-service competitions are in progress to fill the specialist vacancies.

Mr. Doran: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what percentage of fatal accidents offshore have been investigated by his Department's safety directorate over the last five years; and how much has been allocated out of departmental resources for 1990-91.

Mr. Peter Morrison: It is, and has always been, the policy of my Department to investigate all fatal accidents reported under the Offshore Installations (Inspectors and Casualties) Regulations 1973 and the Submarine Pipe-Lines (Inspectors etc) Regulations 1977. Sufficient resources are always made available for such investigations.

Offshore Deaths

Mr. Doran: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will list all offshore deaths and their employers in the last 10 years.

Mr. Peter Morrison: I will write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

National Grid Company

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will place in the Library the terms of any directions he has given to the National Grid Company under section 58 of the Electricity Act 1989; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Baldry: The Secretary of State has not issued a direction under section 58 of the Electricity Act 1989.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Rugby League

116. **Mr. Lofthouse:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what consideration has been given by his Department to the implications of the Taylor report for rugby league.

117. **Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what consideration has been given by his Department to the implications of the Taylor report for rugby league.

118. **Mr. Bradley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he intends to meet representatives of the rugby league to discuss the Taylor report.

Mr. John Patten: I refer the hon. Members to the reply given to a question from the hon. Member for Wigan (Mr. Stott) on 19 March at column *493*.

Police Housing Allowances

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement about the police force housing allowances.

Mr. Waddington: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave on 15 March to my hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge (Mr. Shersby) at columns *360-61*.

Diminished Responsibility

Mr. Speller: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has any plans to increase the maximum sentences for those pleading guilty upon the grounds of diminished responsibility to the crimes of killing, raping, or wounding.

Mr. Patten: No. Diminished responsibility is a defence only to a charge of murder. The maximum penalty for manslaughter, raping or wounding with intent to do grievous bodily harm is life imprisonment.

Electronic Tagging

Mr. John Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the cost effectiveness of electronic tagging of offenders or persons on bail.

Mr. John Patten: The current trials of electronic monitoring as a condition of bail have already shown that the technology works and that operating procedures are effective. We are now considering the case for a larger-scale trial of electronic monitoring in an area where substantial numbers can be monitored as a condition of bail, with a view to providing improved measures of the cost effectiveness of electronic monitoring.

Birmingham Six

Mr. Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what action he has taken in the light of recent representations submitted to him about the safety of the convictions of the Birmingham Six.

Mr. Waddington: I have asked the chief constable of the West Midlands police for a report on a number of specific points which have been put to me recently about the safety of the convictions of the Birmingham Six. I understand that the chief constable has decided to ask the Devon and Cornwall constabulary, which carried out investigations in 1987 into certain aspects of the case, to investigate the matters now under consideration. In the light of the outcome of those investigations, I will give further consideration to whether my intervention in the convictions of the six men would be justified.

Magistrates Courts Service

Mr. David Martin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what action he proposes to take on the recommendation in the report of the scrutiny of the magistrates' courts service that the service should become an executive agency.

Mr. Waddington: I am very grateful for the detailed consideration which has been given to the report by interested bodies and individuals, and for the comments which they have offered. In the light of the consultations which have taken place since the report was published we now wish to obtain more detailed and accurate estimates of the costs of different options for changing the management structure and organisation of the service. These will cover both the executive agency proposals made in the scrutiny report and, for comparison purposes, an alternative model based on a reduced number of separate management units funded 100 per cent. by central Government but independently managed by local boards. Consultants will be appointed for this purpose. I shall not reach firm decisions about the future organisation of the service until I have had an opportunity to consider the results of this costing assessment.

British Citizenship

Mrs. Maureen Hicks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his Department has completed consideration of applications for registration as British citizens made under the transitional provisions of the British Nationality Act 1981; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The transitional provisions of the British Nationality Act 1981 came to an end on 31 December 1987. The number of applications received in 1987-88 was some 210,000 registrations and 70,000 naturalisations, of which 116,000 were received in December 1987 alone. This was far more than expected and the Government responded to the additional demand by providing more resources, including the establishment of the Liverpool nationality office, tasked with processing the remaining transitional registration applications by March 1990.

By 19 January 1990, decisions had been reached on all registration cases being processed at the Liverpool nationality office, except those where replies from applicants were awaited. These latter cases consist of those where we are waiting for the applicant to forward the fee, or to swear an oath of allegiance, or to send some other documentary evidence to establish an entitlement to registration. The time taken to complete these outstanding applications will depend upon how soon we receive the requisite information. So far, some 110,000 applications have been completed out of a total of 130,000.

Now that the Liverpool nationality office has largely completed the processing of registration applications, its staff have been retrained in order to process applications for naturalisation, which until now have been processed only in Croydon. This additional capacity to process naturalisations will improve the level of service given to applicants during 1990-91, and we aim to reduce the average waiting time for decisions on applications of all kinds to 11 months by April 1991.

Breath Tests

Mr. Shersby: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether a decision has been reached on police powers to require roadside breath tests.

Mr. Waddington: Yes. The Government have concluded that the police have adequate powers to require roadside breath tests.

The full circumstances in which a breath test can be required were set out by my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General on 5 December 1989 at column *131* and my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland at column *165*. It is lawful for a police officer in uniform acting in the execution of his duty to require the driver of any vehicle on a road to stop. A police officer who stops a vehicle on a road with the purpose of investigating whether its driver has alcohol in his body is acting in the execution of his duty. It is accordingly lawful for a police officer in uniform to stop vehicles at random for that purpose, provided there is no malpractice such as oppression or capricious conduct on the part of the officer. It is lawful for a police officer in uniform to require a driver who has been stopped in such circumstances to provide a specimen of breath for a breath test, provided that the officer has reasonable cause to suspect that the driver has alcohol in his body.

We have considered carefully the views expressed during our recent consultations that the police should be able to operate high profile enforcement as a deterrent against drink driving. Their present powers allow them to do so and statistics show that they are using their powers to good effect.

The statistics of breath tests for England and Wales for the 12 months to September 1989, which were published on 7 February, show that overall levels of testing continue to rise, with a continued downward trend in the proportion of positive tests. The police reported 502,000 screening breath tests in this period, a rise of 16 per cent. over the previous year. The provisional figures for the Christmas period reported by the Association of Chief Police Officers show that the proportion of positive tests fell from 10 per cent. in 1988 to 9 per cent. in 1989.

In all circumstances, we have concluded that the existing powers strike the right balance between the need for effective enforcement of the law and the freedom of the individual.

Advertising Expenditure

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the total publicity and advertising expenditure of his Department and public bodies for which his Department has responsibility in *(a)* 1979 and *(b)* 1989.

Mr. Waddington: Expenditure on publicity and advertising was as follows:

1979-80	*1989-90 (estimate)*
£ million	£ million
3·0	9·1

Psychiatric Bail Hostels

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has any proposals to institute a system of psychiatric bail hostels; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: We are examining the part bail hostels can play in a strategy for dealing with mentally disturbed defendants, but no decisions have yet been taken.

Drugs

Mr. McAvoy: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the cost in the latest year for which figures are available of education programmes designed to reduce the demand for drugs.

Mr. Mellor: A major part of the overall cost of education aimed at preventing the misuse of drugs is that of the staff and other resources used to provide drugs education within schools. Information on such costs is not available centrally.

However, the Department of Education and Science supported expenditure of £4·2 million in 1988-89 to allow for the continued employment of drugs education co-ordinators in each local education authority area in England and for in-service teacher training. In the same period, similar central expenditure to support drugs education in Scotland and Wales amounted to some £260,000 and £280,000 respectively.

Regional Functions

Mr. Cabora: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what functions his Department carries out at the regional level; where the regional offices are located in each of the regions; what staff are employed and at what grades; what proportion of his Department's budget is spent in each of the regions; and what geographical boundaries determined his Department's regions.

Mr. Waddington: The main functions organised regionally are in the prison service, passport department and the forensic science service. Others include police training, telecommunications, police and fire service inspection, inspections relating to the control of drugs, the United Kingdom warning and monitoring organisation, and the inspection of laboratories engaged in scientific procedures on animals.

There are no standard Departmental regions, and thus no Home Office regional offices. Each regional organisation is separately constructed according to the needs of the particular function concerned.

Only in the prison service is there devolved budgetary responsibility on a regional basis. Details of its regional offices' location and approximate staff numbers and 1989-90 budgets are set out in the table below. Since regional offices in the prison service are responsible for staff and expenditure in all prison establishments in their regions, the figures similarly include all such staff and expenditure.

Region	Staff-in-post	Total budget £ million 1989-90
South East (Woking)	10,500	220
South West (Bristol)	5,100	105
Midlands (Birmingham)	5,900	121
North (Manchester)	9,900	201

Neighbourhod Drugwatch

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he intends to offer any assistance to neighbourhood drug watch schemes.

Mr. Mellor: We welcome local efforts to prevent and reduce the extent of drug misuse, especially where they have the support of the local community. In areas where drug prevention teams are set up under the initiative announced by my right hon. Friend the Member for Witney (Mr. Hurd) last October, I would expect the team to establish close contact with any local neighbourhood drugwatch scheme.

DEFENCE

Submarine-launched Cruise Missiles

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if any studies by SACEUR are under way to examine the role of United States Navy submarine-launched cruise missiles as a part of the NATO theatre nuclear forces.

Mr. Neubert: As part of the post-INF restructuring of nuclear forces, SACEUR is looking at the availability of a whole spectrum of nuclear weapons, including submarine-launched cruise missiles.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if any United States Navy Tomahawk submarine-launched cruise missiles are assigned to the NATO command (i) in peacetime and (ii) in war.

Mr. Neubert: The assignment of United States forces is a matter for the United States Government.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement concerning progress by the NATO military authorities in developing concepts of military operations for the employment of United States Tomahawk submarine-launched cruise missiles.

Mr. Neubert: While it is not our practice to comment in detail on NATO's classified concepts of operations, I can confirm that the NATO military authorities are considering the availability of submarine-launched cruise missiles as part of NATO's post-INF restructuring process.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if United States submarine-launched cruise missiles are currently included in the NATO operational plan for the employment of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Neubert: It is not our practice to comment on classified NATO operational plans.

United Kingdom-United States Agreements

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what provisions currently exist in agreements between the British Government and United States authorities concerning the types of (i) naval and (ii) naval support vessels permitted to be based in United Kingdom ports and facilities.

Mr. Neubert: Details of agreements under which United States vessels may be based in the United Kingdom are confidential between the two Governments.

Running Costs

Mr. John Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what are the annual running costs of an operational (i) Polaris class submarine, (ii) Trafalgar class submarine, (iii) Swiftsure class submarine and (iv) Valiant/Churchill class submarine; and what is the anticipated annual running cost of a Trident class submarine; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Neubert: The average annual operating costs at 1988-89 prices of Royal Navy nuclear-powered submarines are:

	£ million
Polaris	11·7
Fleet	4·4

Figures for individual classes of fleet submarine could not be provided without disproportionate cost.

These costs include personnel, petrol, oil and lubricants, spares and so on, as well as administrative support services, but exclude capital equipment and refit/repair costs.

It is too early to say with any precision what the likely running costs of the Trident force will be. They are not, however, expected to be significantly different from those of Polaris.

Mr. John Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what are the annual running costs of the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment at *(a)* Burghfield, *(b)* Aldermaston, *(c)* Foulness, *(d)* Winfrith, *(e)* Llanishen, *(f)* Harwell, *(g)* Springfields, *(h)* Capenhurst, *(i)* Calder Hall, *(j)* Sellafield and *(k)* Capelcross, and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Neubert: It would not be in the national interest to disclose this information for the four sites of the atomic weapons establishment: Aldermaston, Burghfield, Cardiff (Llanishen), and Foulness. The other locations to which the hon. Member refers are not a matter for the Ministry of Defence.

Nuclear Weapons

Mr. John Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the number of people employed both directly and indirectly in the nuclear weapons programme; how many are involved in research; how many are involved in manufacture; what are the running costs of employing these personnel, and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Neubert: It would not be in the interests of national security to reveal the number or deployment of staff at the

atomic weapons establishment. However our very broad estimate of the number of people in the United Kingdom whose employment is directly or indirectly dependent on nuclear defence is some 40,000.

Tornados (Collision)

Mr. Jopling: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether, in the light of the report of the collision between two Tornado aircraft over Cumbria on 9 August 1988, he will accelerate his plans to introduce a computerised system of track deconfliction to avoid a similar accident in future; and on which date he expects to implement it.

Mr. Neubert: Immediately following the accident concerned and in the light of the interim report of the investigation, a review of night low flying regulations was carried out which resulted in the introduction of a restructured night low flying system in October 1988 designed to provide improved deconfliction arrangements. The automated low flying inquiry and notification system (ALFENS), which is currently in its project definition phase, should improve the flexibility of the night low flying system on its introduction in 1992, but there are no plans to accelerate its development in the light of the final report of the accident investigation.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Housing Benefit Disregards

Mr. Hind: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he has any plans following the publication of the Children's Society report, "Too Much Pressure", to introduce the same disregards for housing benefit for trainees on YTS as currently enjoyed by young people in employment; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Allowances paid to trainees on youth training schemes are provided from central funds. Like social security benefits, these allowances are taken fully into account in the calculation of housing benefit. To provide a disregard of these allowances would mean double provision from public funds and give preferential treatment to a small number of people who are not in the greatest need. However, in July 1989, we accepted that there were special considerations for young people aged 16 and 17 who were living independently and liable to make payments for their housing costs and increased the personal allowance which forms the basis of their housing benefit entitlement to the same level as that used for people aged 18 to 25—an increase of over 30 per cent.

Attendance Allowance

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many people claiming attendance allowance on grounds of terminal illness in each of the last three years for which records are available have died while waiting for the six-month qualifying period to expire.

Mr. Scott: I regret that this information is not available.

Regional Functions

Mr. Caborn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what functions his Department carries out at the regional level; where the regional offices are located in each of the regions; what staff are employed and at what grades; what proportion of his Department's budget is spent in each of the regions; and what geographical boundaries determine his Department's regions.

Mrs. Gillian Shepherd: The Department's regional offices provide a support and advice service to the local office network, details of specific functions are shown in table 1. Information on location, staffing and boundaries are also detailed in tables 2, 3 and 5. Information on budgets in the format requested is not available. Table 4 gives details showing the expenditure for the regional and local offices in each region as a proportion of the Secretary of State's administration and miscellaneous services vote.

Table 1

	Functions carried out at regional level
1.	Regional support and advice on adjudication and policy matters relating to all national insurance and social security benefits.
2.	Enforcement procedures in respect of non compliance with national insurance regulations.
3.	Organised fraud, policy and advice on all fraud related matters.
4.	Personnel matters, staff welfare and training.
5.	Industrial relations, regional Whitley committee.
6.	Implementation of Department's computerisation and new technology policies.
7.	Regional estate management.
8.	Freeline and regional information services.

Table 2

	Location of regional offices
1.	Scotland—Edinburgh.
2.	Midlands—Birmingham.
3.	London South—Sutton, Surrey.
4.	London North—Wembley, Middlesex.
5.	North East—Leeds.
6.	North West—Bootle.
7.	Wales and South West—Cardiff.

Table 3

Numbers of staff, and grade in which currently employed in regional offices—1 March 1990

	MIDS	*LN*	*LS*	*SCOT*	*NW*	*NE*	*WSW*	*Totals*
Executive director	0·0	0·0	0·0	1·0	0·0	0·0	0·0	1·0
Assistant secretary	1·0	1·0	1·0	0·0	1·0	1·0	1·0	6·0
Senior principal	5·0	5·0	5·0	4·0	5·0	5·0	5·0	34·0
Principal	6·0	6·0	8·0	7·0	8·0	6·0	6·0	47·0

	MIDS	LN	LS	SCOT	NW	NE	WSW	Totals
SEO	25·5	25·5	26·0	28·0	30·0	26·5	23·0	184·5
HEO	112·0	90·0	110·5	102·0	95·0	106·5	85·0	701·0
LOI	116·0	145·0	139·5	150·0	105·0	154·0	74·0	883·5
EO	136·5	99·5	146·5	142·5	156·5	112·0	131·0	924·5
LOII	296·5	188·5	81·0	294·0	103·5	184·0	177·0	1,324·5
AO	143·0	75·5	145·0	91·5	227·5	154·5	174·0	1,011·0
AA	763·5	172·0	89·0	521·5	659·5	513·5	717·5	3,436·5
Typing manager	2·0	2·0	3·0	3·0	3·0	2·0	2·0	17·0
Typist	22·5	21·5	25·5	23·5	28·0	25·0	20·5	166·5
PES	8·0	4·0	6·0	7·0	8·0	10·0	4·0	47·0
Handicap instructor	1·0	1·0	1·0	1·0	1·0	1·0	1·0	7·0
MED/board assistant	0·0	0·0	0·0	0·0	2·0	0·0	2·0	4·0
SM3	0·0	0·0	1·0	0·0	1·0	0·0	0·0	2·0
Support grade 1	5·0	2·0	2·0	0·0	3·0	6·0	5·0	23·0
Support grade 2	19·0	8·0	13·0	7·5	19·0	13·0	15·0	94·5
Professionals	2·0	2·5	2·5	0·0	2·0	3·0	3·0	15·0
Totals	1,658·5	843·0	799·5	1,378·5	1,452·0	1,317·0	1,440·0	8,888·5

Table 4
Proportion of the Department's administration budget spent in each region

	Per cent.
1. Scotland	4·75
2. Midlands	5·38
3. London South	6·37
4. London North	6·37
5. North East	5·63
6. North West	5·45
7. Wales and South West	4·79

Note: The information relates to regional and local offices only, headquarters and other units are excluded.

Table 5
Geographical boundaries of each region

Region	Boundaries
1. Scotland	Scotland including the Islands.
2. Midlands.	Derbyshire excluding High Peak District, Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire and West Midlands.
3. London South	Hampshire, Berkshire, Watlington, Nettlebed and Henley on Thames in Oxfordshire, all areas south of Thames, Kensington, Bloomsbury, Chelsea, City and Westminster to north of Thames
4. London North	Essex, Bedfordshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, Oxfordshire excluding small area covered by London South, Hertfordshire and the old GLC area north of Thames except Kensington, Bloomsbury, Chelsea, City and Westminster.
5. North East	Northumberland, Tyne and Wear, Durham, Yorkshire, Humberside and North Lincolnshire.
6. North West	Cumbria, Lancashire, Merseyside, Cheshire, Greater Manchester and High Peak District Derbyshire.
7. Wales and South West	Clwyd, Powys, Gwent Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Dorset.

Vaccine Damage

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many vaccine damage payments were made in 1989; and if he will categorise these according to the age of the child when the vaccination took place, the year of the vaccination and the nature of the vaccination.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Three payments were awarded in 1989 under the provisions of the Vaccine Damage Payments Act 1979. The details are:

Age at date of vaccination	Year vaccination was given	Type of vaccination cited on claim form
4 years	1986	Measles
12 to 15 months	1986	Measles
15 to 18 months	1972	Measles

Correspondence

Mr. Kennedy: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security when he expects to be able to resolve the still outstanding claim for child benefit, from the Rev. John Macleod, of Ross-shire, on whose behalf the hon. Member for Ross, Cromarty and Skye wrote to him on 13 February and 13 March; why an interim payment has not been made; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: There is no outstanding claim for child benefit but I am aware of an outstanding claim for family credit from Mrs. Macleod. Claims for family credit are decided by the independent adjudicating authorities and we cannot interfere in their decisions. I understand that the adjudication officer dealing with Mrs. Macleod's claim is awaiting further information from her before being able to decide the claim. As my noble Friend, Lord Skelmersdale said in his letter to the hon. Member on 8 March 1989, the claim about which the hon. Member wrote on 23 January 1989 was decided on 1 March 1989 when an award of £41·60 a week was made. As a result of an appeal to the social security appeal tribunal, the decision was revised to £58·57 a week and arrears were paid on 1 December 1989.

Rent Relief

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) what is his estimate of the numbers qualifying for rent relief in each region and the amount and distribution of such relief in terms of the amount of relief;

(2) what is his estimate of the numbers qualifying for rate relief in each region and the amount and distribution of such relief in terms of the amount of relief.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard *[holding answer 22 February 1990]:* The information is in the table.

Region	*Number receiving assistance with rent (000s)*	*Proportion of Great Britain total Per cent.*	*Expenditure £ million*	*Proportion of Great Britain total Per cent.*
Northern	315	8	285	7
Yorkshire and Humberside	413	10	357	9
East Midlands	253	6	221	5
East Anglia	117	3	105	3
Greater London	572	14	765	19
South East	522	13	509	12
South West	249	6	245	6
West Midlands	394	9	372	9
North West	536	13	512	13
Wales	211	5	215	5
Scotland	573	14	508	12
Total	4,155	100	4,094	100

Region	*Number receiving assistance with rates (000s)*	*Proportion of England and Wales total Per cent.*	*Expenditure £ million*	*Proportion of England and Wales total Per cent.*
Northern	359	8	95	8
Yorkshire and Humberside	498	11	120	10
East Midlands	317	7	86	7
East Anglia	142	3	35	3
Greater London	630	14	237	19
South East	641	15	183	14
South West	322	7	76	6
West Midlands	506	12	154	12
North West	695	16	229	18
Wales	253	6	50	4
Total	4,363	100	1,265	100

Notes:

1. Estimates based upon local authority subsidy claims 1989-90 and an average of caseload returns made in November 1988, February 1989, May 1989 and August 1989.
2. Expenditure rounded to nearest £ million; caseload rounded to nearest thousand. Individual figures may not sum to total due to rounding.
3. Scotland excluded from the rates table as domestic rates replaced by community charge from April 1989.

Retirement Pension

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will list other European Economic Community countries that decide the date for the commencement of payment of the retirement pension along the same lines as Regulation 16(1) of the Social Security (Claims and Payments) Regulations 1987; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard *[holding answer 27 February 1990]:* In the United Kingdom, state retirement pensions are payable in advance from the day on which the person becomes entitled to a pension, if this is a Monday, or if not, from the following Monday.

Arrangements in other European Community member states differ from each other, with pensions usually being paid monthly rather than weekly. In Denmark, Italy and Spain, the first pension payment is made at the beginning of the month following the qualifying day, but includes a payment backdated to the qualifying day. In the Netherlands, the pensioner is entitled to pension from the beginning of the month of his qualifying birthday.

In Belgium, France, Luxembourg and Germany, the first pension is payable at the start of the month following the qualifying day, without any payment for the intervening period.

In Ireland, where pensions are paid weekly, the first payable date is decided as in the United Kingdom.

I regret it has not proved possible to obtain comparable information about the position in Greece and Portugal.

Travel-to-Work Costs

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is the survey evidence suggesting that one in three employees may have no travel-to-work costs referred to in paragraph 37, chapter 14 of the public expenditure White Paper.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard *[holding answer 5 March 1990]:* This estimate is based on the findings of a study carried out by the university of Stirling for Her Majesty's Treasury in 1980.

Pensions

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many rebates have still not been paid to the personal pension schemes of people who opted out of the state earnings-related pension scheme.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* It is estimated that there are 15,500 individuals who are entitled to a rebate for their personal pension and where it has not yet been paid into their scheme. About 11,000 of these are expected to have a payment at the end of March. Investigations are continuing in the remaining cases to resolve discrepancies in the information provided by employers, and payment will then be made where appropriate.

Housing Benefit

Mr. Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) further to the written reply dated 14 February, *Official Report*, column *222*, concerning the amount of poll tax payable in 1990-91 per adult for each region, etc., whether he will provide in each case an estimate of the numbers receiving housing benefit;

(2) further to the written reply dated 14 February, *Official Report*, column *222*, concerning the amount of poll tax payable in 1990-91 per adult for each region, etc., whether he will provide in each case an estimate of the numbers receiving rate relief.

Mrs. Shephard: The information requested has been placed in the Library.

SCOTLAND

Teucharhill

Mr. Sillars: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he received an urban aid application for projects in the Teucharhill area of Govan constituency; and what decisions have been made.

Mr. Lang: Applications for the 1990-91 urban programme competition for projects in the Teucharhill area were received by the normal 30 November deadline. As in previous years I expect the bulk of final decisions to be announced around the end of March.

Advertising Expenditure

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the total publicity and advertising expenditure, including for privatisation, of his Department and public bodies for which his Department has responsibility in *(a)* 1979 and *(b)* 1989.

Mr. Rifkind: The latest estimate of expenditure by the Scottish Office in the current financial year on publicity and advertising is £3 million. The corresponding figure for the financial year 1979-80 was £263,000. Information on publicity and advertising expenditure by non-departmental public bodies is not held systematically in my Department.

Highlands and Islands Development Board

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish in the *Official Report* tables, covering the years 1983-84 to 1991-92 and consistent with the table for programmes 2 and 15.3 on page 40 of "Public Expenditure to 1991-92: A Commentary on the Scotland Programme", showing *(a)* gross expenditure, parallel to the table appended to the Secretary of State's statement to the House on 6 December 1989, *Official Report*, columns 330-33 and *(b)* a table of receipts, following as closely as is practicable the receipts analysis for the Highlands and Islands Development Board on page 47 of the said commentary.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 17 January 1990]:* Gross expenditure on programmes 15.2 and 15.3 for the period 1983-84 to 1989-90 is set out in the table. Details of expenditure plans for the financial years 1990-91 and 1991-92 will be set out in the Scottish commentary on public expenditure to 1992-93 which will be published in due course.

An analysis of receipts for the Scottish Development Agency is not available in the form requested.

Programme 15.2: Industry, Energy, Trade and Employment
Programme 15.3: Tourism

£ million

	1983-84	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*	*1987-88*	*1988-89*	*1989-90*
(a) Gross expenditure							
Regional and general industrial support:							
Regional selective assistance and related schemes	26·1	37·0	52·7	43·3	45·5	62·1	64·3
Regional development grants	143·0	109·0	106·3	168·5	77·4	60·3	63·7
Other support services (oil platform sites)	0·9	0·6	0·1	0·0	0·0	0·0	0·0
Total	170·0	146·6	159·1	211·8	122·9	122·4	128·0
Support for nationalised industries (other than transport industries)	5·7	3·9	2·0	4·5	6·8	4·0	4·1
General labour market services (The Careers Service)	8·4	8·7	9·4	9·6	11·0	13·5	14·0
Other Central and miscellaneous services	0·3	0·4	0·4	0·7	0·4	0·6	0·5
Total	184·4	159·6	170·9	226·6	141·1	140·5	146·6
Public Corporations							
Other regional support—Highlands and Islands Development Board	38·2	42·1	39·7	35·5	37·9	42·1	46·9
Scottish Development Agency	115·5	118·0	131·0	130·5	135·0	145·9	160·3
Total	153·7	160·1	170·7	166·0	172·9	188·0	207·2

	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90
Total IETE	338·1	319·7	341·6	392·6	314·0	328·5	353·8
Tourism: Programme 15.3	11·5	13·4	12·7	13·7	13·8	15·8	16·8

Living Elsewhere Grants

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many students at each university and higher education college in Scotland receive living elsewhere grants.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 22 January 1990]:* The information requested is set out in the table. It relates to the academic session 1988-89 and is in respect of Scottish-domiciled students attending the Scottish universities and Scottish grant-aided colleges.

Institution	*Number of Students*
Glasgow University	3,295
Edinburgh University	2,977
Strathclyde University	1,843
Aberdeen University	2,221
Heriot-Watt University	1,072
St. Andrews University	804
Dundee University	1,153
Stirling University	1,123
Jordanhill College of Education	599
Moray House College of Education	746
Northern College of Education	499
St. Andrews College of Education, Glasgow	267
Craigie College of Education	135
Robert Gordons Institute of Technology	1,622
Duncan of Jordanstone School of Art	517
Dundee Institute of Technology	862
Paisley College of Technology	865
Glasgow School of Art	316
The Queens College	361
Queen Margaret College	690
Edinburgh College of Art	272
Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama	119
Scottish College of Textiles	414
West of Scotland Agricultural College	67
North of Scotland College of Agriculture	39
East of Scotland School of Agriculture	27
Napier Polytechnic of Edinburgh	2,342
Glasgow College of Technology	980

Fishing, Ullapool

Mr. Charles Kennedy: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he expects to be able to reply to the specific questions raised with him by the Federation of Highlands and Islands fishermen in its original letter of 3 May 1989 with regard to the impact of klondyking activity upon the fishing activities of Ullapool fishermen and the question of possible compensation; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 14 March 1990]:* The question of compensation for loss of fishing opportunities has been raised by the federation, and by the hon. Member on its behalf, on previous occasions. My noble Friend the Minister of State told representatives of the federation at a meeting in Kinlochbervie in August 1989 that the Government do not intend to pay compensation.

Nature Conservation

Mr. Macdonald: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Western Isles, *Official Report*, 1 March, column *292*, whether he will indicate the criteria adopted for the purposes of determining whether land which is subject to, or being considered for, a nature conservation order under section 29 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 is of national importance.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 12 March 1990]:* A nature conservation order is made on the recommendation of the Nature Conservancy Council only where it is satisfied that there is a serious threat to an SSSI. The Nature Conservancy Council would advise on the scientific interest and the importance of the specific area in a national and international context. Each case is then considered by my right hon. and learned Friend on its merits.

TRANSPORT

Traffic

115. **Mr. Gerald Bowden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what consideration he has given to the need for environmental measures to mitigate the effect of increased volume of traffic on roads in residential areas.

Mr. Atkins: Where there is sufficient capacity on main roads, traffic-calming measures such as road humps and variable carriageway widths can play a useful part in enhancing the environmental quality of many residential streets. Their principal effects are to lower traffic speeds and to deter through traffic from using these streets. Improved landscaping and paved surfaces can offer further environmental benefits.

East London Roads

Ms. Gordon: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will make it his policy to accede to any renewal of the request from the local authority to close the exits from the northern Blackwall tunnel approach road at Old Ford/Tredegar road to prevent westbound rat-running;

(2) if he will visit Antill road and Tredegar road in Bow, London, E3 to meet residents to discuss the problems caused by through traffic leaving trunk roads.

Mr. Atkins: No. It is for the appropriate borough council as highway authority for the local roads concerned to make specific proposals which will be considered on the basis of circular 2/87 traffic management guidance in London.

Cyclists

Mr. Summerson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what records he has of accidents involving cyclists in Kensington road, Knightsbridge, Park lane, Bayswater road, and Marylebone road over the last five years.

Mr. Atkins: I understand from the London accident analysis unit that for the five-year period 1984 to 1988, the latest year for which figures are available, the number of accidents involving cyclists was:

Road	*Number of accidents*
Kensington Road	37
Knightsbridge	25
Park Lane	39
Bayswater Road	50
Marylebone Road	42

Regional Functions

Mr. Cabom: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what functions his Department carries out at the regional level; where the regional offices are located in each of the regions; what staff are employed and at what grades; what proportion of his Department's budget is spent in each of the regions; and what geographical boundaries determine his Department's regions.

Mr. Atkins: The Department has a wide range of functions, most of which are undertaken outside London. Some 80 per cent. of its 16,500 staff are based outside London. It has nine regional offices which deal with local aspects of road traffic, road safety and public transport in Newcastle, Leeds, Manchester, Nottingham, Birmingham, Bedford, London, Dorking and Bristol with a sub-office in Exeter. The new motorway widening unit will be in Coventry. We have recently announced our intention to relocate the highways computing division from London to Leeds.

The Department's marine directorate and Her Majesty's Coastguard have their own regional organisations, as do the vehicle inspection agency and the driver and vehicle licensing directorate, the new driver standards agency and traffic areas which supervise driver testing, vehicle safety and operator licences. The transport and road research laboratory is at Crowthorne. The different boundaries of each organisation are set in order to ensure value for public money and to best deliver each organisation's objectives.

Maps showing the nine regional offices and their schemes were published in February in "Trunk Roads, England, Into the 1990s". The roads vote of £1·3 billion is almost entirely spent by the regional organisation and the effort of the agencies and directorates listed above is deployed in the regions.

Cars (Pollution)

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what action he intends to take over calls for the inclusion of a pollution test in the MOT tests.

Mr. Atkins: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Dewsbury (Mr. Taylor) on 6 March 1990 *(Official Report,* column *547.)*

North Yorkshire County Council (Grants)

Mr. Robert Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will set out the additional amounts in grants to the North Yorkshire county council which will be available in future years as a result of the increased spending announcement.

Mr. Atkins: In the 1990-91 transport supplementary grant (TSG) settlement, announced last December, we accepted for the first time expenditure on the Sherburn-in-Elmet and South Milford bypass for 50 per cent. grant support. Subject to North Yorkshire county council making satisfactory progress, we expect to pay TSG of over £5·7 million towards the cost of this scheme between now and its completion in 1992-93. During this same period, support for the Harrogate Knaresborough southern bypass is expected to continue with TSG of some £5·2 million. The county council will also receive increases in revenue support grant over a longer period to cover the cost of funding the balance.

Road Improvements

Mr. Robert Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what arrangements he has made to inform the public about road repairs and improvements on trunk roads where restrictions are in force with consequent delays for traffic movement.

Mr. Atkins: The Department issues fortnightly bulletins summarising planned major motorway lane closures likely to involve delays, and its regional offices issue more detailed information on individual schemes. This information is publicised by the media. For certain roadworks the Department provides telephone hot-lines from which information on likely delays is available directly to the public. The Department also publishes leaflets that give details of telephone numbers and other sources of information.

Signs are being introduced at major roadworks to explain what the works are for and what is happening when work is suspended while cones are still in place.

The broadcast media and motoring organisations play a major part in providing the public with reports on road conditions. The Department is having discussions with those involved in the provision of travel information about ways of improving its availability and reliability.

Mr. Robert Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects plans to be completed for the improvements to the A1 between Wetherby and Dishforth in North Yorkshire; and what is his estimate of the costs involved.

Mr. Atkins: Following a public inquiry in 1987, plans for this scheme are being revised to provide a higher standard of road. The fresh proposals will take into account the findings of the current review of the longer-term needs of the A1 between Hook Moor and Scotch Corner, which includes consideration of motorway status. I expect to make an announcement this summer.

The scheme should be completed in the mid to late 1990s at an estimated cost of £100 million to £110 million depending on the final standard adopted.

Road Programme

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the answer of 14 March, if he will list the length of each road project detailed therein.

Mr. Atkins: The information requested is given in the table.

Length of those county council TSG schemes listed in columns 228 to 234 of The House of Commons Official Report (Vol, 169 No. 73) of 16 March 1990

Authority and Scheme	*Length (km)*
Avon	
Newfoundland street Bristol	0·8
Avon ring road (1A): Hambrook-Badminton road	2·3
Avon ring road (IV): Marsham way—A4 Bath road	2·8
Avon R R (IB1): Badminton road—Westerleigh road	1·0
Avon R R IB2: Westerleigh road—Shortwood road	2·3
Avon ring road (III): A420 Warmley—Marsham way	1·9
M5—Town centre link Weston Super Mare stage 1	0·3
Urban traffic control	0·0
Weston Super Mare PDR stages VA and VB	1·4
Bedfordshire	
Stagsden bypass	3·0
Shefford/Clifton/Henlow bypass	7·0
Berkshire	
Sandhurst Crowthorne bypass	3·8
Slough Bath road Montem lane—Wellington street	0·6
Buckinghamshire	
Wing-Milton Keynes Fenny Stratford bypass	2·2
Cambridgeshire	
Elton/Chesterton bypass	5·9
Cheshire	
Diversion (phase 2) Warrington	1·2
Station road bypass Winsford	1·7
Chester western bypass phase 1	2·1
Haslington bypass	3·7
Cleveland	
Durham road bypass	1·5
South bank link road	2·4
Thornaby bypass	5·0
Guisborough road improvement	1·0
Cornwall	
Penzance primary distributor	4·6
Truro-Devoran I (Carnon Downs bypass)	1·4
Newquay Gannel link road	0·5
Sticker bypass	3·0
Liskeard industrial distributor road	1·5
Cumbria	
Staveley bypass	2·8
Papcastle diversion	2·0
Romney road link	0·3
Derbyshire	
Ilkeston inner relief road	1·3
Tapton bypass Chesterfield (stages 1 and 2)	2·5
Devon	
Plymouth —St. Budeaux bypass	1·7
Milehouse junction improvement Plymouth	0·4
Torbay ring road stage 2	2·7
Thorns Cross—Eagle Farm stage 1 (Olchard Lane-Eagle Farm)	1·8
Thorns Cross to Eagle Farm stage 4	2·8
Western Approach/Union street junction improvement Plymouth	0·8
Kent	
Faversham western link road	2·0
Albion place/Mote road	1·5
Thanet way dualling	28·0
Ashford southern orbital	3·6
Beaver road diversion	3·9
Hamstreet bypass	3·9
Denton bypass	7·5
Whitfield bypass	2·1
Sturry road to Military road link Canterbury	0·2
Dartford northern bypass	3·0
Whitfield to Eastry	7·5
Lord of the Manor	0·2
Eastry bypass	2·5
Densole/Hawkinge bypass	4·0
South Ashford to Hamstreet	6·2
Stockbridge to Brenzett	4·0
Maidstone spine road	2·7
Somerhill park link Tonbridge	2·3
Thames-side industrial route (TIR) stage 1	2·4
Lancashire	
Shuttleworth Hall link road	1·7
Kirkham and Wesham bypass	1·9
Burnley inner relief road (Phase II)	0·7
Penwortham bypass extension to Preston	1·2
Nelson-Colne (main works)	1·7
Chorley town centre bypass (Phase I)	0·8
Blackburn inner relief road (Phase I)	0·9
North Valley link road Colne	1·2
Squires Gate lane Blackpool dualling	1·4
Accrington town centre relief road	0·7
Freckleton bypass	3·3
Park road/St. Helens road link Ormskirk	0·4
Lancaster/Morecambe bypass (Phase I)	5·8
Dorset	
Gillingham internal relief road	1·6
A37 Improvement—Section A	2·8
Durham	
Canney Hill bypass	1·1
Wheatley Hill bypass	3·5
Coundon bypass	2·6
Metal bridge to Bowburn	1·8
East Sussex	
Boarshead to Eridge	3·9
Maresfield bypass	2·8
Mayfield bypass	1·8
Essex	
Dovercourt bypass stage 2 phase 2	2·5
Canes Lane improvement (Final stage)	1·7
Maldon bypass	2·4
Braintree bypass stage 1	9·0
Gloucestershire	
Eastington to Stroud 3 Ebley bypass	2·0
Eastington-Stroud-Ebley bypass	1·3
Eastington-Stroud 3A-Ebley bypass-Dudbridge	0·8
Eastington-Stroud 3B-Ryeford-Dudbridge	1·2
Hampshire	
Blackwater Valley route	6·5
West Totton bypass (2)	1·2
Hook bypass underbridge	0·0
M3 link Minley	1·0
Hereford/Worcestershire	
Roman road Hereford phase 4 stage 2	1·5
A44-A422 Link Worcester road-Whittington road Marl Bank	1·0
Hertfordshire	
Stanstead Abbotts bypass	4·0
Waltham Cross relief road phase II	0·8
Tonwell bypass	1·5
Watford M1 link and southern junction system	3·4
Stanstead Abbotts to Harlow	3·8
Humberside	
Hull north orbital road	1·2
Hull Drypool link	0·6
Hull Wilmington link	1·1
Long Riston bypass	1·0
Grimsby New Baxtergate	0·8

Authority and Scheme	Length (km)
Castle Hill to Bentley	4·6
Hull Stoneferry bridge	0·3
Humber bridge northern approach road	5·3
Hedon bypass	2·4
Hull Ennerdale link	3·3
Leicestershire	
Asfordby bypass	2·0
Syston northern bypass	2·3
Ashby, Loughborough Coleorton improvement	1·9
Redland quarry to Quorn/Mountsorrel bypass link	1·1
Lincolnshire	
Wainfleet bypass	2·0
Donington bypass	2·0
Norfolk	
Dersingham/Snettisham bypass	5·8
Trowse bypass	1·4
Kirby Cane/Geldeston bypass	3·2
Outwell Bends	2·1
Watton inner relief road	0·5
Northamptonshire	
Oundle bypass	4·8
Brigstock bypass	3·9
Wollaston bypass	1·6
Yardley Gobion bypass	2·5
Raunds and Stanwick bypass	5·0
Ringstead and Denford bypass (including M1/A1 junction)	5·2
Thrapston eastern bypass	1·6
Bozeat bypass	3·3
Middleton Cheney bypass and Overthorpe hall improvement	3·2
Brixworth bypass	2·7
River Tove Bends	1·1
Staverton bypass	1·2
Nene valley way I Crawler lane	1·2
Northumberland	
Prudhoe northern bypass	4·4
Swinburne quarry to Fourlaws stage 1	2·0
North Yorkshire	
York outer ring road	16·0
A658/A59 Harrogate Knaresborough southern bypass	10·2
Green Hammerton bypass	3·0
Far Laithe to Pacegate	1·2
Sherburn-in-Elmet and south Milford bypass	6·8
Nottinghamshire	
Hucknall Bypass	5·4
Manvers Street Link Nottingham	1·8
Oxfordshire	
Banbury Inner Relief Road	2·0
Shropshire	
English Bridge Gyratory	0·4
Reabrook to Telford Way Link	2·2
Whitchurch Bypass	2·1
Ironbridge Bypass Extension	2·8
Somerset	
Ashill to Southfields Roundabout (A303)	4·8
Staffordshire	
Tutbury Bypass	1·6
Himley Bypass	1·0
Uttoxeter to Combridge	3·4
Burton Southern Primary Route	2·8
Keele Bypass	1·8
Cannock Eastern Primary Route	2·0
Hawkins Lane Link Burton-Upon-Trent	0·5
Suffolk	
Stowmarket Relief Road	1·6
Long Melford Bypass	5·4
Kessingland Bypass	2·5
Mutford Bridge	0·5
Surrey	
Ewell Bypass	1·6
Warwickshire	
Stratford Southern Relief Road	1·4
Bedworth Bypass Extension (Hen Lane-M6)	1·3
Wellesbourne Bypass	2·1
West Sussex	
Cuckfield Bypass	1·8
Bewbush	1·1
Rustington Bypass	3·0
Littlehampton Bypass (Main Scheme)	1·8
Crawley South Western Bypass	2·3
Wiltshire	
Chippenham Relief Road Stage 1	1·3
Burbage Bypass	2·6

Airport Noise

Mr. Adley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport on how many occasions for each of the last 10 years his Department has utilised its powers to satisfy requirements for limiting the effects of noise at airports in Britain, other than Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted.

Mr. McLoughlin: The Department's long-standing policy has been that owners and operators of airports should be responsible for taking noise abatement measures. The Department has designated 47 airports (including the three London ones) under section 35 of the Civil Aviation Act 1982, which requires consultation between the airport, its users and local interests on matters including noise abatement.

In addition the Department has taken a leading role internationally in securing agreement to measures reducing noise at source made by aircraft. The resultant standards are given force by orders made under the 1982 Act.

London Underground (Safety)

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the near collision on the London Underground in a tunnel outside King's Cross in the week beginning 11 March.

Mr. Portillo: On 12 March, an Underground train travelling southwards on the Piccadilly line stopped at King's Cross station. The train could not continue southwards because the fire brigade had been called to an incident at Covent Garden station. It was necessary, therefore, for the passengers to disembark at King's Cross and for the train to be diverted northwards. To achieve this, the train should have gone south out of King's Cross until it had passed a crossover, and it should then have reversed. In the event, the train immediately reversed. The next southbound train was standing at signals outside King's Cross. The driver saw the headlights of the first train approaching him. In accordance with the procedure in which all drivers are trained, the driver of the stationary train switched off the traction current by shorting the

wires, mounted on the tunnel wall, which provide a safety measure for use in contingencies such as this one. The driver of the moving train applied his brakes and came to a halt about a train's length from the other train. London Underground has carried out an investigation of this incident and will be sending a full report to the railway inspectorate.

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will institute a further inquiry into all aspects of safety on London Underground; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: A further survey of London Underground's safety management will be made by the railway inspectorate later this year, as announced by my right hon. Friend the then Secretary of State for Transport in his statement to the House on 24 May last (*Official Report*, Vol 153 columns *502-3*).

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received concerning the claimed hazards in one-person operation of the older deep level tube railways in London *(a)* prior to and *(b)* since Monday 5 March; and on what date he expects to announce any action he intends to take consequent thereto.

Mr. Portillo: I am able to trace only representations from the hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) about the one-person operation of older deep level tubes in the 12 months preceding 5 March 1990. Since then, I have received none specifically about this matter, though there has been an inquiry from the hon. Member for Lewisham, Deptford (Ms. Ruddock) about an incident which occurred on the Piccadilly Line at King's Cross on 12 March.

As to the last part of the question, I have written to the hon. Member about the exercise arranged at the railway inspectorate's initiative and a copy of my letter is reproduced in the *Official Report*:

21 March 1990

Dear Nigel

It is a coincidence that you put down your Question, about one-person-operation (OPO) of deep level tubes at a time when I was about to respond to your past correspondence on London Underground's emergency procedures in the event of an OPO train driver becoming ill, and the train disabled.

When I wrote to you in September, I mentioned that the Railway Inspectorate would be making further inquiries about certain aspects of these procedures. You were particularly concerned about the practice of "leapfrogging". The Inspectorate arranged for an exercise to be carried out in the early morning of Sunday 28th January on the Bakerloo Line between Oxford Circus and Piccadilly Circus. It involved four trains, none of which was in passenger service. The simulated emergency was deemed to have been caused by the incapacitation of the driver of the leading train. The simulation was done in such a way as to create the conditions likely to be met if the incident had occurred during the peak hour service.

Since you are already familiar with the procedures involved, I need not go into detail about the particular actions which took place. It is sufficient to say that the Chief Inspecting Officer tells me that he regards the arrangements as acceptably safe and that they constitute a suitable method to deal with the unlikely event of a train stopping within a single-bore tunnel due to the sudden disablement of its driver.

Yours sincerely,
Michael Portillo

Buses

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what controls exist over the *(a)* production and *(b)* use of open-platform public buses; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Atkins *[holding answer 20 March 1990]:* Open-platform buses may not be used on local services without a conductor. Apart from this, open-platform public service vehicles are subject to the regulations and certification procedures that apply to all large PSVs.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Sea Defences

114. **Mr. Ian Bruce:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how much money Dorset, South has received from his Department in recent years for the purposes of sea defence; and whether that money will increase as a result of the recent damage caused by storms.

Mr. Curry: Over the past five years, the Department has made payments totalling £3,230,127 in respect of grant to the authorities in Dorset, South for coastal defences. We have not yet received any representations about storm damage in this area but requests for grant aid for reconstruction of coastal defences will be handled in the normal way.

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy

Mr. Alan W. Williams: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food where the carcases of bovine spongiform encephalopathy affected slaughtered cattle are disposed of in the Carmarthen area; and by what means.

Mr. Maclean: The carcases are incinerated on farm.

ENVIRONMENT

Environmental Assessment

16. **Mrs. Mahon:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the minimum area of land that he considers to be viable for environmental assessment; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: The size of a project and the site it occupies are only two of the factors to be taken into account in judging whether a project requires environmental assessment.

Local Government Finance

15. **Mr. Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received from pensioners regarding the community charge.

Mr. David Hunt: I continue to receive representations on many issues concerning the community charge.

Sir Peter Emery: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will list the actual grant given by Government to each of the county councils for the year 1989-90 and the proposed grant available to them arising from the standard spending assessment for the year 1990-91.

Mr. David Hunt *[holding answer 15 March 1990]:* The information is as follows. Revenue support grant will not be paid to county councils in 1990-91.

	Revenue grants[1] *1989-90 £ million*
Avon	135·1
Bedfordshire	51·0
Berkshire	45·6
Buckinghamshire	45·5
Cambridgeshire	85·2
Cheshire	129·8
Cleveland	145·2
Cornwall	117·1
Cumbria	117·0
Derbyshire	185·8
Devon	211·7
Dorset	85·8
Durham	163·1
East Sussex	75·8
Essex	130·4
Gloucestershire	90·5
Hampshire	202·0
Hereford and Worcester	113·5
Hertfordshire	40·9
Humberside	219·0
Isle of Wight	25·8
Kent	296·1
Lancashire	400·2
Leicestershire	180·0
Lincolnshire	135·9
Norfolk	129·6
Northamptonshire	103·1
Northumberland	57·6
North Yorkshire	142·1
Nottinghamshire	199·5
Oxfordshire	24·3
Shropshire	95·7
Somerset	93·5
Staffordshire	206·3
Suffolk	99·4
Surrey	42·2
Warwickshire	61·0
West Sussex	75·8
Wiltshire	103·3

[1] Comprising block grant and specific and supplementary grants.

Sir Peter Emery: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the spending in 1989-90 and the budgeted spending for 1990-91 of each county council; and if he will list in arithmetical order the percentage increase of spending in 1990-91 over outturn spending figures for 1989-90 and indicating the political control of each council.

Mr. David Hunt *[holding answer 19 March 1990]:* The available information is as follows. I intend to place a summary of the information on 1990-91 budgets in the Library of the House when information has been received from all authorities.

	Net current expenditure 1989-90 £ million	*Political control*
Avon	485·5	No overall control
Bedfordshire	271·5	No overall control
Berkshire	339·3	Conservative
Buckinghamshire	314·8	Conservative
Cambridgeshire	310·7	No overall control
Cheshire	489·0	No overall control
Cleveland	344·1	Labour
Cornwall	218·2	No overall control
Cumbria	258·7	No overall control
Derbyshire	503·3	Labour
Devon	483·1	No overall control
Dorset	280·2	Conservative
Durham	313·5	Labour
East Sussex	297·7	Conservative
Essex	743·5	No overall control
Gloucestershire	251·5	No overall control
Hampshire	694·4	No overall control
Hereford & Worcester	305·4	Conservative
Hertfordshire	498·8	No overall control
Humberside	478·6	No overall control
Isle of Wight	57·4	SDLP
Kent	689·0	Conservative
Lancashire	738·8	No overall control
Leicestershire	460·4	No overall control
Lincolnshire	276·7	Conservative
Norfolk	335·4	Conservative
Northamptonshire	294·2	Conservative
Northumberland	145·5	No overall control
North Yorkshire	337·1	Conservative
Nottinghamshire	540·3	Labour
Oxfordshire	263·1	No overall control
Shropshire	201·1	No overall control
Somerset	232·3	No overall control
Staffordshire	493·3	Labour
Suffolk	280·0	Conservative
Surrey	438·7	Conservative
Warwickshire	241·8	No overall control
West Sussex	292·9	Conservative
Wiltshire	272·0	No overall control

Mr. Couchman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what measures have been taken to provide for different levels of standard community charge to be applied according to the different circumstances of properties or individuals.

Mr. David Hunt; The standard community charge applies where domestic property is not used as a sole or main residence. Charging authorities may levy the standard charge by applying one of a choice of five multipliers (either 0, $\frac{1}{2}$, 1, $1\frac{1}{2}$ or 2) to their personal community charge. However, different multipliers may be applied for certain prescribed or specified classes of property.

We have prescribed that no standard charge will be payable for the classes of property listed in table 1. We have also prescribed that for the classes of property listed in table two below the standard community charge multiplier may not exceed one. These provisions will ensure that in an important number of cases either total or partial relief is guaranteed. In particular, no charge is payable for up to three months on property which is unoccupied and unfurnished (for example because it is for sale): until three months after probate where a property is vacant because of the death of the owner; and for up to 12 months where a property is empty because the occupier has moved elsewhere either to care for another person or to be cared for by another person.

Charging authorities may also set different standard community charge multipliers for classes of property specified by reference to one or more of the factors listed in table three below. This for instance allows authorities the discretion to extend the periods of total relief applying to any class of property prescribed by the Secretary of State, and the discretion to take account of special

circumstances, for example where properties give rise to the standard charge because the owner is required to live elsewhere in tied accommodation as a condition of his or her employment. My Department has given advice to local authorities on the scope and exercise of the discretion.

I understand that many authorities have already made good use of these provisions. However, I am concerned that other authorities have not chosen to make reasonable use of the discretion available to them. We will be monitoring local authority practice closely in the first months of the next financial year and, if necessary, we will have to consider further prescription by the Secretary of State for 1991-92.

Table 1: Types of property for which the Government have specified a maximum standard charge of 0

Unoccupied and unfurnished property requiring structural repair work to render it habitable, including unoccupied property with respect to which less than 6 months have elapsed since the day on which the work was completed.

Newly built unoccupied and unfurnished property or property which is being structurally altered, including property in respect of which less than 6 months have elapsed since the day on which the works were complete.

Unoccupied and unfurnished property in respect of which less than 3 months have elapsed since the date it was last occupied.

Property which has been empty for less than 12 months because the owner is living in a hospital or residential care home.

Property which has become vacant on death and in respect of which either probate or letters of administration has been obtained or less than 3 months have elapsed since grant of probate or letters of administration.

Property whose occupation is prohibited by law.

Empty vicarages pending the arrival of the new incumbent.

Properties which have been empty for less than 12 months because the owner has gone to be cared for in someone's home or the carer has left their own home empty to care for someone else.

Table 2: Types of property for which the Government have prescribed a maximum multiplier of 1

Caravans (that is, mobile homes on protected sites).

Property which may not be occupied throughout the year because of local planning conditions imposed on it.

Table 3: Factors which charging authorities may take into account in specifying standard community charge classes

The use to which properties are put or intended to be put.

Whether properties are occupied.

The period for which properties have been unoccupied.

The circumstances, other than financial circumstances, of persons subject to standard charges.

The capacity in which persons are subject to standard charges.

Whether properties fall within a class prescribed by the Secretary of State.

The periods for which unoccupied properties have previously been occupied.

The periods for which properties would have been unoccupied if all or some periods of occupation were treated as periods during which the properties were unoccupied.

In the case of properties comprised in a deceased's estate, the period which has elapsed since a grant of probate or of letters of administration was made.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish a table listing councils in rank order on the basis of the difference between the standard spending assessments and actual planned expenditure, and giving the actual figures for both on a per capita basis and the percentage difference between the two.

Mr. Chope: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to my hon. Friend, the Member for Kingswood (Mr. Hayward) on Monday 19 March at column *478*.

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement about the classification of offshore workers' liability for community charge; and whether he has any information about local authorities using his guidance notes for seafarers to determine offshore workers' liability.

Mr. Chope: It is initially the responsibility of the community charges registration officer to decide whether a person is solely or mainly resident in his area, and therefore subject to a community charge. In determining this, a registration officer will need to consider factors such as the length of time the person is away from home, where most of his belongings are and, if appropriate, where his spouse lives and where his children attend school. In this respect offshore workers are no different from any other potential chargepayer. My Department's guidelines on the treatment of seafarers were not framed with offshore workers in mind, but there is nothing to stop any authorities applying them to this group if they thought it appropriate.

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on his criteria for assessing the spending obligations by statute and regulation of Suffolk county council in 1990-91; and how he expects these to change in 1991-92.

Mr. Chope: The standard spending assessment for Suffolk county council for 1990-91 has been calculated using the methodology set out in the Revenue Support Grant Distribution Report (England). We have not yet reached any views on spending for 1991-92.

Mr. Robert Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what are the amounts from the unified business rate which will accrue to *(a)* the Harrogate borough council, *(b)* York city council and *(c)* Scarborough borough council.

Mr. Chope: The amounts of redistributed business rates which will be paid to the three authorities are:

	£
(a) Harrogate borough council	31,309,939
(b) York city council	23,068,264
(c) Scarborough borough council	23,754,778

This money is paid in support of parish, district and county council services in an area and is £293 per adult.

Mr. Robert Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what are the amounts paid in the individual community charges to the North Yorkshire county council from: *(a)* Harrogate borough council, *(b)* York city council and *(c)* Scarborough borough council.

Mr. Chope: I intend to place a summary of the information returned from local authorities in the Library of the House after information has been received from all authorities.

Mr. Mills: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what proposals he has to assess the workings of the community charge system.

Mr. Chope: My Department has kept the development of the community charge system under close scrutiny through a series of monitoring exercises. These have kept us up to date on the progress made by charging authorities. We will continue to monitor the system as billing and collection of the community charge commences.

Mr. Summerson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what would be the percentage increase over 1989-90 in rates equivalent to the community charge in the London borough of Waltham Forest for the financial year 1990-91.

Mr. Chope: It is our intention when community charges are finally set to say what the increase would have been in domestic rates had that taken the place of the community charge.

Mr. Butterfill: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will calculate what the equivalent rate poundage for the Bournemouth and Poole borough councils would be under their proposed community charge rates of £320 and £325, respectively, under the old rating system; what proportion of the new charge relates to *(a)* county and *(b)* borough expenditure; and, in each case, what proportion of the increase is attributable to (i) reduction in Government grant support and (ii) increased expenditure by the county of borough authorities; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: It is our intention, when community charges are finally set, to say what the increase would have been in domestic rates had that taken the place of the community charge.

The remainder of the information requested is not available, as the community charge is not split between counties and districts. Local authorities providing services in an area precept or make a demand on the collection fund, administered in non-metropolitan areas by the district council. These precepts and demands, which cover the whole of each authority's requirement for revenue, are met in full from the collection fund. Revenue support grant, business rate income and community charge income raised locally are paid into the fund in order to defray these precepts and demands. With these simple arrangements there is no need to allocate revenue support grant, business rates or community charges between tiers of local government.

The comparison between the revenue which each authority is raising and the Government's assessment of the cost to it of providing a standard level of service will be clear from the community charge bill. Where there is higher spending than the standard, it will be clear to the chargepayer whether it is county or the district which is responsible for that extra spending.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make it his policy to collect information on those local authorities which will have to issue two poll tax bills in order to take into account rebates given to those who have applied for rebates after 15 February.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: I have been asked to reply.

No. The information required about local authorities' administration of community charge benefit was agreed with the local authority associations well in advance so that authorities would have sufficient time to prepare.

Mr. Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what will be the rebate of community charge applicable in the case of a wage earner receiving £60 per week with a community charge levied at £344.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: I have been asked to reply.

The community charge benefit payable on a charge of £344, for a single person earning £60 a week, with capital of less than £3,000, would be £2·53 per week.

92. **Mr. Nicholas Brown:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any plans to review the method of setting revenue support grant available for local authorities in 1991-92.

110. **Mr. Meale:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any plans to review the method of setting revenue support grant available for local authorities in 1991-92.

Mr. Chope: My officials have recently started discussions on the 1991-92 revenue support grant with officials of the local authority associations. The methodology for standard spending assessments will need to be adjusted to take account of local authority responsibilities for community care from April 1991. My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for the Environment, has said that he will consider any fresh evidence on SSAs before coming to his decisions for 1991-92.

112. **Mr. Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received on rate-capping Basildon.

Mr. Chope: The Department has received a number of representations calling for Basildon to be charge capped. I am also aware of the petition presented to the House by my hon. Friend on 1 March.

109. **Mr. Loyden:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received from local authorities about the setting of a poll tax rate.

Mr. Chope: The Secretary of State has received a number of representations from local authorities about the setting of community charges.

106. **Mr. Andrew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on levels of revenue support grant to Oxfordshire.

Mr. Chope: The levels of revenue support grant before the safety net adjustment to be distributed to receiving authorities in Oxfordshire in 1990-91 are as follows:

	£ million
Cherwell	11·538
Oxford	15·231
South Oxfordshire	12·062
Vale of White Horse	9·854
West Oxfordshire	8·912

These amounts of grant provide a reasonable level of support to local authorities in the Oxfordshire area.

100. **Mr. Wallace:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many representations he has received about the rebate system for the community charge.

Mr. Chope: I have received a number of such representations. In general, community charge rebates are more generous than the rate rebates they replace.

94. **Mr. Kirkwood:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many people in England are eligible to pay the full community charge.

Mr. Chope: This information is not available.

90. **Mr. Knapman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what will be the cost of collecting the community charge; and what would be the cost of collecting a tax on capital values adjusted according to income.

Mr. Chope: The estimate for the annual cost of collecting the community charge in England is approximately £400 million; it is estimated that collecting the local tax based on incomes might cost up to twice that amount.

87. **Mr. Tracey:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what amount of total external support from Government, in the form of revenue support grant, business rate income, special grants and safety net will be paid in 1990-91 to (i) Wandsworth, (ii) Lambeth and (iii) Tower Hamlets.

Mr. Chope: The amounts of external support, that is the sum of revenue support grant adjusted for the safety net, business rate income and special grant in 1990-91 are as follows.

	External support	
	£ million	*£ per adult*
(i) Wandsworth	213·5	1,034
(ii) Lambeth	234·2	1,358
(iii) Tower Hamlets	194·4	1,723

80. **Mr. Henderson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what are his best estimates of the average poll tax level for England in 1990-91.

80. **Mr. Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the average community charge level so far declared in England.

Mr. Skinner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what are his best estimates of the average poll tax level for England in 1990-91.

Mr. Chope: I refer the hon. Members to the answer my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State gave to the hon. Member for Sunderland, North (Mr. Clay) earlier today.

76. **Mr. Nellist:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what recent representations he has received against the introduction of the poll tax; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: I continue to receive representations expressing a wide range of views on the community charge.

61. **Mr. Alex Carlile:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received from war service pensioners regarding the community charge.

Mr. Chope: We continue to receive representations on all aspects of the community charge. I am not aware of any representations from this group in particular.

62. **Mr. Stott:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he intends to use different rules for different types of local authority for the purposes of poll tax capping.

65. **Mr. Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the rules he intends to use for poll tax capping.

105. **Mr. Cox:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he intends to use different rules for different types of local authority for the purposes of poll tax capping.

111. **Ms. Short:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the rules he intends to use for poll tax capping.

Mr. Chope: I cannot speculate on the details of any charge-capping scheme we might operate for 1990-91.

58. **Mr. Gow:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the way in which the community charge is being implemented in England.

Mr. Chope: The information available to the Department suggests that good progress has been made by local authorities in implementing the community charge. Initial registration was successfully completed in December and some authorities have already issued their first bills in advance of 1 April.

55. **Mr. Carrington:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many recent representations he has received in favour of introducing a system of capital value rates in place of the community charge.

83. **Mr. John Greenway:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what recent representations he has received to replace the community charge with a system of raising local government finance based on property values.

Mr. David Hunt: I am not aware of any representations in favour of capital value rates or roof tax, something which does not surprise me.

51. **Mr. Ray Powell:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many local authorities have been able to levy a poll tax below the Government's estimate for their area.

68. **Mr. Bidwell:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many local authorities have been able to levy a poll tax below the Government's estimate for their area.

103. **Mr. Bill Michie:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many local authorities have been able to levy a poll tax below the Government's estimate for their area.

50. **Mr. Sheerman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many local authorities have been able to set their spending at or below the Goverment's standard spending assesement for their area; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many local authorities have been able to set their spending at or below the Government's standard spending assessment for their area; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Boyes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many local authorities have been able to set their spending at or below the Government's standard spending assessment level for their area.

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the total number of councils which have levied a poll tax greater than the Government recommended level; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: I intend to place a summary of the information returned in the Library of the House when information has been received from all authorities.

44. **Mr. Hardy:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his estimate of the proportion of local government spending in 1989-90 and 1990-91 which will be devoted to meeting statutory requirements.

Mr. Chope: All local authority spending has to be in pursuance of statutory powers. Some spending is a consequence of duties, while some reflects the exercise of discretionary powers. Even where an authority is discharging a duty, there is often a considerable discretion as to the standard of service provided and the efficiency with which it is carried out. It is, therefore, not possible to estimate what proportion of spending will be devoted to meeting statutory requirements.

45. **Mr. Roger King:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what would have been the increase in domestic rates in the city of Birmingham for 1990-91 for a single householder presently paying £500 in rates, based upon a 1990-91 community charge figure of £406 per adult.

Mr. Chope: It is our intention, when community charges are finally set, to say what the increase would have been in domestic rates had they taken the place of the community charge.

35. **Mr. Nicholas Winterton:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the safety net charge paid by the community charge payers in the borough of Macclesfield; and what is the safety net receipt received by the community charge payers in the London borough of Wandsworth.

Mr. Chope: Adjustments to revenue support grant to give effect to the safety net are set out in the Revenue Support Grant Transition Report (England), made on 21 December 1989 and approved by the House on 18 January. The borough of Macclesfield's charge payers collectively contribute £5,951,306 to the safety net. The London borough of Wandsworth's charge payers collectively receive £24,030,650 from the safety net.

The safety net offsets changes in revenue from the domestic sector which are the result of changes in the system of local government finance from 1 April. The safety net limits increases to £25 an adult in real terms compared with 1989-90 rate bills per adult. This limit on increases for some areas is financed in 1990-91 only by other areas contributing about half of their gains. The contributions are for one year only as the safety net will be financed by extra grant from 1991-92.

31. **Mr. Jacques Arnold:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many representations he has received in favour of replacing the community charge with a tax on home improvement.

Mr. Chope: I have not yet received any representations in favour of the roof tax.

28. **Mr. Livsey:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what further consideration he has given to capping local authorities' community charges; and if he will make a statement.

39. **Mrs. Maureen Hicks:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment which local authorities he intends to community charge-cap.

Mr. Chope: I have nothing to add to what my hon. Friend the Minister for Local Government and Inner Cities said in response to my hon. Friend the Member for Bedfordshire, South-West (Mr. Madel) earlier.

29. **Mr. Pike:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received from Lancashire county council regarding its standard spending assessment.

Mr. Chope: The chief executive of Lancashire county council has written to the Department with details of a number of resolutions passed by the county council's finance sub-committee, one of which requests an increase in Lancashire's standard spending assessment for 1990-91.

26. **Mr. Batiste:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is *(a)* the revenue raised by all local authorities in England under the community charge in the year 1990-91 and *(b)* the revenue raised in rates in the year 1989-90.

Mr. David Hunt: I estimate that local authorities are planning to raise £12·5 billion next year from community charges, and £9·8 billion this year from domestic rates.

23. **Mr. Alton:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the average overall difference between domestic rate bills for 1988-89 and the community charge so far declared for 1990-91 by English local authorities.

Mr. David Hunt: The average domestic rate bill for 1988-89 was £468. The average community charge for 1991 is estimated to be £363. These figures are not comparable.

18. **Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he next plans to visit Nottingham to discuss local government finance.

Mr. David Hunt: I plan to visit Nottingham next Wednesday.

Chlorofluorocarbons

19. **Mr. Andrew Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what progress Britain is making towards implementing the Montreal protocol on chlorofluorocarbon reductions.

Mr. Trippier: By the end of 1989 the United Kingdom had cut its production and consumption of CFCs by over 50 per cent.—10 years ahead of current protocol requirements and five years ahead of even the strengthened provisions now being negotiated.

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects to receive the technical report he has commissioned concerning the problem of the existing stock of chlorofluorocarbons.

Mr. Forth: I have been asked to reply.

This report has been commissioned by the Department of Trade and Industry. It seeks to establish the prospects for recovery for recycling or destruction of chlorofluorocarbons and halons, and was received this week.

The study will include assessments of the current and future likely levels of stocks, use and emissions of those substances and of the prospects for alternative products and processes in the United Kingdom. I expect it to be published later this spring. The study complements a previous one for the Department on the impact of health and safety and environment regulatory controls on chlorinated solvents. This was published on 6 March and copies of it have been placed in the Library of the House.

Acid Water

20. **Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he last met representatives from the acid waters review group; and what was discussed.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: My right hon. Friend has not met the acid waters review group personally, but officials of the Department are in frequent contact with its members.

Nature Conservancy Council

21. **Mrs. Ray Michie:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what recent representations he has received regarding the Government's proposals to reorganise the Nature Conservancy Council.

Mr. Trippier: As I told the hon. Lady in my written answer of 24 January, my Department continues to receive representations from interested parties covering a range of views.

Housing Policy

22. **Mrs. Gorman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what recent representations he has received regarding his housing policies.

Mr. Michael Spicer: My right hon. Friend receives representations from time to time from hon. Members, interest groups and members of the public.

104. **Mr. Allen McKay:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what provision is made in the Government's planning for new houses to ensure that established environment policies are maintained.

Mr. Michael Spicer: A revised planning policy guidance note on housing was issued in draft last autumn: I will send the hon. Member a copy. This makes clear that while adequate provision must be made for new housing development, it should be done with full regard to the need to protect and improve the environment, in both town and country.

93. **Mr. Patchett:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what advice is given to planning authorities through the planning for new housing policy to ensure that green field sites are not used first.

Mr. Moynihan: Existing guidance and draft guidance contained in the proposed revision of the planning policy guidance note on housing emphasise that development plans, in making provision for new housing, should ensure that full and effective use is made of land within existing urban areas. This should not however be at the expense of the character of established residential areas; policies in plans must also take account of the need for urban open space for recreation and amenity.

Housing

24. **Mr. Hunter:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many acres currently designated as green field sites or for agricultural use are estimated as being needed for housing in the south and south-west of England over the next 10 years.

32. **Mr. Irvine:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many acres currently designated as green field sites or used for agriculture are estimated as needed for housing and industrial development in the south, south-east and south-west of England by the year 2000.

Mr. Michael Spicer: We estimate that in the south-east of England, excluding London, the proportion of land in urban use will increase from approximately 12·6 per cent. in 1981 to 13·7 per cent. by 2001. Comparable estimates of the rates of urbanisation in other areas are not available though the absolute figures will be much lower.

57. **Mr. Steinberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what provisions in the new city allocation scheme is made for low-cost houses; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: Capital allocations to local authorities do not distinguish between low-cost housing and other housing capital expenditure: it is for individual local authorities to determine their priorities. The Housing Corporation's programme of investment in low-cost housing for rent and sale is set out in tables 8.4 and 8.5 of the public expenditure White Paper (Cm. 1008).

Vacant Land

25. **Mr. Hind:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how much vacant land in public ownership is entered on the Land Register showing the acreage in each of the public sectors, statutory undertakings and nationalised industries.

71. **Mr. Michael Morris:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how much vacant and derelict land in public ownership is entered on the Land Register showing the acreage currently owned by central Government, local government, and nationalised industries.

Mr. Moynihan: The breakdown of unused and underused land on the register at 30 September 1989 is shown in the table:

'000 acres (rounded to 100 acres)

	Acres
Central Government	7·2
Local authorities	49·4
Nationalised industries	9·4
Statutory undertakers	6·9
Other	9·4
Total	82·4

97. **Mr. Barron:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he intends to increase the derelict land grant for the Yorkshire and Humberside region; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Hunt: The national derelict land grant resources available for 1990-91 amount to £71·512 million. Of this sum, £13·450 million has been allocated to the Yorkshire and Humberside region. This represents an increase of 12 per cent. on the region's allocation for 1989-90.

84. **Mr. Devlin:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how much derelict land in public ownership is entered on the Land Register for each of the last five years for which records exist.

Mr. David Hunt: The acreage of unused and underused land on the register is shown in the following table:

	'000 acres
1 January 1985	106·3
1 January 1986	104·7
1 January 1987	98·9
1 January 1988	91·2
1 January 1989	84·7
30 September 1989[1]	82·4

[1] Responsibility for maintaining full registers passed to individual owners at that date.

36. **Mr. Thorne:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has monitored the vacant, derelict and under-utilised land which was in public ownership and has now been transferred to the private sector as a result of his privatisation programme.

Mr. David Hunt: No. The efficient use of their assets is a matter for the companies concerned.

56. **Sir George Young:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many acres of vacant, derelict and under-utilised land which was in public ownership has now been transferred to the private sector as a result of his privatisation programme; and how much of it is still vacant and derelict.

77. **Mr. Shersby:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how much land in public ownership is currently on the Land Register; and how many acres have been removed in the last five years as a result of the privatisation of statutory undertakers.

Mr. David Hunt: Some 6,900 acres entered on the Department's register of unused and underused land have been transferred to the private sector. Information about its subsequent history is not kept, since the efficient use of their assets is a matter for the companies concerned.

Education

27. **Mr. Patrick Thompson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what proportion of local government spending in 1989-90 will go towards education.

Mr. Chope: A total of 46 per cent. of local authority net current expenditure in England in 1989-90 is budgeted to be spent on education.

46. **Mr. Illsley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what consideration he has given to the provisions of the Education Reform Act in reaching decisions on local government finance in 1990-91.

86. **Mr. Eastham:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what consideration he has given to the provisions of the Education Reform Act in drawing up his plans for local government finance for 1990-91.

96. **Mr. George Howarth:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what consideration he has given to the provisions of the Education Reform Act in drawing up his plans for local government finance for 1990-91; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Hunt: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State took all the new burdens falling to local authorities into account when setting the level of total standard spending for 1990-91. I believe that the increase of 11 per cent. to £32·8 billion over the equivalent figure for 1989-90 is reasonable.

North Sea

30. **Mr. Alan W. Williams:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will bring forward the dates by which he intends to end the dumping of sewage sludge, fly ash and industrial wastes in the North sea.

Mr. Trippier: No. We confirmed our intention to end the dumping of industrial waste by the end of 1992 and to end the dumping of sewage sludge by the end of 1998 at the third North sea conference in the Hague on 7 and 8 March. These wastes are not toxic and no harm has been proven in the marine environment. The setting of termination dates is in line with the precautionary approach adopted at the second North sea conference in 1987.

108. **Mr. Janman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the condition of the United Kingdom's rivers and their contribution to pollution of the North sea.

Mr. David Trippier: The United Kingdom's rivers are amongst the cleanest in Europe. Ninety five per cent. are classified as being of good or fair quality compared with 75 per cent. in the European Community as a whole.

The combined effect of all United Kingdom rivers flowing into the North sea is to contribute about 20 per cent. of riverborne contaminants. The remaining 80 per cent. comes from continental rivers, with the Rhine and Meuse alone contributing some 40 to 50 per cent.

The United Kingdom's north sea national action plan, published on 5 March, shows the progress that has already been made in further reducing the inputs of dangerous substances to rivers and coastal waters and hence the open sea. For instance, inputs of two of the most important contaminants, mercury and cadmium, have been reduced by 31 and 22 per cent. respectively since 1985.

81. **Mr. Squire:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the outcome of the recent North sea Environment Ministers' conference.

Mr. Chris Patten: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave on 12 March to my hon. Friend the Member for Wyre (Mr. Mans) on the outcome of The Hague conference on 7 and 8 March.

70. **Mr. Waller:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what response his proposals to protect North sea wildlife received at the recent conference of North sea Environment Ministers.

Mr. Trippier: The United Kingdom's initiative in raising wildlife as a topic for consideration by North sea Ministers was well received at last week's conference in the Hague. In addition to the United Kingdom's proposals in the package of measures agreed on research, survey and protection of marine wildlife the final declaration also reflects proposals from the Governments of the Netherlands and Sweden. The agreement on protection of small cetaceans (dolphins and porpoises) will be further developed by the Swedish Government in the context of the Bonn convention on the conservation of migratory species of wild animals.

42. **Mr. Wray:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what recent studies his Department has carried out regarding waste disposal in the North sea and its impact on marine life.

Mr. Trippier: Studies of effects of contaminants on marine species arising from any waste reaching the sea, via rivers, the atmosphere or dumping are a fundamental part of marine environment science programmes of the Department of the Environment, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland and other research agencies in the United Kingdom working on the North sea. An assessment of general effects on marine species, reflecting the results of research by the United Kingdom and other North sea states, is included in the quality status report prepared for the second North sea conference, a copy of which is in the Library.

Recent or continuing work sponsored by the Department of the Environment has included studies of seals and benthic (sea bed) communities, and the development of internationally standardised techniques for assessing the biological impact of contaminants.

40. **Mr. Mans:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what proportion of pollution entering the North sea comes from rivers; and what proportion of that pollution comes from British rivers and those on the continent, respectively.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: Pollution enters the North sea by way of rivers and direct discharges, atmospheric deposition, dumping at sea, and the operational discharges from ships and offshore platforms. Of these, reliable estimates can be made of all except atmospheric deposition, the effects of which are widely diffused over the entire sea area.

Rivers bringing heavy contaminant loads to relatively small areas of the sea, are the most important source of North sea pollution and our best estimate is that they contribute roughly 40 per cent, of the North sea contaminant load. Of that, 20 per cent. comes from British rivers and 80 per cent. from continental rivers.

33. **Mr. Norris:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps he has taken to protect wildlife in the North sea.

Mr. Trippier: The third North sea conference last week in the Hague adopted an agreement to protect dolphins and porpoises and a package of other measures on wildlife, including securing better protection for the major North sea wildlife sites.

Protection for marine wildlife was a United Kingdom proposal at the conference and we will build on these initiatives at future conferences.

Tourism

34. **Mr. Wigley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received on adapting planning guidelines to assist farmers diversifying into the tourist trade in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Rural diversification is one of the subjects covered in the revised planning policy guidance note on "The Countryside and the Rural Economy", issued in draft on 13 December. Nearly 400 responses have so far been received, some of which make specific reference to tourism. All the comments will be carefully considered.

Homelessness

37. **Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what are the latest figures for homeless households *(a)* in bed-and-breakfast accommodation and *(b)* in other temporary accommodation in England and Wales.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Latest estimates of households temporarily resident in bed and breakfast and other forms of temporary accommodation in England appear in tables 4*(a)*, *(b)* and *(c)* of "Local authorities' action under the homelessness provisions of the 1985 Housing Act: England. Results for the fourth quarter 1989. Supplementary Tables", which is in the Library.

For information about Wales I refer the hon. Member to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

95. **Mr. Roy Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what further proposals he has to combat homelessness.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave earlier today to the hon. Member for Vauxhall (Miss Hoey).

48. **Mr. Callaghan:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what estimate he has made of the cost of bed-and-breakfast or other emergency accommodation as a result of mortgage repossession.

Mr. Chope: Information is not held centrally in the form requested. For the latest estimate of the total cost to local authorities of keeping homeless families in bed and breakfast accommodation I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Minister for Housing and Planning, on 21 February 1990 to the hon. Member for Wigan (Mr. Stott) at column *746*.

Contractorisation

38. **Mr. Boswell:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he next intends to meet representatives of local authorities to discuss anti-competitive practices in the awarding of contracts for services.

Mr. David Hunt: I have no present plans for a meeting with local authorities on this subject, but I shall shortly be issuing guidance by way of a circular.

43. **Mr. David Porter:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many representations he has received about anti-competitive behaviour by councils; and what action he is taking to eliminate such behaviour.

Mr. David Hunt: The Department has received just over 200 representations alleging anti-competitive practices by

local authorities in respect of services put out to tender under the Local Government Act 1988 and about 40 arising from the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980.

Each case is investigated and appraised on its merits. My right hon. Friend has considerable powers of sanction under the legislation and has already issued a direction under the 1980 Act, requiring Wirral borough council to obtain his consent before assigning work to its own DSO when it has not submitted the lowest tender, and on 13 March of this year under the 1988 Act to Hillingdon borough council, prohibiting it from carrying out vehicle maintenance work through its own staff after 1 September of this year.

Home Improvement Grants

41. **Mr. Buckley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the amount of grants made by the Government for home improvements over the past 10 years.

Mr. Chope: During the financial years 1981-82 to 1988-89, the Government provided £2,898 million in Exchequer subsidy to local authorities in England towards their expenditure on home improvement grants. Information for years prior to 1981-82 is not available.

Association of District Councils

47. **Mr. Oppenheim:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he last met the Association of District Councils; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. Chope: My hon. Friend the Secretary of State met the Association of District Councils on 26 February. The Association of County Councils and the Association of Metropolitan Authorities were also present. They discussed environmental matters.

Town Planning

49. **Mr. Dykes:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the principal elements being considered for his Department's draft legislation on planning and development controls in urban areas of relatively high density.

Mr. Michael Spicer: In reply to a Question from my hon. Friend on 12 March, *Official Report*, column *104*, I indicated the options that I proposed should be included in a forthcoming consultation paper about the possible extension of planning control to the demolition of dwellinghouses. Some of these options would need legislation. As we have indicated, the Government intend to introduce legislation at an early opportunity on a number of planning topics, which would apply in urban areas and elsewhere.

54. **Mr. Rees:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what action he is taking to ensure high quality design in new and refurbished buildings so that they improve the appearance of the town or city; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I refer the right hon. Gentleman to the reply given by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State to my hon. Friend the Member for Gloucester (Mr. French) on 6 March 1990, *Official Report*, columns *557-58*.

Planners

52. **Mr. Steen:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many planners are employed by his Department; and at what cost.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The Department currently employs 65 staff in professional town planner posts at a total cost of £2,609,000 a year.

Sports Council

53. **Mr. John Carlisle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he last met the chairman of the Sports Council; and what matters were discussed.

101. **Mr. Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he next intends to meet the chairman of the Sports Council; and what matters he intends to discuss.

Mr. Moynihan: I will be meeting the chairman of the Sports Council later today and we will be discussing a range of current issues relating to sport and recreation.

107. **Mr. Jim Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what discussions he has held with the Sports Council and the Central Council for Physical Recreation about the new business rate and its impact upon sport.

Mr. Chope: My hon. Friend the Minister for Sport and officials of my Department have had a number of meetings with the Sports Council and the Central Council for Physical Recreation at which the impact of the business rate on non-profit-making sports clubs has been discussed.

Urban Development

59. **Miss Emma Nicholson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the average annual loss of agricultural land in the United Kingdom for urban development since 1979.

98. **Mr. Nicholas Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the average loss of agricultural land in both private and public sectors to housing development and other uses since 1979.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Information published by the Department shows that the average area of land in England recorded each year by the Ordance Survey as changing from agricultural to urban use in the period 1985 to 1988 was 5,760 hectares per annum. Further details are given in the Department's statistical bulletins, copies of which are in the Library.

Figures for earlier years are given in planning policy guidance note 7 "Rural Enterprise and Development", but are not directly comparable with the figures for 1985-88.

Environmental White Paper

60. **Mr. Adley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what issues he intends to cover in his forthcoming environmental White Paper.

Mr. Trippier: Our aim is to address a wide range of environmental issues, from global concerns about the atmosphere and climate change to topics that impinge on our local environment.

Rural Development Areas

63. **Mr. Barry Field:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many areas have now been designated rural development areas; and what is the size of the population covered by such areas.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The 27 designated rural development areas have a population of approximately 2·5 million.

Rivers

64. **Mr. Alison:** To put the Secretary of State for the Environment what proportion of United Kingdom rivers are of good or fair quality; and what are the comparable proportions in the rest of Europe.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: A review of river classification schemes across the European Community published in 1988 by the water research centre showed that 95 per cent. of river length in the United Kingdom was of good or fair quality compared with 75 per cent. in the European Community as a whole. The review also indicated that no other member state had a higher proportion of good or fair quality rivers than the United Kindom, although our position was equalled by the Netherlands.

Council Rents

66. **Ms. Primarolo:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any plans to allocate further subsidy to local authorities to prevent local authorities from increasing rents to meet their housing benefit responsibilities.

Mr. Chope: No. No local authority has to increase rents to meet housing benefit responsibilities.

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has developed any proposals to bring local authority rent increases into line with his Department's latest rent guidelines.

Mr. Michael Spicer: It is for local authorities to determine the rents they set for council housing. Rent increases can stay within the housing revenue account subsidy guidelines if authorities so wish.

Private Sector Tenants

67. **Mr. John Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if it is his intention to extend the principle of tenants' choice to tenants in the private sector; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: No. Many public sector landlords own a very high proportion of the total rented dwelling stock in their area. That is not true of private landlords.

River Pollution

69. **Mr. Hague:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what progress is being made by the National Rivers Authority in controlling river pollution and taking action against polluters.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: Since it fully assumed its responsibilities on 1 September 1989, the National Rivers Authority has been actively carrying out its functions in relation to pollution control, and has successfully prosecuted a number of offenders. The authority has also embarked on a number of reviews of policy areas, including the discharge consent system, and it will carry out a national survey of water quality in 1990.

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

72. **Mr. Rowe:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on his future policy for the protection of areas of outstanding natural beauty.

Mr. Trippier: The draft policy planning guidance note on the countryside and the rural economy issued for public comment on 13 December 1989 is a clear and authoritive statement of the Government's planning policies for the continued protection of areas of outstanding natural beauty and the wider countryside.

City Action Teams

73. **Mr. Sumberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many city action teams and inner city task forces are now operating in the north-west of England.

Mr. David Hunt: City action teams have been set up in Liverpool, covering Liverpool and Birkenhead, and Manchester, covering the Manchester and Salford areas. Task forces are operating in Moss Side and Hulme, Manchester, and Granby and Toxteth, Liverpool. My hon. Friend the Minister for Industry announced on 28 February that a new task force will be established in Wirral and that the existing Rochdale task force will close later this year.

South Downs National Park

74. **Mr. Rathbone:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what submissions he has received for or against the creation of a South Downs national park.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: So far this year, my right hon. Friend has received one letter from a member of the public for, and two letters from hon. Members covering correspondence against the creation of a South Downs national park.

Councillors' Allowances

75. **Mr. David Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects to be in a position to announce the introduction of a new system of councillors' allowances.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave on 23 February 1990 to the hon. Member for Normanton (Mr. O'Brien) at column *24*. I expect to announce details of the new system soon.

Integrated Pollution Control

78. **Dr. Goodson-Wickes:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the introduction of integrated pollution control in Britain.

Mr. Trippier: The Government's proposals for integrated pollution control (IPC) are contained in part I

of the Environmental Protection Bill. IPC will provide an innovatory framework for controlling emissions to air water and land at one and the same time from the most potentially polluting processes. It marks a major breakthrough in the control of pollution and an environmental first in Europe.

Depending on the enactment of the Bill, IPC will become operational by the end of the year. All new processes will thenceforth come under IPC. There will be a phased programme for bringing existing processes with the system. Our aim is for this programme to be completed within five years.

Acid Deposition

79. **Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps his Department is taking to reduce acid deposition by the year 2000.

Mr. Trippier: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave to the hon. Member for Gordon (Mr. Bruce) on 19 February at column *481*.

Mr. Gould: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will list current United Kingdom publicly funded research programmes into the impacts of acid rain deposition on sensitive British ecosystems, stating funding levels and research bodies;

(2) If he will make a statement on progress on the current publicly funded research concerning the impact of acid deposition on sensitive British ecosystems and its findings;

(3) what is the current United Kingdom publicly funded research programme on critical loads and acid rain; and what are the findings.

Mr. Chris Patten: In the current financial year, United Kingdom publicly funded research on acid deposition and critical loads can be summarised as follows:

Funding body	*1989-90 £k*
Department of the Environment	1,490·0
Meteorological Office	37·0
Nature Conservancy Council	94·0
Natural Environment Research Council	160·0
Agriculture and Food Research Council	48·0
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food	186·0
Total 1989-90	2,050·0

The United Kingdom plays a prominent international role in the development of the critical loads approach to pollution control. This very substantial programme of research informs that role, and is also part of our overall policy of basing action on the best scientific information that can be obtained.

The Department has established several review groups of scientific experts to examine and assess research and to recommend priorities in the field of acid rain deposition and critical loads. The United Kindom terrestrial effects and acid waters review groups, and the review group on acid rain have all produced reports, copies of which have been placed in the Library of the House. The critical loads advisory group and the terrestrial effects sub-group on trees are expected to report by the end of this year.

Countryside Commission

82. **Mr. Anthony Coombs:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what has been the increase in funding for the Countryside Commission since 1979.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: Subject to the approval of Parliament, we propose to increase the Countryside Commission's grant-in-aid to £25·136 million in 1990-91. This represents an increase in real terms of 112 per cent. over the allocation in 1979-80.

Council Properties, Kirklees

85. **Mr. Riddick:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many council houses currently stand empty within Kirklees council's boundaries; and what is the current level of council house rent arrears.

Mr. Chope: The latest available information on empty council dwellings was provided by Kirklees metropolitan borough council in its April 1989 housing investment programme return (HIP1), a copy of which is in the Library.

The arrears of rent reported by Kirklees on its housing subsidy claim form at the end of March 1989 were £1·7 million.

Environmental Pricing

88. **Mr. Ian Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what progress is being made by his Department in examining the feasibility of implementing recommendations contained in the Pearce report on environmental pricing.

Mr. Trippier: The current review of environmental policy, which will lead to the publication of a White Paper later this year, is considering these among other proposals.

Uniform Business Rate

91. **Mr. Geraint Howells:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received regarding the uniform business rate; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 5 February 1990 to the hon. Member for Leicester, East (Mr. Vaz) at column *446*.

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how much the London borough of Wandsworth will gain from the uniform business rate in 1990-91 as against its current revenue from business and commercial rates.

Mr. Chope: Under the new system of local government finance, non-domestic rate receipts will be distributed as an equal amount per community charge payer and will go to reducing charges. Because of the associated change to the new revenue support grant system and because of major changes in local authority function in inner London, comparisons of levels of business rate income between 1989-90 and 1990-91, or of grant support, do not imply a corresponding effect on community charges. External financial support to authorities (before the safety net and special grants) is

distributed between authorities so as to enable a charge of broadly £278 to be set in each area if the authorities provide a standard level of service.

St. Ives Bay

99. **Mr. Harris:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what are the implications for South West water services proposed long sea outfall into St. Ives bay of his policy announcement accepting the case that sewage discharged into the sea should first be treated.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: As the applications by South West Water Services for discharge consents related to the Penzance-St. Ives sewerage scheme are currently before the Secretary of State for determination, I am unable to comment on the proposals.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest

102. **Mr. Archer:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many applications for planning consents in request of sites of special scientific interest have been granted *(a)* by planning authorities and *(b)* on appeal by the Secretary of State in the last period of 12 months for which figures are available.

Mr. Trippier: Neither the NCC nor the Department keeps a central record of the information requested and it could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mortgage Repossessions

113. **Mr. Battle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what are the latest figures for mortgage repossessions in England and Wales *(a)* by building societies and *(b)* by banks and other financial institutions.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The information available to the Department is for mortgage repossessions by United Kingdom building societies in 1989 (13,780) and by English local authorities in 1989-90 (170).

Clay Pigeon Shoots

Mr. Colvin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he will publish the final draft of the code of practice on noise from clay pigeon shoots 1989; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: My Department is in the process of considering responses from a wide range of interested bodies, to a consultation exercise on the Clay Pigeon Shooting Association's draft code of practice on noise from clay pigeon shooting held last year, with a view to meeting the association again in due course to discuss the comments received. No date for the publication of a code of practice has been finalised.

Sulphur Dioxide Emissions

Mr. Gould: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what current proposals there are to achieve compliance with its European Community commitment to reduce sulphur dioxide emissions by 60 per cent. of their 1980 value by 1993.

Mr. Chris Patten: I refer the hon. Member to the reply which my hon. Friend the Minister for the Environment and Countryside gave to the hon. Member for Gordon (Mr. Bruce) on 19 February at column *481*.

Mr. Gould: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his estimate of the contribution to be made from *(a)* the import of low-sulphur coal, *(b)* the import of French-generated electricity and *(c)* an increase in domestic nuclear electricity generation towards achieving the target reduction in sulphur dioxide from 1980 levels by 1993.

Mr. Chris Patten: A formal plan for reducing SO_2 and NOx emissions from existing large combustion plants will be issued later this year.

Greenhouse Effect

Mr. Gould: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what research has been carried out by the building research establishment into energy use in buildings and the greenhouse effect.

Mr. Chris Patten: The building research establishment will shortly be publishing a study, commissioned by my Department, entitled "Energy Use in Buildings and Carbon Dioxide Emissions".

Climate Change

Mr. Gould: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps have been taken so far to adhere to the Noordwijk conference declaration to stabilise United Kingdom carbon dioxide emissions by the year 2000.

Mr. Chris Patten: That declaration required the basis for stabilisation to be considered in the light of the IPCC report and the second world climate conference later this year. In the meantime, the Government has continued to finance the work of the scientific working group of the IPCC; offered to host an international technical workshop to explore the practical issues which would arise in making binding agreements on green house gas emissions; and is considering proposals for action both domestically and through the European Community, as appropriate.

Waltham Forest (Debt)

Mr. Summerson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment by how much the debt of the London borough of Waltham Forest has increased since 1986; what is the interest payable on this increase; and how much of the borough's community charge is represented by this interest.

Mr. Chope: Figures published by CIPFA show that outstanding debt increased from £200 million in March 1986 to £247 million in March 1989. The March 1989 figure includes debt inherited from the Greater London council.

No information is available on the interest payable on the increase, or on the effect on the community charge.

Cycling (Royal Parks)

Mr. Summerson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many cyclists have been arrested in London's royal parks over the last five years for cycling-related offences.

Mr. Trippier: There is no power of arrest for cycling offences under the royal parks regulations. During the

three years 1987-89, four cyclists were arrested for failing to give their name and address, one for being drunk in charge of a cycle and one for assault on the police. Figures for arrests in 1985 and 1986 are not available.

Liverpool (Funding)

Mr. Hind: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how much funding has been provided by the Government for derelict land reclamation in Liverpool in each of the last three years.

Mr. Moynihan: The information requested is as follows:

£ million

Grant programme	*Actual 1987-88*	*Actual 1988-89*	*Forecast 1989-90*
Derelict land grant	3·010	1·061	0·552
Urban programme[1]	n/a	0·072	n/a
Merseyside Development Corporation[1]	3·560	1·650	3·000
Urban regeneration grant/city grant[1,2]	nil	0·960	0·835

[1] Includes expenditure on unused or waste land as well as derelict land.
[2] Information does not relate solely to the costs of reclamation since grant is based on the total project costs including those of reclamation.

Mr. Hind: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how much funding has been provided by the Government through the Housing Corporation and local authorities to housing associations in Liverpool in each of the last three years.

Mr. Chope: Over the three-year period 1986-87 to 1988-89 the value of new housing association schemes approved by the Housing Corporation in Liverpool was as follows:

Approvals	*Amount £*
1986-87	26,015,011
1987-88	27,580,399
1988-89	25,203,412

(Note: Figures for 1986-87 exclude miscellaneous works. All figures represent the estimated cost to the public sector and take no account of private capital invested).

Similar figures for 1989-90 are not yet available.

Comparable figures for schemes supported by Liverpool city council are not available but during the same period the council reported the following gross capital lending to housing associations:

Year	*Loans £*
1986-87	2,461,000
1987-88	2,125,000
1988-89	811,000

Figures for city council lending in 1989-90 are not yet available.

Tyre Disposals Ltd

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make it his policy to request the health and safety executive to conduct a safety and environmental audit of the site operated by Tyre Disposals Ltd. on Humberside.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: No. I understand that the relevant waste disposal authority, Humberside county council, has considered the environmental aspects of this company's operations and is pursuing appropriate courses of action under the Control of Pollution Act. HMIP is aware of the situation and is in touch with the waste disposal authority. I also understand that the HSE has not been involved at this site. From the information available, it is unclear whether the HSE or the local district council will be the relevant enforcing authority for the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act.

Motor Tyres

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what proposals he has to encourage the environmentally friendly recycling of redundant motor vehicle tyres.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: My hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Industry and Consumer Affairs is expecting to receive very shortly a final report by KPMG Peat Marwick identifying ways of reducing the volume of scrapped vehicle tyres and increasing resource recovery. When he receives the report he will set up a working party, in conjunction with my Department, with industry, local authority and voluntary group representation, to draw up an action plan.

Bathing Beaches (Yorkshire and Humberside)

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will list the designated bathing beaches in Yorkshire and Humberside;

(2) if he will list the designated bathing beaches in Yorkshire and Humberside that breached the European Community mandatory standards for sewage bacteria on at least one sample for the years *(a)* 1987, *(b)* 1988 and *(c)* 1989;

(3) if he willl list the designated bathing beaches in Yorkshire and Humberside that have failed the European Community guidelines for sewage bacteria on at least one sample for the years *(a)* 1987, *(b)* 1988 and *(c)* 1989;

(4) if he will list, by year since 1987, for the designated bathing beaches of Yorkshire and Humberside *(a)* the dates, *(b)* the locations and *(c)* the results of routine sampling carried out; and if he will show in his answer where the results obtained breached (i) European Community guidelines and (ii) European Community mandatory standards.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The information required for the identified bathing waters of Yorkshire and Humberside is to be found in the reports of the bathing waters surveys for the appropriate years which have been placed in the Library, *Official Report*, 5 May 1988, column *571*; 21 February 1989, column *572*; 25 January 1990, column *785*.

National Rivers Authority

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received about the effectiveness of the new National Rivers Authority; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: My right hon. Friend receives many letters raising matters, such as water pollution,

which are now within the responsibility of the National Rivers Authority. I am delighted that the National Rivers Authority has already been able to demonstrate clearly its commitment to effective regulation of water quality. A number of offenders have been successfully prosecuted, and many more have received formal warnings; the authority has embarked on a number of reviews of key policy areas, and is actively developing its priorities for future action.

Palace of Westminster

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what investigations have been made into the location and potential dangers to hon. Members, staff and visitors of asbestos in the Palace of Westminster.

Mr. Chope: The parliamentary works office maintains a register of the locations of all known asbestos in the Palace of Westminster and outbuildings. These are inspected annually to check for signs of deterioration. The register has been built up through routine building maintenance inspections of the entire parliamentary estate and tests carried out when work is done which is likely to uncover previously hidden asbestos. All potentially dangerous asbestos is removed.

Mr. Colvin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any proposals to undertake maintenance work to the great clock this year.

Mr. Chope: Following one of the regular inspections of the clock it has been decided to replace part of the mechanism which is showing signs of fatigue. This will necessitate stopping the hour strike for up to 12 weeks and all chiming and striking for two days whilst the mechanism is disconnected and when it is reconnected. The work will start on Monday 26 March.

Dangerous Substances

Mr. Day: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps the Government are taking to control the emissions of dangerous substances into rivers and the sea.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: Discharges of dangerous substances to rivers and seas are already effectively controlled by the National Rivers Authority through discharge consents based on its duty to maintain statutory quality objectives and other published environmental quality standards.

The Environmental Protection Bill extends the controls on discharges of dangerous substances from the most polluting industries. Under the new arrangements Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution will authorise discharges to all environmental media, based on the use of best available technology not entailing excessive costs, providing that these also meet the requirements of the National Rivers Authority on environmental quality objectives.

Crown Suppliers

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps have been taken to ensure that no staff or former staff of companies bidding for the Crown Suppliers are engaged as consultants.

Mr. Chope *[holding answer 19 March 1990]:* When employing consultants, care is always taken to avoid potential conflicts of interest. It would not be acceptable to use, as a consultant on a matter relating to the Crown Suppliers, either a company which was bidding for the Crown Suppliers or an individual who was known to have a continuing relationship with a bidder.

Household Statistics

Mr. Gregory: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many households there were nationally, in the Yorkshire and Humberside region and in the county of North Yorkshire for 1979, 1983, 1987 and the most recent year; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope *[holding answer 20 March 1990]:* The estimated numbers of households are as follows:

Thousands

	1979	*1983*	*1987*	*1988*
England	17,071	17,579	18,363	18,536
Yorkshire and Humberside region	1,808	1,849	1,906	1,924
North Yorkshire	249	258	273	278

Hazardous Waste

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the volume and sources of hazardous waste imported into the United Kingdom under the terms of the Transfrontier Shipment of Hazardous Waste Regulations 1988 during the last convenient 12-month period.

Mr. Trippier *[holding answer 20 March 1990]:* Imports of waste into England and Wales during 1989 under the Transfrontier Shipment of Hazardous Waste Regulations 1988 were as follows:

	tonnes
Austria	166
Australia	280
Belgium	9,225
Brazil	46
Canada	1,011
Channel Islands	30
Denmark	104
Finland	12
West Germany	611
Greece	5
Ireland	1,358
Italy	1,505
Luxembourg	17
Netherlands	14,799
Norway	533
Philippines	29
Portugal	73
Singapore	5
Spain	64
Sweden	1,541
Switzerland	5,086
Uruguay	3
United States of America	4,237
TOTAL	40,748

Genetically Engineered Organisms

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the possible ethical implications of regulating genetically engineered organisms.

Mr. Trippier *[holding answer 20 March 1990]:* I am considering the ethical implications of such regulation with colleagues and will make a statement in due course.

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 22 March 1990

NATIONAL FINANCE

Cocaine

103. **Mr. David Porter:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what percentage of seizures of cocaine, in the most recent years for which figures are available, was of cocaine entering the United Kingdom from member states of the European Community.

Mr. Ryder: The information is as follows:

Year	*Percentage of United Kingdom routed via EC*	*Weight of United Kingdom seizures routed via EC kg*
1987	23·8	86
1988	36·4	101
[1]1989	62·8	266

[1] All 1989 figures are provisional.

Personal Sector Debt

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will state the amounts by which those in the personal sector were in debt in *(a)* 1979 and *(b)* 1989; and what proportion in the sector were not in debt at all in both years.

Mr. Ryder: The financial liabilities of the personal sector amounted to £70·9 billion in 1979 and £364·9 billion in 1989. These figures may be found in table 14·5 of "Financial Statistics" or on the CSO database which is accessible through the Library. No information is available on the proportion of those in the sector who were not in debt at all.

European Community Budget Contributions

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the net budget contribution of *(a)* the United Kingdom, *(b)* France and *(c)* West Germany to the EEC for 1989; what is his estimate for 1990, 1991 and 1992 both in absolute terms and per capita; and what are his proposals for reducing the British contribution.

Mr. Ryder: The latest published estimate of the United Kingdom's net contribution to the Community budget in 1989, which appeared in the statement on the 1989 Community budget (Cm. 680), is £1,966 million. This figure is the equivalent of £34.43 per capita, on the basis of the estimated United Kingdom population of 57·1 million in 1988 which is contained in the 1990 edition of "Social Trends". A revised estimate of the United Kingdom's net contribution in 1989, and an estimate of the United Kingdom's net contribution in 1990, will be published shortly in the statement on the 1990 Community budget. It is not the Government's practice to publish calendar year forecasts for future years; but the recent public expenditure White Paper (Cm. 1018) provides estimates for the financial years up to and including 1992-93.

Comparable figures for other member states' net contributions are not available.

The United Kingdom's contribution to the Community budget is being significantly reduced by the Fontainebleau abatement mechanism. This will have produced a cumulative benefit of some £7·5 billion by the end of 1990.

International Monetary Fund Quotas

Mr. Riddick: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the negotiations on the ninth review of the International Monetary Fund quotas.

Mr. Ryder: Discussions are continuing in the International Monetary Fund board, and we very much hope that they can be concluded swiftly. One difficulty which had emerged was how to accommodate the special quota increase that Japan is seeking. The United Kingdom has helped to provide a solution by offering to give up some of its quota share: this enables Japan to move up to second rank in the fund without reducing the quota share of developing countries. Our offer has been widely welcomed. The rankings of the other major countries will be determined in the usual way, according to the quota formulas agreed by the whole International Monetary Fund membership. Taking account of the offer we have made, these formulas would reduce the United Kingdom's quota share from 6·9 per cent. to 6·0 per cent. and would move the United Kingdom to fourth position in the rankings; we are perfectly ready to accept that result. I hope that the remaining issues, on the overall size of the quota increase and on the problem of arrears on past International Monetary Fund lending, can be resolved soon.

European Currency Unit

Mr. Riddick: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the Government's European currency unit Treasury bill programme.

Mr. Ryder: The programme has now reached a total outstanding of 3 billion ecu and we have been able to issue bills at one, three and six-month maturities on very fine terms. In view of this success and the unsatisfied demand which still exists, particularly at longer maturities, we shall be issuing an additional 100 million ecu of six-month bills each month from the April tender. This means an increase in the programme to a total of 3·6 billion ecu of bills outstanding by September—helping to develop the private ecu market in London and demonstrating the practical contribution the United Kingdom is making to greater economic and monetary integration in Europe.

Tax Debts

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many petitions have been presented by Her Majesty's Inland Revenue against *(a)* limited companies and *(b)* individuals to secure the repayment of tax debts in each of the last three years.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 20 March 1990]:* The number of winding-up and bankruptcy petitions filed in England, Wales and Northern Ireland in each of the last three years is:

	Company winding up petitions	*Bankruptcy petitions*
1987	308	1,415
1988	277	2,435
1989	317	2,707

The precise equivalent figures for Scotland cannot be ascertained without disproportionate cost, but do not exceed 20 companies and 70 individuals for any of those years.

Civil Service Pensions

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the value at current prices of the average pension received by civil servants on their retirement in *(a)* 1979 and *(b)* 1969.

Mr. Ryder *[holding answer 20 March 1990]:* I regret that directly comparable figures are not available. But, on the basis of information to hand, the value at current prices of the average pension received by civil servants who retired in 1979 is £2,614; for those who retired in 1969 it is £2,213. These figures include increases paid under the provisions of the Pensions (Increase) Act 1971 (as amended).

Inland Revenue Staff

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people staff the Inland Revenue survey of personal incomes.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 20 March 1990]:* The full-time equivalent of some 25 people, including about 10 in tax offices.

TRANSPORT

Tyre Treads

Mr. Mills: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the consultation process on the European Economic Community proposals for a change in tyre tread depth regulations.

Mr. Atkins: The Department's consultation on draft regulations to introduce the mandatory tread depth requirements in Community directive 89/459/EEC from 1 January 1992 has been completed. A statutory instrument amending the Construction and Use Regulations will be laid before the House shortly.

Advertising Expenditure

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what was the total publicity and advertising expenditure, including for privatisation, of his Department and public bodies for which his Department has responsibility in *(a)* 1979 and *(b)* 1989.

Mr. Atkins: The total publicity and advertising expenditure, including for privatisation, of my Department and the non-departmental public bodies for which my Department is responsible, in the financial years 1979-80 and 1989-90 is as follows:

Year	*Amount £*
1979–80	5,840,000
1989–90	6,434,000

The expenditure by my Department is recorded in financial years, not calendar years.

Headington Roundabout

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received on his Department's interim proposals for the Green road roundabout, Headington, Oxford.

Mr. Atkins: My Department has received representations from Oxfordshire county council which are now being considered. These concern the consideration of the possible need for a footbridge.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport according to what criteria his Department's proposals for a bus lane from Green road roundabout, Headington, Oxford, extending as far as Collinwood road, were decided.

Mr. Atkins: The westbound carriageway of the A40 between the Headington roundabout and Collinwood road is subject to serious traffic delays. Provision of a bus lane would enable buses to overtake queueing traffic.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will consider establishing a bus lane from Green road roundabout, Headington, Oxford, to Thornhill park and ride car park.

Mr. Atkins: We have no present plans to extend the bus lane beyond Collinwood road. The indications are that the cost would outweigh any benefits.

Heavy Vehicles

Mr. Brandon-Bravo: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the Government's policy on emissions from heavy diesel engined vehicles; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Atkins: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment is today urging the European Commission at the Environment Council to make proposals to introduce tighter controls on gaseous emissions from heavy diesels and to set limits for the first time for particulate emissions from these vehicles. The Government regard these proposals as long overdue.

Diesel emissions, in the form of oxides of nitrogen and particulates, are a significant cause of pollution and loss of amenity. Oxides of nitrogen (NOx) can damage plants and crops, as well as affect human health. Diesel particulates cause soiled buildings and discomfort to pedestrians and other road users.

The Government believe that the Community's long-term aim should be to set a mid-1990s diesel standard based as closely as possible on the US 1994 standard, both in limit values and test procedure. This is the strictest of all the diesel emission standards being considered worldwide.

In particular, it would afford substantial reductions in the amount of NOx and particulates that new vehicles may emit. I strongly support early action towards setting these tougher standards.

ENERGY

Electricity

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is his estimate of the weighted average increase in domestic electricity prices in the 12 electricity board areas of England and Wales in the year commencing 1 April 1990.

Mr. Baldry: Electricity prices are a matter for the industry, but I understand that the weighted average increase in domestic tariffs in England and Wales for 1990-91 is 9·2 per cent.

Privatisation

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy how much was paid in fees to the organisations listed in his answer of 13 March, *Official Report*, columns *141-44*.

Mr. Wakeham: It is not the practice of Her Majesty's Government to publish the sums paid to individual advisers or contractors in a privatisation.

France (Nuclear Safety)

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make it his policy to obtain from the French nuclear safety authorities the report, "Nuclear Safety at Elecricité de France (EDF)," at the end of 1989, by the chief inspector for nuclear safety at EDF; and if he will seek an early meeting with the head of nuclear safety in France and his French counterpart to discuss nuclear safety.

Mr. Baldry: Both my Department and the Health and Safety Executive's nuclear installations inspectorate have copies of the report. There are continuing and regular contacts between my officials and the inspectorate's and their French counterparts to discuss matters of mutual interest.

Alternative Energy

Mr. Speller: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if his Department has considered an application for an exhibition relating to alternative energy to be displayed in the Upper Waiting Hall.

Mr. Peter Morrison: I understand that, under procedures agreed by the Services Committee, arrangements have been made with the authorities of the House for the exhibition to be held in the Upper Waiting Hall from 4 to 8 June.

Electricity Privatisation

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what estimate he has made of the likely impact of privatisation on electricity prices; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wakeham *[pursuant to his reply, 18 December 1989, c. 1-3]:* As previously announced, the average increase in electricity prices for all customers will be less than 6 per cent. this year. The Government have now agreed the controls on future price increases that will apply to the area electricity supply companies.

For customers taking less than 1 MW, the final price will increase by an average of some 9 per cent. this year. The price controls agreed should prevent any further real increase to these customers until April 1993.

Customers taking more than 1 MW are able to seek competing bids for supply. To allow time for these customers to negotiate contracts, the electricity industry has agreed to offer them a price freeze in real terms for one year. However, many of these customers will experience real reductions in price this year.

These controls apply to the final price paid by customers. But in future the price will be made up of a number of different elements: the price for generating electricity in power stations; the charge for transmitting it across the national grid; the price for distributing it over the area electricity companies' local networks; the area supply company's margin; and the fossil fuel levy. The area supply companies have a monopoly on distribution and the National Grid Company has a monopoly on transmission. Their charges therefore need to be separately regulated within the overall controls on final prices to customers. Transmission and distribution respectively make up about 10 per cent. and 20 per cent. of the final price to customers.

The price control applying to the National Grid Company will prevent its prices from rising by faster than the RPI. Increases in charges for transmission will therefore be held at or below the rate of inflation.

The price control applying to the 12 area supply companies will prevent the charges for distribution from rising by more than RPI + X, where X ranges between the different companies from 0 to 2·5, with a weighted average of 1·1, as follows:

	RPI
Eastern Electricity	+0·25
East Midlands Electricity	+1·25
LEB	+0
MANWEB	+2·50
MEB	+1·15
Northern Electric	+1·55
NORWEB	+1·40
Southern Electric	+0·65
SEEB	+0·75
South Wales Electricity	+2·50
SWEB	+2·25
Yorkshire Electricity	+1·30

Within the overall cap on final prices, charges for distribution may therefore rise on average by just 1·1 percentage point faster than inflation. This will allow investment of some £5 billion to be made in the capital-intensive distribution network to ensure the high standards of security are maintained. The area supply companies' price control will also prevent their supply margins from rising faster than inflation.

Altogether, this package will protect the smaller customer from real price increases, and enable larger customers to benefit from competition. Within the overall price controls, the area supply companies and National Grid Company will be able to charge a price that enables them to finance the investment required.

PRIME MINISTER

Fishing

Q63. **Dr. Godman:** To ask the Prime Minister what recent representations she has received concerning the present economic circumstances of the catching section of the fishing industry; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: The Government are well aware of the current difficulties facing the fishing industry, but between 1983 and 1988 the value of landings increased by over 40 per cent. There is an urgent need to work for effective conservation of fish on a Communitywide basis and to adopt improved quota management measures which will bring fishing capacity more closely into line with available opportunities.

South Africa

Q133. **Mr. Hunter:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will make a further statement on her policy towards South African political organisations which continue to advocate the use of violence.

The Prime Minister: We are stongly opposed to the use of violence for political ends in South Africa as elsewhere. We have repeatedly urged South African political organisations to enter negotiations in the context of a suspension of violence on all sides.

European Council

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Prime Minister if she will urge at the next meeting of the European Council clarification of the extent to which the single market arrangements are proceeding; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: Arrangements for the completion of the single European market are proceeding very well. Almost 60 per cent. of the legislation programme is now complete, including a number of important and contentious issues such as the liberalisation of capital movements, the mutual recognition of professional qualifications, and the mergers regulation.

The Irish presidency is maintaining the political momentum, and reached agreement at the Internal Market Council on 22 February to extend public purchasing rules to the energy, telecommunications, water and transport sectors.

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Prime Minister if she will invite the next meeting of the European Council to review the structure of contributions by member states; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: No. The review of the Community's finances concluded at the European Council in Brussels on 11 to 13 February 1988 confirmed the arrangements for abating the United Kingdom's contributions. The Fontainebleau mechanism remains totally intact and it will last as long as the new own resources arrangements. Our cumulative benefit from the Fontainebleau mechanism will be some £7·5 billion by the end of 1990.

East Germany

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Prime Minister what representations she has made to Chancellor Kohl about his proposal that West Germany should use its trade surplus to invest in East Germany; and how great she estimates Britain's contribution will be to rebuilding East Germany for 1990 if the process is financed on that basis.

The Prime Minister: The financing of the rebuilding of East Germany is a matter for the German authorities and individual companies, both in Germany and elsewhere.

Community Charge

Mr. Latham: To ask the Prime Minister whether Her Majesty's Government have yet completed their review of the possibility of community charge-capping any local authorities; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment is currently considering the information which he has about local authorities' budgets. When he has completed his consideration he will announce to the House any decisions to cap authorities.

Romanian Children

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Prime Minister what are the interdepartmental procedures operated by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Home Office and the Department of Health for co-ordinating the issuing of visas in respect of Romanian children adopted by United Kingdom citizens; if she will review these procedures to improve their efficiency; and what are the criteria applied when considering such visa applications.

The Prime Minister: When an application is made to bring to the United Kingdom a child who has been adopted abroad or who is coming here for adoption, the entry clearance officer first makes inquiries into the child's circumstances overseas and the circumstances in which the child became available for adoption. The application is then referred to the Home Office, which seeks advice from the Department of Health on the health and welfare aspects of the case before reaching a decision. The main consideration is whether the proposed adoption is in the child's best interests. Every effort is made to ensure that the necessary inquiries are completed as quickly as possible.

Nuclear Test Treaties

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Prime Minister if she will make it her policy, when she meets President Bush on 13 April in Bermuda, to raise *(a)* the forthcoming fourth review conference of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, *(b)* the forthcoming amendment conference of the 1963 partial test ban treaty and *(c)* the development of a common policy position by the three depository states for the non-proliferation treaty, for membership of the treaty of a united Germany.

The Prime Minister: I do not expect that these subjects will be considered in any detail.

Engagements

Mr. Skinner: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 22 March.

Mr. Stern: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 22 March.

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 22 March.

The Prime Minister: This morning I presided at a meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House I shall be having further meetings later today. This evening I shall be speaking at a dinner given by the Royal Society, along with the Prime Ministers of Norway and Sweden, to conclude the last conference on surface water acidification.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Audit Policy

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether, at any time since June 1979, any Minister from his Department has publicly called upon auditing firms to publish annual reports and accounts.

Mr. Redwood: Not so far as I am aware.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is his policy on following through decisions of the joint disciplinary scheme on matters referred by him to the Institute of Chartered Accountants.

Mr. Redwood: The outcome of a complaint referred by my Department to any of the professional accountancy bodies, whether or not it is subsequently referred to the joint disciplinary scheme, is noted and such action is taken as is appropriate.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will seek to amend the Companies Act to require each set of annual accounts prepared in accordance with the historical cost convention to carry a statement that these accounts do not show realistic values of assets and may therefore be misleading.

Mr. Redwood: No. Understanding figures in company accounts will always depend on understanding the conventions by which the accounts were prepared. It is inherent in accounts prepared under the historical cost accounting rules, as required by the Companies Act 1985 (unless the alternative accounting rules are used), that assets are carried at historical cost less depreciation.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether his Department has any plans to legislate to require auditors of all large companies to examine the chairman's report.

Mr. Redwood: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to his question on 12 March, at column *43*.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether his Department has any plans to require company auditors at annual general meetings to give details of the audit teams used on audits of companies.

Mr. Redwood: No.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether his Department plans to make any recommendations to companies on the accounting treatment of financial futures.

Mr. Redwood: No. This issue is being considered by the accounting profession and my Department is watching developments closely.

Mergers

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will make a statement on his Department's policy on mergers between major auditing firms.

Mr. Redwood: My Department's policy on mergers remains as set out in the Blue Paper published in 1988 entitled "Mergers Policy"—that the main consideration in deciding whether to refer a merger or proposed merger to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission should be the effect on competition in the United Kingdom. This applies equally to mergers between auditing firms as to any other mergers.

Insolvency Service

Mr. Charles Wardle: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans he has to launch the Insolvency Service as an executive agency.

Mr. Ridley: I established the Insolvency Service as an executive agency on 21 March.

I expect the Insolvency Service, as an executive agency, to continue to bring proceedings for the disqualification of directors of failed companies in appropriate cases, to submit prosecution reports where there is evidence of criminal behaviour and to administer bankruptcies and compulsory liquidations in an increasingly effective manner.

I have also set the Insolvency Service the following productivity and quality of service targets for 1990-91:

to increase productivity in case administration by at least 8 per cent.;

to complete the administration of at least 13,600 cases;

to report to creditors on assets and liabilities within nine weeks in at least 60 per cent. of all cases;

to hold meetings of creditors within 12 weeks in at least 90 per cent. of cases;

to submit reports within 10 months in at least 80 per cent. of cases identified for investigation;

to action at least 93 per cent. of payment requisitions within 10 days or by the due date.

Additionally, the Insolvency Service will be required to reduce in real terms the average unit cost of the initial stage of bankruptcies and liquidations by at least 5 per cent. over the next three years.

I have arranged for the framework document for the new agency to be placed in the Library of both Houses.

Shipbuilding

Mr. Clay: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many of the 250 jobs referred to in the reply by the hon. Member for Darwen and Rossendale (Mr. Trippier) to the hon. Member for Sunderland, North, 20 July 1989, *Official Report*, column *346*, arise from ship repair or ship conversion activities.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 14 March 1990]:* Of the 250 jobs referred to, approximately 10 people were employed by a company which was primarily engaged in ship repair business.

Mr. Clay: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the dates and purposes of visits to Norway during 1988 and 1989 by *(a)* Ministers of his Department and *(b)* civil servants of grade 5 or above.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 14 March 1990]:* My right hon. Friend the Member for Braintree (Mr. Newton) visited Norway as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster from 29 October to 1 November 1988 to discuss investment in the United Kingdom by Kvaerner Industrier and other Norwegian companies. He also announced that Kvaerner Govan Ltd. had placed orders with Clark Kincaid Ltd. for the engines for the first two gas ships to be built on the Clyde for their Norwegian clients. A number of other visits were made by DTI officials in the course of 1988 and 1989 for general discussions on bilateral issues and for discussions with Norwegian interests concerning the acquisition of United Kingdom shipbuilding capacity and ship and marine engine orders.

Mr. Clay: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will set out the specific proposals of the Tyne and Wear development corporation for the redevelopment of the Southwick shipyard site in Sunderland.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 14 March 1990]:* Detailed proposals depend on the outcome of negotiations with relevant parties. It is, however, the current intention of the development corporation to redevelop the Southwick shipyard site in Sunderland for general industrial uses.

Mr. Clay: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will set out the various elements of state aid agreed by his Department in the disposal of the private sector of the British Shipbuilders facilities at *(a)* Govan, *(b)* Appledore, *(c)* Ailsa Ferguson (Troon), *(d)* Ferguson and *(e)* Clark Kincaid.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 14 March 1990]:* The detailed terms of sale of the individual British Shipbuilders' companies are commercially confidential. Following is a summary of the net costs of disposal after taking account of the considerations paid in each case:

(a) Govan Up to £25 million, including redundancy payments in respect of surplus staff, and a contribution to a programme of capital investment at the yard.

(b) Appledore £3·4 million, including redundancy payments and costs arising from completion of existing work.

(c) Ferguson-Ailsa (Troon) The assets of the Ailsa yard were sold on commerical terms, following closure of the company by British Shipbuilders.

(d) Ferguson Net cost of disposal to British Shipbuilders was £3·8 million, primarily relating to the costs of redundancies at the yard.

(e) Clark Kincaid £3·2 million, including redundancy payments, costs arising from completion of existing work, and a contribution to capital investment at the yard.

Mr. Clay: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will update the estimate of the commercial costs to British Shipbuilders of closing North East Shipbuilders Ltd.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 14 March 1990]:* A provision for an estimated extraordinary loss of £53·7 million relating to the closure of North East Shipbuilders Ltd. was made in the NESL accounts for 1987-88. A release of some of these provisions in the 1988-89 accounts has brought the estimated costs of closure down to £51 million. There may be further slight amendments in the 1989-90 accounts when published.

Mr. Clay: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which riverside areas along the River Wear are affected by the advice of Sir Leon Brittan that a recommencement of shipbuilding would lead the European Commission to reconsider its agreement to the notification made by the British Government in December 1988.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 14 March 1990]:* There is no specific delineation by the Commission of the European Communities of land on the River Wear on which it would regard a recommencement of shipbuilding as prompting a reopening of the December 1988 notification. The Commission has, however, indicated that a restart of shipbuilding in Sunderland in general terms, even on land outside the confines of North East Shipbuilders Limited, would lead it to look again at the overall package. This view is taken on the grounds that the remedial measures programme for Sunderland was approved on the basis of the loss of shipbuilding jobs in the town.

Professional Access Project

Mr. George Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will consider financing in Scotland a pilot scheme similar to the British Council/DTI professional access project in Yorkshire/Humberside.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 19 March 1990]:* I shall be interested to consider proposals for a professional access project in Scotland in consultation with my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland. My officials will also wish to discuss this with the British Council.

National Engineering Laboratory

Mr. Ingram: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the projected budget is for the year 1990-91 broken down by designated category for the National Engineering Laboratory.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 19 March 1990]:* The Secretary of State will be making decisions later this month about budget allocations for the next financial year. In the case of the National Engineering Laboratory, I expect the provision to be adequate for some 400 staff and associated costs.

Exports

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will publish a table showing for each of the European Community countries, the United States of America, Canada and Japan the amount of exports per head of population expressed on a comparable basis in £ sterling and as at the latest available date.

Mr. Redwood *[holding answer 20 March 1990]:* The information is in the table.

Exports per head of population 1988

	£
Belgium/Luxembourg	5,035
Denmark	2,970
Federal Republic of Germany	2,953
France	1,625
Greece	305
Ireland	2,973
Italy	1,261
Netherlands	3,919
Portugal	580
Spain	579
United Kingdom	1,426
United States of America	730
Canada	2,422
Japan	1,213

Source: OECD Series 'A' and OECD MEI

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will publish a table showing for each of the European Community countries, the United States of America, Canada and Japan exports expressed as a percentage of gross national product as at the latest available date.

Mr. Redwood *[holding answer 20 March 1990]:* The information is in the table.

Exports as a percentage of GNP 1988

	Per cent.
Belgium/Luxembourg[1]	57·9
Denmark	26·3
FR Germany	26·8
France[1]	17·0
Greece	10·5
Ireland	65·4
Italy[1]	15·5
Netherlands	45·3
Portugal[1]	27·1
Spain	12·0
United Kingdom	17·4
United States of America	6·6
Canada	23·7
Japan	9·3

[1]GDP figures—GNP figures not readily available.
Source: OECD Series 'A' and IMF International Financial Statistics.

Hong Kong (Trade Balance)

Mr. Janman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is the United Kingdom's trade balance with Hong Kong.

Mr. Redwood *[holding answer 21 March 1990]:* In 1989 imports of visible goods from Hong Kong exceeded United Kingdom's exports of visible goods to that country by £925 million.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Rain Forests

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will obtain a copy of the article on rain forest destruction in the latest issue of the magazine *Science* for his Department library.

Mrs. Chalker: Yes.

WALES

Health Conferences

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) whether he will issue guidelines to the National Health Service director in Wales to ensure that in any conferences organised by him all participants, including speakers, with particular expertise and experience in health care systems with administrative costs higher than the National Health Service, should contribute fees to the National Health Service commensurate with the learning curve benefit on management efficiency they derive;

(2) whether he will issue guidelines to the National Health Service directorate and manpower consultancy service to ensure that all conferences it organises for National Health Service employees in Wales on health care management give preference to speakers with direct expertise and experience of health care systems with lower administrative costs than the United Kingdom National Health Service;

(3) whether he will issue guidelines to Welsh health authorities on the maximum cost per National Health Service employee for attendance at conferences on non-medical subjects.

Mr. Grist: All conferences arranged by the NHS in Wales are designed to develop the service and are therefore ultimately for the benefit of patients. Speakers, whether from within the United Kingdom National Health Service or outside, are selected on the basis of the contribution they can make. Fees and related costs and charges are taken fully into account in making this judgment.

I see no need to issue specific guidelines as these principles are well understood. It is a matter for local decision as to which conferences individual employees should attend.

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what was the cost to the National Health Service in Wales of National Health Service employees attending the Yale university school of management health care management executive programme at the Metropole hotel, Llandrindod Wells, on 3 to 8 June.

Mr. Grist: It is estimated that up to 60 delegates will attend the healthcare management executive programme at Llandrindod Wells. The course is expected to be self-financing, but the Department has indicated that it will fund four delegates from each health authority, at a total cost of £60,000. Fee-paying delegates will be attending from the rest of the United Kingdom, and further places may be taken up by Welsh NHS employees at a cost of £1,500 per delegate.

The programme is widely recognised as one of the best and most intensive training courses available in healthcare management and has previously been run in Australia, Spain and England, as well as the United States. Professor Fetter's team are world leaders, having developed the use of diagnosis related groups (DRGs) for the effective management of healthcare resources in a wide range of countries.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Probate

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Attorney-General what is the delay before sending personal applicants for probate an appointment for interview; what is the reason for the delay; how many applications are outstanding; and what plans he has to offer a better service to the public.

The Attorney-General: The delay before sending personal applicants for probate an appointment for interview is approximately four weeks at the current time. The reason for the delay is the seasonal large influx of cases, and some staffing difficulties in the London area. There are currently 771 outstanding cases, of which 202 are ready for appointment and the remainder are being processed. Arrears are gradually reducing as a result of increased computerisation and a reorganisation of working practices.

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Attorney-General when and why the probate personal application department of the London probate registry moved from Golden Cross house to Somerset house.

The Attorney-General: The personal application department moved from Golden Cross house to Somerset house on Monday 11 September 1989. The main reasons for the move were:

(a) Economy. As a direct consequence of the move £250,000 was saved in accommodation charges and staff savings.

(b) Greater efficiency. The senior probate staff, together with the judiciary, are in Somerset house and referrals to them can be made more speedily and efficiently.

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Attorney-General when he expects to amend form PA2 to reflect the move of the probate personal application department to Somerset house; what was the level and value of stationery stock at the time of the move; how many staff are employed sticking change of address labels on the stationery; and at what cost.

The Attorney-General: Form PA2 was amended in November 1989 and distributed during that month. The level and value of stationery stock at the time of the move cannot now be accurately ascertained. Change of address labels are stuck on as and when the forms are completed by clerical staff. The only cost of applying sticky labels to forms is that of the labels themselves, which is £164·94 for 32,000.

SCOTLAND

Capital Allocations

Mrs. Fyfe: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much of Glasgow district council's general services capital programme in the past five years has been funded from *(a)* capital receipts and *(b)* borrowing.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The information is as follows:

£ million

(a) Year	*(b)* Total General Services Capital Expenditure	*(c)* Capital Receipts	*(d)* (b)-(c)
1988-89	13·499	8·550	4·949
1987-88	9·616	5·037	4·579
1986-87	9·287	6·054	3·233
1985-86	9·804	5·521	4·283
1984-85	10·243	5·297	4·946

Note: Column *(d)* is the difference between columns *(b)* and *(c)* and includes borrowing, capital grants and current revenue used to finance capital expenditure. Information on these separate components is not available.

Mrs. Fyfe: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what are his criteria for deciding the capital allocations for general services for each district council.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The allocation of resources for capital expenditure by local authorities is determined, within the resources available, on the basis of their relative needs. In the light of the financial plans which each authority submits each year, the relative needs of authorities are assessed having regard to a number of factors, including the priorities that Ministers attach to particular categories of expenditure, the capital costs of individual projects, previous spending patterns and forecasts of capital receipts. As part of the stability of the financial planning system, regard is also had, when the final allocations for any year are being decided, to the provisional allocations previously issued.

Mrs. Fyfe: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what change he is planning in real terms for 1991-92 in Glasgow district council's capital allocation for general services.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The provisional figure notified to the City of Glasgow district council for its general services capital allocation in 1991-92 is £3·0 million, the same as the final allocation for 1990-91, or £0·1 million lower in real terms as measured by the change in GDP deflator assumed over these two years for public expenditure planning.

Mrs. Fyfe: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he will review Glasgow district council's general services capital allocation for 1990-91.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: My right hon. and learned Friend has no plans either to reduce, or to increase, the council's general services capital allocation for 1990-91.

Local Government Finance

Mrs. Ray Michie: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will estimate the average local income tax figures in each region or islands authority required to produce the amount being paid in community charge in 1989-90.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: On the basis of the information available to my Department, it is not possible to estimate the average amount which would have been required to be paid in local income tax to replace the revenue which each region or islands authority will receive from the community charge in 1989-90.

Mrs. Ray Michie: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the estimated amount to be paid by

community charge payers in each region or islands area in their regional, district or island and water community charge in 1989-90, taking account of the rebates which are paid for by the Government out of the Exchequer.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Local authorities' most recent estimates of income raised in 1989-90 from personal and collective community charges are set out in the table. In establishing these figures local authorites take account both of community charge rebates and the rebate subsidy received from central Government. The amount actually paid by charge payers will be the amounts quoted in the table less the amounts paid as appropriate in community charge benefit (rebates) by local authorities. Details of the total amount of rebates by authority are not yet available.

Information on the amount to be paid in community water charges is not held centrally.

Personal and collective community charge income 1989-90

	£000
Borders	12,876
Berwickshire	423
Ettrick and Lauderdale	1,033
Roxburgh	1,119
Tweeddale	456
Centrel	37,519
Clackmannan	2,871
Falkirk	4,646
Stirling	5,287
Dumfries and Galloway	18,765
Annandale and Eskdale	1,245
Nithsdale	1,605
Stewartry	630
Wigtown	853
Fife	51,860
Dunfermline	4,793
Kirkcaldy	6,370
North East Fife	3,910
Grampian	67,880
Aberdeen	12,676
Banff and Buchan	3,157
Gordon	2,067
Kincardine and Deeside	1,114
Moray	2,366
Highland	24,607
Badenoch and Strathspey	259
Caithness	465
Inverness	1,102
Lochaber	478
Nairn	201
Ross and Cromarty	1,396
Skye and Lochalsh	180
Sutherland	53
Lothian	157,334
East Lothian	4,260
Edinburgh	26,983
Midlothian	3,364
West Lothian	5,476
Strathclyde	331,035
Argyll and Bute	2,683
Bearsden and Milngavie	2,225
Clydebank	2,639
Clydesdale	3,304
Cumbernauld	2,270
Cumnock and Doon Valley	1,734
Cunninghame	5,646
Dumbarton	4,403
East Kilbride	5,800
Eastwood	2,569
Glasgow	43,570
Hamilton	5,353
Inverclyde	4,724
Kilmarnock	2,874
Kyle and Carrick	7,315
Monklands	5,366
Motherwell	8,519
Renfrew	10,229
Strathkelvin	4,783
Tayside	58,656
Angus	3,295
Dundee	9,799
Perth and Kinross	4,773
Orkney	1,626
Shetland	1,731
Western Isles	2,600

Civil Engineering

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will take steps to encourage public sector bodies to increase their use of the private sector for civil engineering work.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Almost all civil engineering works commissioned by public authorities in Scotland are constructed by contractors from the private sector, on the basis of competitive tendering. In addition, all trunk road projects and many water and sewerage projects are designed and supervised by private sector consultants appointed on a competitive basis. There is no evidence that further action to encourage use of the private sector in civil engineering is necessary.

Phoenix House Trust

Mr. Michael J. Martin: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if Scottish Homes plans to give a grant to the Phoenix House Trust for the purposes of converting the dwelling house at Kappochhill road into a drugs unit.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: When approving Scottish Homes' programme for any year my right hon. and learned Friend also agrees the amounts which Scottish Homes proposes should be spent on particular functions. The allocation of funds to specific areas or to individual projects is then a matter for Scottish Homes.

Leukaemia

Sir Hector Monro: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has considered the Gardner report on the incidence of leukaemia; and if he will make it his policy to make a statement on its application to Scotland.

Mr. Rifkind: The conclusions of Professor Gardner's study of childhood leukaemia in west Cumbria are of considerable concern. A similar study at Dounreay is being concluded as a matter of urgency and the results are expected by the summer.

It is important that each study is not considered in isolation but together with all the other Government-funded studies emerging as a result of recommendations by the committee on medical aspects of radiation in the environment, to whom the Government look for expert advice.

Electricity Industry

Mr. Allan Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the regulation of the Scottish electricity industry.

Mr. Rifkind: I am making available to the House today model drafts of the licences to be issued to Scottish Power and Scotish Hydro-Electric, to independent generators including Scottish Nuclear Ltd. and to second-tier suppliers in Scotland. The licences for Scottish Power and Scottish Hydro-Electric are now largely in final form and ready to be granted shortly before vesting. Other generation and second-tier supply licensees will receive a licence based on the published drafts but adjusted to meet their particular circumstances and requirements.

The public electricity supply, transmission and generation licences for the Scottish vertically integrated companies are contained in a composite licence document. They reflect the wider Great Britain framework but have been tailored where appropriate to meet specific Scottish circumstances. A particular example of this is the provision which will be included in the licence for Hydro-Electric to secure that the benefit of cheap hydro power will be applied to maintain transmission and distribution costs in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland at levels comparable with those in other parts of the country, thus underpinning our commitment to maintain common tariffs for customers throughout that area.

The composite licence document includes provisions to control the maximum average prices charged by Scottish Power and Scottish Hydro-Electric. The average distribution, supply and transmission prices will be capped and indexed annually by an RPI-X formula. This will create incentives on the industry to improved performance and cost efficiency. The objective is to replicate market pressures to cost reduction on these monopoly services.

The vertically integrated structure of the Scottish industry also requires that, within the overall prices charged to customers, there should be direct regulation of generation prices. We have decided that the maximum average generation price to customers should not be allowed to increase beyond changes in RPI over the next four years. During a further four-year transitional period, regulation will move over progressively to an index derived from average generation prices in the England and Wales competitive market. In this way, the disciplines of the wider market will be impressed upon the Scottish companies.

Prices to consumers taking 10 MW or more will not be directly regulated in Scotland, nor will sales by the Scottish companies outside their areas. Prices in this part of the market are already being determined, quite properly, by competitive forces and this will continue to offer customers the best form of protection. To protect smaller customers who do not have a choice in their supplier, there will be a subsidiary cap on average prices to all consumers taking up to 1 MW which will restrict maximum average price rises to the movement in the overall price cap.

Taken together, these regulatory controls will mean that average electricity price rises to customers in the regulated market in Scotland will be held below the rate of inflation over the next four years and thereafter they will increasingly reflect the downward pressures on prices in the fully competitive Great Britain market. The companies will, however, be free, subject to their licence conditions, to set different tariffs to each individual group of consumers within the average price cap to reflect the economic costs of supply.

For the more immediate term, I expect average tariff increases in Scotland next year to be about the rate of inflation. For larger customers above 1 MW, including contract customers, the Scottish industry does not expect that any customer will experience increases much out of line with inflation over the next year.

It is important for the stability of prices and the industry's finances that there should not be excessive disruption in the market. We have, therefore, decided to introduce arrangements in Scotland which will ensure a smooth transition to a competitive market similar to those announced last month for England and Wales by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy. These provisions will allow all suppliers to compete for supply to premises taking more than 1 MW at the outset of the new regime, for premises taking more than 100 KW after four years, and for all customers after eight years. While my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State will be disposed to act in accordance with the above restrictions, he will require to exercise discretion taking account of the specific circumstances of each case in its merits and the advice of the Director General of Electricity Supply.

Equal Opportunities

Mr. Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what action he has taken, and what action he intends taking, to implement the recommendations within his area of responsibility of the European Commission's childcare network report "Caring for Children—Services and Policies for Childcare and Equal Opportunities in the United Kingdom."

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 5 March 1990]:* The report was prepared for the European Commission which has yet to develop any firm proposals. The Government take the view that policy on child care is a matter for member states and that families themselves should determine how their children are to be cared for. It is for parents to decide how to combine work and family responsibilities. The Government, through the ministerial group on women's issues, are encouraging the development of a range of quality day care.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Regional Functions

Mr. Cabom: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what functions his Department carries out at the regional level; where the regional offices are located in each of the regions; what staff are employed and at what grades; what proportion of his Department's budget is spent in each of the regions; and what geographical boundaries determine his Department's regions.

Mrs. Rumbold: The Department has no administrative regional organisation, although HMI has a divisional structure. There is one administrative outstation in Darlington which deals with teachers' pensions and some other functions. Details of the Darlington outstation and of HMI's divisional structure are as follows:

Administrative outstation in Darlington
Grades and numbers of staff

Grades	Number
G5	1
G6	2
G7	9
SEO	25
HEO	67
EO	127
AO	219
AA	133
Typing	27
Support Grades	52
Proportion of Department's budget (per cent.)	9·1

Her Majesty's Inspectorate's Divisional Structure

Division	Grade and Numbers of Staff HMI G5	HMI G6	EO	Support Staff AO	Support Staff AA	Support Staff P/Sec	Typist	Proportion of Department's [1] Budget Per cent.
Eastern Barking and Dagenham, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Havering, Hertfordshire, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Newham, Redbridge, Suffolk, Waltham Forest	1·0	54·0	1·0	1·8	3·5	6·0	10·0	3·3
Metropolitan South Midland Barnet, Brent, Buckinghamshire, Ealing, Enfield, Haringey, Harrow, Hillingdon, Hounslow, ILEA, Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire	3·0	62·0	1·0	1·0	3·0	6·0	13·2	3·9
Midland Derbyshire, Hereford and Worcester, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, West Midlands	4·0	62·0	1·0	2·0	1·0	7·0	15·0	3·9
Northern Cleveland, Cumbria, Durham, Humberside, Northumberland, North Yorkshire, South Yorkshire, Tyne and Wear, West Yorkshire	3·0	63·0	1·0	1·2	3·0	7·0	15·5	3·9
North Western Cheshire, Greater Manchester, Lancashire, Merseyside	4·0	60·0	1·0	1·0	2·6	4·0	13·0	3·7
Southern Berkshire, Bexley, Bromley, Croydon, East Sussex, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Kent, Kingston on Thames, Merton, Richmond on Thames, Surrey, Sutton, West Sussex	12·0	49·0	1·0	2·0	4·5	6·0	12·1	3·8
South Western Avon, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Gloucester, Isles of Scilly, Somerset, Wiltshire	3·0	44·0	1·0	1·0	0·8	5·0	10·1	2·8

[1] The percentage figures represent the proportion of the Department's running costs for 1990-91.

Portage Schemes

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science, pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Leyton, 29 January, *Official Report*, column *33*, when he intends to place in the Library a copy of the Her Majesty's inspectorate survey on portage projects funded by education support grants.

Mr. Alan Howarth: A copy of the Her Majesty's inspectorate survey on portage project was sent to the Library on 9 February, but I have now placed further copies there.

City Technology College, Bradford

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the city technology college in Bradford; and when he expects the school to open.

Mrs. Rumbold: The main buildings for the Bradford technology college will be complete and the college will open in September 1990 with 180 first-form pupils.

Student Loans

Mr. Gill: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make available further details of the method of application for top-up loans for students; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. MacGregor: I have today placed in the Library of the House a paper summarising the student loans certification and application process. The academic institutions' role will be limited to making the forms available, identifying students and certifying their eligibility for loans and loan entitlement. Students will apply for loans direct to the Student Loans Company, through the post. The system is designed to ensure that loans reach eligible students with maximum speed and efficiency.

School Meals and Milk

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what representations he has received concerning difficulties arising from schools being required to collect moneys from parents for meals and milk taken by pupils at school; how many local education authorities in England and Wales require schools to make such collections; what savings he estimates would be made in school administration costs if the requirement to collect moneys were removed; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Howarth: I am not aware of any such representations being received.

The provision of school meals and milk, and the arrangements made to administer these services, are matters for local determination. Information is not collected centrally by the Department.

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will bring forward proposals to amend the Social Security Act 1986 to permit local education authorities to provide meals and milk free to pupils; what representations he has received concerning difficulties caused by schools being required to collect moneys from parents for milk and meals taken by school pupils; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Howarth: My right hon. Friend has no plans to reintroduce powers for LEAs to provide free meals on a discretionary basis. Section 77 of the Social Security Act 1986 places LEAs under a duty to provide free school meals to pupils whose families are in receipt of income support.

I am not aware of any representations being received in the Department about the collection of moneys for school meals and milk.

Magnet Schools

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what represention he has received from the leader of the Inner London education authority on the subject of magnet schools.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend has received no specific representations, although he receives letters from time to time, and holds meetings, where a number of issues are discussed.

ENVIRONMENT

Regional Functions

Mr. Caborn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what functions his Department carries out at the regional level; where the regional offices are located in each of the regions; what staff are employed and at what grades; what proportion of his Department's budget is spent in each of the regions; and what geographical boundaries determine his Department's regions.

Mr. Chris Patten: The regional offices of DOE (Central) perform a general representational role, involving liaison with local authorities and other bodies, and also carry out a number of executive functions in the housing, planning and urban policy fields. These include, for example, on housing distributing resources through the housing investment programme (HIP) system and establishing housing action trusts (HATs); on planning, advising on strategic planning, handling the approval of structure plans, and issuing decisions on certain types of planning appeals and other casework; and on urban policy, promoting urban development corporations (UDCs), liaising with local authorities on the urban programme (UP), participating in (and in some cases providing the secretariat for) city action teams (CATs), and processing applications for derelict land grant (DLG).

DOE(C) has nine regional offices, in the north, north-west, Yorkshire and Humberside, east midlands, west midlands, eastern region, south-west, south-east and London. In addition there is a task force based in Merseyside. The geographical coverage of each region and the location of the main office is as set out in table A.

I will write to the hon. Member with regard to the PSA at a later date.

Table A
Location and geographical boundaries of DOE(C) regional offices

	Counties covered	*Main office*
North West regional office	Northumberland Tyne and Wear Durham Cleveland	Newcastle-upon-Tyne
North West regional office	Lancashire Greater Manchester Cheshire Cumbria Merseyside (planning work)	Manchester
Yorkshire and Humberside regional office	North Yorkshire West Yorkshire South Yorkshire Humberside	Leeds
East Midlands regional office	Derbyshire Nottinghamshire Lincolnshire Leicestershire Northamptonshire	Nottingham
West Midlands regional office	Staffordshire Shorpshire West Midlands Warwickshire Hereford and Worcester	Birmingham
Eastern regional office	Norfolk Suffolk Essex Cambridgeshire Bedfordshire Buckinghamshire Hertfordshire	Bedford
South West regional office	Cornwall Devon Dorset	Bristol

	Counties covered	Main office
	Somerset	
	Avon	
	Wiltshire	
	Gloucestershire	
South East regional office	Oxfordshire	London
	Berkshire	
	Surrey	
	Hampshire	
	Isle of Wight	
	Kent	
	West Sussex	
	East Sussex	
London regional office	Greater London	London
Merseyside task force	Merseyside	Liverpool

The staff employed, by grade, in each regional office on 1 February are set out in table B. These figures include staff in common service posts who provide support to the Department of Transport as well as DOE; regional directors also have responsibility for transport.

Table B: Staff in post in DOE regional offices by grade (or equivalent grade) on 1 February 1990

	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	SEO	HEO	EO	AO	AA	Total
NRO	1·0	—	2·0	1·0	9·0	10·0	13·0	22·0	25·0	8·0	91·0
NWRO	1·0	—	2·0	3·0	15·5	9·0	23·0	29·0	47·5	24·0	154·0
YHRO	1·0	—	2·0	1·0	10·0	15·0	14·0	21·0	22·0	13·5	99·5
EMRO	—	1·0	—	2·0	7·0	10·0	11·0	17·0	23·0	13·0	84·0
WMRO	1·0	—	3·0	1·0	11·0	6·0	17·5	23·5	29·5	3·0	95·5
ERO	1·0	—	2·0	1·0	11·0	7·0	11·0	16·0	10·0	6·0	65·0
SWRO	1·0	—	1·0	2·0	8·0	5·0	12·0	13·0	14·0	4·0	60·0
SERO	1·0	—	3·0	1·0	10·0	10·5	13·0	27·0	16·0	1·0	82·5
LRO	1·0	—	3·0	2·0	18·0	7·5	24·0	33·0	24·0	1·0	113·5
MTF	—	—	2·0	—	6·0	5·0	11·0	11·0	11·0	1·0	47·0
Total	8·0	1·0	20·0	14·0	105·5	85·0	149·5	212·5	222·0	74·5	892·0

The proportion of the Department's central administration vote spent in each of the regions in 1989-90 is set out in table C.

Table C
DOE Regional Offices Administrative expenditure as a percentage of the DOE (C) Central Administration Vote (1989-90)

	Per cent.
NRO	1·01
NWRO	1·56
YHRO	1·11
EMRO	0·82
WMRO	1·07
ERO	0·76
SWRO	0·69
SERO	1·01
LRO	1·32
MTF	0·55
Total	9·90

Housing Starts

Mr. Gregory: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many new housing starts there were in the Yorkshire and Humberside region for 1979, 1983, 1987 and the most recent year; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: There were 15,800 starts in Yorkshire and Humberside region in 1989. Figures for the earlier years appear in table 6·4(a) of "Housing and Construction Statistics, 1978-1988", which is in the Library.

Neighbourhood Noise

Mr. David Martin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when his Department's special working group on neighbourhood noise problems and the law is likely to produce its report.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The working party on the review of noise, chaired by Mr. James Batho, should produce its report in the summer.

Radioactivity

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list all the occasions in the last 10 years that Her Majesty's Government have been informed under international agreements of any release of radioactive material that could be of radiological significance for the United Kingdom.

Mr. Trippier: Her Majesty's Government have never been informed of a release of radioactive material of radiological significance to the United Kingdom under international agreements.

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list all the occasions in the last 10 years that RIMNET has detected abnormal levels of radiation in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Trippier: The RIMNET monitors were installed in June 1988. No abnormal levels of radiation have been detected since that date.

Water Privatisation

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he proposes to report to Parliament the proceeds of the water share offers and associated costs; whether that report will include the total value of land and assets privatised under the Water Act 1989; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: Figures for proceeds from and overall costs to the Government of the water share offers are being compiled and will be reported shortly. Information on the assets of all the water holding companies was set out in the water share offers prospectus in November 1989.

Waste Paper

Mr. Mills: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will introduce measures to prevent the importation of waste paper from the United States of America.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: No. Such measures are not required. In 1989 United Kingdom mill consumption of waste paper and board amounted to some 2·578 million tonnes. Only 80,000 tonnes were imported, and of this less than 3 per cent. originated from north America.

Mr. Mills: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has had about market, legal or other obstacles faced by enterprises seeking to develop recycling of waste paper.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: My Department and the Department of Trade and Industry have received many representations and comments about issues concerning the recycling of waste paper. For this reason the Government have established a recycling forum with a series of expert groups, including one specifically dealing with waste paper recycling. We hope to make the conclusions of the expert groups public shortly.

East European Countries

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what request he has received for assistance towards improving the environment in *(a)* Poland, *(b)* Hungary, *(c)* Czechoslovakia, *(d)* East Germany and *(e)* the Soviet Union; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: The Government are receiving a good deal of information from formal and informal sources about the environment in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. We provided experts for two fact-finding missions to Poland and Hungary earlier this year. We are working actively through the G24 process—in which we are playing a leading part—and other appropriate multilateral and bilateral mechanisms to promote the adoption of environmentally sustainable policies within Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, East Germany and the Soviet Union. Our overriding concern is to ensure that assistance for tackling the wide range of complex environmental problems involved should be based on sound science and a knowledge of the different priorities within each country.

New Town Corporation Properties

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has yet made an assessment of the desirability of introducing a rents into mortgages scheme for the tenants of new town corporation properties.

Mr. Chope: No, but we are following the progress of the experimental rents into mortgages schemes for tenants of Scottish Homes and the Development Board for Rural Wales.

Language Teachers

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if foreign nationals temporarily resident in the United Kingdom for the purpose of foreign language teaching are liable to pay the poll tax.

Mr. Chope: Everyone aged 18 or over, who is not exempt, and who is solely or mainly resident in England, Scotland or Wales will be subject to the personal community charge for the days on which the community charges registration officer for the area determines that they are so resident. The matter will be determined by the community charges registration officers in light of the facts of each case.

Anyone who is aggrieved by a decision made by a community charge registration officer to enter him on the charging authority's registers as subject to a community charge may appeal to valuation and community charge tribunal.

Drought Risk

Mr. Shore: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether water levels are now sufficient to avoid an immediate risk of drought conditions in 1990.

Mr. Trippier: Water resources are now normal apart from a few pockets in Kent, East Anglia and east Yorkshire where groundwater levels have been slow to recover and supply difficulties may arise.

Cash Limits

Mr. Colvin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has any changes to announce to his Department's cash limits for 1989-90.

Mr. Chope: Yes. To enable the transfer of some 4,500 dwellings from the Commission for the New Towns to Peterborough city council, I have issued a supplementary capital allocation of £24,039,200 to the council covering the transfer price. The non-voted cash limit DOE/NT1 (New Towns) has been correspondingly reduced by £24,039,200 from minus £420,646,000 to minus £444,685,200. The transaction will not therefore add to the total of planned public expenditure.

Collective Community Change

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any plans to make additional resources available to local authorities for the monitoring of the collection of moneys by landlords within properties designated for the collective community charge.

Mr. David Hunt: I am confident that charging authorities have sufficient resources to collect the personal, standard and collective community charges. The chargeable person who is shown in the community charges register as subject to the collective charge will be required to maintain a record of the payments of contributions which he collects. The charging authority will be able to inspect these records.

Water Privatisation

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how much was paid in fees to the organisations listed in his answer on 13 March, *Official Report*, columns *186-87*.

Mr. Trippier: It is not the normal practice of Her Majesty's Government to publish the sums paid to individual advisers and contractors in a privatisation, as this information is a matter of commercial confidentiality.

Figures for overall costs to the Government of the water share offers are being compiled and will be reported shortly.

Council Tenants (Transfers)

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has received any representations about the likely effects of part VI of the Local Government Act 1989 on the movement of council tenants from the south to the north of England.

Mr. Chope: No.

Boundary Review, Oxford

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he intends to announce the outcome of the boundary review in respect of Oxford city.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory *[holding answer 21 March 1990]:* My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State hopes to announce his decision this month.

Leeds Development Corporation

Mr. Fatchett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, further to his answer of 12 March, if he will list the amounts spent by the Leeds development corporation in 1989-90, and planned to be spent in 1990-91 on *(a)* the promotion and marketing of the urban development area and of Leeds in general, *(b)* the promotion and marketing of specific sites, *(c)* keeping the local community informed of the development corporation's activities and *(d)* the production of an annual report.

Mr. Moynihan *[holding answer 21 March 1990]:* The information for 1989-90 is as follows.

(a) the promotion and marketing of the urban development area and of Leeds in general: £175,000;
(b) the promotion and marketing of specific sites: £30,000;
(c) programme of liaison with the local community: £95,000;
(d) the production of an annual report: £18,000.

The total expenditure on the items identified in my substantive answer of 14 March is now estimated to be £335,000.

Urban development corporations are responsible for determining their own spending priorities within budgets, and similar details are not available for 1990-91.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is *(a)* the latest estimate of the total cost of collecting and administering the community charge for 1990-91, excluding set-up costs, *(b)* the total set-up costs of the introduction of community charge, locally and nationally, *(c)* the estimated cost of the collection and administration of the rates in 1989-90 and *(d)* the number of staff employed in the calculations, collection and administration of the rates in 1989-90.

Mr. Chope *[holding answer 20 March 1990]:* The latest estimate of the total cost of collecting and administering the community charge in 1990-91 is £400 million. The latest estimate made by authorities of the current cost of preparation is £207 million. The estimated capital cost of preparation is £160 million. The estimated cost of collecting rates in 1989-90 was £200 million. The total number of staff employed in the calculation, collection and administration of the rates in 1989-90 is not separately distinguishable in the available statistics.

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will now publish in the *Official Report* recalculations of the tables in annex J of Cmnd. 9714, "Paying for Local Government."

Mr. David Hunt *[holding answer 21 March 1990]:* I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave him on 15 March, *Official Report*, volume 169, column *313*.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Advertising Expenditure

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what was the total publicity and advertising expenditure of his Department and public bodies for which his Department has responsibility in *(a)* 1979 and *(b)* 1989.

Mr. Sainsbury: Total expenditure by the FCO (diplomatic wing) in 1979-80 on publicity and advertising was £100,226. For 1989-90 the estimated expenditure is £329,115.

The expenditure for the public bodies for which the FCO is responsible is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Romanian Children (Adoption)

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many visas have been (i) applied for and (ii) issued since December 1989 in respect of Romanian children adopted by United Kingdom citizens.

Mr. Sainsbury: Four such visas have been applied for and one has been granted.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will estimate the average time between applications for, and the issuing of, visas in respect of Romanian children adopted by United Kingdom citizens.

Mr. Sainsbury: Our visa procedures are designed to ensure that proper safeguards apply in cases of children brought to this country for adoption. These include inquiries into the child's circumstances overseas and reports by the prospective adopter's local authority. The length of time taken to complete these inquiries will depend on the circumstances of individual cases and it is not possible to estimate the average time for processing visa applications in respect of Romanian children adopted by United Kingdom citizens.

Sudan

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Sudanese Government concerning the arrest of Farouk Mohammed Ibrahim of the university of Khartoum; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: Her Majesty's embassy has reported that Dr. Farouk Mohammed Ibrahim was released from custody on 10 March and has returned to his work at the university of Khartoum.

Immigration

Mr. Franks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when the entry clearance officer's statement of refusal of entry was completed and the clearance officer's statement was forwarded to (i) the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London, and (ii) the immigration appeals office, London, in respect of Juliet C. Melville, née Crave, who applied for entry clearance in October 1989 at the British embassy in Manila, Philippines.

Mr. Sainsbury: The entry clearance officer's explanatory statement accompanying Mrs. Melville's appeal, which had been lodged at the embassy in Manila in September 1989, was sent direct to the immigration appeals office on 5 March 1990.

The delay in processing this appeal was due to disruption to the work of the embassy in November 1989 (move to new premises) and December 1989 (attempted coup), and increased demands on secretarial resources. The post in Manila has now taken on extra staff to help reduce the delay in processing appeals.

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when a decision will be taken on the application to enter the United Kingdom made to the United Kingdom's post in Islamabad by Abdul Hamid, who was born on 14 February 1964 (Serial Number: 64050); and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: In accordance with the guidelines on the handling of representations by Members of Parliament in immigration cases, issued to Members on 14 December 1988, I have referred the question to the correspondence unit of the migration and visa department of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The hon. Member will receive a reply from the unit as soon as possible.

Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if the United Kingdom has discussed with its fellow depository member states for the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, the implications of German state unification for its membership of the non-proliferation treaty.

Mr. Waldegrave: We have not yet discussed this question with the other depository states of the non-proliferation treaty (NPT). Both the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany are parties to the NPT.

Hong Kong

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement regarding the provenance of the 116 tonnes of ivory in Hong Kong that does not have CITES documents specified in the letter sent by the Hong Kong Agriculture and Fisheries Department to the World Wide Fund for Nature, Hong Kong, dated 27 February, a copy of which has been made available to him.

Mr. Waldegrave *[holding answer 8 March 1990]:* The Hong Kong authorities cannot provide a breakdown of the places of origin of the 116 tonnes of ivory in the territory that do not have CITES documentation. But these have been inspected by the Hong Kong authorities, which have found no evidence that any of these were illegally acquired. No stocks without CITES documentation may be exported from Hong Kong.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to his reply of 2 February, *Official Report,* column *405,* what further information he has about ivory stocks currently held in Hong Kong *(a)* that are not marked and registered in accordance with CITES regulations or *(b)* were illegally acquired.

Mr. Waldegrave *[holding answer 8 March 1990]:* There are 116 tonnes of ivory in Hong Kong which do not have CITES documentation. The Hong Kong authorities have inspected all commercial ivory stocks in the territory. They have found no evidence that any of these stocks were illegally acquired.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the latest available figure for the current stock of elephant ivory held in Hong Kong under CITES regulations; and if he will indicate the reasons for the changes in the totals between *(a)* this figure, *(b)* the figure given in his answer of 2 February, *Official Report,* column *405* and *(c)* the figure given in his answer of 20 July 1989, *Official Report,* column *334.*

Mr. Waldegrave *[holding answer 8 March 1990]:* The latest available figure for the current stock of elephant ivory held in Hong Kong under CITES regulations (to the nearest tonne) is 356 tonnes, including 102 tonnes of worked ivory and 254 tonnes of raw ivory.

The figure for worked ivory is slightly smaller than that given on 2 February (104 tonnes) because exports of two tonnes have been notified to the Hong Kong authorities since then. The reason why the total figure for the current ivory stock is substantially less than the figure of 670 tonnes given by my hon. Friend, the then Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, on 20 July 1989 is that the earlier figure was an estimate based on voluntary declarations by traders. The introduction of a statutory requirement for all commercial holdings of ivory to be licensed has made it possible to produce a much more accurate figure. Moreover, some 50 tonnes of ivory have been exported since the original declaration was made.

DEFENCE

Regional Functions

Mr. Caborn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what functions his Department carries out at the regional level; where the regional offices are located in each of the regions; what staff are employed and at what grades; what proportion of his Department's budget is spent in each of the regions; and what geographical boundaries determine his Department's regions.

Mr. Alan Clark: Information relating to the regional distribution of service and civilian personnel together with

expenditure on defence equipment is already published in the Statement on the Defence Estimates 1989, Cm. 675, volume 2. Expenditure across the defence budget as a whole is not accounted for on a regional basis.

Personnel (Loans and Secondments)

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list all the countries where service personnel are currently on *(a)* loan service and *(b)* secondment.

Mr. Neubert: Members of Her Majesty's armed forces are currently on loan service in the following countries.

Bahrain
Bangladesh
Barbados
Belize
Bermuda
Botswana
Brunei
Dominica
Fiji
Gambia
Ghana
Grenada
Hong Kong
Indonesia
Jordan
Kenya
Lesotho
Malaysia
Mauritius
Namibia
New Zealand
Nigeria
Oman
Qatar
Saudi Arabia
Singapore
St. Lucia
St. Vincent
Sudan
Swaziland
Turks and Caicos Islands
United Arab Emirates
Zimbabwe[1]

[1] Since January 1986 a wing of the British military advisory and training team has been specifically allocated to train Mozambican troops within Zimbabwe.

Current policy is for overseas military assistance to foreign Governments to be provided on loan service rather than secondment terms but, in accordance with particular longstanding arrangements, some personnel are serving on secondment in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

Patent Rights

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list those instances where he has exercised his right to use without payment, or authorised others to use without payment, any patents for any Government purpose; and whether there are any patents falling within this right which he has paid for the use of.

Mr. Neubert: Patents which the Secretary of State has the right to use without payment, including the right to authorise others to use without payment, fall into two categories. The first category consists of patents owned by the Crown. The second category consists of patents for inventions which have arisen as a result of public funding in circumstances where the Secretary of State is granted such rights—for example, inventions which have arisen under contract.

No account is kept of instances where patents in either of the above categories are used, and, where the Secretary of State receives the right to use or authorise the use of a patent for an invention that has arisen as a result of public funding, there is no requirement to inform the patentee as to the extent of the use of the patent.

There are no known instances of payment by the Secretary of State for the use of a patent which he has the right to use free of charge.

Public House, Knightsbridge (Attack)

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to write to the hon. Member for Leyton concerning the assault of a soldier, as undertaken in his answer of 26 October 1989, *Official Report*, column *562*.

Mr. Neubert: The hon. Member should by now have received a reply from my noble Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces.

RAF Fylingdales

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) for how long the proposed environmental study is to be undertaken around the new phased array radar system currently being installed at the Fylingdales Royal Air Force station;

(2) if he will make it his policy to publish the results of the proposed environmental study to be undertaken around the new phased array radar system currently being installed at the Fylingdales Royal Air Force station;

(3) what is the purpose of, and what parameters are to be measured in, the proposed environmental study to be undertaken around the new phased array radar system currently being installed at the Fylingdales Royal Air Force station;

(4) which agency is to undertake the proposed environmental study to be undertaken around the new phased array radar system currently being installed at the Fylingdales Royal Air Force station.

Mr. Neubert: There are no plans for an environmental study to be undertaken round the new phased array radar being installed at RAF Fylingdales. The RAF signals engineering establishment will, however, conduct radio frequency assessments at the station over a period of about six months before the new radar system is brought into operation, to ensure that the radar transmissions from the system satisfy both the design specification and RAF safety regulations. On security grounds, it is not our practice to publish the results of such assessments.

Overseas Territories

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list all countries who have sent *(a)* military cadets and *(b)* senior service men to training schools in the United Kingdom since 1979; how many military persons were involved in each case; and what has been the total cost to the United Kingdom of this training.

Mr. Neubert: The following countries have sent military personnel for training at United Kingdom service establishments on at least one occasion since 1 January 1979. It is not possible to distinguish between military cadets and senior service men, as information is not held centrally in this form and could not be compiled without disproportionate cost.

Afghanistan
Anguilla

Antigua
Argentina
Australia
Bahamas
Bahrein
Bangledesh
Barbados
Belgium
Belize
Bermuda
Botswana
Brazil
Brunei
Burma (Myanmar)
Burundi
Cameroons
Canada
Chad
Chile
Congo
Cyprus
Denmark
Dominica
Ecuador
Egypt
El Salvador
Ethiopia
Fiji
Finland
France
Gambia
Germany (Federal Republic)
Ghana
Gibraltar
Greece
Guyana
Honduras
Hong Kong
Iceland
India
Indonesia
Iran
Iraq
Ireland
Israel
Italy
Ivory Coast
Jamaica
Japan
Jordan
Kenya
Kiribati (Gilbert Islands)
Kuwait
Lebanon
Lesotho
Libya
Liechtenstein
Malawi
Malaysia
Maldives
Mauritius
Montserrat
Morocco
Nepal
Netherlands
New Zealand
Nigeria
Norway
Oman
Pakistan
Papua New Guinea
Peru
Philippines
Portugal
Qatar
St. Kitts
St. Lucia
St. Vincent
Saudi Arabia
Senegal
Seychelles
Sierra Leone
Singapore
Somalia
South Korea
Spain
Sri Lanka
Sudan
Swaziland
Sweden
Switzerland
Syria
Tanzania
Thailand
Tonga
Trinidad and Tobago
Tunisia
Turks and Caicos Islands
Turkey
Uganda
United Arab Emirates
Upper Volta (Burkina Faso)
United States of America
Venezuela
Yemen
Yugoslavia
Zaire
Zambia
Zimbabwe

The approximate numbers of overseas service men who attended United Kingdom military training courses in each year since 1979 are as follows:

	Numbers
1979	6,450
1980	5,300
[1]1981-82	5,650
1982-83	4,600
1983-84	5,200
1984-85	5,450
1985-86	5,150
1986-87	5,500
1987-88	4,850
1988-89	5,150

[1] From 1981-82 statistics have been gathered by financial rather than calendar years.

Further specific details about numbers trained are generally confidential between her Majesty's Government and the Government concerned.

The bulk of this training has been carried out on repayment.

Radar (Hazards)

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment has been made of the bio-hazard associated with the phased array radar currently under construction at Fylingdales.

Mr. Neubert *[holding answer 16 March 1990]:* Theoretical assessments have indicated that the phased array radar will not produce power density levels at ground level beyond its immediate vicinity which will exceed those stipulated by current RAF regulations. Furthermore, a practical assessment will be carried out before the radar is brought into operational use to confirm these findings.

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what criteria currently govern the bio-hazards associated with radar emissions.

Mr. Neubert *[holding answer 16 March 1990]:* The RAF is required to meet the standards set out in "Home

Office Safety Precautions Relating to Intense Radio Frequency Radiation, 1960", but has issued its own more stringent regulations which impose lower maximum power density levels.

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what current research is being undertaken into the bio-hazards associated with radar emissions.

Mr. Neubert *[holding answer 16 March 1990]:* No such research is being undertaken by the Ministry of Defence.

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the phased array radar currently under contruction at Fylingdales will radiate more energy than the current radar at Fylingdales.

Mr. Neubert *[holding answer 16 March 1990]:* No.

HEALTH

Children Act

104. **Mr. Campbell-Savours:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what additional financial resources will be made available to local authorities in order to assist them in the implementation of the provisions of the Children Act.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave the hon. Member for Sheffield, Heeley (Mr. Michie) on 9 March at column *897*.

Housing Statistics

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) further to table 6.13(a) of the general household survey for 1986, whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for each country in 1986, with the relevant base, the distribution by sex and marital status of heads of household for dwellings rented from local authorities and new towns, together with an estimate for 1988 and 1989;

(2) further to table 6.13(b) of the general household survey for 1986, whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for each country in 1986, with the relevant base, the distribution of dwellings rented from local authorities and new towns of heads of household by sex and marital status, together with an estimate for 1988 and 1989;

(3) further to table 6.14(a) of the general household survey for 1986, whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for each country, with the relevant base, the distribution of *(a)* mortgagors and *(b)* local authority and new town tenants by socio-economic group in 1986, together with an estimate for the years 1988 and 1989;

(4) further to table 6.14(a) of the general household survey for 1986, whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for each country in 1986, with the relevant base, the distribution by sex and marital status of heads of household for dwellings rented from local authorities and new towns in 1986, together with an estimate for 1988 and 1989;

(5) further to table 6.15(b) of the general household survey for 1986, whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for each country in 1986, with the relevant base, the distribution by usual gross weekly household incomes in the case of local authority and new town tenants, together with an estimate for 1988 and 1989;

(6) further to table 6.18(a) of the general household survey for 1986, whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for each region in 1986 the distribution of the type of accommodation by tenure, together with *(a)* the implied populations and *(b)* an estimate for 1989 or if unavailable for 1988;

(7) further to table 6.19 of the general household survey for 1986 whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for each country and each region in 1986 the implied population of accommodation by types listed in table 6.18 in the case of local authority or new town tenures, together with an estimate for 1989 or if unavailable for 1988;

(8) further to table 6.10 of the general household survey for 1986, whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for each country with the relevant base the distribution of mortgagors by income, in 1986, together with an estimate for 1988 and 1989;

(9) further to table 6.10 of the general household survey for 1986, whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for each country, with the relevant base, the percentage of economically inactive heads of household by tenure in 1986, together with an estimate for 1989 and a forecast for 1990;

(10) further to table 6.2 of the general household survey for 1986, whether he will publish in the *Official Report* the figures for each region for 1986 with the relevant base, together with an estimate for 1989.

Mr. Freeman: Information that is available has been placed in the Library.

Cancer (Yorkshire)

Mr. O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will publish the figures held by the Yorkshire regional cancer registry of the number of people in the area of *(a)* Pontefract district health authority and *(b)* Wakefield district health authority, who have been diagnosed or treated for cancer or cancer-related disease including leukaemia; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: This is a matter for the Yorkshire regional cancer registry.

Soviet Health Minister

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy of 6 March, *Official Report*, column *580*, if he will give details of the letter he received from the Soviet Health Minister; and what was his response.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: The Soviet Health Minister, Mr. E. Chazov, sent a letter which suggested that nuclear weapons testing posed a threat to life and health, and called for a test ban. I replied, among other things, that these tests posed no danger to public health and that as we wish to retain a nuclear deterrent, we should have to retain weapons testing.

Infant Mortality

Mr. Robert Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the number of fatal births which can be attributed to *(a)* late births and *(b)* questionable handling and treatment of the mother.

Mr. Freeman: The number of stillbirths by gestation week for England and Wales, 1988 is shown in the table. Information regarding the treatment of the mother in these cases is not available centrally.

Gestation week	*Number of stillbirths*
28	204
29	196
30	227
31	178
32	232
33	145
34	205
35	205
36	268
37	286
38	295
39	246
40	342
41	141
42 and over	80
Total	3,250

Mr. Robert Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information he has on infant mortality in each European country.

Mr. Freeman: The table shows the infant mortality rate by country in 1978 and from 1983-88:

Country	*1978*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	*1987*	*1988*
Austria[1]	15·0	11·9	11·4	[4]11·0	10·3	9·8	—
Belgium[2]	13·3	10·6	10·7	9·4	[4]9·7	[4]9·7	—
Denmark[2]	8·8	7·7	7·7	7·9	8·2	8·3	—
Finland[1]	7·7	6·2	6·5	6·3	5·9	n/a	—
France[2]	10·7	9·1	8·3	8·3	8·0	7·8	—
Germany Federal Republic[2]	14·7	10·2	9·6	9·0	8·7	8·3	—
Greece[2]	19·3	14·6	14·3	14·1	12·2	[4]11·7	—
Ireland[2]	14·9	10·1	9·6	8·9	[4]8·7	[4]7·4	—
Italy[2]	17·1	12·3	[4]11·3	[4]10·3	[4]9·8	[4]9·6	—
Luxembourg[2]	10·6	11·2	11·7	9·0	7·9	9·4	—
Netherlands[2]	9·6	8·4	8·3	8·0	7·7	7·6	—
Norway[1]	8·6	7·9	8·3	8·5	7·9	n/a	—
Portugal[2]	29·1	19·2	16·7	17·8	15·8	14·2	—
Spain[2]	15·3	7·3	9·9	[4]8·5	[4]8·8	n/a	—
Sweden[1]	7·8	7·2	6·4	[4]6·7	[4]5·9	n/a	—
Switzerland[1]	8·6	7·5	7·1	6·9	6·8	6·8	—
United Kingdom[3]	13·3	10·2	9·6	9·4	9·5	9·1	9·0
England and Wales[3]	13·2	10·1	9·5	9·4	9·6	9·2	9·0

Rates provided are as published in:—
[1] World Health Organistion "World Health Statistics Annual",
[2] The Statistical Office of the European Community "Eurostat Demographic Statistics".
[3] Population Trends OPCS.
[4] Provisional.
Infant mortality—Deaths under one year per 1,000 livebirths.

Drug Abuse

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what was the cost in the latest year for which figures are available of treatment facilities for people with problems of drug abuse.

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is (i) the cost and (ii) the proportion of total expenditure on facilities for people with problems of drug abuse incurred by *(a)* the National Health Service, *(b)* local authorities and *(c)* the non-statutory sector.

Mr. Freeman: I have been asked to reply.

The information is not available in the form requested.

In 1989-90, the Department allocated £14·8 million to regional health authorities for the further development of all drug misuse services including treatment facilities. In addition, over £970,000 was allocated to local projects under the central funding initiative.

Treatment (Foreign Nationals)

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what rights to free National Health Service treatment in the United Kingdom *(a)* nationals of European Economic Community countries and *(b)* non-European Economic Community nationals have; and on what agreements and so on they are based.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: All visitors to the United Kingdom are subject to at least the same charges for treatment within the NHS as United Kingdom residents. The NHS (Charges to Overseas Visitors) Regulations 1982 set out the basis on which charges should be applied in the case of patients not ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom but also provide for exemptions inter alia from some charges for nationals or residents of other countries with which the United Kingdom has reciprocal health agreements, including the arrangements under the European Community social security regulations. The latter require that EC nationals visiting another member state be provided with immediately necessary treatment, the need for which arose during a visit, on the same basis as nationals of the host member state; they also provide

for EC member states to refer patients elsewhere in the Community specifically for treatment of pre-existing conditions. The costs incurred in respect of all such treatments for EC nationals are ultimately met by the patients' home state. The United Kingdom has bilateral reciprocal health agreements with 25 non-EC states, all of which cover immediately necessary treatment; 11 also allow for a limited number of referrals specifically for treatment for pre-existing conditions. These agreements provide for each of the signatories to meet the cost of the treatment provided in its own territory.

Any visitor to the United Kingdom may apply to use the general medical services in the same way and on the same conditions as those who are ordinarily resident here. It is a matter for the discretion of the individual practitioner whether to accept someone for treatment as an NHS patient.

Cancer

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys' recent publication. "Socio-demographic Differences in Cancer Survival 1971-83"; and what action he proposes to take on behalf of the various groups of people identified as being more prone to cancer and less likely to survive it.

Mr. Freeman: The report gives a valuable and detailed analysis of differences in cancer mortality between social groups which will be studied with interest by our expert advisers. It suggests that these differences are more likely to be attributable to variations in the incidence of cancer than in its treatment. The Government attach great importance to securing both reductions in incidence and improvements in survival for all groups, through comprehensive programmes of prevention, including health education and screening, and by encouraging equality of access to high-quality services.

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action he proposes to take to increase the number of women attending for mammographs; and whether he has any plans to make more effective the breast cancer screening programme.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Take-up among those invited for screening is an essential factor in the achievement of an effective screening programme. A number of initiatives have been undertaken to educate and encourage women to respond positively to their invitations. The programme is funding four cancer screening development workers' posts in districts with multi-ethnic populations to examine the acceptability of breast screening to women in these groups and find out whether any special approach is required. The Cancer Research Campaign is conducting a study into attendance and non-attendance of those invited for screening and how take-up might be encouraged by primary health care teams. The breast screening research sub-committee of the United Kingdom co-ordinating committee on cancer research has set up a working group to review and co-ordinate existing studies into acceptability and to stimulate new research in this area. The Health Education Authority has conducted research, produced leaflets and other forms of information on the programme and supported local health education initiatives. We also encourage women's voluntary organisations to promote the programme and to encourage their members to take up their screening invitations when they receive them.

London Air Ambulance

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what charges he expects to be generated by the London Air Ambulance; who he anticipates will be the payers and whom the beneficiaries; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: Express Newspapers plc is providing the aircraft used by the helicopter emergency medical service completely free of charge to the National Health Service. This use of a medically staffed helicopter for emergency purposes is to be the subject of an independent evaluation to be carried out by Professor Brian Williams of the department of community medicine, Sheffield university.

Advertising Expenditure

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what was the total publicity and advertising expenditure of his Department and its predecessor and public bodies for which his Department and its predecessor has responsibility in *(a)* 1979 and *(b)* 1989.

Mr. Freeman: Estimated expenditure on publicity and advertising for the financial years 1978-79 and 1988-89 was:

	£ million
1978-79	13·5
1988-89	44·6

These figures include expenditure by the Department of Health, health authorities in England, the Health Education Council (in 1978-79) and the Health Education Authority (in 1988-89). Information on publicity and advertising expenditure by other special health authorities and public bodies is not available centrally, but is not thought to be significant.

Midwives

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he has any proposals which could alter employment rights, pay and working conditions of midwives; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Recommendations on pay for nurses and midwives are put forward each year by the independent pay review body for nursing staff, midwives, health visitors and professions allied to medicine. Conditions of service are negotiated in the nursing and midwifery staffs negotiating council and the general Whitley council. We have no proposals to alter these arrangements.

Under the Government's proposals for reform of the National Health Service as described in the White Paper "Working for Patients", National Health Service trusts will be free to settle the pay and conditions of their staff, including midwives. They will be able to follow national agreements or adopt partly or wholly different arrangements.

Staff who transfer from health authority to National Health Service trust employment will retain their existing contracts and all rights arising from them, subject to

substitution of the new employer for the old and any consequential technical changes. It will be open to National Health Service trusts to seek to introduce changes in existing contracts at any time after transfer.

Treatment Statistics

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will publish for each English and Welsh district health authority the number of residents treated in terms of the 1988-89 consultant episodes *(a)* for all specialties and *(b)* omitting the specialties of maternity and psychiatry.

Mr. Freeman: The information for English district health authorities is expected to be published towards the end of this year. Information for Wales is the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

Lancashire (General Practitioners)

Mr. Miscampbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many general practitioners in Lancashire have applied to manage their own indicative budgets.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: I refer my hon. and learned Friend to the reply I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Lancashire, West (Mr. Hind) on 20 March at column *540*.

Wheelchairs and Artificial Limbs

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how spinal injury units will recover the cost of the appliances from other regions under the new proposed arrangements for dispensing wheelchairs and artificial limbs.

Mr. Freeman: Under proposals in the NHS and Community Care Bill, services provided by spinal injury units after 1 April 1991 will be supplied and paid for under contracts in the same way as all other hospital and community health services.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how the ring-fencing of funds for the dispensing of wheelchairs and artificial limbs will affect the consumers' choice of the best and most appropriate appliance; and whether health authorities will be able to spend over the ring-fenced budget.

Mr. Freeman: The ring fencing of funds will guarantee a minimum level of resources for these services sufficient to provide the extensive range of appliances already available and being developed. It will be for health authorities to decide how best to meet the needs of their population for these appliances and they will, of course, be able to spend on these services more than the ring-fenced amount by funding from their general allocations.

Abortion

Mrs. Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make it his policy to introduce regulations under the provisions of the Abortion Act to require those charitable pregnancy counselling agencies which refer women for abortions to keep records of the numbers of such women they refer in any given year.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Pregnancy advice bureaux are required to maintain registers which show, inter alia, whether women are referred for abortion. These registers are inspected by the Departments' investigative officers in their inspection visits.

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will define "seriously handicapped" as used in statutory ground 4 of the Abortion Act 1967.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The opinion as to whether an abortion is justified in terms of ground 4, or any other ground, of the Abortion Act 1967 is for two registered medical practitioners to form in good faith, in the light of their clinical judgment of all the particular circumstances of the individual case.

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidelines his Department has issued on abortions after 24 weeks' gestation; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: When it became clear in 1985 that the consensus of the relevant professional bodies about the point at which a foetus could be said to be viable had changed in the light of medical and scientific developments to 24 weeks' gestation, the Department made it a condition of approval for those private sector clinics licensed to carry out abortions over 20 weeks that no abortions were carried out over 24 weeks' gestation. In addition, that view was drawn to the attention of clinicians working in both the private sector and in the NHS. There has been a significant reduction in recent years in the number of abortions after 24 weeks. Only 22 were carried out in England and Wales in 1988.

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if his Department has issued any instructions to hospitals and private abortion clinics regarding the implications of Justice Brookes's recent ruling on the meaning of the Infant Life (Preservation) Act; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The question of whether a child is capable of being born alive is for the court to decide in any particular case on the basis of the evidence before it.

Nurses' Homes

Mr. Shersby: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what consideration was given by the nursing and midwifery staffs negotiating council at its meeting on 13 March to abating board and lodging charges for nurses living in nurses' homes by the rates element in respect of the collective community charge payable with effect from 18 April.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The nursing and midwifery staffs negotiating council has now reached agreement on lodging charges for 1990-91. To take account of the abolition of domestic rates in England and Wales, charges in those countries are being reduced by the element attributable to rates.

Terminally Ill People

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assistance is provided to people who are terminally ill in respect of prescriptions and other medical costs.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Terminally ill patients incur no charges for the treatment or medication that they

receive during their stay in hospital. Although they are not specifically exempted from prescription and other NHS charges there are wide-ranging exemption arrangements designed to help patients who might have difficulty in paying NHS charges. As the result of these arrangements over 75 per cent. of all items dispensed in the NHS are provided free. People who are not exempt but who need frequent medication can reduce the cost by purchasing a prepayment certificate.

Community Charge

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what are his best estimates of the numbers of National Health Servie properties which have been designated for the collective community charge; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: This information is not held centrally.

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps have been taken by health authorities to reduce the rate-inclusive rents paid by nurses and other staff living in health authority accommodation following the introduction of the community charge on 1 April; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Health authorities have been advised in circular EL(90)MB/43 that as from 1 April 1990 they should cease to collect the rates addition to rental charges. A copy has been placed in the Library.

The level of lodging charges for nursing staff is determined by the nursing and midwifery staffs negotiating council, which has recently reached agreement on charges for 1990-91. To take account of the abolition of domestic rates in England and Wales, charges in those countries are being reduced by the element attributable to rates.

Community Pharmacists

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will give details of the number of prescriptions issued by community pharmacists for the year 1989.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The information requested is not yet available.

Benzodiazepines

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many repeat prescriptions of benzodiazepines are given to patients without doctors seeing the patient for a check-up; and if he has any plans to prevent or reduce such practice.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The information requested cannot be determined from centrally held information on prescribing. Doctors already have advice about the use of these drugs from the Committee on Safety of Medicines, the Royal College of Physicians, Psychiatrists and General Practitioners, the British Medical Association and the British National Formulary.

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list those clinics and hospitals in England and Wales which specialise chiefly in helping people to withdraw from benzodiazepines.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: This information is not held centrally.

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will state how much his Department is spending in 1990-91 on warning the public about the dangers of addiction to *(a)* hard drugs and *(b)* benzodiazepines.

Mr. Freeman: The current phase of the national drug publicity campaign cost £3·8 million, spread over two financial years 1989-90 and 1990-91. The campaign warns of the danger of misusing any drug. Further expenditure in 1990-91 will be considered as appropriate.

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information he has on the blanket prescribing of benzodiazepine hypnotics in hospitals.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The use of benzodiazepines in the treatment of a patient is a matter of clinical judgment. Information on the volume of benzodiazepines prescribed in hospitals is not held centrally.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment by how much the work force in employment in the United Kingdom has increased since 1983.

Mr. Patrick Nicholls *[pursuant to his reply, 13 March 1990, c. 203-04]:* I regret that the information given in my reply of 13 March 1990 was incorrect, as it gave employment estimates prior to the revisions following the publication, on 9 March 1990, of the 1989 labour force survey results.The correct information is as follows:

Since 1983 the United Kingdom work force in employment has been on a rising trend. In September 1989 the latest date for which information is available, the work force in employment was 26,955,000. This represents an increase of 3,391,000 of 14·4 per cent. since March 1983 when the figure was 23,564,000.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Regional Functions

Mr. Caborn: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what functions his Department carries out at the regional level; where the regional offices are located in each of the regions; what staff are employed and at what grades; what proportion of his Department's budget is spent in each of the regions; and what geographical boundaries determine his Department's regions.

Mr. Curry: The Department has a three-tier structure of regional, divisional and area offices. The geographical extent of the five regions and the location of the regional offices are as follows:

Region	*Regional Office*	*Area, by county*
South Western	Bristol	Avon, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Somerset, Wiltshire, Isles of Scilly.
South Eastern	Reading	Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Kent, Oxfordshire, Surrey, East and West Sussex, parts of the Greater London area.

Region	*Regional Office*	*Area, by county*
Eastern	Cambridge	Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, Suffolk, parts of the Greater London area.
Midlands and Western	Wolverhampton	Cheshire, Derbyshire, Lancashire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Merseyside and Greater Manchester, West Midlands Metropolitan County, Hereford and Worcester.
Northern	Leeds	Cleveland, Cumbria, Durham, Humberside, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear, North, South and West Yorkshire.

A wide range of functions are carried out at the regional level. These include the administration of a number of grants and subsidy schemes, the provision of scientific, professional and technical advice (both free and charged), the conduct of research and development, the statutory control of animal diseases, the provision of a veterinary laboratory diagnostic service, meat hygiene and consumer protection work and safeguarding animal welfare.

As at 1 March 1990, the total number of staff of all grades stationed in each region was:

Region	*Administrative*	*ADAS*		
		FCS	*RDS*	*SVS*
South Western	469	264	12	250
South Eastern	275·5	212	101	
Eastern	427	218	110·5	213
Northern	438	220	92·5	
Midlands and Western	533·5	326	91	165·5
TOTAL	2,143	1,339	407	628·5

ADAS: Agricultural Development and Advisory Service.
FCS: Farm and Countryside Service.
RDS: Research and Development Service.
SVS: State Veterinary Service.

These figures do not include staff at the central veterinary and science laboratories, staff engaged on fisheries work and outstationed headquarters staff. Nor do they include the 345 ADAS officers stationed in Scotland and Wales.

I regret that a detailed breakdown of the regional staff by grade and an analysis of the Department's budget by region are not readily available and could be provided only at disproportionate expense.

Horses (Export)

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is his policy towards the export of live horses to European abattoirs after 1992.

Mr. Maclean: We are seeking to maintain controls to prevent the export of horses for slaughter.

Leptospirosis Vaccine

Mr. Gill: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the average cost of leptospirosis vaccine in the United Kingdom; and what information he has on its cost in New Zealand.

Mr. Maclean: I have no information on the cost of leptospirosis vaccines in this country or New Zealand.

Sheep Brains and Offals

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the research that is being carried out by his Department into infectious diseases passing into the human food chain by the use of sheep brains and offals being fed to pigs, sheep and poultry being reared for domestic consumption.

Mr. Maclean: A number of areas of current research are relevant to this topic, including:

- Monitoring of any spongiform encephalopathy in animals by brain histology.
- Pathology of experimental mouse scrapie.
- Inactivation studies in comparison with scrapie.
- Strain typing in comparison with BSE.
- Inactivation studies in relation to meat and bone meal.
- Technical developments in diagnosis by using scrapie associated fibrils and genotyping of farm sheep.
- Breeding programmes for resistance to scrapie.
- Transmission studies using marmosets, sheep and goats.

Grade 1 Agricultural Land

Dame Peggy Fenner: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) what are the current restrictions on release of grade 1 agricultural land;

(2) what exceptions are permitted to the criteria governing the release of grade 1 agricultural land.

Mr. Curry: Responsibility for day-to-day planning control, including the consideration and determination of applications for planning permission, rests with the appropriate planning authority in the first instance. The Government issue guidance to local authorities on development involving agricultural land which is contained in DOE circular 16/87 issued on 8 May 1987. Annex B to that circular gives information and technical guidance on specific agricultural matters, including agricultural land quality, to assist local authorities in applying the policy contained in the main body of the circular. Copies of the circular are available in the Library of the House.

Food Advisory Committee

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, pursuant to the reply to the hon. Member for Caerphilly (Mr. Davies) of 13 December 1989, *Official Report*, column *695-97*, whether there have been any changes in the membership of the Food Advisory Committee.

Mr. Maclean: There has been one change in the membership of the Food Advisory Committee since last December. I have recently accepted Mr. M. J. Boxall's resignation. I am currently considering suitable replacements and I will make an announcement when the appointment is decided.

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will publish a table showing the number of confirmed cases of bovine spongiform encephalopathy for each county of England and Wales for the four-week period ended 16 March.

Mr. Maclean: The information is as follows:

County	*Number*
Avon	23
Bedfordshire	1
Berkshire	2
Buckinghamshire	4
Cambridgeshire	1
Cheshire	27
Cleveland	1
Clwyd	5
Cornwall	83
Cumbria	9
Derbyshire	17
Devon	84
Dorset	78
Durham	2
Dyfed	24
Essex	6
Gloucestershire	25
Gwent	9
Gwynedd	4
Hampshire	37
Hereford and Worcester	18
Hertfordshire	3
Humberside	4
Isle of Wight	3
Kent	18
Lancashire	15
Leicestershire	22
Lincolnshire	3
Norfolk	16
Northamptonshire	9
Northumberland	4
Nottinghamshire	8
Oxfordshire	27
Powys	8
Shropshire	19
Somerset	90
Staffordshire	19
Suffolk	11
Surrey	13
Sussex East	14
Sussex West	26
West Midlands	2
Warwickshire	16
Wiltshire	53
Yorkshire North	33
Yorkshire South	5
Yorkshire West	8
Total	909

Abattoirs

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how much meat was produced in total from abattoirs in the United Kingdom in 1989.

Mr. Gummer: Total red meat production from United Kingdom abattoirs in 1989 was 2·276 million tonnes carcase weight.

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how much meat was consumed in the United Kingdom from non-European Community approved abattoirs in 1989.

Mr. Gummer: Data on consumption from particular abattoirs are not collected; red meat production from non EC-approved abattoirs in 1989 was 1·1525 million tonnes carcase weight.

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will place in the Library the general conclusions by the European Community arising from their 1989 inspection visit to slaughterhouses in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Gummer: A formal report from the European Commission has not been received. However, I will write to the hon. Member about the information which is available.

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many European Community approved abattoirs received *(a)* suspension warnings and *(b)* suspensions in 1989 under the Fresh Meat Export (Hygiene and Inspection) Regulations.

Mr. Gummer: During 1989, five suspension warnings were issued and export approval was suspended in four cases.

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how much meat from European Community approved abattoirs in the United Kingdom

was *(a)* exported and *(b)* consumed in the United Kingdom in 1989 under the Fresh Meat Export (Hygiene and Inspection) Regulations.

Mr. Gummer: Abattoirs approved to engage in intra-Community trade under the Fresh Meat Export (Hygiene and Inspection) Regulations 1987 may produce fresh meat for sale on domestic markets as well as for export. It is a matter of commercial judgment for each operator to decide whether to produce meat for export or for domestic markets and figures are not held by my Department as to the destination of the meat from such plants.

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether the suspension on providing meat to the European Community from the slaughter-house at North Torrington is still in force; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: Yes, this suspension of export approval is still in force. Since suspending export approval, officials have been in discussion with the plant management regarding the necessary improvements, and these are being carried out. Suspension will not be lifted till we are satisfied that the plant conforms to EC export conditions.

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what was the total number of abattoirs in *(a)* the United Kingdom, *(b)* England, *(c)* Scotland and *(d)* Wales; and how many were approved for export to the European Community for each year since 1983 for (i) England, (ii) Scotland and (iii) Wales.

Mr. Gummer: Whether plants apply for export approval is a matter for their commercial judgment. The total number of abattoirs and of those which have export approval are as follows.

	Northern Ireland	*England*	*Scotland*	*Wales*	*United Kingdom*
1983					
EC	16	60	22	—	98
Total	20	873	79	69	1,041
1984					
EC	16	61	22	—	99
Total	20	861	79	70	1,030
1985					
EC	17	63	24	1	105
Total	21	852	75	72	1,020
1986					
EC	17	66	23	1	107
Total	21	815	73	72	981
1987					
EC	17	57	24	1	99
Total	21	793	73	71	958
1988					
EC	18	55	24	2	99
Total	23	782	68	65	938
1989					
EC	17	54	24	3	98
Total	23	783	68	66	940

Set-aside Scheme

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what information he requests from applicants to the set-aside scheme with regard to the non-agricultural use of the land to be set aside and planning permission; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: Farmers wishing to set aside land to non-agricultural use are required to specify the land concerned and to describe the intended new use. Tenants must submit a copy of a consent form signed by the landlord showing that he is content that the land be used for non-agricultural purposes. As already indicated to the hon. Member, information as regards planning permission is not required from applicants, although advice on the point is given in the scheme literature.

Flood Defences

Mr. Key: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has made a recent assessment of the state of flood defences.

Mr. Maclean *[pursuant to his reply, Official Report, 8 March 1990, c. 994]:* I am sorry that some incorrect information was provided about grant rates available for flood protection work. At present, under the Land Drainage Act 1976, grant may be paid to the National Rivers Authority at one of four basic rates—15, 30, 45 and 55 per cent. In addition, a supplement of 15 per cent. is added for work to protect against flooding from the sea and tidal rivers. From April this supplement will increase to 20 per cent. and the maximum grant available will therefore be 75 per cent. For local authorities, the basic rate for flood defence work is 26 per cent. The 15 per cent. sea and tidal supplement may also apply at present and, again, the supplement will rise to 20 per cent. in April. Where local authorities carry out work under the Coast Protection Act 1949, grant may be payable within the range 24 to 70 per cent.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Pensions

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what plans the Government have to introduce legislation to ensure that all private pensions are index-linked; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to my hon. Friend the Member for Ludlow (Mr. Gill) on 16 March at columns *403-04*.

Benefits

Mr. Ralph Howell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what was the central Government expenditure on rent rebates, rent allowances, rate rebates and family credit in 1979 and 1989; and what was the income level at which these benefits ceased and the number of persons in receipt of such benefits in each year.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The information available is in the table. In 1979-80 assistance with housing costs was provided through the supplementary benefit scheme administered by the Department of Health and Social

Security and the rent and rate rebate and rent allowance schemes which were the responsibility of the Department of the Environment. The costs and numbers receiving assistance with housing costs through supplementary benefit are not available and the figures for 1979-80 therefore represent the Department of the Environment schemes only. Expenditure in 1989-90 is the amount of central Government grant paid to local authorities through housing benefit subsidy. Direct comparison of the two sets of figures would be misleading because of the limited nature of the information for 1979-80.

Under both the 1979-80 schemes and the current scheme for supporting housing costs, the amount of help available to a person would be dependent partly upon those housing costs. There is, therefore, no single income level at which help would run out.

In 1979, the income level at which family income supplement ceased depended upon the number of children in the family. In family credit the level depends on the number of children and their ages.

	1979-80		*1989-90*	
	£ million	*(000s)*	*£ million*	*(000s)*
Rent rebate	238	1,205	2,748	3,115
Rent allowance	40	220	1,260	1,040
Rate rebate	200	3,065	1,178	4,480
Family Income supplement	27	80	—	—
Family credit	—	—	435	315

Advertising Expenditure

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what was the total publicity and advertising expenditure of his Department and its predecessor and public bodies for which his Department and its predecessor has responsibility in *(a)* 1979 and *(b)* 1989.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: *(a)* The information requested for 1979 is not available.

(b) Expenditure for 1989 was £16·7 million.

Income Support

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will give the latest report on the number of claimants living in the Birkenhead constituency aged below 25 years, over 25 years and married couples, drawing income support and the number of dependants covered by each of these three groups of payments.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The information could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Industrial Injuries

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security when he expects to make a decision on the Industrial Injuries Advisory Council recommendation that work in ships' engine rooms be added to the list of prescribed occupations; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: The recommendations by the Industrial Injuries Advisory Council contained in "Occupational Deafness" (Cm. 817) will be reviewed in the light of its further report of the operation and administration of the occupational deafness scheme which is expected later this year.

Social Fund

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) if he is satisfied as to the levels of performance achieved by the social fund microcomputer;

(2) when he anticipates incorporating the social fund into the mainframe computer system currently being installed for income support claims.

Mr. Scott: Yes. The present system is providing good support to local offices. We are continually seeking to improve the system and a team is currently working on plans to transfer the social fund on to the mainframe computer as part of the operational strategy. It will report in June 1990. Meanwhile, from April 1990, a new management system for the social fund will be operated using a mainframe computer.

Attendance Allowance Board

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what external and independent agency's remit includes investigating the Attendance Allowance Board.

Mr. Scott: There is no external or independent agency with a remit to investigate the board, but there is a right of appeal to a social security commissioner on a point of law.

Terminally Ill People

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what assistance is provided to people who are terminally ill in respect of attendance allowance and other benefits.

Mr. Scott: All the relevant social security benefits are available to people who are terminally ill. In addition, the current Social Security Bill includes provision to remove the six-month qualifying period for attendance allowance for terminally ill people from October this year. The Department's leaflet "Sick or Disabled?" (FB 28) gives information on the benefits available to sick and disabled people. A copy is in the Library.

Community Care Grant

Mr. Hardy: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will amend the criteria governing the award of community care grant in order to ensure that there is adequate support for people in need.

Mr. Scott: We have no plans to change the criteria governing eligibility for community care grants. Social fund community care grants help people re-establish themselves or remain in the community, ease exceptional pressures on families and assist with certain travelling expenses. The social fund with its mixture of grants and interest-free loans provides extra help to those in receipt of income support.

Community Charge

Mr. Hayward: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what would be the cost of raising the savings limit for social security benefits from £8,000 to £16,000; and what would be the figure for application of such a limit solely to the community charge.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The current capital limits are £6,000 for income support and family credit, and £8,000

for housing benefit and community charge benefit. The estimates for raising these limits are in the table (assuming that the present rules for imputing a weekly income to capital of more than £3,000 are maintained).

	£
Current capital limits increased to:	16,000
Full year cost at current rate (£ million)	
IS, FC, HB and CCB	180
CCB	20

Notes:
Costs rounded to the nearest £5 million.
Assumes community charges in line with SSA based DOE estimates.

Mr. Speller: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will raise the limit on personal savings below which reductions in community charge are allowed from £3,000 and £8,000 to £6,000 and £16,000, respectively; and if he will adjust the scale of relief accordingly.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The upper capital limit, above which there is no entitlement to community charge benefit, is to be raised to £16,000 from 1 April when the benefit scheme comes into operation. The first £3,000 of capital will continue to be ignored and the rules which assume some income from capital above that level will also continue.

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) how much community charge benefit will be received by (i) a single person with capital of £3,000 and at each £250 band to £16,000 and (ii) a married person with capital of £3,000 and at each £250 band to £8,000, assuming their partner holds the same level of capital, paying a community charge of *(a)* £250 per annum, *(b)* £300 per annum, *(c)* £350 per annum, *(d)* £400 per annum, *(e)* £450 per annum and *(f)* £500 per annum, giving, in each case, the amount of benefit attributable to raising the capital limit for singles and couples to £16,000;

(2) how much housing benefit will be received by *(a)* a single person and *(b)* a married/cohabiting couple with capital of £3,000 and £16,000 and for each £250 between, paying rent of £25 per week and £100 per week and for each £5 between; and if he will indicate, in each case, how much of the benefit is attributable to raising the capital limit for singles and couples to £16,000.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The questions assume that the claimant has no resources other than capital. The calculations of entitlement to housing benefit and community charge benefit, therefore, take account only of assumed tariff income on the capital. For the couple, the result is that entitlement remains at the maximum, whatever the level of capital. For the single person, entitlement remains at the maximum until capital exceeds £12,000, at which point the tariff income exceeds the applicable amount and the respective tapers apply in the normal way.

Wherever capital exceeds £8,000, benefit entitlement is attributable to the rise in the capital limit.

The tables show the amount of entitlement to benefit.

Amount of benefit entitlement for a married or cohabiting couple aged up to 59
(a) Housing Benefit, assuming that the whole rent shown is eligible for benefit

Capital	*Rent £25·00*	*Rent £30·00*	*Rent £35·00*	*Rent £40·00*	*Rent £45·00*	*Rent £50·00*	*Rent £55·00*	*Rent £60·00*	*Rent £65·00*	*Rent £70·00*	*Rent £75·00*	*Rent £80·00*	*Rent £85·00*	*Rent £90·00*	*Rent £95·00*	*Rent £100·00*
£3,000·00	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
£16,000·00	25·00	30·00	35·00	40·00	45·00	50·00	55·00	60·00	65·00	70·00	75·00	80·00	85·00	90·00	95·00	100·00

(b) Community Charge Benefit

	Community Charge per person					
	£	£	£	£	£	£
£ annual	*250·00*	*300·00*	*350·00*	*400·00*	*450·00*	*500·00*
£ weekly	*4·79*	*5·75*	*6·71*	*7·67*	*8·63*	*9·59*
Capital						
£3,000·00	—	—	—	—	—	—
£16,000·00	7·66	9·20	10·74	12·20	13·80	15·34

Amount of benefit entitlement for a single person aged 25 to 59
(a) Housing Benefit, assuming that the whole rent shown is eligible for benefit

Capital not over	*Rent £25·00*	*Rent £30·00*	*Rent £35·00*	*Rent £40·00*	*Rent £45·00*	*Rent £50·00*	*Rent £55·00*	*Rent £60·00*	*Rent £65·00*	*Rent £70·00*	*Rent £75·00*	*Rent £80·00*	*Rent £85·00*	*Rent £90·00*	*Rent £95·00*	*Rent £100·00*
£12,000·00	25·00	30·00	35·00	40·00	45·00	50·00	55·00	60·00	65·00	70·00	75·00	80·00	85·00	90·00	95·00	100·00
£12,250·00	24·81	29·81	34·81	39·81	44·81	49·81	54·81	59·81	64·81	69·81	74·81	79·81	84·81	89·81	94·81	99·81
£12,500·00	24·16	29·16	34·16	39·16	44·16	49·16	54·16	59·16	64·16	69·16	74·16	79·16	84·16	89·16	94·16	99·16
£12,750·00	23·51	28·51	33·51	38·51	43·51	48·51	53·51	58·51	63·51	68·51	73·51	78·51	83·51	88·51	93·51	98·51
£13,000·00	22·86	27·86	32·86	37·86	42·86	47·86	52·86	57·86	62·86	67·86	72·86	77·86	82·86	87·86	92·86	97·86
£13,250·00	22·21	27·21	32·21	37·21	42·21	47·21	52·21	57·21	62·21	67·21	72·21	77·21	82·21	87·21	92·21	97·21
£13,500·00	21·56	26·56	31·56	36·56	41·56	46·56	51·56	56·56	61·56	66·56	71·56	76·56	81·56	86·56	91·56	96·56
£13,750·00	20·91	25·91	30·91	35·91	40·91	45·91	50·91	55·91	60·91	65·91	70·91	75·91	80·91	85·91	90·91	95·91
£14,000·00	20·26	25·26	30·26	35·26	40·26	45·26	50·26	55·26	60·26	65·26	70·26	75·26	80·26	85·26	90·26	95·26
£14,250·00	19·61	24·61	29·61	34·61	39·61	44·61	49·61	54·61	59·61	64·61	69·61	74·61	79·61	84·61	89·61	94·61
£14,500·00	18·96	23·96	28·96	33·96	38·96	43·96	48·96	53·96	58·96	63·96	68·96	73·96	78·96	83·96	88·96	93·96
£14,750·00	18·31	23·31	28·31	33·31	38·31	43·31	48·31	53·31	58·31	63·31	68·31	73·31	78·31	83·31	88·31	93·31
£15,000·00	17·66	22·66	27·66	32·66	37·66	42·66	47·66	52·66	57·66	62·66	67·66	72·66	77·66	82·66	87·66	92·66
£15,250·00	17·01	22·01	27·01	32·01	37·01	42·01	47·01	52·01	57·01	62·01	67·01	72·01	77·01	82·01	87·01	92·01
£15,500·00	16·36	21·36	26·36	31·36	36·36	41·36	46·36	51·36	56·36	61·36	66·36	71·36	76·36	81·36	86·36	91·36
£15,750·00	15·71	20·71	25·71	30·71	35·71	40·71	45·71	50·71	55·71	60·71	65·71	70·71	75·71	80·71	85·71	90·71
£16,000·00	15·06	20·06	25·06	30·06	35·06	40·06	45·06	50·06	55·06	60·06	65·06	70·06	75·06	80·06	85·06	90·06

(b) Community Charge Benefit

	Community Charge per person					
	£	£	£	£	£	£
£ annually	*250·00*	*300·00*	*350·00*	*400·00*	*450·00*	*500·00*
£ weekly	*4·79*	*5·75*	*6·71*	*7·67*	*8·63*	*9·59*
Capital not over						
£12,000·00	3·83	4·60	5·37	6·14	6·90	7·67
£12,250·00	3·79	4·56	5·32	6·09	6·86	7·63
£12,500·00	3·64	4·41	5·17	5·94	6·71	7·48
£12,750·00	3·49	4·26	5·02	5·79	6·56	7·33
£13,000·00	3·34	4·11	4·87	5·64	6·41	7·18
£13,250·00	3·19	3·96	4·72	5·49	6·26	7·03
£13,500·00	3·04	3·81	4·57	5·34	6·11	6·88
£13,750·00	2·89	3·66	4·42	5·19	5·96	6·73
£14,000·00	2·74	3·51	4·27	5·04	5·81	6·58
£14,250·00	2·59	3·36	4·12	4·89	5·66	6·43
£14,500·00	2·44	3·21	3·97	4·74	5·51	6·28
£14,750·00	2·29	3·06	3·82	4·59	5·36	6·13
£15,000·00	2·14	2·91	3·67	4·44	5·21	5·98
£15,250·00	1·99	2·76	3·52	4·29	5·06	5·83
£15,500·00	1·84	2·61	3·37	4·14	4·91	5·68
£15,750·00	1·69	2·46	3·22	3·99	4·76	5·53
£16,000·00	1·54	2·31	3·07	3·84	4·61	5·38

Housing Benefit

Mr. Dewar: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what are the most recent figures for the total number of *(a)* widows in Scotland *(b)* widows who are also householders in Scotland and *(c)* widow householders who are also in receipt of housing benefit.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard *[holding answer 22 February 1990]:* It is estimated that in May 1988 22,000 widows in Scotland who were receiving widows' benefit or war widows' pension were also receiving housing benefit. Information is not collected about numbers of other widows receiving housing benefit whose income did not include these widows' benefits. The number of widows and widow householders in Scotland is not available.

HOME DEPARTMENT

House of Fraser

4. **Mr. Ashby:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, in the light of the findings of the inspector in the affairs of the House of Fraser and the Al Fayed brothers, he will consider the immediate deporation of the Al Fayed brothers as undesirable aliens.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The report of the inspectors appointed under the Companies Act does not provide a basis for the use of deportation powers.

Prisoners

19. **Mr. Ron Brown:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people are currently serving a prison sentence in England and Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: On 31 January 1990 there were about 36,250 sentenced prisoners in prison service establishments in England and Wales. This is 1,625 fewer than a year earlier.

85. **Mr. Quentin Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the current prison population; what it was one year ago; and what projections he has made for the prison population over the next five years.

Mr. Mellor: I would refer my hon. Friend to the reply given earlier to my hon. Friend the Member for Devon, West and Torridge (Miss Nicholson).

75. **Mr. Batiste:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of the population of England and Wales is currently in prison; and what are the figures for Germany, France, Italy, and Holland.

Mr. Mellor: The latest information, for 1 September 1988, published by the Council of Europe is shown in the table. The prison population per 100,000 inhabitants in England and Wales has subsequently fallen to 93 on 31 January 1990.

The Council of Europe publishes information on the prison population in member states twice a year in its "Prison Information Bulletin", copies of which are held in the Library. An article on "International comparisons of prison populations" by Collier and Tarling (Home Office research bulletin No. 23 pages 48 to 54) showed that the figures for different countries are unlikely to be strictly comparable, because the definitions of prisons and prisoners vary from one country to another, reflecting different legal and administrative systems. Examples of differences in the definitions are the inclusion or exclusion in a country's figures of juvenile offenders and mentally disordered offenders.

Prison population per 100,000 inhabitants in selected member states of the Council of Europe on 1 February 1988.

Member state	*Prison population per 100,000 inhabitants*
England and Wales[1]	100
West Germany	85
France	81
Italy	60
Netherlands	40

[1] Includes those held in police cells.

67. **Mr. Knox:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people were in prison at the most recent count.

81. **Mr. Yeo:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the total number of people in prison.

Mr. Mellor: On Friday 16 March, there were 47,115 people held in prison service establishments in England and Wales. This represents a fall of 2,722 people since the same time last year.

60. **Mr. Battle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what progress has been made in implementing the recommendations of the report of the prison department working group in the management of vulnerable prisoners.

Mr. Mellor: Prison rule 43 and young offender institution rule 46 were amended with effect from 18 December 1989 in accordance with recommendations of the working group. Instructions and guidance based on other recommendations are to be issued shortly.

Birmingham Pub Bombings

20. **Mr. Galloway:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has sought the opinion of the Lord Chief Justice on the new evidence in the Birmingham pub bombings case.

41. **Mr. David Young:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received from Birmingham city council on the Birmingham pub bombings case.

77. **Mrs. Mahon:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received from Birmingham city council on the Birmingham pub bombing case.

Mr. Waddington: I refer the hon. Members to the reply I gave earlier to the hon. Members for Derbyshire, North-East (Mr. Barnes) and for Sunderland, South (Mr. Mullin).

39. **Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to complete his consideration of the new evidence in the Birmingham pub bombings case.

48. **Mr. Andrew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to complete his consideration of the new evidence in the Birmingham pub bombings case.

66. **Ms. Primarolo:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to complete his consideration of the new evidence in the Birmingham pub bombings case.

72. **Mr. Sedgemore:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to complete his consideration of the new evidence in the Birmingham pub bombings case.

79. **Mr. Jim Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has completed his consideration of the new evidence in his Birmingham pub bombings case.

84. **Mr. Clay:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to complete his consideration of the new evidence in the Birmingham pub bombings case.

101. **Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has completed his consideration of the new evidence in the Birmingham pub bombings case.

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has completed his consideration of the new evidence in the Birmingham pub bombings case.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has completed his consideration of the new evidence in the Birmingham pub bombings case.

Mr. John Patten: I refer the hon. Members to the reply given on 21 March to my hon. Friend the Member for Newark (Mr. Alexander) at column *633*.

Juvenile Crime

21. **Mr. David Davis:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent representations he has received on his proposals to make parents more responsible for crimes committed by their children.

70. **Mr. Sims:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent representations he has received on his proposals to make parents more responsible for crimes committed by their children.

Mr. John Patten: Since we published the White Paper "Crime, Justice and Protecting the Public" last month we have received about 10 responses on the proposals to increase parental responsibility. These broadly support the proposals contained in the White Paper. We look forward to receiving more responses in the next few weeks.

Drug Abuse

26. **Mrs. Currie:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many nations will be represented at the world ministerial summit on drug misuse in London this May.

Mr. Mellor: The world ministerial summit to reduce the demand for drugs and to combat the cocaine threat will take place in London on 9 to 11 April. Replies to invitations are still coming in, but to date over 100 countries have indicated their intention to take part, and we are expecting a final attendance of between 120 and 140 countries.

Special Constables

28. **Mr. Roger King:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the number of special constables now attached to police forces in England and Wales; and if he will encourage chief constables to recruit more, particularly among ethnic minority communities.

98. **Mr. Lord:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the number of special constables now attached to police forces in England and Wales; and if he will encourage chief constables to recruit more, particularly among ethnic minority communities.

102. **Mr. Michael Brown:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the number of special constables now attached to police forces in England and Wales; and if he will encourage chief constables to recruit more, particularly among ethnic minority communities.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: On 31 December 1989, there were 15,589 special constables in England and Wales (10,390

men and 5,199 women). Of the total, 469 were from the ethnic minority communities. We encourage chief constables to recruit as many special constables as they can and to make special efforts to recruit from the ethnic minority communities.

43. **Mr. John Townend:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the discussions he had in February with the Police Advisory Board on introducing further measures to improve recruitment of special constables.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The police advisory board welcomed a proposal for a national publicity campaign, which will commence later this year. There was a divergence of views on the question of an incentive payment or "bounty", and this will be further considered in the light of those views.

Sunday Trading

30. **Dr. Hampson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to his answer of 17 January, *Official Report*, column *266*, whether he yet has figures available for prosecutions of retail outlets for trading on Sundays for *(a)* 1989 as a whole and *(b)* December 1989.

Mr. Mellor: Information for 1989 will not be available until autumn 1990.

Drug Traffickers

31. **Mr. Irvine:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the current value of assets for which confiscation orders have been made in respect of drug trafficking offences in the latest year for which figures are available.

Mr. John Patten: The latest figures, which are in respect of confiscation orders made in 1987 and 1988, are given in table 7.25 of "Criminal Statistics England and Wales 1988", a copy of which is in the Library. These show that over £9 million was ordered to be confiscated in those two years. The current estimate by the national drugs intelligence unit of the cumulative total of confiscation orders made since the Drug Trafficking Offences Act came into force in January 1987 is in excess of £16 million.

War Crimes

33. **Mr. Redmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what further representations he has received in respect of alleged war crimes; and if he will make a statement.

86. **Mr. John P. Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what further representations he has received in respect of alleged war crimes; and if he will make a statement.

100. **Mr. Ron Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what further representations he has received in respect of alleged war crimes; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waddington: The issue of war crimes was fully discussed in the Second Reading debate on the War Crimes Bill earlier this week.

Terrorism

34. **Mr. Hunter:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a further statement on the United Kingdom's contribution to international co-operation against terrorism.

Mr. Waddington: The mainstay of our contribution to the international fight against terrorism is the daily advice, assistance and support that we provide to our partners in responding to terrorist threats and incidents. On top of that, we continue to be prominent in the TREVI group and other international fora in working towards joint agreement on effective, practical measures. Co-operation against terrorism is high on the agenda when I meet colleagues in other Governments bilaterally. I recently had such meetings with the State Secretary for the Ministry of the Interior of Spain and the Minister of Justice for Denmark, and I shall be meeting European Community colleagues collectively at the next meeting of TREVI Ministers in Dublin in June.

Data Protection

36. **Mr. Alex Carlile:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received regarding the implications for civil liberties of the public availability of personal information as a result of the introduction of the community charge.

Mr. Mellor: None. The only information which can be made available to the public from the community charge register is the address, surname and initials of those subject to the charge. This information may be inspected, but not copied out, by members of the public.

52. **Mr. Nellist:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the data protection registrar into the number of incidents of alleged misuse of information held by poll tax registration officers; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: My right hon. and learned Friend has no powers to do so. Any evidence of misuse of automated personal information will be investigated by the registrar, who has the responsibility for enforcing the Data Protection Act 1984.

Domestic Violence

35. **Mr. Morgan:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police units trained especially for domestic violence there are in the West Midlands police force.

45. **Mr. Boateng:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police units trained especially for domestic violence there are in the West Midlands police force.

63. **Mr. Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police units trained especially for domestic violence there are in the West Midlands police force.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: There are no such units at present. All officers in the force receive training in the appropriate response to incidents of domestic violence.

37. **Mr. Buckley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will now arrange to collect

information on prosecutions and convictions to distinguish domestic violence in each police force area in England and Wales.

68. **Mr. Fraser:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will now arrange to collect information on prosecutions and convictions to distinguish domestic violence in each police force area in England and Wales.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: I would refer the hon. Member to the reply given earlier to the hon. Member for Clwyd, South-West (Mr. Jones).

49. **Mr. Ian Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many special units have been established within the Metropolitan police area dealing with cases of domestic violence.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: There are currently 34 such units.

Neighbourhood Watch

38. **Mr. Cash:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many neighbourhood watch schemes are now established in England and Wales.

53. **Mr. Simon Coombs:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many neighbourhood watch schemes now operate in England and Wales.

73. **Mr. Wolfson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many neighbourhood watch schemes are now established in England and Wales.

74. **Sir Ian Lloyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many neighbourhood watch schemes are now established in England and Wales.

Mr. John Patten: I refer my hon. Friends to the reply I gave earlier to my hon. Friend the Member for Fulham (Mr. Carrington).

White Paper

40. **Mr. Sumberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received in response to his White Paper "Crime, Justice and Protecting the Public".

Mr. John Patten: We have invited comments on the proposals in the White Paper by 30 April. It received widespread support in both Houses upon publication on 6 February. Since then, we have received a number of responses which have generally welcomed the proposals.

Policing Review

42. **Mr. Shersby:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has received a copy of the operational policing review commissioned by the police staff associations and published on 8 March; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Yes. We look forward to discussion of the issues covered by the review in the course of the many opportunities which exist for exchanging views on police matters with the police staff and local authority associations.

"Fresh Start"

44. **Mr. Archer:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will make a further statement on the operation of "fresh start."

Mr. Mellor: I refer the right hon. and learned Member to my answer of 20 December 1989 to the hon. Member for Leicester, East (Mr. Vaz) at columns *270-71*. We have recruited nationally all the additional staff promised under the "fresh start" framework agreement and will continue to honour our commitments. There are nearly 20 per cent. more officers in post in establishments than three years ago.

Drugs Seizures

46. **Mr. Mans:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of seizures of illicit drugs occurs at British ports of entry.

Mr. Mellor: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Dover (Mr. Shaw) on 22 January 1990 at column *516*.

Deportations

47. **Mr. David Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what has been the increase over the past five years in the numbers of persons removed from the United Kingdom, either by deportations or as illegal immigrants, under his Department's enforcement powers.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The number of persons removed from the United Kingdom under the enforcement powers in the Immigration Act 1971, either as illegal entrants or under the deportation process, increased from 1,357 in 1984 to 3,838 in 1989. More detailed information is published in tables 23 and 24 of the Home Office Command Paper "Control of Immigration: Statistics United Kingdom 1988" (Cm. 726), and today, in Home Office Statistical Bulletin 8/90 "Control of Immigration: Statistics—Fourth Quarter and Year 1989", copies of both of which are in the Library.

Dangerous Dogs

50. **Mr. Bowis:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will bring forward measures to place restrictions on the ownership and sale of certain types of breeds of dangerous dogs.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: As I stated in my reply to questions from the hon. and learned Member for Montgomery (Mr. Carlile) and the hon. Member for Knowsley, North (Mr. Howarth) on 22 February at column *917*, the law was strengthened only last year by the Dangerous Dogs Act 1989. We are studying recent incidents closely and will consider whether the law would benefit from further revision.

Missing Persons

51. **Dr. Reid:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has any plans to establish a national missing persons bureau; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: My right hon. and learned Friend is currently examining two possible methods of collecting

data about missing persons; the establishment of a national bureau and the possibility of putting missing persons on the planned replacement of the police national computer system which was referred to in the reply given to a question from the hon. and learned Member for Leicester, West (Mr. Janner) on 12 February 1990 at columns *6-7*. He expects to receive advice on the police national computer option shortly.

Sentencing

54. **Mr. Hague:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps the Government propose to take to ensure that sentences served more accurately reflect the crimes for which they are imposed.

71. **Mr. Gale:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps the Government propose to take to ensure that sentences served more accurately reflect the crimes for which they are imposed.

78. **Mr. David Nicholson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps the Government propose to take to ensure that sentences served more accurately reflect the crimes for which they are imposed.

Mr. John Patten: Our proposals were set out in the White Paper "Crime, Justice and Protecting the Public" (Cm. 965) which was published on 6 February. The proposed statutory framework for sentencing aims to ensure the length of the sentence reflects the seriousness of the crime. All prisoners will serve at least half their sentences in custody and will be at risk of being returned to custody up to the end of their sentence, if convicted of a further imprisonable offence. All those serving sentences of a year or more will be supervised on release until three quarters of their sentence. Those serving sentences of four years or more would not get parole if this would put the public at risk of serious harm. These arrangements would replace the present system of parole and remission.

Rape

55. **Mr. John Greenway:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the average sentence imposed for the crime of rape for the latest period for which figures are available and for 1979.

80. **Mr. Janman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the average sentence imposed for the crime of rape for the latest period for which figures are available and for 1979.

99. **Mr. Brazier:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the average sentence imposed for the crime of rape for the latest period for which figures are available and for 1979.

Mr. John Patten: In England and Wales the average sentence length imposed on males for the crime of rape was 6·2 years in 1988 and 4·0 years in 1979.

Data for 1989 will not be available until the autumn.

57. **Mr. Murphy:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to monitor the response of police forces in England and Wales to Home Office circular 69/86 on the special needs of victims of rape trauma syndrome.

61. **Mr. Caborn:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to monitor the response of police forces in England and Wales to Home Office circular 69/86 on the special needs of victims of rape trauma syndrome.

Mr. Lofthouse: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to monitor the response of police forces in England and Wales to Home Office circular 69/86 on the special needs of victims of rape trauma syndrome.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: My right hon. and learned Friend has asked Her Majesty's inspectorate of constabulary to monitor arrangements for dealing with rape victims with police forces as part of its annual inspections. In doing so, it covers the main elements of Home Office circular 69-86.

Police (Height Requirement)

56. **Mr. Evennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received concerning the removal of the height requirement for Metropolitan police recruits.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The Commissioner's decision has been generally welcomed and we have received no representations about it.

Council Meetings

58. **Mr. Andrew MacKay:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received on the public order implications of disruption of local council meetings.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: None, as far as I am aware.

Crack

59. **Mr. Cyril D. Townsend:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many cases of the possession of the drug crack are known to the Metropolitan police; and what further action he plans to take to deal with this potential threat.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Figures supplied by the police to the national drugs intelligence unit, which may not be completed, show that in the first two months of 1990 the Metropolitan police made 11 seizures of crack. This compares with 86 seizures in the whole of 1989; 10 in 1988; three in 1987; and three in 1986.

Over £2 million is being made available in 1990-91 for a new drug prevention initiative which will involve the setting up of local drug prevention teams in a number of areas at risk from drugs and in particular from threat of "crack". Areas in London are among those being considered as locations for such teams.

In December 1989 a joint police/Customs task force was set up to combat the "crack" threat. The task force, which is based in London, will target the importation of cocaine linked to the manufacture and distribution of "crack".

BBC

62. **Mr. Robert Hicks:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he intends next meeting the chairman of the BBC; what matters he intends to discuss; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given to his question on 25 January at column *882*.

Crime Victims

64. **Mr. Dunn:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps have been taken to support victims of crime; and what compensation is available to them.

Mr. John Patten: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Chelmsford (Mr. Burns).

62. **Mr. Kim Howells:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will now collect information on prosecutions and convictions in sufficient detail to identify the sex of victims in each police force in England and Wales.

Mr. John Patten: We have no plans to do so. Special studies of victims are published from time to time and the sex of the victim is already known in homicide cases and for nearly all sexual offences. To record the victim's sex for all offences would greatly add to the collection of costs.

Community Policing

62. **Mr. Orme:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on his monitoring of the effect of community policing on crime levels.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The effectiveness of each community policing initiative must be judged on its merits by the responsible chief office of police. This will involve both an assessment of the impact on crime levels and on police relations with the public, together with associated factors such as fear of crime. Her Majesty's inspectorate of constabulary, during its inspection of forces, examines in some detail the aims and objectives of each force and the means by which it is intended to measure effectiveness. In addition, a Home Office research study is currrently examining a wide range of community policing strategies and their effects upon local people.

Tape Recorded Interviews

69. **Mr. Loyden:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received on the pilot scheme to be launched in Liverpool to log interviews with suspects on tapes; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waddington: I have received no such representations. Consultations with interested parties took place before the pilot scheme was established. The arrangements for it are described in my reply to a question from my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Burton (Mr. Lawrence) on 1 March at column *273*.

Lewes Gaol

76. **Ms. Quin:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has any new proposals on prison conditions in the light of Mr. Stewart Fisher's report on Lewes gaol.

Mr. Mellor: We have already announced an increase of £80 million in the prison refurbishment programme for 1990-91, bringing the total available in that year to £120 million. The additional funding will allow for essential health, safety and security measures to be carried out, particularly in kitchens. In all, £400 million will be provided over the next three years to improve prison conditions.

At Her Majesty's prison Lewes, capital expenditure of £2·6 million is already planned for the provision of a new kitchen and reception area, and an extension to the hospital.

Acid House Parties

82. **Mr. Jacques Arnold:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps are being taken to control acid house parties.

Mr. John Patten: The police and local authorities are already taking a variety of measures under existing powers to stop or regulate parties of this kind, but we consider that the law needs to be strengthened. Accordingly, we welcome the introduction by my hon. Friend the Member for Luton, South (Mr. Bright) of the Entertainments (Increased Penalties) Bill. This seeks to empower the summary courts to impose fines of up to £20,000 or imprisonment for up to six months, or both, on people convicted of the relevant offences against the entertainment licensing laws. In addition, the provisions will give magistrates the power to order the confiscation of profits made by those convicted of organising illegal parties or allowing their land or premises to be used for them.

Broadcasting Bill

83. **Mr. McCrindle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many representations he has received regarding the Broadcasting Bill.

Mr. Mellor: We are continuing to receive representations, and to have meetings with groups and individuals, on a range of topics connected with the Broadcasting Bill.

Ports (Policing Costs)

87. **Mr. Nicholas Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received about the costs of policing ports.

Mr. Waddington: None so far this year. There are continuing discussions between the Home Office and the police forces and authorities concerned.

Crime Prevention

89. **Mr. Barry Field:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received in response to his guidelines announcing a new framework for crime prevention partnership.

Mr. John Patten: The new guidelines on crime prevention have been issued in draft form. Written observations are requested by 3 April. Several sets of comments have been received, and I look forward to considering these, and others yet to be submitted, with my colleagues on the ministerial group on crime prevention.

Northumbria Police

90. **Mr. Amos:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he next expects to meet the Chief Constable of Northumbria police; and what he proposes to discuss.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: My right hon. and learned Friend has no current plans to meet the Chief Constable of Northumbria police.

Civil Disturbances

91. **Mr. Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what information he has on the number of arrests in connection with civil disturbances and demonstrations in the last four weeks.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Information on arrests in connection with demonstrations generally is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. However, I am advised that between 5 and 13 March 247 people were arrested following disorder at demonstrations to protest against the community charge.

Citizenship

92. **Mr. Madden:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the average time taken to grant British citizenship.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The average time taken to process applications of all types completed in February 1990 was 25 months.

Missing Children

93. **Mr. John Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the latest official estimate of missing children in Great Britain; and if he will make a statement.

97. **Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will give the latest official estimate of missing children in Great Britain; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: There is no centrally collated figure. Chief officers of police are responsible locally for keeping records of missing persons and for deciding whether to keep separate records of the number of missing children.

Gambling Machines

94. **Mr. Maclennan:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proposals he has to control the use of gambling machines by young people under 18 years.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Of the machines covered by part III of the Gaming Act 1968, "jackpot" machines are permitted only on premises to which young people do not normally have access. With respect to amusement-with-prizes machines, local authorities have extensive powers to prohibit them in premises where they are incidental to the main business, and local authorities also have wide discretion to refuse permits for new amusement arcades.

Devon and Cornwall Constabulary

95. **Mr. Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many new posts were given to the Devon and Cornwall constabulary in the current year.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: My right hon. and learned Friend has approved 17 additional police posts in 1990-91 for the Devon and Cornwall constabulary. This will increase the authorised establishment to 2,863 officers.

Police Rent Allowance

96. **Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will meet the representatives of the Police Federation in Nottingham, North to discuss the police rent allowance.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: No. This is a national issue, on which the chairman and secretary of the Police Federation have already made the views of their members clear to us.

Prosecution Statistics

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will now collect information on prosecutions and convictions in sufficient detail to identify the sex of victims in each police force area in England and Wales.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given earlier to a question from the hon. Member for Clwyd, South-West (Mr. Jones).

Random Breath Tests

Mr. Day: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received on the issue of random breath testing.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given on 21 March to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge (Mr. Shersby) at column *635*.

Probation Service

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department why representatives of the National Association of Probation Officers were refused admission to the press conference launching the White Paper, "Crime, Justice and Protecting the Public".

Mr. Waddington: The Home Office did not hold a press conference to launch the White Paper, "Crime, Justice and Protecting the Public".

Private Security Firms

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, further to his answer of 21 December, *Official Report*, column *386*, whether he has yet decided whether there is scope for further improvement in self-regulation of the private security industry; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: No. We are still considering this matter.

Fraud

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his Department collects statistics about fraud in Britain.

Mr. John Patten: Yes. The Department collects statistics concerning fraud in England and Wales which are published annually in "Criminal Statistics, England and Wales" and quarterly in statistical bulletins. Copies of these publications are available in the Library. Information for Scotland is a matter for my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland.

Prison Hospitals

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will request a report on conditions in prison hospitals in the London area for Her Majesty's inspector of prisons; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: Medical facilities are examined by HM inspectorate of prisons in the course of all full inspections and some short inspections of individual establishments. In 1989 there were full inspections of Wandsworth and Latchmere house and a short inspection of Holloway, which included the medical facilities. Full inspections of Brixton (currently taking place) and Wormwood Scrubs, and a short inspection of Pentonville, are scheduled for this year. My right hon. and learned Friend is not persuaded of the case for asking the chief inspector to carry out a special study of prison hospitals.

Greater Manchester Police

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will establish an independent inquiry into the workings of Greater Manchester police in the light of the success of the appeal against conviction by Thomas Corby.

Mr. Waddington: No. The circumstances of Mr. Corley's case are already the subject of an investigation by Mr. C. F. Bailey, assistant chief constable of West Yorkshire, under the supervision of the Police Complaints Authority.

Oracle Service

Mr. Dunnachie: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the future of the Oracle text service on television.

Mr. Mellor: The Broadcasting Bill will introduce a new regulatory regime for the allocation of the spare capacity on broadcasting signals. This regime will allow the development of new uses for this capacity, other than teletext.

In view of concern that these proposals might result in the absence of a commercial teletext service after 1992, I announced on 15 March that we intended to amend the Bill to require the Independent Television Commission (ITC) to advertise a teletext service using part of the spare capacity on the Channel 3 and 4 signals. The amount of spare capacity to be allocated to this service by the ITC would be subject to the approval of the Secretary of State. The exact amount to be allocated will be a matter for further careful consultation. The necessary amendments to the Bill will be brought forward at the Report stage of the Bill.

Subject to parliamentary approval, the new proposals will come into operation on 1 January 1993, when Oracle's present contract comes to an end. Oracle will be free to apply to the ITC for a new licence.

Drugs

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the cost, in the latest year for which figures are available, of customs operations directed at drug trafficking.

Mr. Ryder: I have been asked to reply.

In the financial year ending 31 March 1989 Customs and Excise estimates its expenditure on drugs enforcement and deterrence work at around £114·5 million. This includes the full costs of dedicated drugs investigation teams and the preventive staff employed at ports and airports whose duties include a prime responsibility for combating drugs smuggling.

Written Answers to Questions

Friday 23 March 1990

NORTHERN IRELAND

Hospital Waiting Lists

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, further to his answer to the hon. Member for Londonderry, East of 9 March, *Official Report*, columns *869-78*, when he expects to reduce the in-patients waiting list to below six months.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 20 March 1990]:* The Government do not believe it to be helpful to forecast waiting times, as the management of waiting lists is a matter for health and social services boards. Under the changes flowing from the NHS review, boards as purchasers of services will be keen to have those services deemed necessary for their populations delivered speedily and efficiently. Boards can therefore be expected to regard waiting times as an important criterion in placing and reviewing contracts.

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, further to his answer to the hon. Member for Londonderry, East of 9 March, *Official Report*, columns *869-78*, how many of the persons on the waiting list for *(a)* less than 12 months and *(b)* more than 12 months who are unfit for work due to their medical condition, but who can be expected to return to work after treatment, have lost their jobs because of the length of the period of waiting for treatment, or as much of such information as is available to him.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 20 March 1990]:* This information is not available.

PRIME MINISTER

East Germany

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Prime Minister whether she will make it her policy not to agree to full membership of the EEC for East Germany in advance of other east European states.

The Prime Minister: We support the integration of the territory of the GDR into the EC as soon as practicable after unification. Intensive and detailed negotiations between Germany and the EC will be required on, for example, agriculture and fisheries, trade and regional policy. I look forward to discussing this at the informal meeting of EC Heads of State or Government in Dublin on 28 April.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Prime Minister whether the Government will make it their policy not to agree to an increase in EEC funding for East Germany until measures have been taken to eliminate the United Kingdom's net contribution to the EEC budget; and if she will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing that contribution for each year since 1979, the estimated outturn for 1989 and the forecast for the current year.

The Prime Minister: No. The United Kingdom's net contribution to the European Community budget was £947 million in 1979 and £706 million in 1980. Information about the United Kingdom's contribution in later years is given in the successive annual statements on the Community budget. The latest published estimate of the United Kingdom's net contribution to the Community budget in 1989 is in the statement on the 1989 Community budget (Cm. 680). The statement on the 1990 Community budget will be published shortly and will contain a revised estimate of the United Kingdom's net contribution in 1989 and an estimate of the net contribution in 1990.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Residential Special Schools

Mr. Cartwright: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) whether membership of the joint working party for residential special schools will be affected by any new arrangements for determining the pay and conditions of teachers;

(2) what bodies form the membership of the joint working party for residential special schools;

(3) how the membership of the joint working party for residential special schools was determined.

Mrs. Rumbold: The joint working party on the future of ILEA residential special schools outside inner London was established in June 1988 to consider the future of the residential special schools maintained by ILEA but situated outside its geographical boundary. It was chaired by officials from the Department and representation was invited from ILEA, inner and outer London boroughs, the Common Council of the City of London, those county councils in whose area the schools are situated and the London residuary body.

The joint working party completed its work in January 1989 and submitted a report to my right hon. Friend. I refer the hon. Member to the reply that I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Rugby and Kenilworth (Mr. Pawsey) on 22 February 1989, *Official Report*, columns *638-39*.

Iraqi Students

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many Iraqi students have been given permission to study in United Kingdom universities, polytechnics and colleges of higher and further education in each year since 1979.

Mr. Jackson: The number of full-time and sandwich students on publicly funded further and higher education courses in Great Britain institutions, whose domicile was recorded as Iraq, is as follows:

Academic year beginning	*Numbers*
1979	2,484
1980	2,218
1982	2,239
1983	1,845

Academic year beginning	Numbers
1984	1,559
1985	1,378
1986	1,420
1987	1,255
1988	918

Source:
Universities statistical register/Further education statistical register-Welsh Office/Scottish education department.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Profit-related Pay

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many firms that have been operating a profit-related pay scheme for more than one year have changed the basis on which the scheme is organised during the course of its operation.

Mr. Lilley: I regret that the information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Tax Threshold

Mr. Ralph Howell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what would be the estimated loss in revenue of an increase in the tax threshold to £150 per week for all families and £100 for individuals together with a basic tax rate of 25 per cent. inclusive of national insurance contribution.

Mr. Lilley: At 1990-91 levels of income, the cost in a full year of adopting the tax regime suggested by my hon. Friend and abolishing class 1 national insurance contributions for employees and class 2 and 4 contributions for the self-employed is estimated to be over £30 billion.

This estimate assumes independent taxation and is based on a projection of the 1987-88 survey of personal incomes and is provisional.

Advertising Expenditure

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the total publicity and advertising expenditure including for privatisation, of his Department and public bodies for which his Department has responsibility in *(a)*1979 and *(b)* 1989.

Mr. Ryder: Total expenditure on publicity and advertising by HM Treasury in 1989-90 is estimated at £550,525. That figure does not include any provision for privatisation-related expenditure for which there was no requirement in 1989-90. Actual expenditure will not be known until after the close of the financial year. Comparable figures for the year 1979-80 are not available because of machinery of Government changes, and could be given only at disproportionate cost.

Inland Revenue Staff

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people are employed by the Inland Revenue in *(a)* administering and *(b)* collecting income tax.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 20 March 1990]:* The staff costs of *(a)* administering and *(b)* collecting income tax are around 41,500 and around 6,500 man years respectively. These figures do not include the staff costs of certain central functions which relate to the running of the Inland Revenue as a whole.

Police Recruitment Examination

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will place in the Library a copy of the prison service psychologist's review of the police initial recruitment examination.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: I have been asked to reply.
Yes.

HEALTH

Maternity Services

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to provide a more integrated level of hospital-based maternity and community midwifery care; whether he proposes to issue any guidelines to health authorities; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The benefits of integrated hospital and community maternity services were emphasised in the reports of the maternity services advisory committee which was set up in 1981 by my right hon. Friends the then Secretaries of State for Social Services and for Wales to advise on matters relating to the maternity and neonatal services. The three reports were commended to health authorities upon their publication in 1984 and 1985 and remain the basis of policies for NHS maternity services. Their recommendations will inform the negotiation of contracts for maternity services which district health authorities will be undertaking with provider units subject to enactment of the National Health Service and Community Care Bill.

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received to make maternity services a core service; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: We have received a number of representations from doctors and midwives as well as voluntary groups working in maternity and child care. They arise from a misunderstanding about the reasons behind the need to designate certain services as "core" services. Designation will not be an indication of the importance of a service relative to other services nor the sole indicator of a service that has to be provided locally. It will be relevant only where a district health authority has only one sensible option on the location of a service and that service is managed by a National Health Service trust.

Regional and District Health Authorities (Allocations)

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he proposes a further response in view of the representations he has recieved about the financial allocations to the North East Thames regional health authority and the Waltham Forest district health authority; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: It is for regional health authorities to decide allocations to districts in the light of local needs and priorities.

Midwives

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) for what reasons the grading of newly qualified midwives with the same responsibilities varies between district health authorities;

(2) if he will state the numbers of midwives, in districts with low staff turnover, who remain in posts graded D until higher posts become available; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Midwifery posts, in common with others in the clinical grading structure, are graded in accordance with the skills and responsibilities they call for. The grading of posts may vary between authorities because of differences in the way services, staff responsibilities, and management structures are organised.

Information is not collected centrally on how long midwives in particular grades have been qualified, nor on the numbers of staff who wish to apply for higher graded posts.

Deaf People (Report)

Mr. Neale: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the report entitled, "A Better Life—Telecommunication for People who are Deaf and use Sign Language", carried out by the social research unit at the university of York, will be published; and if he will put a copy of the report in the Library.

Mr. Freeman: The report is being completed and will be published shortly. I will arrange for a copy to be put in the Library.

Hospital Facilities

Sir John Farr: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will ensure that back-up hospital facilities are maintained outside city centres in order to reduce the time and financial costs involved in travelling to concentrated facilities.

Mr. Freeman: It is for each individual health authority to decide its pattern of services locally in the light of its assessment of needs and priorities as against available resources.

Dental Service

Mr. Sean Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many dentists joined the dentists' register in each of the last five years from individual EC countries, and from non-EC countries.

Mr. Freeman: Information provided by the General Dental Council shows that in the last five years the number of new registrations was as follows:

	1985	*1986*	*1987*	*1988*	*1989*
EC Countries					
Belgium	—	—	1	1	1
Denmark	8	5	4	7	5
France	3	1	4	1	3
Germany	2	4	2	3	3
Greece	2	5	5	9	11
Irish Republic	58	62	69	52	50
Italy	—	—	—	—	—
Luxembourg	—	—	—	—	—
Netherlands	5	8	12	22	30
Portugal	—	—	1	—	—
Spain	—	—	—	—	—
United Kingdom	857	852	904	853	783
Non-EC Countries	168	99	81	90	161

Correspondence

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the hon. Member for Rugby and Kenilworth will receive a reply to his letter of 16 January about Mr. Parkes of Kenilworth, passed to him by the Department of Social Security.

Mr. Freeman: A reply was sent yesterday. I regret the delay.

Health Care Research

Mr. Kennedy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he intends to increase the amount of money in real terms available for research into nursing care; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what is the amount of money allocated to specific nursing care research; and what percentage this amount is of the total moneys available to health care research overall.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Research into nursing care falls mainly into the following research priority themes:

Aids
Acute Sector Hospital Services
Community Care
Primary Health Care

Information about expenditure on individual projects is published in the Department of Health yearbook of research and development 1989, available in the Library.

Provision for the health and personal social services research programme in 1990-91 is planned at £21 million, compared with expenditure in 1989-90 estimated at £15 million.

NHS Earnings

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what was the average level of earnings for *(a)* hospital doctors, *(b)* nurses and *(c)* ancillary staff in each year since 1974 in cash, constant prices and as a proportion of national average earnings.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley *[holding answer 1 March 1990]:* Estimates are available on a consistent basis only from 1985-86, and these are given in the table.

	1985-86	*1986-87*	*1987-88*	*1988-89*	*1989-90*
Nurses/Midwives[1]					
Average gross weekly earnings (£)	140	154	173	203	218
Constant prices[2] (£)	140	150	162	181	180

	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90
As a proportion of national average non-manual earnings (per cent.)	76·0	76·5	79·5	84·2	82·2
Ancillaries[1]					
Average gross weekly earnings (£)	111	119	127	138	152
Constant prices[2] (£)	111	116	119	123	125
As a proportion of national average manual earnings (per cent.)	72·4	72·9	73·5	73·9	74·6
Doctors/Dentists[1 3]					
Average gross weekly earnings (£)	402	438	494	529	598
Constant prices[2] (£)	402	428	462	472	493
As a proportion of national average non-manual earnings (per cent.)	217·8	218·1	227·1	219·6	225·6

[1] The estimates include London Weigthing and, for Nurses and Midwives, include London Supplements and Flexible Pay Supplements.
[2] At constant prices of 1985-86, calculated using the RPI for July of each year.
[3] Hospital and Community Health Service Doctors and Dentists. For years prior to 1989-90, information on earnings is taken from a different source to the estimates of whole-time equivalents, and the average figures shown may be somewhat unreliable in consequence.

Hepatitis B

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what advice his Department has issued to health authorities regarding the risk of contracting the hepatitis B virus from discarded needles;

(2) what research his Department has conducted into the risks of infection by the hepatitis B virus through discarded needles in refuse.

Mr. Freeman *[holding answer 16 March 1990]:* We are unaware of any specific research in this area, but advice on the risks of hepatitis B contamination from discarded needles and other "sharps" is contained in "The Safe Disposal of Clinical Waste" which was issued to all health authorities in 1982. Further advice is contained in "Guidance for Clinical Health Care Workers: Protection Against Infections with HIV and Hepatitis Viruses" which was issued to health authorities in January this year. Copies of the documents mentioned are available in the Library.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Estate Agency

Mr. Sean Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what is his estimate of the total cost of establishing and implementing the new controls over estate agency as envisaged in the current report "Estate Agency" issued by the Director General of Fair Trading;

(2) whether he is able to give a firm date for when he expects the new proposals for estate agency control outlined in the Office of Fair Trading report to be in operation.

Mr. Forth: I received the director general's report on the issues that I asked him to consider in relation to my proposals to improve consumer protection in estate agency on 9 March.

I am giving careful consideration to his conclusions and recommendations, particularly in respect of the proposals for new controls under section 3 of the Estate Agents Act 1979 and under the Trade Descriptions Act 1968. Examination of the resource implications of these proposals will form part of this work.

I intend to announce my conclusions shortly.

Business Lending and Hiring

Sir Neil Macfarlane: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans he has to amend the Consumer Credit Act by removing business lending and hiring from the scope of the Act as proposed in paragraph 6:8:8 of the 1988 White Paper "Releasing Enterprise"; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Forth: The Government intend to amend the Consumer Credit Act 1974 so as to exclude all credit and hire for business purposes, as soon as parliamentary time permits.

Penny Post Anniversary

Mr. Harry Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if his Department has considered an application for an exhibition relating to the 150th anniversary of the penny post to be displayed in the Upper Waiting Hall.

Mr. Forth: I gave my approval in principle to this application on 6 March.

New Businesses

Mr. Gregory: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many new businesses were established in the Yorkshire and Humberside region in 1979, 1983, 1987 and the most recent year; how many net new businesses were established for the same periods; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: I have been asked to reply.

The available information, based on VAT data, is given in the table. Figures are not available before 1980. Although 1988 is the latest year for which these detailed figures are available, early indications from data collected by Her Majesty's Customs and Excise are that there was a net increase in 1989 in the United Kingdom as a whole of 1,500 a week on average, compared with 1,200 a week in 1988.

VAT registrations and deregistrations in Yorkshire and Humberside

Thousands

	Registrations	*Deregistrations*	*Net change*
1980	11·9	11·0	0·9
1983	13·7	11·0	2·7
1987	14·8	13·1	1·7
1988	16·9	12·9	4·0

Germany (Privatisation)

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if Her Majesty's Government have offered any advice on privatisation to the Governments of West and East Germany.

Mr. Waldegrave: I have been asked to reply.

We have exchanged views with the West German Government on our respective privatisation programmes. During his talks in East Berlin with the GDR authorities earlier this year, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs emphasised the importance of attracting foreign investment. We have not yet offered substantive help in this area to the GDR, but expect to do so in future.

Czechoslovakia

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is his latest assessment of the opportunities for joint trading ventures in Czechoslovakia.

Mr. Redwood: Czechoslovakia introduced joint venture legislation over a year ago and although it has been refining it since to make the idea more attractive to western investors, so far only one British company has entered into a full joint venture. This is in the textile sector. As for the future, I visited Czechoslovakia recently and found great commitment in the Government and among middle management towards joint ventures. Opportunities are certainly there in such areas as food processing machinery and the automotive sector, and will also grow out of the day-to-day trade relationships which we are doing our best to encourage.

East Germany

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on United Kingdom trade with East Germany.

Mr. Redwood: In 1989 the United Kingdom exported to the GDR goods worth £106 million and imported goods to the value of £169 million. Some 25 per cent. of our exports were accounted for by cereals; and of the imports, non-ferrous metals and furniture accounted for about 35 per cent. altogether. My Department encourages the expansion of trade with the GDR and my noble Friend the Minister for Trade has just returned from the Leipzig fair where over 100 British firms exhibited and received a record number of inquiries from potential GDR customers.

Eastern Europe

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what information he has on any proposed joint ventures between United Kingdom companies and East Germany.

Mr. Redwood: I am not aware of any actual joint ventures between British and German Democratic Republic companies. Such joint ventures are certainly possible although the formal legislation is not in place yet. We are advised that although the East German authorities have specified a maximum foreign shareholding of 49 per cent., in practice it might be possible to exceed this. Several British companies have built up close trading links with East German enterprises, particularly in the food processing machinery and health care sectors, and I know of at least two companies being set up in the German Democratic Republic under British auspices to market British products and expertise in these sectors. Other legislation to facilitate trade and investment is being discussed, for example, a double taxation agreement and an investment promotion and protection agreement.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if, during his recent visit to eastern Europe, he discussed the possibility of providing export credit guarantees to support the development of environment-friendly industrial plants.

Mr. Redwood *[holding answer 20 March 1990]:* My right hon. Friend met Ministers and senior officials during his visit last week to the USSR and Poland. He did not discuss environmental issues in particular, but I am sure both Governments recognise the need to improve the environment. The ECGD will consider support for United Kingdom exports and investment to eastern Europe to the extent and on terms the Department considers prudent in particular countries.

ENVIRONMENT

Boundary Commission

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his estimate of *(a)* the total cost and *(b)* the costs of the management and opinion surveys of the Boundary Commission's proposed report on county Humberside.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The local government boundary commission has not yet completed its review of the county of Humberside. It is not our practice to reveal costs of individual contracts, but the combined cost of the two consultants' studies so far carried out in connection with Humberside is about £170,000.

North Sea (Chemical Discharges)

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, further to his reply to the hon. Member for Glasgow, Provan of 13 March, *Official Report*, column *188*, if he will list all the chemicals which are *(a)* persistent, *(b)* toxic and *(c)* liable to bioaccumulate which are not included in the United Kingdom red list or covered by the national action plan and which will continue to be discharged into the North sea via pipes and rivers.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: Further to my answer to the hon. Member for Glasgow, Provan on 13 March at column *188*, the following 16 chemicals agreed as priority hazardous substances at the recent North sea conference are not included on the United Kingdom red list: copper, zinc, lead, arsenic, chromium, nickel, carbon tetrachloride, chloroform, azinphos-ethyl, fenthion, parathion,

parathion-methyl, trichloroethylene, tetrachloroethylene, trichloroethane and dioxins. The first eight of these substances are either EEC list I or list II substances and discharges of such substances are strictly controlled under the arrangements set out in Department of the Environment circular 7/89.

For the remaining substances the Government will be introducing the necessary arrangements to achieve the substantial reductions in the inputs of these substances to water which were agreed at the Hague North sea conference.

Flowers and Fauna (Exhibition)

Mr. Corbett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if his Department has considered an application for an exhibition relating to the flowers and fauna of Great Britain to be displayed in the Upper Waiting Hall.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: I understand that, under procedures agreed by the Services Committee, arrangements have been made with the authorities of the House for the exhibition to be held in the Upper Waiting Hall from Monday 21 May to Friday 25 May.

West Midlands Residuary Body

Mr. Anthony Coombs: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will make a statement on appointments to the West Midlands residuary body.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The following appointments and reappointments are being made to the West Midlands residuary body for the period 1 April to 31 March 1991 or until dissolution of the body, whichever is the earlier:

Chairman:	T. McDonald, OBE
Members:	Cllr. J. Adams, OBE[1]
	G. N. Jackson, CBE[1]
	J. P. Meering[1]
	W. S. Page, CBE[1]
	K. Williams[1]

[1] Reappointments.

The West Midlands residuary body has already distributed £50 million in balances and £33 million in capital receipts and has made substantial progress with a major programme of property disposals.

My right hon. Friend is especially grateful to the retiring chairman, Dr. Malcolm Skillicorn, for his outstanding contribution to the work of the residuary body since its inception. Dr. Skillicorn will be taking up an appointment as chairman of the North Birmingham district health authority from 1 April. Mr. Tom McDonald will combine the chairmanships of West Midlands and the West Yorkshire residuary bodies during what is expected to be the remaining few months before both are finally dissolved.

West Yorkshire Residuary Body

Mrs. Peacock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on appointments to the West Yorkshire residuary body.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The following have been reappointed to the West Yorkshire residuary body for the period 1 April 1990 to 31 March 1991 or until dissolution of the body, whichever is sooner:

Chairman:
T. McDonald, OBE

Members:
K. J. Bridge
D. Hanson
F. A. Mallett, CBE
Cllr. G. E. Mudie
R. W. Suddards, CBE

The West Yorkshire residuary body has already distributed £5 million in balances and £24 million in capital receipts for the benefit of local ratepayers and charge payers. The reappointments reflect my right hon. Friend's confidence in the board's ability to discharge the residuary body's few remaining tasks before early wind-up.

Surface Water Acidification

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has on the results of the recently completed surface water acidification programme and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The results of the surface water acidification programme, which has been held under the auspices of the Royal Society and the Norwegian and Swedish academies of science, have cast valuable light on this subject. This programme has complemented the continuing research programmes funded by the Department of the Environment as well as those of the Natural Environmental Research Council, and the Lock Fleet studies funded by the CEGB. My Department is funding research programmes on air pollution which in 1990-91 will total nearly £7 million: a similar sum will be devoted to research on climate change and stratospheric ozone. In addition to the research programmes, the Department operates a system of independent scientific review groups to provide a critical evaluation of the emerging evidence and need for further work.

Together these programmes show that for some upland, sensitive areas of Wales, Scotland, Cumbria, the midlands, the Pennines and parts of the south-east of south-west England, as in Scandinavia, there is a direct link betwen acid disposition, soil and water acidification and effects on flora and fauna. This direct link means we would expect to observe a decrease in acidification in certain areas following a reduction in sulphur dioxide emissions. The first signs of such a recovery have been found for some lochs in the south-west of Scotland following the decreases in United Kingdom emissions of SO_2 that have occurred over the past 20 years, and further improvement is to be expected as a result of the major additional reductions to which we are now committed. As part of its research programme, the DOE is committed to monitoring these long-term trends in air pollution.

One important outcome of the science has been the development of the critical loads concept which enables ecosystems to be classified in terms of their sensitivity to pollution. This concept is now accepted internationally as a basis for discussing strategies for controlling pollution.

Transitional Relief Scheme Orders

Sir John Stanley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment to what debate on the transitional relief scheme orders he was referring at column 427 of the *Official Report* of 18 January.

Mr. David Hunt *[holding answer 19 March 1990]:* I understand that there will be a debate next Monday.

Collective Community Charge

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps he is taking to monitor the numbers and types of property which are being designated for the collective community charge.

Mr. David Hunt *[holding answer 22 March 1990]:* We are planning to collect information about numbers of properties subject to a collective community charge on an annual basis from community charges registration officers.

DEFENCE

Climate Change

Mr. Gould: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what research is being carried out by the Meteorological Office on global climate change and precipitation.

Mr. Neubert: Changes in precipitation patterns are monitored on a global scale in the Meteorological Office using all relevant available data. Precipitation is one of the variables carried in the mathematical models being developed to estimate future climate changes. There is substantial research within the Meteorological Office on the processes involved in precipitation generally and on their representation in models.

A90 Building, Aldermaston

Mr. Sayeed: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what action has been taken following the alleged contract irregularities on the A90 building at Aldermaston; and what conclusions have been reached.

Mr. Neubert: A detailed and painstaking investigation of these allegations undertaken by the MOD police has now been completed. No evidence has been found of criminal activity.

Patent Rights

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much his Department has paid or is committed to pay for patent rights.

Mr. Neubert: In strict terms the Secretary of State does not pay for patent rights. Under the Patents Act 1977, Government Departments already possess the right to use or authorise the use of any patent for the services of the Crown. In the absence of any right of free use, terms for payment must be negotiated with the patentee.

The following payments have been made on behalf of the Secretary of State in the exercise of these rights during the past two financial years:

	£
1987-88	257,000
1988-89	210,000

Advertising Expenditure

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the total publicity and advertising expenditure, including for privatisation, of his Department and public bodies for which his Department has responsibility in *(a)* 1979 and *(b)* 1989.

Mr. Neubert: The earliest year for which the figures requested are available is 1982-83 when expenditure totalled £10·113 million. The estimated expenditure for 1989-90 is £30·891 million.

Figures for 1979-80 are not readily available and could not be obtained without disproportionate expense.

Iraqi Military Cadets (Training)

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Iraqi military cadets have studied at Ministry of Defence training schools in each year since 1979; and how much Iraq has been charged in 1990 prices for each cadet's study course.

Mr. Neubert: Details of military assistance provided to individual countries are normally confidential between Governments. Attendance of Iraqi students on United Kingdom service courses since 1979 has been entirely on a repayment basis.

WALES

Trefnant Footpaths

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) whether public rights of way Trefnant footpaths, seven, eight, nine, 14 and 15 are free from all obstructions; and whether he will discuss those footpaths with Mr. Michael Griffith, chair designate of the Countryside Council for Wales;

(2) whether public rights of way Trefnant, seven, eight, nine, 14 and 15 have any missing signposts where they leave or cross public roads, or are in need of way marking; and whether he will discuss those footpaths with Mr. Michael Griffith, chair designate of the Countryside Council for Wales.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: This is a matter for the appropriate highway authority.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Gill: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is the current level of funding for each of the district health authorities in Wales; and what is their corresponding population.

Mr. Grist: The information requested is shown as follows:

District Health Authority	[1] *Current level of Funding* £ *million*	*Population per District Health Authority* [2] *000s*
Clwyd	115·0	407·0
East Dyfed	77·2	235·8
Gwent	138·6	445·5
Gwynedd	68·3	239·0
Mid Glamorgan	161·8	535·9
Pembrokeshire	28·9	112·7
Powys	32·4	114·9
South Glamorgan[3]	186·9	403·4
West Glamorgan	123·5	362·9
Total DHAs	932·6	2,857·0

[1] Revenue and capital allocations for 1989-90 as at 19 March 1990.
[2] Unweighted mid 1988 estimates of population: *Source:* Office of Population Censuses and Surveys.
[3] Provides medical and dental teaching facilities.

It should be noted, however, that allocations to district health authorities in Wales are not currently based on resident population. Authorities are, at present, funded on the basis of the services which they provide and in relation to the catchment populations (weighted for age, sex, morbidity, sparsity and seasonal variation) which they serve. However, this will change in 1991-92 when a process of transition will begin towards funding authorities on the basis of weighted resident capitation in accordance with the proposals set out in the White Paper "Working for Patients". Allocation mechanisms are therefore now in the process of being reviewed and authorities will be consulted on both revised and transitional arrangements prior to allocations for 1991-92 being determined later this year.

Veterinary Laboratories

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will visit the veterinary laboratories at Bangor, north Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Walker: I have no plans for such a visit.

TRANSPORT

A6 Windlehurst Road

Mr. Tom Arnold: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will give further details of the A6 Windlehurst road scheme which he is putting out to tender.

Mr. Atkins: This scheme, scheduled for completion this summer, will improve road safety and ease traffic flow, by widening the A6 on the south side of its junction with Windlehurst road.

The provision of a ghost island, and wider turning circle at the junction, will assist vehicles turning right into and out of Windlehurst road and reduce traffic delays for through traffic on the trunk road. The existing pelican crossing will also be improved.

London Underground (Incidents)

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what information he has on recent incidents on London Underground involving doors closing while blind persons and guide dogs were entering a train; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what information he has on recent incidents on London Underground involving the trapping of push-chairs and children in train doors out of the driver's view; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: The railway inspectorate was notified of an incident involving a London Underground train at Wimbledon Park station on 9 February. A partially sighted man was caught by the doors and carried along the platform for a distance of 15 to 20 yd, sustaining injuries to his left elbow and hip.

The inspectorate has learnt from London Underground of two incidents involving children. On 23 October 1989 a train was leaving Lambeth North station when someone on the platform shouted a warning that there was a child caught in the doors. The guard stopped the train after it had travelled, I understand, half a carriage length. On 11 January 1990 a pushchair with a child in it was trapped by a wheel support bar as the doors of a train closed at Holborn station (Piccadilly line). The driver reported that on hearing shouts he stopped the train within 10 to 12 ft. I am pleased to say that neither of these incidents caused injury. Because of this, neither incident was notifiable to the inspectorate.

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will indicate the nature of incidents which London Underground Limited has a legal duty to report to the railway inspectorate; and if he will make a statement;

(2) whether there are published guidelines specifying the type of incidents which London Underground Limited has a legal duty to report to the railway inspectorate; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: Railways are required to report any accident specified in schedule 1 of the Railways (Notice of Accidents) Order 1986.

The terms of that schedule are as follows:

SCHEDULE 1 Article 3(2)

ACCIDENTS OCCURRING IN THE WORKING OF A RAILWAY WHICH ARE NOTIFIABLE ACCIDENTS

1. Accidents to persons
   Any accident attended with loss of life or major or minor personal injury to any person whomsoever.

2. Accidents to passenger trains
   (a) Any collision where one of the trains is a passenger train;
   (b) any passenger train or any part of a passenger train accidentally leaving the rails.

3. Accidents not involving passenger trains
   (a) Any collision on a running line where any vehicle sustains damage as a result of the collision, and any collision in a siding which results in a running line being obstructed;
   (b) any derailment on a running line, except a derailment which occurs during shunting operations and does not obstruct any other running line;
   (c) any derailment in a siding which results in a running line being obstructed.

4. Accidents involving any kind of train
   (a) Any case of a train striking a buffer stop, other than in a siding, where damage is caused to the train;
   (b) any case of a train on a running line striking or being struck by any object which causes damage (other than damage consisting solely in the breakage of glass) necessitating immediate temporary or permanent repair or which might have been liable to derail the train;
   (c) any case of a train striking any cattle or horse, whether or not damage is caused to the train, or striking any other animal if, in consequence, damage (other than damage consisting solely in the breakage of glass) is caused to the train necessitating immediate temporary or permanent repair;
   (d) any case of a passenger train, or any other train not fitted with continuous self-applying brakes, becoming divided.

5. Accidents and incidents at level crossings
   (a) any train striking a road vehicle or a gate at a level crossing;
   (b) any train running onto a level crossing when not authorised to do so;
   (c) a failure of the equipment at a level crossing which could endanger users of the road or path crossing the railway.

6. Accidents involving a locomotive or other power unit or any rolling stock.
   Any of the following classes of accident is notifiable if it occurs or is discovered whilst the vehicle is on a running line:
   (a) the failure of an axle;

(b) the failure of a wheel or tyre, including a tyre loose on its wheel;
(c) the failure of a rope or the fastenings thereof in working an incline;
(d) any fire, severe electrical arcing or fusing in or on any part of a passenger train;
(e) in the case of any train other than a passenger train, any severe electrical arcing, fusing, or any fire which was extinguished by a fire-fighting service;
(f) any other failure of any part of a train which is likely to cause an accident to that or any other train or to kill or injure any person.

7. Accidents involving the permanent way and other works on or connected with a railway:
(a) The failure of a rail in a running line, which results in a complete fracture through its cross-section or in a piece becoming detached from the rail;
(b) a buckle of a running line which necessitates the immediate imposition of a speed restriction lower than that currently in force;
(c) any aircraft or vehicle of any kind landing on, running onto or coming to rest foul of the line, or damaging the line, causing damage which obstructs the line or damaging any railway equipment at a level crossing;
(d) the runaway of an escalator, lift or passenger conveyor;
(e) any fire or severe arcing or fusing which seriously affects the functioning of electrical signalling equipment;
(f) any other fire affecting the permanent way or works of the railway which necessitates the suspension of services over any line, or the closure of any part of a station, signalbox or other premises for a period:
(i) in the case of a fire affecting any part of the railway below ground, of more than 30 minutes, and
(ii) in any other case, of more than 1 hour.

8. Accidents involving failure of the works on or connected with the railway.

The following classes of accident are notifiable if they are likely either to cause an accident to a train or to endanger any person:
(a) a failure of a tunnel, bridge, viaduct, culvert, station, or other structure or any part thereof including the fixed electrical equipment of an electrified railway;
(b) a slip of a cutting or of an embankment;
(c) flooding of the permanent way;
(d) the striking of a bridge by a road vehicle or its load;
(e) the failure of any other portion of the permanent way or works not specified above.

Greenhouse Effect

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Southport of 2 February, *Official Report*, column *368* and 16 February, *Official Report*, column *430*, he has any plans to increase his Department's road building programme further to combat the greenhouse effect.

Mr. Atkins: Combating the greenhouse effect will depend on many factors including reducing congestion on the roads. The road programme itself is kept under constant review in the light of our stated objectives to assist economic growth, improve the environment and enhance safety.

Carbon Dioxide Emissions

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he has made an assessment of the effect on carbon dioxide emissions of each pound spent on *(a)* road building programmes and *(b)* rail investment; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Atkins: No, because so many uncertain factors are involved.

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to his answer of 16 February, *Official Report*, column *430*, what assessment he has made of the size of the road building programme which would give maximum reductions in carbon dioxide emissions from vehicular transport.

Mr. Atkins: Many considerations—economic and environmental—are taken into account when prospective road schemes are assessed. It is not possible to devise a programme which is solely devoted to reducing CO_2 emissions.

Road Building

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the implications of his Department's road building programme for the number of vehicle miles travelled; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Atkins: The national road traffic forecasts published last year predict an increase in vehicle miles of between 83 and 142 per cent. between 1988 and 2025. These are demand forecasts, not targets, and the high and low forecasts are equally possible outcomes.

Increased traffic demand is primarily a function of economic growth rather than road building. Road improvements will not affect measurably the overall level of demand although there may be redistribution effects as traffic switches to better quality roads.

SS Montgomery

Mr. Channon: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he is taking to ensure the safety of the SS Montgomery in the Thames estuary.

Mr. McLoughlin: The wreck of the Liberty ship Richard Montgomery is marked by four lighted buoys and an outer cordon of 12 unlit marker buoys. Periodic surveys are conducted to establish the condition of the wreck. The next survey is planned for later this year.

Railway Lines (Noise Insulation)

Mr. Moate: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he will make a statement about the action he is taking to establish a noise insulation standard for new railway lines.

Mr. Portillo: I have now set up a committee whose remit is to recommend to the Secretary of State for Transport a national noise insulation standard (or standards) for the operation of new railway lines which equitably relates to the standard set by regulation for new highways. The aim will be to arrive at a standard or standards at which the duty to offer noise insulation will be triggered and to set the trigger at a level which will ensure that there is parity of treatment between those who live near new railways and those who live near new roads.

The committee will be chaired by Dr. C. G. B. Mitchell, head of the vehicles and environment division at the transport and road research laboratory. It will have the following members:

Mr. G. Llewellyn John, County Engineer and Surveyor, West Glamorgan county council

Dr. H. G. Leventhall, head of Institute of Environmental Engineering at South Bank polytechnic, deputy chairman of the Noise Council
Dr. J. B. Ollerhead, head of Noise Research and Analysis, Civil Aviation Authority
Mr. G. A. Parry, principal noise consultant, Technica Indecon Limited
Dr. J. G. Walker, Institute of Sound and Vibration Research, Southampton University
Mr. A. V. L. Williams, British Steel Track Products

Each has been selected for his expertise in the field and not as a representative of any particular body or interest. I am most grateful to them for agreeing to serve. There will also be three members from the Department of Transport. I have asked the committee to report by the end of September. Its report will be published.

The committee will be pleased to receive views and evidence from interested parties. Submissions should be sent to the committee's secretary, Dr. P. M. Nelson of the transport and road research laboratory, Crowthorne, Berkshire, RG11 6AU.

Radioactive Material (Road Accident)

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what information he has on the accident between a vehicle carrying radioactive material and a local bus, in January, on the road between Annan and Dumfries.

Mr. Atkins *[holding answer 20 March 1990]:* I have no knowledge of any such accident.

SCOTLAND

Spirits (Metric Measures)

Sir David Steel: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will lengthen the period for the introduction of metrication on the dispensing of spirits in licensed premises to date later than 31 December; and if he will use that period to hold further consultations with affected parties.

Mr. Forth: I have been asked to reply.

I announced on 14 December that, having considered the responses to my Department's consultation paper, I had concluded that the present range of imperial quantities for serving gin, rum, vodka and whisky be phased out by 31 December 1994 in favour of one round metric quantity of 25 ml. I am considering further representations that I have received and will announce a decision as soon as possible.

Fatal Accident Inquiries

Mr. Doran: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list all offshore deaths that have resulted in fatal accident inquiries, naming employers concerned, in the last 10 years.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 21 March 1990]:* The information is as per the list.

Offshore deaths resulting in fatal accident inquiries

Employer of deceased	*Number*
1981	
Atlantic Drilling Co. Ltd., Aberdeen	1
International Drilling Co. Ltd., Aberdeen	1
Buggee Supply Ships Ltd., Aberdeen	1
Southeastern Drilling Services Ltd., Aberdeen	1
Christian Salvesen (Shipping) Ltd., Edinburgh	1
Wimpey Marine Ltd., Great Yarmouth	1
1982	
British United Trawlers	1
Offshore Marine Ltd., Great Yarmouth	1
Viking Supply Ships, Norway	1
Odeco UK Inc., Aberdeen	1
Herreman Marine Contractors, Switzerland	1
1983	
Salamis Ltd., Aberdeen	1
Dan Smedvig Ltd., Aberdeen	1
Herreman Engineering Services UK Ltd.	1
Blandford Shipping Co. Ltd.	1
Flopetrol Services Inc.	1
Atlantic Drilling Co. Ltd.	1
Subsea Surveys Ltd.	1
1984	
Bristows Helicopters	3
Shell UK	5
London Bridge Engineering Ltd.	1
Offshore Medical Support	1
KCA Drilling Ltd.	1
Willem Wilhelmsen Enterprises	1
1985	
Aberdeen Service Company North Sea Ltd.	1
Component Erectors, East Wemyss, Fife	1
Aberdeen Scaffolding Co. Ltd.	2
Union Oil of GB Ltd.	1
Dietsmann UK Ltd.	1
1986	
BP Petroleum Development Ltd.	1
1987	
Herreman Offshore Contractors Ltd.	2
Lassalle Petroleum SS Ltd., Aberdeen	18
Shell UK Exploration and Production, Aberdeen	8
Aberdeen Service Co. Ltd.	12
W. A. Fairhurst and Partners, Aberdeen	1
British International Helicopters, Aberdeen	2
Geotech Ltd., Aberdeen	2
Salamis (Marine and Industrial) Ltd., Aberdeen	1
Kongsberg Albatros Offshore Services Ltd., Aberdeen	1
British Underwater Engineering Offshore Vessels Ltd.	1
1988	
Press Offshore Ltd., Aberdeen	1
1989	Nil

Local Government Finance

Mr. Douglas: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will provide details of local authority revenues for Scottish regions derived from central Government sources, non-domestic rates, rates and or poll tax for the years 1980-81 to 1989-90 and estimates for 1990-91 on a money and percentage basis.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 19 March 1990]:* The figures are given in the table. Amounts for rate and revenue support grant are final amounts or those applying to the most recent order. Figures for non-domestic and domestic rates are derived from data published in "Rating Review" for the relevant years up to 1988-89. For 1989-90 and 1990-91 amounts of non-domestic rate income and community charge income are

taken from the provisional outturn-budget estimate returns made by local authorities to the Scottish Office. Domestic rates figures are net of domestic rate relief. All figures of domestic rate and community charge income are inclusive of rebates.

	Rate Support Grant		Non-Domestic Rate Income		Domestic Rates		Total
	£ million	percentage	£ million	percentage	£ million	percentage	£ million
1980-81							
Borders	26·226	71·5	5·575	15·2	4·858	13·3	36·659
Central	54·436	58·2	27·850	29·8	11·245	12·0	93·531
Dumfries and Galloway	33·785	70·7	7·679	16·1	6·330	13·2	47·794
Fife	71·657	63·5	25·592	22·7	15·646	13·9	112·895
Grampian	102·997	62·1	42·247	25·5	20·677	12·5	165·921
Highland	62·019	72·0	15·495	18·0	8·644	10·0	86·158
Lothian	157·676	53·4	87·527	29·6	50·147	17·0	295·350
Strathclyde	653·091	68·3	194·009	20·3	109·005	11·4	956·105
Tayside	88·525	65·9	28·983	21·6	16·892	12·6	134·400
Orkney	6·378	48·4	6·428	48·8	0·366	2·8	13·172
Shetland	8·030	26·3	21·611	70·9	0·859	2·8	30·500
Western Isles	17·065	84·6	2·161	10·7	0·935	4·6	20·161
1981-82							
Borders	28·796	68·8	7·003	16·7	6·067	14·5	41·866
Central	58·379	53·8	35·630	32·9	14·448	13·3	108·457
Dumfries and Galloway	37·088	68·5	9·352	17·3	7·704	14·2	54·144
Fife	78·142	60·2	31·797	24·5	19·932	15·4	129·871
Grampian	114·556	61·0	49·210	26·2	24·023	12·8	187·789
Highland	66·798	67·0	21·196	21·2	11·780	11·8	99·774
Lothian	135·272	39·0	133·749	38·6	77·839	22·4	346·860
Strathclyde	692·412	62·3	264·537	23·8	155·034	13·9	1,111·983
Tayside	96·813	60·6	39·145	24·5	23·696	14·8	159·654
Orkney	6·838	47·5	7·140	49·6	0·423	2·9	14·401
Shetland	9·011	27·2	23·361	70·5	0·782	2·4	33·154
Western Isles	19·229	81·3	3·118	13·2	1·310	5·5	23·657
1982-83							
Borders	30·986	68·3	7·627	16·8	6·785	14·9	45·398
Central	61·052	49·5	43·495	35·3	18·687	15·2	123·234
Dumfries and Galloway	40·508	63·6	12·580	19·8	10·596	16·6	63·684
Fife	80·078	55·7	38·814	27·0	24·826	17·3	143·718
Grampian	115·948	56·3	59·639	28·9	30·552	14·8	206·139
Highland	72·301	65·4	24·996	22·6	13·270	12·0	110·567
Lothian	170·027	47·2	120·153	33·4	69·943	19·4	360·123
Strathclyde	738·941	60·6	298·735	24·5	180·925	14·9	1,218·601
Tayside	100·607	58·1	44·804	25·9	27·823	16·1	173·234
Orkney	6·931	47·1	7·290	49·5	0·493	3·4	14·714
Shetland	10·039	27·7	25·345	70·0	0·843	2·3	36·227
Western Isles	22·144	81·4	3·536	13·0	1·511	5·6	27·191
1983-84							
Borders	32·808	71·7	6·895	15·1	6·071	13·3	45·774
Central	64·302	52·1	41·741	33·8	17·426	14·1	123·469
Dumfries and Galloway	43·182	66·9	11·592	18·0	9·760	15·1	64·534
Fife	85·677	56·3	40·555	26·6	26·000	17·1	152·232
Grampian	127·054	56·4	66·335	29·5	31·842	14·1	225·231
Highland	76·987	67·0	24·888	21·7	13·012	11·3	114·887
Lothian	175·503	51·5	104·303	30·6	60·923	17·9	340·729
Strathclyde	770·963	61·5	301·559	24·0	182·041	14·5	1,254·563
Tayside	206·211	58·8	45·709	25·3	28·870	16·0	180·790
Orkney	8·978	56·9	6·373	40·4	0·439	2·8	15·790
Shetland	10·018	26·7	26·549	70·9	0·891	2·4	37·458
Western Isles	23·021	81·5	3·627	12·8	1·613	5·7	28·261
1984-85							
Borders	33·031	69·2	7·808	16·4	6·865	14·4	47·704
Central	67·000	52·2	41·348	32·2	20·107	15·7	128·455
Dumfries and Galloway	43·262	65·6	12·279	18·6	10·437	15·8	65·978
Fife	78·865	50·9	46·258	29·8	29·930	19·3	155·053
Grampian	126·681	55·7	68·132	29·9	32·823	14·4	227·636
Highland	78·009	65·2	26·168	22·4	14·428	12·4	116·605
Lothian	171·223	48·0	116·349	32·7	68·715	19·3	356·287
Strathclyde	749·483	59·9	312·158	24·9	190·558	15·2	1,252·199
Tayside	104·637	57·3	47·842	26·2	30·143	16·5	182·622
Orkney	7·719	47·3	8·040	49·2	0·577	3·5	16·336
Shetland	10·277	26·4	27·662	71·1	0·963	2·5	38·902
Western Isles	24·346	81·0	3·925	13·1	1·773	5·9	30·044
1985-86							
Borders	34·489	67·0	9·225	17·9	7·746	15·1	51·460
Central	64·839	50·7	42·962	33·6	20·056	15·7	127·857

	Rate Support Grant		Non-Domestic Rate Income		Domestic Rates		Total
	£ million	percentage	£ million	percentage	£ million	percentage	£ million
Dumfries and Galloway	43·910	63·0	14·723	21·1	11·080	15·9	69·713
Fife	83·524	47·8	58·456	33·4	32·850	18·8	174·830
Grampian	130·974	55·2	73·619	31·0	32·577	13·7	237·170
Highland	79·044	64·2	29·081	23·6	15·053	12·2	123·178
Lothian	176·312	47·6	118·577	32·0	75·353	20·4	370·242
Strathclyde	782·705	60·0	313·275	24·0	208·878	16·0	1,304·858
Tayside	112·401	57·8	49·636	25·5	32·394	16·7	194·431
Orkney	7·654	43·5	9·028	51·3	0·916	5·2	17·598
Shetland	10·203	22·8	33·180	74·1	1·379	3·1	44·762
Western Isles	24·774	81·2	3·920	12·8	1·817	6·0	30·511
1986-87							
Borders	37·018	66·5	9·938	17·8	8·755	15·7	55·711
Central	68·350	50·3	45·320	33·3	22·273	16·4	135·943
Dumfries and Galloway	48·317	62·3	16·291	21·0	12·945	16·7	77·553
Fife	84·383	44·9	68·248	36·3	35·338	18·8	187·969
Grampian	134·867	52·2	83·982	32·5	39·338	15·2	258·187
Highland	82·866	62·3	33·108	24·9	16·948	12·8	132·922
Lothian	161·944	44·4	123·351	33·8	79·815	21·9	365·110
Strathclyde	730·560	55·2	348·978	26·4	242·912	18·4	1,322·450
Tayside	114·824	57·6	50·441	25·3	34·172	17·1	199·437
Orkney	7·766	43·2	9·353	52·0	0·873	4·9	17·992
Shetland	10·247	22·8	33·343	74·1	1·429	3·2	45·019
Western Isles	27·602	82·3	4·011	12·0	1·919	5·7	33·532
1987-88							
Borders	41·191	65·8	11·154	17·8	10·232	16·4	62·577
Central	78·582	49·5	52·999	33·4	27·191	17·1	158·772
Dumfries and Galloway	54·583	63·0	17·710	20·4	14·412	16·6	86·705
Fife	80·036	41·0	75·568	38·7	39·699	20·3	195·303
Grampian	145·489	51·6	92·156	32·7	44·265	15·7	281·910
Highland	92·591	60·7	38·724	25·4	21·158	13·9	152·473
Lothian	177·449	41·1	152·292	35·3	102·198	23·7	431·939
Strathclyde	794·598	52·7	416·697	27·6	296·548	19·7	1,507·843
Tayside	123·318	54·6	59·501	26·4	42·896	19·0	225·715
Orkney	9·418	51·9	7·998	44·0	0·744	4·1	18·160
Shetland	11·056	24·3	32·912	72·5	1·454	3·2	45·422
Western Isles	29·998	82·4	4·284	11·8	2·120	5·8	36·402
1988-89							
Borders	44·008	66·0	11·648	17·5	11·057	16·6	66·713
Central	78·551	47·7	56·240	34·2	29·885	18·2	164·676
Dumfries and Galloway	57·227	61·5	19·490	20·9	16·399	17·6	93·116
Fife	105·635	45·8	81·804	35·5	43·035	18·7	230·474
Grampian	158·614	50·3	104·691	33·2	52·188	16·5	315·493
Highland	100·978	62·7	38·768	24·1	21·220	13·2	160·966
Lothian	187·897	37·5	183·967	36·7	129·751	25·9	501·615
Strathclyde	898·472	54·8	428·452	26·2	311·584	19·0	1,638·508
Tayside	139·187	54·9	65·019	25·7	49·224	19·4	253·430
Orkney	10·353	53·3	7·814	40·2	1·262	6·5	19·429
Shetland	11·945	19·2	48·079	77·2	2·291	3·7	62·315
Western Isles	31·439	82·5	4·431	11·6	2·225	5·8	38·095

	Revenue support grant		Non-domestic rate income		Community charge		Total
	£ million	Percentage	£ million	Percentage	£ million	Percentage	£ million
1989-90							
Borders	50·287	68·3	10·187	13·8	13·156	17·9	73·630
Central	93·300	50·8	52·831	28·8	37·519	20·4	183·650
Dumfries and Galloway	64·907	63·6	17·726	17·4	19·457	19·1	102·090
Fife	117·337	48·3	73·686	30·3	51·860	21·4	242·883
Grampian	181·645	53·4	90·700	26·7	67·880	20·0	340·225
Highland	109·413	63·8	34·500	20·1	27·597	16·1	171·510
Lothian	217·527	40·5	161·755	30·1	157·334	29·3	536·616
Strathclyde	995·253	57·6	403·000	23·3	331·035	19·1	1,729·288
Tayside	155·456	56·2	61·700	22·3	59·708	21·6	276·864
Orkney	11·724	56·8	7·141	34·6	1·796	8·7	20·661
Shetland	20·114	45·4	22·377	50·5	1·795	4·1	44·286
Western Isles	35·290	82·0	5·000	11·6	2·750	6·4	43·040
1990-91							
Borders	57·380	70·4	10·681	13·1	13·452	16·5	81·513
Central	104·139	53·3	48·192	24·7	43·014	22·0	195·345
Dumfries and Galloway	75·390	65·4	19·250	16·7	20·601	17·9	115·241
Fife	128·971	46·8	83·838	30·4	63·001	22·8	275·810
Grampian	219·148	60·4	81·833	22·6	61·950	17·1	362·931

	Revenue support grant		Non-domestic rate income		Community charge		Total
	£ million	Percentage	£ million	Percentage	£ million	Percentage	£ million
Highland	123·822	65·5	36·405	19·3	28·901	15·3	189·128
Lothian	234·110	41·7	154·184	27·5	173·256	30·9	561·550
Strathclyde	1,041·618	57·4	403·976	22·3	368·065	20·3	1,813·659
Tayside	174·987	58·8	59·393	20·0	63·218	21·2	297·598
Orkney	14·813	63·2	6·735	28·7	1·905	8·1	23·453
Shetland	30·670	60·5	18·548	36·6	1·458	2·9	50·676
Western Isles	39·187	82·7	4·891	10·3	3·308	7·0	47·386

EMPLOYMENT

Employment Schemes

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list the various schemes operated by his Department designed to assist unemployed people back into the labour market; and if he will give the spending in 1989-90 on each scheme.

Mr. Eggar: The Employment Department Group operates the following programmes primarily designed to assist unemployed people back into employment:

Programmes	Spending 1989-90 (Estimated Outturn) £ million
Employment Training	1,112·00
Enterprise Allowance Scheme	184·00
Claimant Advisers (Staff costs only)	17·90
New Client Advisers (Staff costs only)	16·80
Restart	
Restart Counselling	43·00
Restart Courses	7·00
Jobclubs	19·00
Jobshare	0·15
Jobstart	4·60
Travel to Interview Scheme	1·05
Employment Services for People with Disabilities (including Disablement Resettlement Officers and Disablement Advisory Service)	19·00
Employment Rehabilitation Service (Programme costs only)	9·00
Special Schemes for Disabled People	8·40
Sheltered Employment Schemes	107·00

In addition, small sums are being spent piloting new approaches to helping the unemployed.

Genetically Engineered Organisms

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Gordon of 15 March, *Official Report*, column *342*, if he will list the locations of *(a)* the three centres at which he is reviewing applications for the release of genetically manipulated organisms to the environment and *(b)* the eight centres where releases have already taken place.

Mr. Nicholls: The eight centres which have notified the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) of proposals to release genetically manipulated organisms to the environment and whose proposals have been reviewed by HSE are:

Natural Environment Research Council, Institute of Virology, Oxford.
Rothamsted Experimental Station, Harpenden.
Institute for Plant Science Research, Cambridge.
Scottish Crops Research Institute, Invergowrie and Pentlandfield
Shell Research Ltd, Sittingbourne.
ICI, Jealott's Hill, Berkshire.
British Fermentation Products Ltd./Gist Brocades, Felixtowe.
Nickerson International Seeds Co. Ltd. Cambridge.

For the three centres whose notifications are currently under review, it would be inappropriate to provide this information.

Youth Training Allowance

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he has any plans to introduce an increase in youth training allowance to help 18-year-olds who will be liable to pay the community charge.

Mr. Nicholls: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the right hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, South (Mr. Ashley) on 15 March, *Official Report*, column *340*.

ENERGY

Chemical Spillages (North Sea)

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what checks are carried out to test what chemicals may be disposed of or spilled from offshore oil and gas installations.

Mr. Peter Morrison: The United Kingdom Government operate a notification scheme for the use of chemicals offshore. The object of the scheme is to prevent damage to the marine environment. Chemical manufacturers and suppliers provide data on all chemicals used offshore to the Department of Energy. Based on these data maximum permitted levels that can be discharged at any one installation in a year are given for each chemical.

Discussions are under way within the Paris commission for a mandatory scheme for the use and discharge of chemicals offshore as agreed at the recent North sea conference.

Tyres

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what steps he is taking to encourage the use as a fuel of redundant tyres; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Morrison: We propose to create a special place for renewable sources of energy in the non-fossil fuel obligation after privatisation. Within this scheme, the opportunity will exist for redundant tyres to qualify as a non-fossil fuel source. I would like to see them used as a renewable source where such use would be economically viable and environmentally acceptable and, to this end the energy technology support unit at Harwell is planning to hold a small workshop, to be attended by representatives from the appropriate sectors of the industry, later this summer.

Action for Cities

Ms. Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy (1) what was the cost of the action for cities anniversary event held at Wynward hall, Cleveland, on 28 February;

(2) what was the total cost of the action for cities anniversary events held nationwide.

Mr. David Hunt: I have been asked to reply.

I refer the hon. Member to the reply which my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister gave to the hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) on 7 March, column *629*.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Pensioners

Mr. Andrew Bowden: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is the proportion of *(a)* all pensioners, *(b)* male single pensioners, *(c)* female single pensioners, *(d)* pensioner couples, *(e)* newly retired single men, *(f)* newly retired single women, *(g)* newly retired couples who are in receipt of a state additional pension on the basis of the 1987 family expenditure survey; and for each group what is the mean and median amount received.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Information is not available in the form requested. The family expenditure survey does not identify the additional pension separately.

Fishermen (Unemployment Benefits)

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will make a statement on new regulations introduced by the Department of Social Security on 10 December 1989 relating to unemployment benefit payments; and if any research has been carried out into the impact of the benefits changes on fishermen now restricted in the number of days they can go to sea.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The new earnings levels for unemployment benefit apply equally to all claimants. We are aware of the concerns of the fishing industry and the Department is in contact with fishermen's representatives. We are monitoring the effects of the changes.

Nursing Care (Upkeep Costs)

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is the maximum savings limit allowed before a resident of *(a)* a residential home, *(b)* a residential nursing home and *(c)* a long-stay hospital is liable for a contribution towards his upkeep.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Whether a resident is liable to make any contribution towards his upkeep depends not only on his savings but on his income and on any fee charged. However, the first £3,000 of any savings of a resident are completely disregarded for benefit purposes.

Benefits (Capital Limits)

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how much will be deducted each week from income support, family credit, housing benefit and community charge benefit claimants with capital of £3,000 and at each £250 band up to the capital limit for the benefit as a result of his Department's assumptions as to the income derived from each level of capital.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: We do not make particular assumptions on the level of income from capital but a notional income—that is, a tariff income—is calculated on capital above a certain level. However, no tariff income is calculated on the first £3,000. Any actual income earned by savings is fully disregarded.

The table shows the tariff income on capital over £3,000 up to the upper limit of £6,000 in income support and family credit (increasing to £8,000 from 9 April 1990) and to £8,000 in housing benefit and community charge benefit (increasing to £16,000 from 1 April 1990).

In income support the amount of tariff income is wholly deductible from a person's entitlement. However, it is not possible to state how much of any tariff income will be deducted from family credit, housing benefit or community charge benefit since this depends on the amount of other income available, the circumstances of each individual case including, where appropriate, the amount of eligible rent or community charge and the effect of the tapers. These tapers are applied to any income above the appropriate applicable amount and the resulting figure is offset against the maximum benefit payable. In family credit the taper is 70 per cent., in housing benefit it is 65 per cent. and in community charge benefit it is 15 per cent.

Claimant/partner (£)	*Tariff income (weekly)* (£)
3,000·01 – 3,250·00	1
3,250·01 – 3,500·00	2
3,500·01 – 3,750·00	3
3,750·01 – 4,000·00	4
4,000·01 – 4,250·00	5
4,250·01 – 4,500·00	6
4,500·01 – 4,750·00	7
4,750·01 – 5,000·00	8
5,000·01 – 5,250·00	9
5,250·01 – 5,500·00	10
5,500·01 – 5,750·00	11
5,750·01 – 6,000·00	12
6,000·01 – 6,250·00	13
6,250·01 – 6,500·00	14
6,500·01 – 6,750·00	15
6,750·00 – 7,000·00	16
7,000·01 – 7,250·00	17
7,250·01 – 7,500·00	18
7,500·01 – 7,750·00	19
7,750·01 – 8,000·00	20
8,000·01 – 8,250·00	21
8,250·01 – 8,500·00	22
8,500·01 – 8,750·00	23
8,750·01 – 9,000·00	24
9,000·01 – 9,250·00	25
9,250·01 – 9,500·00	26
9,500·01 – 9,750·00	27
9,750·01 – 10,000·00	28
10,000·01 – 10,250·00	29
10,250·01 – 10,500·00	30
10,500·01 – 10,750·00	31
10,750·01 – 11,000·00	32
11,000·01 – 11,250·00	33
11,250·01 – 11,500·00	34
11,500·01 – 11,750·00	35
11,750·01 – 12,000·00	36
12,000·01 – 12,250·00	37
12,250·01 – 12,500·00	38
12,500·01 – 12,750·00	39
12,750·01 – 13,000·00	40
13,000·01 – 13,250·00	41
13,250·01 – 13,500·00	42
13,500·01 – 13,750·00	43
13,750·01 – 14,000·00	44

Claimant/partner (£)	Tariff income (weekly) (£)
14,000·01 – 14,250·00	45
14,250·01 – 14,500·00	46
14,500·01 – 14,750·00	47
14,750·01 – 15,000·00	48
15,000·01 – 15,250·00	49
15,250·01 – 15,500·00	50
15,500·01 – 15,750·00	51
15,750·01 – 16,000·00	52

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will give for each of *(a)* income support, *(b)* family credit, *(c)* housing benefit and *(d)* community charge benefit (i) the additional number of people who will come into entitlement and (ii) the number of existing claimants who will receive additional benefit as a result of the increased capital limits; and if he will give the net cost for each benefit.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: No existing recipients of income support or family credit will receive additional benefit although a negligible number of existing housing benefit or community charge benefit recipients may gain.

The estimated figures for new beneficiaries are set out in the table:

	Individuals (thousands)	Benefit units (thousands)	Cost (£ million)
Income support	30	25	30
Housing benefit	75	50	55
Community charge benefit	195	130	35
The number of family credit gainers is small			

Note:
The above figures include some people gaining more than one benefit. Taking account of the number of couples, the total number of individual gainers is estimated at around a quarter of a million.

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if, with regard to the announcement on 20 March about the increase in the capital limit for housing benefit and community charge benefit to £16,000 as of April 1990, he will state *(a)* what safeguards will be provided for claimants whose benefit does not immediately reflect the new capital limits, *(b)* what is his estimate of the increased cost to local authorities, *(c)* what additional resources are to be given to local authorities to help them (i) administer the change swiftly and (ii) cover the additional administrative costs, and *(d)* by what date he expects everyone to have received their full benefit, reflecting the new capital levels.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The information is as follows:

(a) Claims that are made before 27 May will be able to be backdated to 1 April. Benefit is awarded from the date the claim is made. Any delay in assessment does not therefore lead to loss of benefit;

(b) and *(c)* The Department is discussing with the local authority associations the administrative implications of these changes, and a decision on the amount of additional subsidy support to be provided to local authorities to meet their administrative costs will be made as soon as possible;

(d) Local authorities are responsible for ensuring that benefit, once claimed, is awarded within a reasonable time.

Community Charge Rebates

Mr. Hayward: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will ensure that those community charge payers who discover they are entitled to rebates after they have paid their bills would be entitled to a refund.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Benefit is normally backdated only if the claimant can show good cause for failure to claim earlier. For community charge benefit purposes there are two exceptions. In England and Wales a claim for community charge benefit will be treated as though it had been made on 1 April as long as it is made not more than 56 days after 1 April 1990, or not more than 56 days after the date of issue of the first community charge demand notice if the notice is received after 1 April. This provision does not apply where the delay in issuing the demand notice arises because of a failure by the claimant to notify the community charge registration officer that he is liable for that charge.

In Great Britain, charge payers who become entitled as a result of the change in the capital limit announced in the Budget will be treated as having made their claim on 1 April 1990, if their claim is received by 27 May 1990.

Sir John Stanley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Glasgow, Cathcart (Mr. Maxton) on 15 March, *Official Report*, column *333*, if he will publish in the *Official Report* the maximum net weekly incomes at which 50 per cent. of the maximum entitlement to community charge benefit will be paid for *(a)* a single person under 25, *(b)* a married couple with two children under 11, *(c)* a pensioner couple aged 60 to 74 and *(d)* a pensioner couple aged 75 to 79, assuming community charge levels per adult of (i) £250, (ii) £300, (iii) £328, (iv) £350, (v) £400 and (vi) £438.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The information requested is shown in the table.

Annual community charge	Single under 25	Couple two children under 11	Pensioner couple aged 60-74	Pensioner couple aged 75-79
250·00	45·19	125·22	101·12	104·77
300·00	47·74	130·33	106·23	109·88
328·00	49·17	133·20	109·10	112·75
350·00	50·30	135·45	111·35	115·00
400·00	52·86	140·56	116·46	120·11
438·00	54·80	144·45	120·35	124·00

Sir John Stanley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Glasgow, Cathcart (Mr. Maxton) on 15 March, *Official Report*, column *333*, if he will publish in the *Official Report* the maximum net weekly incomes at which the maximum entitlement to community charge benefit will be paid for *(a)* a single person under 25, *(b)* a married couple with two children under 11, *(c)* a pensioner couple aged 60 to 74 and *(d)* a pensioner couple aged 75 to 79, assuming community charge levels per adult of (i) £250, (ii) £300, (iii) £328, (iv) £350, (v) £400 and (vi) £438.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The maximum net weekly income at which maximum entitlement to community

charge benefit is awarded does not vary for different community charge levels. The information requested is shown in the table.

	£
Single person under 25	32·40
Couple with two children under 11	99·65
Pensioner couple aged 60-74	75·55
Pensioner couple aged 75-79	79·20

Child Benefit

Mr. Nicholas Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many *(a)* mothers and *(b)* families in receipt of child benefit pay income tax at the higher rate; and how many children they have who qualify for child benefit.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard *[holding answer 9 February 1990]:* The latest available estimates for the United Kingdom suggest that about 0·6 million families, with about 1·1 million children, receive child benefit and pay income tax at the higher rate in 1989-90. Among these is an estimated 0·2 million mothers, with about 0·3 million children. These include wives who, under the present system for taxing married couples, are liable to a 40 per cent. marginal tax rate only when the husband's earnings are taken into account.

These estimates are based on information from the 1987-88 survey of personal incomes projected to 1989-90 and are provisional.

Mr. Nicholas Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many *(a)* mothers, *(b)* families and *(c)* children in families are in receipt of child benefit with annual incomes in the ranges: (i) up to £5,000, (ii) £5,001 to £7,500, (iii) £7,501 to £10,000, (iv) £10,001 to £15,500, (v) £15,001 to £20,000, (vi) £20,001 to £25,000, (vii) £25,001 to £30,000, (viii), £30,001 to £50,000 and (ix) over £50,000.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard *[holding answer 9 February 1990]:* In the great majority of families child benefit is paid to the mother. The small number of other recipients cannot be reliably estimated and it is not possible therefore to break the figures down below family units and numbers of children. Information about the incomes of families receiving child benefit is not routinely collected. The following estimates of the distribution of gross incomes of recipient families in 1989-90 are therefore made on the basis of sample survey data which are subject to normal sampling and response variation.

Band of Gross Income	*Families Receiving Child Benefit* (000s)	*Number of Children* (000s)
Under £5,000	430	490
£5,001 to £7,500	1,010	1,940
£7,501 to £10,000	730	1,390
£10,001 to £15,000	1,520	2,620
£15,001 to £20,000	1,380	2,520
£20,001 to £25,000	740	1,340
£25,001 to £30,000	410	710
£30,001 to £50,000	450	790
over £50,000	100	190
TOTAL	6,760	12,000

Mr. Nicholas Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many *(a)* mothers, *(b)* families and *(c)* children in families would lose entitlement to child benefit as a result of having an income below the tax threshold if child benefit were abolished and replaced by a tax allowance.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard *[holding answer 9 February 1990]:* It is estimated that 1·6 million families with 2·9 million children in the United Kingdom in 1989-90 are non-taxpayers, and of these around 1·3 million with 2·3 million children receive income-related benefits with a further 0·2 million entitled but not claiming. There are estimated to be about a further 0·8 million families with 1·4 million children who would not be fully compensated through the tax system and around half of these are, or would be, entitled to income-related benefits.

These figures are based on information from the 1987-88 survey of personal incomes, projected to 1989-90, combined with the 1987 family expenditure survey. There is no reliable basis for any further division of the figures, but nearly all child benefit recipients are mothers.

Social Security Commissioners

Mr. Sillars: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what are the reasons for the delay in the social security commissioners working on cases submitted in July, 1989.

The Attorney-General: I have been asked to reply.

The last-minute surge of appeals under the pre-April 1988 benefits legislation took some time to work its way through the appeal system and caused a bottleneck at the Office of the Social Security Commissioners (OSSC) in 1989. This and the general increase in work load in 1989, combined with staff recruitment and retention difficulties, resulted in continuing delays at OSSC. In addition, an increasing proportion of appeals to the commissioners have become more complex and take longer to determine individually.

In view of the continuing delays, the Lord Chancellor's Department's manpower auditors are currently looking at the organisation and staffing levels of OSSC to see whether further steps can be taken to improve efficiency and reduce the delays.

The commissioners have powers to expedite hearings in exceptional circumstances. Appellants may seek expedition by applying to OSSC.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

No-fault Compensation

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Attorney-General if he will make a statement on no-fault compensation.

The Attorney-General: As previously announced, an inter-departmental working party is examining the feasibility of a no-fault compensation scheme, restricted to less serious road accidents and financed by private insurance. I understand that the working party is making good progress and it now expects to report to the Lord Chancellor by early next year.

Regional Functions

Mr. Cabom: To ask the Attorney-General what functions the Lord Chancellor's Department carries out at the regional level; where the regional offices are located in each of the regions; what staff are employed and at what grades; what proportion of the Department's budget is spent in each of the regions; and what geographical boundaries determine the Department's regions.

The Attorney-General: The Lord Chancellor is responsible for providing the administration of the Supreme Court, which consists of the Court of Appeal, the High Court and the Crown court, and of the county courts. The Crown court sits at nearly 100 locations and there are some 275 county courts. Administrative control is exercised through circuit-based administrative staff headed by a circuit administrator and a number of courts administrators in each of six circuits in England and Wales. These circuits are the Midland and Oxford (with its headquarters in Birmingham), the North Eastern (Leeds), the Northern (Manchester), the South Eastern (London), the Wales and Chester (Cardiff) and the Western (Bristol). There are also 11 district probate registries and 18 probate sub-registries, which together with the principal registry in London are administered by the administrator of the Royal Courts of Justice.

The majority of the Department's staff work in the courts on the circuits. The distribution as at 1 January 1990 is as follows (the figure in brackets represents the number of staff in the circuit and courts administrators offices):

	Number	*(Number)*
Midland and Oxford	890·5	(60·5)
North Eastern	1,130·5	(42·0)
Northern	1,134·0	(47·5)
South Eastern	2,700·5	(101·5)
Wales and Chester	611·5	(31·0)
Western	890·5	(44·5)
Other court service staff[1]	1,419·0	—

[1] Including RCJ/PRFD.

These staff are employed in a full range of grades which include support grades and administrative and executive grades up to circuit administators at grades 3 and 4 level.

Of the 1989-90 provision for running costs, the six circuits are directly responsible for half the Department's expenditure:

	Per cent.
Midland and Oxford	8·5
North Eastern	6·0
Northern	6·3
South Eastern	17·6
Wales and Chester	3·5
Western	5·1
Other court service	9·6

In addition, the majority of expenditure on accommodation (27·8 per cent. of the total) and a proportion of the budget for headquarters and associated offices (15·2 per cent.) is controlled centrally on behalf of the court service.

The court circuit boundaries date from 1972 when the Courts Act 1971 established a unified court service. The circuits cover the counties of England and Wales as follows:

Midland and Oxford circuit
Cambridgeshire (the part formerly Huntingdon and Peterborough), part of Derbyshire, Hereford and Worcester, Humberside (the part formerly in Lincolnshire), Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Staffordshire, Shropshire, Warwickshire, West Midlands.

North Eastern circuit
Cleveland, Durham, Humberside (excluding the part formerly in Lincolnshire), part of North Yorkshire, Northumberland, South Yorkshire, Tyne and Wear, West Yorkshire.

Northern circuit
Cumbria, part of Derbyshire, Lancashire, part of North Yorkshire, Greater Manchester, Merseyside.

South Eastern circuit
Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire (except that part formerly Huntingdon and Peterborough), East Sussex, Essex Greater London, Hertfordshire, Kent, Norfolk, Suffolk, Surrey, West Sussex.

Wales and Chester circuit
Cheshire, Clwyd, Dyfed, Gwent, Gwynedd, Mid-Glamorgan, Powys, South Glamorgan, West Glamorgan.

Western circuit
Avon, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Somerset, Isle of Wight, Wiltshire.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Privatisation (Eastern Europe)

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he has offered any assistance to the Czechoslovakian Government in producing their privatisation programme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister announced on 21 March that the know-how fund will be extended to Czechoslovakia. Among the first activities will be a visit to explore particular Czechoslovak needs in the promotion of free markets and privatisation.

Cambodia

Mrs. Mahon: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will support efforts to ensure the Cambodians in the Thailand border camps come under the supervision of the United Nations.

Mr. Sainsbury: Camps for displaced persons along the Thai-Cambodian border are administered by the Cambodian resistance factions themselves. But the United Nations has contributed to humanitarian assistance in the camps for a number of years. The creation of neutral sites under direct United Nations administration may be necessary as part of a comprehensive political settlement leading to free and fair elections in Cambodia.

Eastern Europe

Mr. Dickens: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on *(a)* policy towards the recent events in eastern Europe and *(b)* his latest assessment of the consequences of a unified Germany.

Mr. Waldegrave: We warmly welcome the rapid progress towards democracy in eastern Europe, which will

lead to greater prosperity and freedom for all. The elections in the GDR last weekend showed clearly the desire of the people for unity with the FRG and fundamental political and economic change. We look forward to the elections in Hungary this weekend, and to others in the coming months.

We shall be working hard for a successful outcome to the discussions on external aspects of German unification and are confident that a united Germany will be a welcome and influential force for strengthening democracy and prosperity in Europe.

Daphne Parish

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has on the location of the prison in Iraq where Daphne Parish is being held; and whether she has been allowed to see any member of the British consular staff since her conviction and sentence were announced.

Mr. Waldegrave: Mrs. Parish was visited by the British consul general in Baghdad on 15 March. She was well, but was naturally distressed to hear of Mr. Bazoft's execution. At that time Mrs. Parish was being held at Abu Ghraib prison. She has now been moved to a women's prison on the outskirts of Baghdad.

Iraq

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has regarding Iraq's nuclear capability.

Mr. Waldegrave: Iraq is a party to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty and, as such, is obliged to declare all nuclear facilities to the International Atomic Energy Agency. One facility, a research centre at Tuwaitha, has been so declared.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Religious Broadcasting

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representation he has received from the shadow Radio Authority about the interpretation of the restrictions on broadcasting religious matters in the Broadcasting Bill known as the "no undue prominence" and "no editorialising" provisions, as they will apply to the ownership of licences by religious groups; and if he proposes to issue any guidance about how the Radio Authority intends to interpret these provisions.

Mr. Mellor: The Broadcasting Bill contains no prohibitions on ownership of radio stations by religious bodies. We are currently discussing with the regulatory bodies the programme content provisons in the Bill which are relevant to religious broadcasting. Application of such provisions will be a matter for them; but our discussions include the question of whether it would be helpful to issue guidance on the effect of these provisions.

Protection of Animals

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he plans to take to provide disincentives to those who torture or abuse wild animals not covered by the terms of the Protection of Animals Act 1911.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to his question on 19 March at column *458*.

Police Inspectorate

Mr. Forman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will publish reports by Her Majesty's inspectorate of constabulary on its inspections of police forces.

Mr. Waddington: Yes. I shall from today publish the reports by Her Majesty's inspectorate of constabulary on police forces inspected annually under the Police Act 1964, that is the 42 provincial forces including the City of London police; and also those which the inspectorate makes on the Metropolitan police at the invitation of the Commissioner. The first three reports, published today, are of the 1989 inspections of police forces in Norfolk, South Wales and Staffordshire. Copies of these reports, and of a booklet about Her Majesty's inspectorate of constabulary, have been placed in the Library.

I have decided to publish these reports so as to increase public awareness of the significance of the inspectorate's role and functions; to draw police achievements and good practice to wider attention; to identify more publicly the scope for improvements and help accelerate the process of improving value for money in the police service; and to respond to public and parliamentary interest in the police.

Immigration

Mr. Raffan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he intends to make changes in the immigration rules.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: My right hon. and learned Friend has today laid before Parliament a statement of changes in the immigration rules. The main changes are the introduction of a visa requirement for nationals of Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia; changes in the arrangements for Commonwealth citizens with grandparents born in the United Kingdom so that they will qualify for settlement after four years' residence rather than on arrival; and an increase in the minimum sum or income which persons must invest or have at their disposal to qualify as a business man or person of independent means. These changes are consolidated in a new statement of the immigration rules. The new visa requirements will come into effect on 1 April 1990, the other changes on 1 May 1990. A statement listing and explaining all the changes is available in the Vote Office.

Vulnerable Prisoner Units

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has any plans to increase the number of vulnerable prisoner units.

Mr. Mellor: An additional unit planned at Wayland prison will hold 96 prisoners and is expected to be in

operation in June. The unit at Channings Wood prison is being extended to double its capacity to 112. The extension is due to be completed by the end of this year.

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will *(a)* list the national and regional vulnerable prisoner units and *(b)* state their current capacity and occupancy levels.

Mr. Mellor: The information is as follows:

Prison	*Capacity*	*Occupancy at 16 March 1990*
National VPUs		
Channings Wood	56	56
Maidstone	102	102
Wakefield	19	17
Regional VPUs		
Albany	149	147
Bristol	62	61
Dartmoor	151	149
Gartree	15	15
Rochester	67	67
Stafford	46	46

In addition, a wing of Littlehey prison, not referred to as a vulnerable prisoner unit, houses prisoners formerly segregated under rule 43. Capacity is 112 and occupancy at 16 March 1990 was 112.

Lay Visitors, Southwark

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what action he intends to take with respect to concerns expressed in the Southwark lay visitors panel's annual report.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: As with all annual reports from lay visitors' panels, the issues which have been raised by the Southwark panel's annual report have been carefully considered in consultation with the community involvement branch and local officers from the Metropolitan police. Detailed responses have been sent direct to the panel about the reports and points which have been raised.

Drugs

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the cost in the latest year for which figures are available of police work directed at drug enforcement.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: There are more than 1,500 police officers throughout the country with a major commitment to drugs work. In addition, many other officers contribute to the prevention and investigation of drug-related offences in the course of their duties. Reliable estimates of the cost of this work are not therefore available.

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the cost in the latest year for which figures are available of the probation service's work with offenders with problems of drug abuse.

Mr. John Patten: The information available to the Home Office about the cost of probation service activities does not make it possible to identify separately the cost of the probation service's work with offenders who have problems of drug abuse, but this is a duty which is regarded as a priority.

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the cost in the latest year for which figures are available of treatment facilities provided in prisons for offenders with problems of drug abuse.

Mr. Mellor: Monitoring of the expenditure, including medical expenditure, of the prison service is insufficiently detailed to enable costs on specific activities such as helping drug misusers to be separately identified.

Police Consultative Groups

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will provide the funds for police consultative groups in London to meet on a London-wide basis to discuss policing matters.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: No. The emphasis within the formal consultation process provided under section 106 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 is on flexible local arrangements which cater for the varying needs of each individual local community. It would not be appropriate for the Home Office to fund a body which is not an essential part of these arrangements.

Racism and Xenophobia

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what response he has received to his Department's memorandum COM (88) 318 Final submitted to the European Community; whether consideration of it has been concluded; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: The draft European Community resolution on the fight against racism and xenophobia has yet to be considered by the Council of Ministers. The Government's position is unchanged from that set out in the explanatory memorandum to Parliament and has been reflected in negotiations at official level on this subject.

Prison Population

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is prepared exceptionally to release all sentenced prison inmates serving sentences of six months or less with a view to bringing the total population in prison service establishments in England and Wales within their total certified normal accommodation; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: No. The power of executive release is one we have always kept in reserve, for use only in the last resort.

We have already taken a number of initiatives to reduce the prison population, both diverting people from custody and greatly expanding the prison building programme. These measures are now taking effect.

Payphones in Prisons

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is his policy on extending payphones in prisons in England and Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: We believe that the use of cardphones by inmates is an important way of sustaining relationships with family and friends during the time in custody and can help inmates to prepare for release.

Following the successful introduction of cardphones in open establishments and the current programme of installation at category C and equivalent female and young offender establishments, a pilot scheme to give unconvicted inmates access to cardphones, subject to certain safeguards, will start shortly at Her Majesty's prison Manchester. We hope that, if the trial is successful, cardphones can be extended for the use of unconvicted inmates in all other local prisons and remand centres. There are no plans at present to instal cardphones for the use of category B or category A inmates.

Rule 43

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what review his Department is conducting of the existing policy on rule 43 inmates in prisons in England and Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: A review was completed last year. I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Battersea (Mr. Bowis) on 31 October 1989 at column *116*.

Prisoners

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) for the latest date available, how many prisoners in England and Wales serving *(a)* less than three years, *(b)* three to four years, *(c)* four to five years, *(d)* five to 10 years and *(e)* more than 10 years but less than life were (i) white or (ii) from an ethnic minority;

(2) for the latest date available, what was the male and female sentenced prisoner population in England and Wales; and how many emanated from an ethnic minority.

Mr. Mellor *[holding answer 8 March 1990]:* The latest available information is given in the table.

Sentenced population[1] of Prison Service establishments in England and Wales on 30 September 1989: by length of sentence, ethnic origin and sex

Number of prisoners[2]

Length of sentence	*Ethnic origin*					*Total number of persons in establishments*
	White	*West Indian, Guyanese, African*	*Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi*	*Chinese, Arab, Mixed origin*	*Other, not recorded (including refusals)*	
Up to 3 years	18,900	1,803	396	385	489	21,973
Over 3 up to 4 years	3,031	494	101	73	63	3,762
Over 4 up to 5 years	2,109	442	95	51	47	2,744
Over 5 up to 10 years	4,060	868	310	120	142	5,500
Over 10 years less than life	811	138	86	25	35	1,095
Life	2,437	172	97	45	26	2,777
All lengths	31,348	3,917	1,085	699	802	37,851
Males	30,414	3,629	1,059	667	727	36,496
Females	934	288	26	32	75	1,355

[1] Including fine defaulters.
[2] The figures are those recorded centrally and are approximate.

Electronic Monitoring

Sir Charles Irving: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many defendants have been subjected to electronic monitoring at each of the three magistrates courts where experiments have taken place; how many have offended while on bail; how many have otherwise breached the conditions of bail; and how many have subsequently been remanded in custody.

Mr. John Patten *[holding answer 13 March 1990]:* The information requested is given in the table. Electronic monitoring is a very precise and accurate method of detecting automatically even minor breaches of the relevant bail conditions, compared to conventional methods. Some defendants commit offences or otherwise breach bail conditions whatever conditions may be imposed on them by the courts. For example 40 per cent. of male defendants refused bail and remanded in custody in January 1989 had previously committed offences on bail or otherwise breached bail conditions.

Defendants monitored during trials as at March 1990.

Trial area and Court	*Total monitored*	*Currently monitored*	*Breaches[1]*	
			Violations	*Further Offences*
Nottingham Magistrates' Crown	11	—	2	6
	6	—	1	—
North Tyneside Magistrates' Crown	14	2	8	1
	1	—	—	—
Tower Bridge Magistrates'	17	8	5	3
Crown	1	1	—	—
Total Magistrates'	42	10	15	10
Crown	8	1	1	—

[1] Of the 26 defendants who have breached their conditions 23 have been remanded in custody except two in North Tyneside and one in Tower Bridge who have absconded and are still violating.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Advertising Expenditure

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what was the total publicity and advertising expenditure, including for privatisation, of his Department and public bodies for which his Department has responsibility in *(a)* 1979 and *(b)* 1989.

Mr. Curry: The information requested is supplied by financial years. The total estimated publicity budget for my Department for 1989-90 is £2·5 million. Comparable figures for the year 1979-80 are not available on an identical basis due to changes in the way the figures are recorded. The spend for 1979-80 was £256,000. This figure, however, includes recruitment and other types of advertising as well as promotional publicity. It would be possible to distinguish between the two only at disproportionate cost.

No privatisations took place in the Department in the years 1979 and 1989.

Sulphadimidine

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if the review of medicines containing the active ingredient sulphadimidine has yet taken place; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: The review of existing veterinary medicinal products containing sulphadimidine as an active ingredient is under way and those products that meet modern standards of safety, quality and efficacy qualify for reviewed product licences.

GATT

Sir Richard Body: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) if he will place in the Library a copy of the final position paper on agriculture prepared by the European Economic Community for the Uruguay round of general agreement on tariffs and trade negotiations in Geneva;

(2) what offers have been made by the European Economic Community to the Uruguay round negotiation of the general agreement on tariffs and trade for substantial and progressive reductions in agricultural support; how those offers would affect the scope and level of agricultural trade between the United Kingdom and Canada, Australia and New Zealand; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Curry: I am arranging for a copy of the Community's comprehensive position paper on agriculture, submitted for the GATT negotiations in December 1989, to be placed in the Library of the House.

The Government are working actively with our Community partners to develop this position and to carry the negotiations forward on this basis.

A successful outcome to the negotiations will bring benefits to agricultural trade worldwide.

Dressed Poultry

Mr. John Townend: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) if he will seek a derogation under the new European Economic Community poultry health regulations to allow the continued processing and marketing of New York dressed poultry;

(2) what information he has about derogations under European Economic Community poultry health regulations for the continued use of the effilé, roped, method of dressing poultry in Italy and France.

Mr. Gummer: The EC Commission's proposals to the Council for a new regulation on poultrymeat hygiene make provision for member states to continue to authorise the marketing of partially eviscerated (effilé) poultry. At our insistence, the Commission has suggested, although only tentatively, that this authority should extend to the marketing of uneviscerated (New York dressed) birds.

There are no grounds for discriminating between the two forms of production and we shall resist firmly any attempt to prevent us authorising the marketing of uneviscerated birds under conditions consistent with public safety.

Food Products (Labelling)

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has any plans to introduce quantitative labelling of characterising ingredients in food products for human consumption.

Mr. Gummer: The European Commission is committed to making proposals requiring quantitative declaration of the major characterising ingredients of foodstuffs as part of its single market programme. The United Kingdom has been pressing the Commission to bring forward proposals and they are expected to be tabled formally within the next few months.

Genetically Engineered Yeast

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the method of announcement chosen by his Department to inform the public about the introduction of genetically engineered yeast.

Mr. Maclean: The announcement of the clearance given to this product was made by means of a news release circulated to the national, regional and specialist media and the simultaneous issue of the independent scientific advice on which the decision was based to some 240 organisations which might have a special interest in the subject.

Pet Food

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what controls exist over the safety and contents of pet food; what steps he takes to ensure dogmeat is not included in dog food; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: The safety of pet foods is required by sections 73 and 73A of the Agriculture Act 1970. Controls on the contents are contained in the Feedingstuffs Regulations 1988 (as amended). These controls require the ingredients used to be declared either individually or according to specific categories. Enforcement of the regulations has produced no reason to believe that dogmeat has been used as an ingredient. Indeed, my information is that pet food manufacturers maintain strict quality controls and that the meat they use is from food animals passed as fit for human consumption.

Shellfish

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will publish figures showing the quantity of nephrops used to produce scampi landed or imported into the United Kingdom over the last five years; and whether he is able to estimate what landings can be anticipated for the rest of the year.

Mr. Curry *[holding answer 19 March 1990]:* We do not collect the figures requested.

However a proportion of landings and imports of nephrops into the United Kingdom is used to produce scampi. In particular, nephrops landed as tails, as opposed to landed whole, are mostly used to produce scampi. It is too early in the year to estimate landings and imports for 1990 but figures for the last five years are as follows:

Tonnes

	Landings (whole weight equivalent)		
	Total	*Of which tails (estimate)*	[1] *Imports*
1985	24,858	n.a.	90
1986	25,607	(16,110)	47
1987	24,424	(12,765)	217
1988	27,513	(16,314)	351
[2]1989	27,031	(15,417)	415

Sources:

Fisheries Departments Statistics Units.

Her Majesty's Customs and Excise Overseas Trade Statistics.

[1] Imported weight; whole nephrops and tails are not separately recorded in import data.

[2] Provisional.

INDEX TO THE

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

OFFICIAL REPORT

SIXTH SERIES **VOLUME 169**

SESSION 1989–90

12th March—23rd March 1990

SCOPE OF THE INDEX, ARRANGEMENT AND ABBREVIATIONS

This index is derived from the House of Commons Library's Parliamentary On-Line Information System (POLIS), and the subject terms used are based on those used in POLIS. There are often changes in column numbering, etc, between the daily part or weekly Hansard (which simply collects together the daily parts without revision) and the bound volume. The index for the bound volume is revised to take account of these changes and cannot therefore, be used in connection with the daily part or weekly Hansard. For these versions use the Fortnightly Index.

Scope and arrangement of the Index

Oral and Written Parliamentary Questions are indexed under subject headings and the names of Members asking and Ministers replying to them. Questions are not listed under the names of Departments replying. Departmental listings can be arrived at indirectly by looking under the names of the Minister(s) of that Department. There are, however, the headings 'Northern Ireland', 'Scotland', and 'Wales' under which one can find not only most Questions answered by the Northern Ireland Office, Scottish Office, Welsh Office but also Questions about these areas of the United Kingdom which are answered by other Departments. Ministerial statements are indexed under subject headings, under 'Ministerial statements' and the names of Ministers making them and Members speaking on them. General debates are indexed under broad subject headings and under the names of all Members and Ministers taking part. Debates on legislation (Bills, Orders, Regulations etc.) are indexed under the name of the Bill, Statutory Instrument etc, under subject headings and under the names of those taking part.

Rulings and Statements by Mr. Speaker and his deputies are brought together under the heading Speaker's rulings and statements.

Other contributions by Mr. Speaker and his deputies appear under the heading Speaker.

Opposition Day Debates, Estimates Day Debates and Standing Order No. 10 applications are listed under those respective headings and under subject headings too.

The date of each item except Parliamentary Questions is inserted immediately before the reference.

Members' names are given in the form by which they prefer to be known and are printed in bold italics. Under their names, entries are arranged under one of the two headings *Debates etc* (to include interventions on statements, points of order and so on) or *Questions*.

Abbreviations

Bills 1R=first reading, 2R=second reading, Money res=money resolution, Com=Committee stage, Rep=Report stage, 3R=third reading, amendt/amendts=amendment/amendments, *=matter taken formally, without debate.

Column numbers followed by the letter W refer to Written Questions. These appear at the end of each daily part or volume with their own sequence of column numbers printed in italics.

A1
Road works 649-50w

A2
Dual carriageways 151w

A6
533w, 535w
Road works 773w

A13
7
Road works 8

A55
349w

A303
Dual carriageways 126w

A428
535w

A487
244w

A580
Road works 534w

AA
see Automobile Association

Abbott, Ms Diane
Debates etc.
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 430
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Allocation of time motion & Rep (14:03:90) 515
Questions
Rain forests, ACP-EEC Joint Assembly 61w

Aberystwyth University
see University College of Wales Aberystwyth

Abortion
Advisory services 729w
Codes of practice 730w
Drugs 180w, 541w
Judgments 730w

Abortion Act 1967
Questions
Handicapped children 730w

ACC
see Association of County Councils

Access to countryside
1113
Climbing 1113
Defence land 331w
Walking 1113

Access to Parliament
Westminster Hall 884-5

Accountability
Accountants 43w

Accountants
Accountability 43w
Company reports 43w, 695w
Dept of Trade inquiries 431w
Ethnic minorities 430w
Higher civil servants 613w
Manpower 607w
Ministers 613w
Professional organisations 43w, 430w
Royal charters 439w

Accounting
Financial services 696w
Goodwill 432w
Professional qualifications 586-7w

Accounting Standards Committee
432w

Acid house
Entertainments (Increased Penalties) Bill 1989/90 754w
Lancashire 356w

Acid rain
Environmental impact assessment 677w
Fisheries 446w
Lincolnshire 266w
Norfolk 266w
Research 770w
Research finance 677w

ACP-EEC Joint Assembly
Rain forests 61w

Act Now
565-7w

Action credit scheme
Hard core unemployed 129w

Action for Jobs
Central Office of Information 506w
Expenditure 506w
Publicity 136w

Adams, Mr Allen
Questions
Securities & Investments Board 300w

ADAS
see Agricultural Development & Advisory Service

ADC
see Association of District Councils

Additional pensions
Pensioners 785w

Adelphi Estate Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
Order for resuming adjourned 2R read (15:03:90) 649, (22:03:90) 1219

Adjudication officers
131-2w

Adley, Mr Robert
Debates etc.
Public transport (23:03:90) 1342-58, 1364, 1365, 1366, 1381, 1382, 1383, 1389, 1390, 1401, 1402, 1407, 1410-1
Questions
Aircraft noise, Noise control 654w
Ambulance services, Pay settlements 553w
Dept of Transport, Civil service manpower 539w
Environment, White papers 674w
Exchange control 374w
Health services, Road accidents 475w
Railway travel, Ministers 496w
Road tolls, EC countries 540w
Road traffic police 456w
Road transport 539-40w
Winchester bypass 3

Administrative costs
Atomic Weapons Research Establishment 638w
Community charge 246w, 663w, 715-6w
Community charge capping 1109-10
Rates & rating 715-6w
Social security benefits 335-6w

Administrative delays
British citizenship 634-5w
Immigration appeals 717w
Members' correspondence 68w, 764w
Probate 701w
Social security appeals 790w
Visas 716w
War pensions 594-5w

Admissibility of evidence
Scottish courts 580w

Adoption
Romania 694w

Adult education
Welsh language 350w

Advertising
Cabinet Office 41w
Central Office of Information 167-8w
Dept of Education & Science 32-3w
Dept of Employment 131-2w

Advertising—continued
Dept of Energy 5-6w
Dept of Health 183w
Dept of Social Security 71-2w
Dept of the Environment 191w
Dept of Trade & Industry 173-4w
Dept of Transport 151w
Expenditure 5-6w, 9w, 14-6w, 23-4w, 32-3w, 37w, 41w, 47-8w, 51w, 56w, 71-2w, 83-4w, 90w, 113-4w, 131-2w, 134w, 151w, 167-8w, 173-4w, 183w, 191w, 276-7w
Foreign & Commonwealth Office 37w
Home Office 23-4w
Leeds Development Corporation 268w
Lord Chancellor 90w
Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food 83-4w
Ministry of Defence 51w
Office of Arts & Libraries 9w
Office of Population Censuses & Surveys 56w
Personal pensions 664-5
Prime Minister 41w
Privy Council 47-8w
Scottish Office 113-4w
Training Agency 134w
Treasury 276-7w
Welsh Office 14-6w

Advertising controls
Bingo 457w

Advice & Assistance (Financial Conditions) (Scotland) Regulations 1990
Debates etc.
(12:03:90) 29

Advisory bodies
Dept of Trade & Industry 402w

Advisory services
Abortion 729w
Finance 475-6
Stockport 476

Aerospace industry
428w
Europe 302w
Government grants 467
Trade unions 467
USA 302w

AFRC
see Agricultural & Food Research Council

Africa
Overseas aid 59-60w

Age
Employment discrimination 213w

Agricultural & Food Research Council
521w
Commodities 34-5w

Agricultural chemicals
Industrial health & safety 195-6w

Agricultural Development & Advisory Service
572-3w

Agricultural land
735w
Church Commissioners 881
Housing construction 674w
North Wales 245w
Property development 674w
Tourism 672w

Agricultural production
Beef 384-5w, 438-9w
Pesticides 74w

Agricultural products
International trade 799w

Agricultural research
Fungicides 241w

Agricultural support systems
GATT 799w

Agricultural workers
Manpower 197-8w
Pesticides 130-1w

Agriculture
Northern Ireland 438w
Private Members' motions (16:03:90) 851-9

Agriculture Select Committee
193-4w

AIDS
Blood transfusions 557-8w
Compensation 557-8w
Health education 545w
Prisoners 511w
Publicity 545w

Air accidents
Fastcastle 435w
Lockerbie 2
Military aircraft 435w
Taylor Scott, Lt Cdr 288-9w
Tornado aircraft 639w

Air ambulance services
Greater London 728w

Air fares
Competition 10
Manchester Airport 10-1

Air pollution
Carbon dioxide 493w
North Sea 312w
Road construction 775w
Road traffic 187w

Air pollution control
Carbon dioxide 680w
Chlorofluorocarbons 666w
Diesel vehicles 690-1w
Smoke & chimney gases 677w, 679-80w

Air routes
EC transport policy 123w

Air traffic control
126-7w
Prestwick Airport 497w

Air transport
USA 124w

Air travel
Prestwick Airport 497w

Aircraft
Exercise Northaxe 2/90 332w
Radio 592-3w

Aircraft noise
Noise control 654w

Aircrew
Vocational education 626w

Airlines
USA 1-2

Airports
Scotland 581w

Alarms
Sellafield 629-30w

Albania
Gold 451w

Albion Colliery
Spoil heaps 876

Alcoholic drinks
Scotland 351w
Young people 351w

Alcoholism
Community care 561w

Alexander, Mr Richard
Debates etc.
Arts finance (13:03:90) 166
Human embryo experiments, Public petitions (16:03:90) 793
Questions
Bombings, Birmingham 633-4w, 1226

Al-Fayed, Mohammed
Deportation 743w

Al-Fayed, Mohammed—continued
Perjury 316w

Al-Fayed Investment Holdings
Banking Act 1987 151
Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986 469

Algae
269w, 447w
North Sea 487w
Pollution monitoring 492w

Alison, Rt Hon Michael, Second Church Estates Commissioner
Questions
Church Commissioners, Agricultural land 881
Church Commissioners, Income 439w, 881
Church of England, Wealth 439w
Rent control, Barnet 880-1
River pollution, EC countries 675w

Allason, Mr Rupert
Debates etc.
War Crimes Bill, 2R (19:03:90) 922, 927, 939, 940, 947, 948-52
Questions
Al-Fayed Investment Holdings, Banking Act 1987 151
Security Service Tribunal, Complaints 139w
Trade formalities, Japan 477

Allen, Mr Graham
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990 (21:03:90) 1179-81
Redbridge London Borough Council Bill, 3R (20:03:90) 1076
Steel framed houses, Nottingham (20:03:90) 1087-94, 1097, 1099-100, 1102
Questions
Beaulieu Group, Tax evasion 527w
Budget 163w
Capital movements, Foreign companies in UK 271-2w
Community charge, Mentally disadvantaged 481w
Community charge, Students 481w
Community charge benefits, Billing 661w
Company taxation 377-8w
Corporation tax 375w
Council house sales, House prices 98w
Debts written off, Banks 380w
Defective housing, Reinstatement grants 97-8w
European Investment Bank, Channel tunnel 160w, 527w
European Investment Bank, Exchange risk guarantee scheme 409w
European Investment Bank, Loans 161w, 527-8w
European Investment Bank, Public appointments 160-1w
Gibraltar, Sovereignty 145w
Immigration applications, Members 16w
Inflation, Council house sales 163w
Intelligence services, Northern Ireland 13
Local government finance, Nottingham 666w
Members' staff, Manpower 882
National insurance contributions, Fraud 154-5w
Oral questions, House of Commons procedure 886
Personal loans, Council house sales 163w
Poland, Frontiers 156w
Police, Rent allowances 756w
Romania, Human rights 35w
Tax allowances, Banks 379w
Transport of hazardous materials, Lindane 127w
Uniform business rate, Cricket 484w
War pensions, Administrative delays 594-5w

Alternative energy
Energy research 318w
Exhibitions 691w
Tyres 784w

Alternative medicine
EC action 180-1w

Alternatives to prison
Prison population 1223-4

Alton, Mr David
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990 (20:03:90) 1050-4
Community charge, Public petitions (13:03:90) 460
Questions
Abortion, Codes of practice 730w
Abortion, Judgments 730w
Abortion Act 1967, Handicapped children 730w
Air pollution, Road traffic 187w
Arts Council grants, Liverpool 420w
Arts Council grants, Playhouse Theatre Liverpool 420w
Arts finance, Merseyside 420w
Baltic republics of USSR, Self-determination of states 1009-10
Blue Coat School Liverpool 143w
Business statements 1240
Community care, Mentally ill 1001
Debts, Interest rates 380w
Domestic rates, Community charge 666w
Family credit, Take-up 154w
Hedges & ditches 185w
Land pollution, Conifers 269w
Malaria, Notifiable diseases 182w
Prison staff, Hepatitis 399w
Prisoners, Hepatitis 1223
Religious broadcasting, Broadcasting controls 793w
Tidal power, Environmental impact assessment 492w
Tourism, Merseyside 211w
Traffic censuses, Bicycles 234w
Traffic censuses, Road traffic 234-5w
Unemployment, Hard core unemployed 139-40
Unemployment benefits, Occupational pensions 335w
Vietnam, Overseas aid 62w
Water pollution, Fertilisers 269w

Ambulance services
Dewsbury Health Authority 367w
Industrial disputes 461w
Pay settlements 553w

Amery, Rt Hon Julian
Debates etc.
Northern Ireland (Emergency & Prevention of Terrorism Provisions) (Continuance) Order 1990 (12:03:90) 53-5
War Crimes Bill, 2R (19:03:90) 900-3, 930, 970

Amess, Mr David
Debates etc.
Families (16:03:90) 845-8
Questions
Abortion, Drugs 180w
Community charge, Transitional relief 483-4w
Community charge capping, Basildon 662w
Inflation 371-2w
Local authorities, Companies 491-2w
Uniform business rate, Sports facilities 485w
Young offenders, Parental responsibility 1228

Amos, Mr Alan
Questions
Air traffic control 126-7w
Docklands light railway 129w
Economic growth 371w
Employment opportunities, National Garden Festival 1990 251-2w
Northumberland Health Authority 559w
Northumbria Police Authority 754w
Skills Training Agency, Privatisation 216w

Anaesthetics
Downe Hospital 311w

Anderson, Mr Donald
Debates etc.
Business statements (13:03:90) 446, (15:03:90) 673
By elections, Mid-Staffordshire (23:03:90) 1341

Anderson, Mr Donald—continued
Public transport (23:03:90) 1342, 1343, 1345, 1355, 1358-62, 1378
Questions
Community charge, Wales 443w
EC social charter 129w

Anglo-Irish Agreement
(14:03:90) 641-8

Animal diseases
Marine animals 242w

Animal experiments
Cosmetics 43w

Animal feed
Drugs 194w
Food contamination 242w
Transmissible encephalopathies 734w

Animal Health Act 1981
Questions
Poultry 81w

Animal welfare
Poultry 197w
Wild animals 459w, 794w

Animals
Upper Waiting Hall 769w

Annual reports
586w, 795w
Audit 695w
HM Inspectorate of Constabulary 794w

Antarctic
Snow & ice 450w

Antelopes
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy 573-4w

Antitank missiles
Expenditure 433-4w

Apartheid
South Africa 156w

APC
see Auditing Practices Committee

Appeals
Northern Ireland Fire Authority 436w

Appledore Ferguson
697w

Appledore Shipyard
697w

Appropriation (Northern Ireland) Order 1990
Debates etc.
(12:03:90) 72-127

Appropriations in aid
Northern Ireland (12:03:90) 72-127

Approved training organisations
Day nurseries 136w

Arbuthnot, Mr James
Questions
Foreign investment in UK, Public expenditure controls 663

Archaeological sites
Bankside power station 494w
Covent Garden 494-5w
Seas & oceans 328w

Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Debates etc.
War Crimes Bill, 2R (19:03:90) 889, 892, 899, 901, 905, 924-8, 931, 934
Questions
Prison staff, Fresh Start 750w
Sites of special scientific interest, Planning permission 679w

Architects
Dept of the Environment 1112

Architecture
1112-3
Buildings 673w

Areas of outstanding natural beauty
Environment protection 676w

Armadale
Iron & steel industry 290w

Armed conflict
UN resolutions 38w

Armed forces
Community charge 413w
HIV infection 49w
West Germany 51w

Armed forces cadets
Iraq 772w

Armed forces casualties
Armed forces training 201w
Defence Council 200-1w

Armed forces civilians
Radiation hazards 333w

Armed forces deployment
719w
Brunei 412-3w
USA 515-6w

Armed forces discharges
Homosexuality 52w

Armed forces officers
Armed forces training 202w

Armed forces training
720-1w
Armed forces casualties 201w
Armed forces officers 202w
Clothing 200-2w
Defence Council 199-200w, 202w
Heatstroke 198-201w
Medical examinations 202w

Arms control negotiations
Defence equipment 330w
NATO 290w

Arms exports
Indonesia 433w

Armstrong, Ms Hilary
Questions
Balance of trade, Biotechnology 297w
Council house rents 1104-5
Railway safety 8
Retail price index, Energy prices 370w
Special education 26-9w
Special education, Wales 244w

Army in Northern Ireland
Fraud 602w
Property Services Agency 49w

Arnold, Mr Jacques
Debates etc.
War Crimes Bill, 2R (19:03:90) 942
Questions
Acid house, Entertainments (Increased Penalties) Bill 1989/90 754w
Capital value rating 665w
English language, South America 16

Arnold, Mr Tom
Questions
Disley bypass, Road construction 533w
Higher civil servants, Foreign & Commonwealth Office 264w
Higher civil servants, Home Office 507w
Road works, A6 773w
Roads, Greater Manchester 534-5w

Arrests
Cycling 680-1w
Demonstrations 755w
Sudan 716-7w

Arson
Wales 138w

Art works
Export licensing 235w, 317w

Arthur Andersen
Civil servants 73w

Articled teachers
33w
Wales 517-8w

Arts
Budgeting 9w
Ministers' domestic visits 515w
Tourism 413w

Arts Council
9w, (13:03:90) 155-70

Arts Council grants
Liverpool 420w
Playhouse Theatre Liverpool 420w

Arts finance
413w
Merseyside 420w
Ministerial statements (13:03:90) 155-70

Arts Funding Reorganisation Steering Committee
(13:03:90) 155-70

Arts Support Review Group
(13:03:90) 155-70

Asbestos
Industrial diseases 502-3w
Industrial health & safety 216w
Palace of Westminster 683w

Ashby, Mr David
Questions
Al-Fayed, Mohammed, Deportation 743w
NHS hospital trusts 546w

Ashdown, Rt Hon Paddy
Questions
Community charge benefits, Capital rules 1236

Ashford
Unemployment 257-9w

Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Questions
Armed forces casualties, Armed forces training 201w
Armed forces casualties, Defence Council 200-1w
Armed forces training, Armed forces officers 202w
Armed forces training, Clothing 200-2w
Armed forces training, Defence Council 199-200w, 202w
Armed forces training, Heatstroke 198-201w
Armed forces training, Medical examinations 202w
Attendance allowance, Handicapped children 154w
Business statements 1242
Community charge, Youth training scheme 484w
Disability employment credit, Personal savings 67w
Disabled workers, Government departments 235w
Disabled workers, Labour market 135w
Disabled workers, Survey techniques 135w
Disabled workers, Working hours 134-5w
Drug abuse, Disposable syringes 474w
Health hazards, Disposable syringes 765w
Hepatitis, Disposable syringes 765w
Hepatitis, Refuse disposal 474w
Hepatitis, Vaccination 473-4w
Housing & handicapped, Voluntary organisations 267w
Invalidity benefits, Social security recipients 154w
Prescription charges, Price increases 550w
Prisoners, Hepatitis 1223
Prosthetics, Finance 729w
Quota of disabled workers 607w
Quota of disabled workers, Prosecutions 252w
Quota of disabled workers, Public sector 252w
Sheltered employment 135w
Skillcentres, Handicapped 134w

***Ashley, Rt Hon Jack**—continued*
Vaccine damaged children, Compensation 642w
Youth training scheme, Special education 342w
Youth training scheme, Training allowances 342w

Ashton, Mr Joseph
Debates etc.
Business statements (13:03:90) 444, 448
Questions
Motorways, Road construction 126w
RECHAR, East Midlands 301w
Smoking, Death 555-6w

Assisted places scheme
Costs 158w
Parental contributions 382w
Scotland 158w, 583-4w

Association of County Councils
394-5w

Association of District Councils
673w

Asthma
Prescription charges exemptions 621-2w
Prisoners 25w

Astra Training Services
134w, 141
Civil servants 579w

***Atkins, Mr Robert**, Under-Secretary of State for Transport*
Questions
A1, Road works 649-50w
A2, Dual carriageways 151w
A303, Dual carriageways 126w
A580, Road works 534w
Advertising, Dept of Transport 151w
B3227, Road signs 540w
Blackwall tunnel, Road traffic 533w
Bridges, Repairs & maintenance 3
Bridges, River Severn 383w
Bus lanes, Headington 690w
Buses 656w
Buses, Speed governors 12
Catalytic converters, Cost benefit analysis 127w
Channel tunnel, Road construction 233-4w
Channel tunnel, Road traffic 234w
Civil service manpower, Dept of Transport 649w
Company cars, Central London 535w
Cycling, Road accidents 648-9w
Dept of Transport, Civil service manpower 539w
Diesel vehicles, Air pollution control 690-1w
Disley bypass, Road construction 533w
Driving instruction 535-6w
Driving instruction, EC countries 536w
Driving instruction, Road accidents 535w
East London River Crossing, Construction 537w
East London River Crossing, Costs 537w
East London River Crossing, Housing 537w
East London River Crossing, Public inquiries 537w
Exhaust emission controls, Electronic equipment 539w
Exhaust emission controls, Motor vehicle testing 649w
Goods vehicles, Safety equipment 6-7
Kleinwort Benson, Dept of Transport 152w
London assessment studies 121-2w
London assessment studies, Public opinion 532w
Lorries, Road tax 147w
Lorries, Spray suppression 12
M1, Road traffic 151-2w
M1, Road works 126w
Management consultants, Dept of Transport 310w
Mersey tunnel, Road tolls 127w
Motor insurance, Road traffic offences 147w

***Atkins, Mr Robert**—continued*
Motor vehicle testing, Licensing 309-10w
Motoring, Taxation 12-3
Motorways, Road construction 126w
Petrol, Road tax 540w
Privatisation, Dept of Transport 150-2w
Public relations, Dept of Transport 150w
Public sector housing, Dept of Transport 233w
Publicity, Dept of Transport 689-90w
Road accidents 127w
Road accidents, Hereford & Worcester 121w
Road construction 126w
Road construction, Air pollution 775w
Road construction, Badgers 152w
Road construction, Carbon dioxide 775-6w
Road construction, Environment protection 309w
Road construction, Public expenditure 540w
Road construction, Transport supplementary grants 228-34w, 650-4w
Road safety, Expenditure 123w
Road safety barriers 148w
Road tax, Tax evasion 121w
Road tolls, EC countries 540w
Road traffic, Bedford 535w
Road traffic, Bow 648w
Road traffic, Central London 125w
Road traffic, Road construction 536w, 776w
Road traffic control, Birmingham 536w
Road traffic control, East London 533w
Road traffic control, Headington 690w
Road traffic control, Leeds 536w
Road traffic control, Urban areas 648w
Road transport 539-40w
Road works, A6 773w
Road works, Publicity 650w
Roads, Expenditure 125w
Roads, Greater London 125-6w
Roads, Greater Manchester 534-5w
Roads, Public expenditure 149w
Speed limits, Danbury 540w
Statistics, Dept of Transport 128w
Traffic censuses, Bicycles 234w
Traffic censuses, Road traffic 234-5w
Traffic Commissioners, Complaints 152w
Traffic examiners, Cardiff 10
Transport, Greater London 122w
Transport of radioactive materials, Road accidents 777w
Transport supplementary grants, Inner cities initiative 537-8w
Transport supplementary grants, North Yorkshire County Council 649-50w
Transport supplementary grants, Road works 2-3
Tyre tread depths, Harmonisation of legislation 689w
Winchester bypass 3

Atkinson, Mr David
Questions
Alcoholism, Community care 561w
Community charge benefits, Capital rules 404w
Local government finance, Dorset County Council 478w
Non-domestic rates, Bournemouth 391w
UNESCO 145w
Uniform business rate, Bournemouth Borough Council 184-5w
USSR, War crimes 265w

Atomic Weapons Research Establishment
333w
Administrative costs 638w
Contractorisation 522w, 524-5w
Pensions 524-5w

Atrazine
148-9w
Licensing 240w

Attendance
European Investment Bank 160-1w
Science Museum 8w

Attendance allowance
Community charge benefits 404w
Handicapped children 154w
Terminal care 639-40w, 740w

Attendance Allowance Board
740w

Audible reversing alarms
6-7

Audit
Annual reports 695w
Company accounts 42-3w, 169w, 587w, 695-6w
Contracts 431w
Crown Suppliers 92w
Dept of Education & Science 521w
Dept of Employment 580w
Foreign & Commonwealth Office 526w
Fraud 42w
HM Fire Service Inspectorate 510w
Lord Advocate 582w
Mergers 696w
Northern Ireland Office 227w

Auditing Practices Committee
Voting rights 432w

Automatic train protection
Railway technology 310w

Automobile Association
12-3

Availability for work
Unemployment benefits 131-2w

Average earnings
343w, 502w
Avon 501w
Health service staff 764-6w
Part-time employment 501w

Avionics
Research finance 467

Avon
Average earnings 501w
Secondary education 418w

AWACS
Defence contracts 289w

AWE Aldermaston
Defence contracts 771w

AWE Burghfield
638w

AWE Cardiff
638w

AWE Foulness
638w

AWRE
see Atomic Weapons Research Establishment

B3227
Road signs 540w

BAA
see British Airports Authority

Back pain
Industrial health & safety 576-7w
Lost working days 578w

Bacteria
Mineral waters 86w
Water filters 104w

Badgers
Road construction 152w

Bail hostels
Mentally disturbed offenders 636w

Bailiffs
Manpower 91w

***Baker, Rt Hon Kenneth**, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster*
Questions
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Official hospitality 47w

Baker, Rt Hon Kenneth—continued
Public relations, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster 47w

Bakers yeast
Genetically modified organisms 800w

Bakery products
Food hygiene 353w
Scotland 353w

Balance of payments
EC institutions 610w
UK trade with EC 424w

Balance of trade
270w, 291w, 378w, 660-1
Biotechnology 297w
East Germany 291w
Electronic equipment 303w
Hong Kong 699w
Industry 661
Invisible trade balance 661
Manufactured goods 291-2w, 378w
OECD countries 378w, 660
Textile industry 479-80
UK trade with EC 291w, 474

Baldry, Mr Tony, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Energy
Debates etc.
Coal Industry Bill, Lords amendts (15:03:90) 784
Questions
Electricity supply industry, Privatisation 6w
Electricity tariffs 691w
Fossil fuel levy 428w
Health physics, Sellafield 629-30w
Ionizing radiation, Sellafield 629w
National Grid Company, Electricity Act 1989 632w
Nuclear power, Subsidies 399w
"Nuclear Safety at Electricite de France" 691w

Ballykelly
Fraud 602w

Baltic republics of USSR
Self-determination of states 1009-10

Bangor
Veterinary medicine 773w

Bangor University
see University College of North Wales

Bank for Reconstruction & Development of Europe
see European Development Bank

Bank notes
273w

Bank of England
306w, 373-4w

Bank services
Company investigations 591w

Banking Act 1987
Questions
Al-Fayed Investment Holdings 151

Bankruptcy
304w, 429w

Banks
Debts written off 380w
Tax allowances 379w

Banks, Mr Robert
Questions
A1, Road works 649-50w
Community charge, North Yorkshire County Council 660w
Infant mortality 568-9w
Infant mortality, Medical research 569w
Infant mortality, Western Europe 726w
Namibia, Constitutions 525w
Perinatal mortality 725-6w
Road works, Publicity 650w
Sudan, Human rights 525w
Transport supplementary grants, North Yorkshire County Council 649-50w

Banks, Mr Robert—continued
Uniform business rate, Harrogate Borough Council 660w

Banks, Mr Tony
Debates etc.
Arts finance (13:03:90) 167
Bazoft, Farzad (15:03:90) 670-1
Budget March 1990, Industry (22:03:90) 1256, 1288, 1299, 1310-3
Business statements (15:03:90) 674
Public transport (23:03:90) 1349, 1354, 1356, 1392, 1403-5
Questions
Art works, Export licensing 235w
Bombings, Birmingham 459w
Business statements 1243
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Official cars 188w
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Official hospitality 47w
Church Commissioners, Income 439w
Civil emergency adviser, Conferences 137w
Elephants, Nature conservation 64w
Emergency planning, Expenditure 137w
Falkland Islands, Penguins 38w
Homelessness, Families 672w
Hong Kong, Ivory 717-8w
Missing persons, Children 755w
Neighbourhood watch schemes, Police patrolling 1231
Regional health authorities, Land acquisition 279w
Trade barriers, Japan 296w
Transport policy, South East region 7-8
Urban transport, EC countries 128w
Westminster Hall 883-4
White fronted geese, Islay 116w

Bankside power station
Archaeological sites 494w
Land values 319w, 400w
Listed buildings 494w
Nuclear Electric 400w

Barking & Dagenham
Community charge 153

Barlow Clowes
Compensation 401w

Barnacle geese
Islay 116w

Barnes, Mr Harry
Debates etc.
Appropriation (Northern Ireland) Order 1990 (12:03:90) 82-3, 120-1
Business statements (13:03:90) 452, (15:03:90) 682
Community charge (15:03:90) 683
Community charge, Public petitions (16:03:90) 794
Entitlement to Employment & Training Bill, Order for resuming adjourned 2R read (16:03:90) 860
Radiation Exposed Crown Employees (Benefits) Bill, 2R order read (16:03:90) 860
Tees & Hartlepool Port Authority Bill, 2R (15:03:90) 751, 762, 764-6, 770-1, 773
Questions
Bankruptcy 429w
Bombings, Birmingham 1225-6
Business statements 1239
Colombia, Mercenaries 608w
Community care 549w
Community charge capping, Local government expenditure 185w
Hazardous materials, Planning permission 313w
Industrial investment 271w
Mental health services, Derbyshire 183w
National Girobank, Cheque cards 409w
NHS Income Generation Unit, Dept of Health 387w
North Korea 330w

Barnes, Mrs Rosie
Debates etc.
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 228-9
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Allocation of time motion & Rep (14:03:90) 569-70
Questions
Hepatitis 58-60w
Industrial wastes, Pollution control 105w
Medical research 552w
Waste disposal, Chemicals 105-6w

Barnet
Rent control 880-1

Barnsley
One parent benefit 405w

Barron, Mr Kevin
Debates etc.
Coal Industry Bill, Lords amendts (15:03:90) 778-9, 784
Tees & Hartlepool Port Authority Bill, 2R (15:03:90) 743, 746
Questions
Derelict land grants, Yorkshire & Humberside 669w
Industrial investment 271w

Barrow-in-Furness
Crown courts 91w

Basildon
Community charge capping 662w

Bathgate
Fossils 413w

Batho Committee
see Noise Laws Review Group

Batiste, Mr Spencer
Questions
Building regulations, Wind 600w
Leeds Development Corporation, Rented housing 1106-7
Local government revenue, Domestic rates 666w
Prison population 744w
Sportsgrounds 1115

Batteries
Lead 301w

Battle, Mr John
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990 (21:03:90) 1140
Budget March 1990, Industry (22:03:90) 1304-8, 1314-5
Business statements (13:03:90) 450-1
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 219, 365, 424
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Allocation of time motion & Rep (14:03:90) 530, 532
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, 3R (15:03:90) 685
Questions
Bombings, Birmingham 459w
Business expansion scheme, Rented housing 163w, 530-1w
Community care 549w
Disabled workers, Handicap benefits 67w
EC Finance Council, Economic & monetary union 376w
Handicap benefits, Social security recipients 66-7w
Hospital beds, Yorkshire & Humberside 364w
Hospital finance, Yorkshire & Humberside 469-72w
Hospital waiting lists, Yorkshire & Humberside 462-6w
Housing standards, Dampness 183w
Industrial investment 271w, 423w
Industrial wastes, North Sea 76-7w
Local government finance, Capital 488w
Local government finance, Urban programme 391w
Midwives, Career structure 763w
Mortgage defaulters, Repossession orders 679w

Battle, Mr John*—*continued
Nurses, NHS 466-7w
Paper, Recycling 313w
Pollution control, North Sea 312w
Prison administration, Segregation of prisoners 745w
Student Loans Company, Expenditure 219w
Teachers, Mortgages 34w
Water charges, Infrastructure 312w
Yorkshire Regional Health Authority, Finance 564-6w

Bazoft, Farzad
21-2, 408w, 427w, 450w
Capital punishment 662
Iraq 450w
Ministerial statements (15:03:90) 667-71
Trials 264w

BBC
752-3w
Broadcasting bias 17w

BDA
see British Dental Association

Beaches
Pollution monitoring 682w

Beaulieu Group
Criminal proceedings 527w
Tax evasion 527w

Beaumont-Dark, Mr Anthony
Debates etc.
Deposited papers, Backbenchers (12:03:90) 27-8
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 210, 253
War Crimes Bill, 2R (19:03:90) 907, 936, 961-2, 965
Questions
Employment, West Midlands 204w
NHS finance, Inflation 1006
Productivity, Manufacturing industries 269w
West Midlands Police, Inquiries 458w

Beckett, Mrs Margaret
Questions
Mortgages, Debts 655

Bed & breakfast accommodation
Homelessness 672w

Bedding
997
Cot deaths 46-7w

Bedford
Road traffic 535w

Bedfordshire County Council
Community charge capping 1109
Local government expenditure 1109

Beef
Agricultural production 384-5w, 438-9w
Benzene 571w
Northern Ireland 384-5w, 438-9w

Beggs, Mr Roy
Debates etc.
Appropriation (Northern Ireland) Order 1990 (12:03:90) 87-8, 96, 106, 117
Questions
Council house sales 1105
Employment opportunities, Newtownabbey 436w
Kilroot power station, Construction 436w

Beith, Mr A J
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990 (21:03:90) 1133, 1144-8
Coal Industry Bill, Lords amendts (15:03:90) 781-2
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Allocation of time motion & Rep (14:03:90) 548
Questions
Bank of England 373-4w
Capital allowances 527w

Beith, Mr A J*—*continued
Capital gains tax, Taxpayers 273w
House of Commons staff, Industrial health & safety 442w
House of Commons staff, Industrial relations 441-2w
House of Commons staff, Manpower 441w
House of Commons staff, Pay 882-3
House of Commons staff, Training 441w
House of Commons staff, Working conditions 883
Interest rates 654-5
Members' staff, Manpower 882
Personal equity plans 379w
Refreshment Dept, Pay 883

Bell, Mr Stuart
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990 (20:03:90) 1043-4
Tees & Hartlepool Port Authority Bill, 2R (15:03:90) 732, 742, 744, 749-50, 757-70, 773
Questions
Community care 549w
Industrial investment 271w

Bellingham, Mr Henry
Questions
Construction Industry Training Board 211w
EC internal trade, Norfolk 464
Hazardous wastes, Imports 684w
Hospital consultants, Manpower 180w
Official engagements 516w
Regional airports, Passengers 121w
Transport of hazardous materials, EC law 600-1w
VAT, Caravan sites 373w

Bellwin scheme
243-4w

Benbecula Airport
332w

Bendall, Mr Vivian
Debates etc.
Redbridge London Borough Council Bill, 3R (20:03:90) 1063-5, 1072, 1081
Questions
Committee on Safety of Medicines 560w

Bennett, Mr Andrew F
Debates etc.
Business statements (13:03:90) 451
Questions
Access to countryside, Walking 1113
Bombings, Birmingham 746w
Cruise missiles, Submarines 637w
Further education, Young people 628w
Health & Safety Executive 145
Health services, Contracts for services 561w
Housing revenue accounts, Transitional relief 394w
Nuclear submarines, Radioactive waste disposal 412w
Nursing homes, North West region 68w
Pre-school education 997
Public footpaths, Menwith with Darley 48w
Public footpaths, Wales 772w
Submarines, Holy Loch 523-4w
Trident submarines, Sonar 198w
Vanguard submarines, Defence contracts 411w
Warships, Ports 638w

Bennett, Mr Nicholas
Debates etc.
Bazoft, Farzad (15:03:90) 670
Business statements (13:03:90) 444
Cleddau bridge, Road tolls (19:03:90) 983-6, 988
Community charge (15:03:90) 683
Deposited papers, Backbenchers (12:03:90) 27
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 318
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Allocation of time motion & Rep (14:03:90) 533-4, 581, 582-5

Bennett, Mr Nicholas*—*continued
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, 3R (15:03:90) 685, 694
War Crimes Bill, 2R (19:03:90) 891, 932-5
Questions
Agricultural land, Property development 674w
Attendance allowance, Terminal care 740w
Balance of trade 660-1
Capital rules, Residential care 785w
Community charge, South Pembrokeshire 878
Community charge, Wales 442w
Labour Party, Economic policy 474-5
Police, Ports 754w
Terminal care, NHS charges exemptions 730-1w
Unemployment, Wales 137-8

Benyon, Mr W
Questions
Extradition, Republic of Ireland 485

Benzene
Beef 571w
Food irradiation 571w
Mineral waters 86w

Benzodiazepines
Drug abuse 731-2w
Prescriptions 731-2w

Bermingham, Mr Gerald
Debates etc.
Business statements (15:03:90) 678
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 408, 419, 430, 433
Redbridge London Borough Council Bill, 3R (20:03:90) 1068-71
War Crimes Bill, 2R (19:03:90) 942-3, 945
Questions
Complaints against police, Broadwater Farm Estate 455w
Extradition, Republic of Ireland 484
Occupational deafness, Merchant seamen 739w
Prison population, Ethnic minorities 354-6w, 798w
Prisoners, AIDS 511w
Prisons, Drug abuse 512w
Prisons, Race relations 354w
Sudan, Arrests 716-7w

Bevan, Mr David Gilroy
Questions
Foreign tourists, Expenditure 211w
Vacant land, Land acquisition 1107-8

Bexley Health Authority
551-2w

BFI
see British Film Institute

Bhaktivedanta Manor
601w

Bicycles
Traffic censuses 234w

Bidwell, Mr Sydney
Questions
Community care 549w
Community charge, Standard spending assessments 664-5w
European Commission 294w

Big Ben
Repairs & maintenance 683w

Billing
Community charge benefits 661w
Local education authorities 30w

Bingo
Advertising controls 457w

Biotechnology
Balance of trade 297w
EC action 573w
Intellectual property 573w

Birkenhead
Income support 739w

Birmingham
Bombings 15, 396w, 459w, 633-4w, 745-6w, 1225-8
Manufacturing industries 466
Rates & rating 665w
Road traffic control 536w

Birmingham City Council
459w, 745w, 1225-6

Birmingham City Council Bill (HL) 1988/89
Debates etc.
Rep* (21:03:90) 1101

Birmingham City Council (No 2) Bill 1988/89
Debates etc.
Order for resuming adjourned debate on consideration read (15:03:90) 649, (22:03:90) 1219

BL
see Rover Group

Blackwall tunnel
Road traffic 533w

Blair, Mr Tony
Questions
Employment training 129w
Training Agency, Finance 215w
Unemployment 138-9

Blind
Railway travel 383w
Travel concessions 383w

Blood sports
Dogs 282w

Blood transfusions
AIDS 557-8w

Blue Coat School Liverpool
143w

Blunkett, Mr David
Questions
Armed forces, Community charge 413w
Collective community charge 771w
Collective community charge, Local government finance 714w
Community charge, Local government finance 716w
Community charge, Orders & regulations 105w
Community charge, Rents 391w
Community charge, Youth training scheme 391w, 484w
Community charge benefits, Personal savings 1112
Community charge exemptions 315w
Health service staff, Rents 731w
Iron & steel industry, Respiratory diseases 575w
Local government finance 315w
NHS, Collective community charge 731w
Youth training scheme, Handicapped 415w
Youth training scheme, Training allowances 416w

BMA
see British Medical Association

Board & lodging charges
Nurses' homes 53w, 730w

Board of Inland Revenue
see Inland Revenue

Boarding schools
Special education 760w

Boateng, Mr Paul
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990 (21:03:90) 1157, 1196-201
Questions
Balance of trade, Invisible trade balance 661
European Commission 294w
West Midlands Police, Domestic violence 748w

Body, Sir Richard
Questions
Agricultural chemicals, Industrial health & safety 195-6w
GATT, Agricultural support systems 799w
Industrial health & safety, Farmers 130-1w
Industrial health & safety, Food packaging 130w
Organic farming, Government assistance 196w
Pesticides, Agricultural production 74w
Pesticides, Consumer protection 74-5w

Body, Sir Richard—continued

Boeing
289w

BOM Holdings
Dept of Trade inquiries 431w

Bombings
Birmingham 15, 396w, 459w, 633-4w, 745-6w, 1225-8
Court of Appeal 1225-6
Prisoners' release 1225-6

Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Debates etc.
Redbridge London Borough Council Bill, 3R (20:03:90) 1065-6, 1068, 1076-82

Boscawen, Mr Robert
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990 (21:03:90) 1167-9
War Crimes Bill, 2R (19:03:90) 901

Boswell, Mr Tim
Questions
Environment protection 155w
Health services, Contracts for services 558w
Local authorities, Contracts for services 672w
Official engagements 516w
Sea pollution 328-9w
Youth training scheme, Take-up of employment 209w

BOTB
see British Overseas Trade Board

Bottomley, Mr Peter, Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland
Debates etc.
Appropriation (Northern Ireland) Order 1990 (12:03:90) 87, 92, 93, 95, 110, 123-7
Questions
Agricultural production, Beef 384-5w, 438-9w
Agriculture, Northern Ireland 438w
Downe Hospital, Anaesthetics 311w
Duration of unemployment, Northern Ireland 227-8w
Electricity disconnections, Storms 436w
Employment opportunities, Newtownabbey 436w
Family doctors, Deprivation indicators 438w
Kilroot power station, Construction 436w
Northern Ireland Fire Authority, Appeals 436w
Northern Ireland health & social services boards, Finance 512w
Northern Ireland health & social services boards, Recruitment 384w
Rate increases, Northern Ireland 225-6w
Roads, Expenditure 437-8w
Storms, Compensation 384w

Bottomley, Mrs Virginia, Minister of State, Department of Health
Debates etc.
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Allocation of time motion & Rep (14:03:90) 535-7, 573-5, 593, 595-6
Questions
Abortion, Advisory services 729w
Abortion, Codes of practice 730w
Abortion, Drugs 180w
Abortion, Judgments 730w
Abortion Act 1967, Handicapped children 730w
AIDS, Blood transfusions 557-8w

Bottomley, Mrs Virginia—continued
AIDS, Publicity 545w
Alcoholism, Community care 561w
Ambulance services, Dewsbury Health Authority 367w
Ambulance services, Industrial disputes 461w
Asthma, Prescription charges exemptions 621-2w
Bedding, Cot deaths 46-7w
Benzodiazepines, Drug abuse 731w
Benzodiazepines, Prescriptions 731-2w
Breast cancer, Screening 570w, 727w
British Medical Association 548w
Cancer, Prescription charges exemptions 550w
Cassel Hospital, Self-governing hospitals 386w
Central Council for Education & Training in Social Work 562w
Cervical cancer, Screening 179w, 543w, 994-5
Child care, Social workers 553w
Child workers 173-4w
Child workers, Local education authorities 368w
Children's Act 1989, Government grants to local authorities 723w
Commercial surrogacy, Prosecutions 476w
Committee on Safety of Medicines 560w
Community care 549w
Community care, Inspection units 385w
Community care, Local government functions 388-9w
Community care plans 467w
Community health councils 554-5w
Dental charges 541w, 1005
District health authorities, Public appointments 477w
Drugs, Licensing 367w
Elderly, Screening 570-1w
Elderly , Budgeting 556w
Family doctors, Budgeting 542w, 556w, 729w
Family doctors, Child health 366w
Family doctors, Contracts of employment 551w
Family doctors, Cornwall 549w
Family doctors, Deprivation indicators 366w
Family doctors, Medical education 181w
Family doctors, Prescription drugs 549w
Foreign patients, NHS reciprocal arrangements 725-7w
Handicapped, Local government social services 182-3w
Health service staff 620w
Health service staff, Average earnings 764-6w
Health service staff, Conflict of interests 385w, 569w
Health service staff, Rents 731w
Health services, Contracts for services 561w
Health services, Inner city areas 179w
Health services, NHS administration 562w
Heart diseases, Surgery 389-90w, 474w
Home helps, Community care 553w
Hormone treatments, Preventive medicine 462w
Hospices 1004-5
Hospices, Government grants to voluntary organisations 1003-4
Hospital closures, Sheffield Health Authority 554w
Hospital consultants, Manpower 180w
Hospital doctors, Disciplinary proceedings 280w
Hospital waiting lists 557w
Hospital waiting lists, Eye disorders 468w
Hospital waiting lists, Northern region 557w
Hospital waiting lists, Psychiatry 386w
Hospital waiting lists, Trent Regional Health Authority 387-8w
Hospitals, Health service staff 544w
Infant mortality 568-9w
Infant mortality, Medical research 569w

Bottomley, Mrs Virginia—continued
Junior hospital doctors, Working hours 477w
Maternity services, Hospitals 762w
Maternity services, NHS hospital trusts 762w
Medical audit, Finance 563w
Medical laboratory scientific officers, Manpower 386w
Medical records, Parent & child 53w
Medical research 552w
Midwives, Career structure 763w
Midwives, Conditions of employment 728w
National Health Service & Community Care Bill 1989/90, Greater Manchester 178-9w
Newcastle Health Authority 546w
NHS, Collective community charge 731w
NHS, Contracts for services 176-7w
NHS finance, Self-governing hospitals 472w
NHS hospital trusts 545-6w
NHS hospital trusts, Mersey Regional Health Authority 57-8w
NHS hospital trusts, Voting methods 546w, 545-6w
NHS review 387w, 548w
North West Thames Regional Health Authority, Career structure 559w
Northumberland Health Authority 559w
Nurses, Career structure 386w
Nurses, Computers in National Health Service 53w
Nurses, NHS 385w, 466-7w, 552w
Nurses, Research finance 764w
Nurses' homes, Board & lodging charges 53w, 730w
Nurses' training 177w, 552w
Nurses' training, Psychology 462w
Optical charges 559w
Parents Against Injustice, Government grants 468w
Patients, Medical treatments 547-9w
Pre-school education 997
Pre-school education, Voluntary organisations 996-7
Prescription charges, Price increases 550w
Prescription charges exemptions, Low incomes 461w
Prescription drugs 475w
Prescription drugs, Elderly 367w
Prescriptions, Chemists shops 731w
Prescriptions, Family doctors 475w
Private patients, Trent Regional Health Authority 388w
Residential care, Elderly 541w
Residential care, Fees & charges 542w
RU486, Licensing 541w
Social services, Personal records 369w
South West Thames Regional Health Authority, Finance 461w
Speech therapists, Pay settlements 564w
Surrogacy Arrangements Act 1985 476w
Surrogate motherhood 476w
Terminal care, NHS charges exemptions 730-1w
Test tube babies, South West region 620-1w
Voluntary organisations, Pre-school education 562-3w
West Midlands Regional Health Authority, Manpower 1005-6
Young people, Homelessness 621w

Boundary Commission for England
Humberside 768w

Bournemouth
Non-domestic rates 391w

Bournemouth Borough Council
Domestic rates 478w
Rates & rating 661w
Uniform business rate 184-5w

Bovine spongiform encephalopathy
326-7w, 734-6w
Antelopes 573-4w
Carmarthen 656w
Disease control 326w
Experimental farms 78w

Bovine spongiform encephalopathy—continued
Export of live animals 326w
National Farmers' Union 326w
Research 197w
Scrapie 326w
Sheep 326-7w
Slaughterhouses 79-80w
Yorkshire & Humberside 79-80w

Bow
Road traffic 648w

Bowden, Mr Andrew
Debates etc.
Business statements (15:03:90) 677-8
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 201
Questions
Additional pensions, Pensioners 785w
Income support, Residential care 69-70w
Pensioners 454w

Bowden, Mr Gerald
Questions
Arts, Ministers' domestic visits 515w
Civil service agencies, Managers 609w
Road traffic control, Urban areas 648w
South circular road 4

Bowis, Mr John
Debates etc.
Arts finance (13:03:90) 167
Public transport (23:03:90) 1400-3
Questions
Disabled workers, Training 147
Dogs, Liability for animals 750w
London assessment studies 121w
Magnet schools 709w
Mineral waters, Composition labelling 240-1w
Mineral waters, Trade descriptions 240w
Namibia, Military aid 145-6w
National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, Child abuse 154
NHS hospital trusts 995-6
Nicaragua, Overseas aid 62w
Poland, Know-how Fund 236-40w
Pre-school education, Costs 520-1w
Recycling, Domestic wastes 479
Voluntary organisations, Pre-school education 562-3w

Boyes, Mr Roland
Questions
European Commission 294w
Industrial health & safety 211-2w
Local government expenditure, Standard spending assessments 664-5w
Mentally handicapped, Day centres 546w
Mortgage interest rates, Owner occupied housing 378w

BR
see British Rail

Bradford
Caravan sites 492-3w
City technology colleges 708w
School population 521w
Social Fund 284-8w
Trolleybuses 496w

Bradley, Mr Keith
Debates etc.
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 403-5, 434
Questions
Crowd control, Sportsgrounds 633w
Mentally handicapped, Day centres 546w
National Health Service & Community Care Bill 1989/90, Greater Manchester 178-9w
Road safety barriers 148w
West Germany 302w

Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Debates etc.
War Crimes Bill, 2R (19:03:90) 908, 913-6

Brandon-Bravo, Mr Martin M
Questions
Diesel vehicles, Air pollution control 690-1w
Mental health community care 547w
Prescriptions, Budgeting 994

Brazier, Mr Julian
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990 (21:03:90) 1199
Business statements (15:03:90) 682
Families (16:03:90) 800, 825-9
Questions
Air routes, EC transport policy 123w
Community care, Inspection units 385w
Investment, Consumption 375w
Rape, Sentencing 751w

Brazil
Rain forests 61w, 440w

BRE
see Building Research Establishment

Breast cancer
Screening 570w, 727w

Breathalysers
24w
Police powers 355w, 635w, 756w

Bridges
Cowes 2-3
Repairs & maintenance 3
River Severn 383w

Bright, Mr Graham
Questions
Community charge, Rates & rating 1110

Bristol
Public order policing 361-2w

Bristol Channel
Sewage 267w, 491w

British Aerospace
288-9w

British Airports Authority
497w

British Alcan Primary & Recycling Ltd. (Rateable Values) (Scotland) Order 1990
Debates etc.
(12:03:90) 29

British antarctic territory
Snow & ice 450w

British Broadcasting Corporation
see BBC

British citizenship
755w
Administrative delays 634-5w

British Coal Corporation
(15:03:90) 778-84

British Council
698w

British Dental Association
477w

British Film Institute
(13:03:90) 155-70

British Gas
3w, 146w
Privatisation 142-4w, 691w

British Gas plc (Rateable Values) (Scotland) Order 1990
Debates etc.
(12:03:90) 29

British Leyland
see Rover Group

British Medical Association
476w, 545w, 548w

British Nutrition Protection Board
573w

British Overseas Trade Board
Export promotion 297-8w

British Ports Association
495w

British Rail
8-9, 11, 122-3w, 125w, 147-9w, 309w, (23:03:90) 1342-413
Public service obligation grant 536-7w

British Railways Board (Rateable Values) (Scotland) Order 1990
Debates etc.
(12:03:90) 29

British Railways Order Confirmation Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
Royal Assent (19:03:90) 888

British residents abroad
Property Services Agency 99-100w

British Shipbuilders
697-8w
Factory closures 697w
Government assistance to industry 697w

British Standards Institution
600w

British Telecom
Telephone charges 666

British Telecommunications plc (Rateable Values) (Scotland) Order 1990
Debates etc.
(12:03:90) 29

British Waterways Board (Rateable Values) (Scotland) Order 1990
Debates etc.
(12:03:90) 29

British Wind Energy Association
630w

Broadcasting
Energy conservation 6w

Broadcasting Act 1981
Questions
509w

Broadcasting bias
BBC 17w
Local radio 17w

Broadcasting Bill 1989/90
Questions
754w, 757-8w, 793w

Broadcasting controls
Religious broadcasting 793w

Broadmoor Hospital
181w

Broadwater Farm Estate
Complaints against police 455w

Bromley
School admission 520w

Brooke, Rt Hon Peter, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland
Debates etc.
Northern Ireland (Emergency & Prevention of Terrorism Provisions) (Continuance) Order 1990 (12:03:90) 30-6
Questions
Electricity tariffs, Northern Ireland 139-40w
Extradition, Republic of Ireland 481-6

Brown, Mr Gordon
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990, Industry (22:03:90) 1260-8
Questions
Industry, Interest rates 470

Brown, Mr Michael
Debates etc.
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 210-2
Questions
Metropolitan Police, Domestic violence 459w

Brown, Mr Michael—continued
Special constables, Manpower 746-7w
Unemployment 205w

Brown, Mr Nicholas
Questions
Child benefit, Personal income 789w
Child benefit, Tax rates & bands 789w
Child benefit, Tax thresholds 790w
EC Internal Market Council 294w
Income tax 653-4
Revenue support grant 662w

Brown, Mr Ron
Debates etc.
Business statements (15:03:90) 677
Questions
Business statements 1242
Company liquidations 302w
Prison population 743-4w

Bruce, Mr Ian
Debates etc.
Tees & Hartlepool Port Authority Bill, 2R (15:03:90) 740-1
War Crimes Bill, 2R (19:03:90) 891
Questions
Coastal protection, Dorset 656w
Health & Safety Executive 148
Interest rates, Wales 871
UK trade with EC, Subsidies 473-4
Unemployment benefits, Social security abuse 212w
Wessex Health Authority, Finance 544w

Bruce, Mr Malcolm
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990, Industry (22:03:90) 1273, 1316-9, 1330
Budget March 1990, Points of Order (20:03:90) 1030
Questions
Alternative energy, Energy research 318w
Alternative energy, Tyres 784w
Animal welfare, Wild animals 459w, 794w
Biotechnology, Intellectual property 573w
Business statements 1248
Community charge, Pensioners 656w
Cosmetics, Animal experiments 43w
Electromagnetic interference, Safety measures 266w
Electromagnetic interference, USSR 266w
Employment, Economic regions 204-6w
Energy conservation, Broadcasting 6w
Environment protection, Competition 313w
Genetically modified organisms 344w, 493-4w, 783-4w
Genetically modified organisms, EC action 494w
Genetically modified organisms, Environment protection 493w
Genetically modified organisms, Ethics 685-6w
Hospices, Government grants to voluntary organisations 1003-4
Industrial wastes, Waste disposal 314w
Lindane, Sea pollution 87w
National insurance contributions 334w
Offshore structures, Chemicals 784w
Oil pollution, North Sea 7w
Radioactive wastes 99w
Road construction, Badgers 152w
Road construction, Environment protection 309w
Road traffic, Road construction 536w
Seals, Fish farming 353w
Sewage, Waste disposal 314w
Telecommunications industry, Leukaemia 251w

Brunei
Armed forces deployment 412-3w
Treaties 449w

BSI
see British Standards Institution

BT
see British Telecom

Buchan, Mr Norman
Debates etc.
Arts finance (13:03:90) 162-3
Broadcasting Bill, Hybrid Bills (14:03:90) 487-90
Questions
Information technology, Skill shortages 293w

Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990 (21:03:90) 1139-40

Buck, Sir Antony
Debates etc.
War Crimes Bill, 2R (19:03:90) 893

Buckinghamshire County Council
Capital investment 143-4w
Educational finance 143-4w

Buckley, Mr George J
Debates etc.
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 391
Questions
Domestic violence, Criminal statistics 748-9w
Housing improvement, Government grants to local authorities 673w
Information technology, Training 292w
Mentally handicapped, Day centres 546w

Budgen, Mr Nicholas
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990 (21:03:90) 1159-61, 1198
Questions
Inflation, Economic policy 652

Budget
163w
Ministerial statements (20:03:90) 1011-29

Budget March 1990
(20:03:90) 1011-29, 1030-57, 1235-6
Economic situation (21:03:90) 1125-208
Industry (22:03:90) 1253-332
Personal savings 1232

Budgeting
Arts 9w
Chronically sick 556w
Elderly 556w
Family doctors 281w, 542w, 556w, 582w, 623-4w, 729w, 993
Prescription drugs 556w
Prescriptions 993-4, 1007
School administration 26w, 144w

Building alterations
Energy conservation 267w

Building regulations
Wind 600w

Building Research Establishment
600w, 680w

Buildings
Architecture 673w
Greenhouse effect 680w
Scottish Conveyancing & Confirmation Practitioners Board 111w

Bureaucracy
Business 467-9

Burnley
Community charge 1006-7

Burns, Mr Simon
Questions
Crime victims, Compensation 1231-2
Health services, NHS administration 562w
Hospital doctors, Disciplinary proceedings 280w
NHS hospital trusts 546w
Retirement pensions, EC countries 643-4w
Speed limits, Danbury 540w

Burt, Mr Alistair
Questions
Unemployment, Bury 204w

Bury
Unemployment 204w

Bus & Coach Council
152w

Bus lanes
Headington 690w

Bus services
Elderly 383w

Buses
656w
Speed governors 12

Business
Bureaucracy 467-9
Capital investment 273w
Community charge 468
Consumer Credit Act 1974 766w
Investment 373w
Non-departmental public bodies 467-8
Self-regulating organisations 469

Business expansion scheme
Nursing homes 165w
Rented housing 163w, 530-1w
Tax allowances 165w

Business motions
(12:03:90) 129, (23:03:90) 1410-1

Business questions
Speaker's rulings & statements (15:03:90) 679, 681

Business statements
(13:03:90) 442-54, (15:03:90) 672-82, 1237-50
Speaker's rulings & statements (13:03:90) 423, 444-5

Business travel
EC law 170-1w
Package holidays 170-1w

Butler, Mr Chris
Questions
Beef, Benzene 571w
Cheshire Business & Innovation Centre, EC grants & loans 463
Drug abuse, Neighbourhood watch schemes 637w
English education, Primary education 625w
Family doctors, Budgeting 542w
Land pollution, Radioactive wastes 1104
Members' facilities, Repairs & maintenance 884-5
Motoring, Taxation 12-3
Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin, Government grants 443w
Sea pollution, North Sea 487w
South Africa, Overseas aid 63w
UN Fund for Drug Abuse Control, Government grants 407w

Butterfill, Mr John
Debates etc.
Uniform business rate, Hotels (15:03:90) 787-9, 792
Questions
Capital investment 273w
EC social charter, European Commission 661-2
Overseas trade, Hungary 470-1
Rates & rating, Bournemouth Borough Council 661w

Buy outs
Western Scottish Omnibuses 582-3w

BWEA
see British Wind Energy Association

Cabinet Office
516w
Advertising 41w
Management consultants 41-2w
Privatisation 42w
Public relations 39-40w
Statistics 40-1w

Caborn, Mr Richard
Questions
Civil service manpower, Dept of Education & Science 706-8w
Civil service manpower, Dept of Energy 630-1w
Civil service manpower, Dept of Social Security 640-2w
Civil service manpower, Dept of the Environment 709-10w
Civil service manpower, Dept of Transport 649w
Civil service manpower, Home Office 636-7w
Civil service manpower, Lord Chancellor 791-2w
Civil service manpower, Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food 732-4w
Civil service manpower, Ministry of Defence 718-9w
Dept of Health, Economic regions 568w
Industrial investment, West Midlands 475
Mentally handicapped, Day centres 547w
Office of Arts & Libraries, Expenditure 420-1w
Rape, Departmental circulars 751-2w

Caerphilly
Community charge 877

Caledonian MacBrayne
Public appointments 114-5w

Caledonian MacBrayne Limited (Rateable Values) (Scotland) Order 1990
Debates etc.
(12:03:90) 29

Callaghan, Mr Jim
Questions
Homelessness, Mortgage defaulters 672w

Calling of Members
Speaker's rulings & statements (12:03:90) 28, (13:03:90) 146, 406, 411, (21:03:90) 1122

Cambodia
Refugees 792w

Campbell, Mr Menzies
Debates etc.
Northern Ireland (Emergency & Prevention of Terrorism Provisions) (Continuance) Order 1990 (12:03:90) 55-7
Questions
Arrests, Demonstrations 755w
Bankruptcy 304w
Economic & Monetary Union 376w
Sports Council 674w
Sportsgrounds 1115
Touting, Crime 260w
Touting, Police powers 260w
Touting, Scottish Sports Council 260w
Touting, Sports 260w
Uniform business rate, Sports facilities 601-2w

Campbell, Mr Ronnie
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990 (21:03:90) 1146, 1160, 1169-70
Tees & Hartlepool Port Authority Bill, 2R (15:03:90) 734, 745, 748, 756, 769
Questions
Dept of Trade & Industry, Departmental reorganisation 300w
Residential care, Fees & charges 542w

Campbell-Savours, Mr D N
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990 (21:03:90) 1143-4
Budget March 1990, Industry (22:03:90) 1254
Business statements (13:03:90) 444, 446-7, 454, (15:03:90) 681
Members' interests (13:03:90) 176
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 179, 230, 236, 388, 406, 418, 421, 423, 429
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Allocation of time motion & Rep (14:03:90) 499, 500, 552, 569, 570, 574, 579-82, 584, 585, 588, 590-1

Campbell-Savours, Mr D N—continued
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, 3R (15:03:90) 690
Questions
Business statements 1239
Children's Act 1989, Government grants to local authorities 723w
Crown Suppliers, Government departments 478w
Crown Suppliers, Procurement 91-2w
Crown Suppliers, Public contracts 478w
Debts, Developing countries 9w
Health physics, Sellafield 629-30w
Ionizing radiation, Sellafield 629w
Property Services Agency, Downing Street 598w
Radiation hazards, Cumbria 489w
Refreshment Dept, Pay 883

Cancer
Medical treatments 872
North Wales 244w, 872
Pontefract Health Authority 724w
Prescription charges exemptions 550w
Shropshire 58w
Social class 727w
Statistics 349-50w, 620w
Wakefield Health Authority 724w
Wales 15w, 143w, 349-50w, 400w, 444w, 516-7w

Cancer hazards
Scotland 704w

Capital
Local government finance 488w

Capital allowances
527w

Capital Allowances Bill (HL) 1989/90
Debates etc.
2R & rem stages* (12:03:90) 128
Royal Assent (19:03:90) 888

Capital gains tax
Taxpayers 273w

Capital investment
273w
Buckinghamshire County Council 143-4w
Business 273w
European Development Bank 526w
Glasgow District Council 702w
Littlemore Hospital 1000
Manufacturing industries 11w, 651
Mental health services 1000
North Sea 399w
Railway network (23:03:90) 1342-413
Scottish councils 702w
Water pollution 311w

Capital movements
Foreign companies in UK 271-2w

Capital punishment
Bazoft, Farzad 662

Capital rules
Community charge benefits 404w, 740-4w, 1232, 1235-6
Housing benefits 741-4w
Residential care 785w
Social security benefits 740-1w, 787-8w
Social security benefits reductions 785-7w

Capital value rating
664-5w

Car industry
299w

Caravan sites
Bradford 492-3w
VAT 373w

Caravan Sites Act 1968
Questions
492-3w

Carbon dioxide
Air pollution 493w
Air pollution control 680w

***Carbon dioxide**—continued*
Mineral waters 242w
Railway transport 775-6w
Road construction 775-6w

Carbon monoxide
187w

Cardiff
Community charge capping 877
Traffic examiners 10

Cardiff University
see University College Cardiff

Career structure
Midwives 763w
North West Thames Regional Health Authority 559w
Nurses 386w, 1002-3
Speech therapists 564w

Carers
Community charge benefits 404w

Carers' National Association
352w

Carlile, Mr Alex
Debates etc.
Appropriation (Northern Ireland) Order 1990 (12:03:90) 103-4
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 322, 328-9
War Crimes Bill, 2R (19:03:90) 902, 910, 911-3, 941, 964
Questions
Agricultural workers, Manpower 197-8w
Blood sports, Dogs 282w
Cancer, Prescription charges exemptions 550w
Community charge, Exservicemen 663w
Community charge, Montgomery 879
Computer privacy, Community charge register 748w
European monetary system 376w
Social security benefits, Publicity 403w

Carlisle, Mr John
Questions
Business statements 1242
Sports Council 674w

Carlisle, Mr Kenneth, an Assistant Whip
Debates etc.
Steel framed houses, Nottingham (20:03:90) 1092

Carmarthen
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy 656w
Dairy farming 347w

Carnbooth School Glasgow
352w

Carrington, Mr Matthew
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990, Industry (22:03:90) 1286-90, 1312
Public transport (23:03:90) 1401
Questions
Capital value rating 664w
Iraq, Judgments 24
London Underground, Government grants 122w
Neighbourhood watch schemes, Crime prevention 1221-2

Cars
EC internal trade 328w
Fraud 464-5

Carttiss, Mr Michael
Debates etc.
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Allocation of time motion & Rep (14:03:90) 522-4
Uniform business rate, Hotels (15:03:90) 786-9, 791
Questions
Prescriptions, Budgeting 993

Cartwright, Mr John
Questions
East London river crossing, Construction 537w
East London river crossing, Costs 537w

***Cartwright, Mr John**—continued*
East London river crossing, Housing 537w
East London river crossing, Public inquiries 537w
NATO, Arms control negotiations 290w
Special education, Boarding schools 760w

CAS
see Citizens' Advice Scotland

Cash, Mr William
Debates etc.
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Allocation of time motion & Rep (14:03:90) 509
Questions
Educational standards, Staffordshire 663-4
Extradition, Republic of Ireland 484
Medical audit, Finance 563w
Neighbourhood watch schemes 749w
Occupational Pensions Board, Public appointments 405w

Cash limits
Dept of the Environment 104w, 714w
Welsh Office 245w, 350w

Cassel Hospital
Hospital closures 364w
Self-governing hospitals 386w

Catalytic converters
Cost benefit analysis 127w

Category C prisoners
796-7w

Cattewater Reclamation Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
2R order read (15:03:90) 649, (22:03:90) 1219

Cattle
Scrapie 327w

CBI
see Confederation of British Industry

Central Council for Education & Training in Social Work
562w

Central Council of Physical Education
674w

Central Electricity Generating Board
Property transfer 318-9w

Central Government
Manpower 423w

Central London
Company cars 535w
Road traffic 125w

Central Office of Information
136w
Action for Jobs 506w
Advertising 167-8w
Management consultants 168w
Privatisation 167w
Public relations 166w
Statistics 165w

Central Transport Consultative Committee
9, 496w

Central Unit on Purchasing
616w

Centre for Policy Studies
89w

Cervical cancer
Hartlepool Health Authority 179w
Screening 179w, 543w, 994-5

Cetaceans
242w

CFE talks
290w, 330w

Chad
Human rights 145w

Chalker, Rt Hon Lynda, Minister for Overseas Development
Questions
Africa, Overseas aid 59-60w
Brazil, Rain forests 61w
Climate, Research facilities 19-20
Development aid 61w
Eastern Europe, Overseas aid 59w
EC aid, Developing countries 531-2w
Elephants, Nature conservation 64w
English language, Chile 16
English language, South America 16
Ethiopia, Disaster relief 63-4w
Ethiopia, Food aid 63w
Indonesia, Overseas aid 432-3w
Kenya, Ministers' visits abroad 17, 61w
Namibia, Overseas aid 612w
Nicaragua, Overseas aid 62w
Overseas aid, Expenditure 61w
Overseas aid, Rehabilitation 60-1w
Poland, Know-how Fund 236-40w
Publicity, Overseas Development Administration 531w
Rain forests 699w
Rain forests, ACP-EEC Joint Assembly 61w
South Africa, Overseas aid 63w, 433w
Sri Lanka, Forestry 17
Sri Lanka, Human rights 17
Sri Lanka, Overseas aid 16-7
Tanzania 62w
Tanzania, Overseas aid 62w
Uganda, Development aid 64w
UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Finance 532w
UN High Commissioner for Refugees, UK contributions 532w
Vietnam, Development aid 17-20
Vietnam, Foreign policy 18
Vietnam, Overseas aid 62w
West Africa, Technical assistance 63w, 381-3w

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster
Official cars 188w
Official hospitality 47w
Public relations 47w
Statistics 47w

Chancellor of the Exchequer
see Treasury

Channel tunnel
Construction 120w
European Investment Bank 160w, 527w
Railway network 121w
Road construction 233-4w
Road traffic 234w
Wales 143w

Channel Tunnel Act 1987 (Amendment) Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
2R order read (23:03:90) 1412

Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Questions
Wrecks, River Thames 776w

Charities
Tax yields 372w

Chemical & biological warfare
Defence research 202w

Chemicals
Mineral waters 85w
Offshore structures 784w
Waste disposal 105-6w

Chemists shops
Prescriptions 731w

Cheque cards
National Girobank 409w

Cheques
County courts 426-7w

Cherries
Food colourings 327w

Cheshire Business & Innovation Centre
EC grants & loans 463

Chevaline warheads
524w

Child abuse
National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children 154
Satanism 154

Child benefit
334w
Personal income 789w
Social security benefits rates 153w
Tax rates & bands 789w
Tax thresholds 790w

Child care
Equal opportunities 706w
Social workers 553w

Child health
Departmental forms 366w
Family doctors 366w

Child rearing
Curriculum 519w

Child workers
173-4w
Local education authorities 368w

Children
Dental health 468w
Leukaemia 704w
London Underground 773-4w
Missing persons 755w
Multiply handicapped 436w
Romania 716w
Vaccination 52w, 550-1w
Visas 716w

Children's Act 1989
Questions
Government grants to local authorities 723w

Children's pushchairs
773-4w

Chile
English language 16

China
Compensation 449w

Chlorinated solvents
Recycling 666-7w

Chlorofluorocarbons
311w
Air pollution control 666w
Refrigerators 104w
Waste disposal 490w

***Chope, Mr Christopher**, Under-Secretary of State for the Environment*
Debates etc.
Steel framed houses, Nottingham (20:03:90) 1088, 1094-101
Questions
Architecture 1112-3
Army in Northern Ireland, Fraud 602w
Asbestos, Palace of Westminster 683w
Association of County Councils 394-5w
Association of District Councils 673w
Big Ben, Repairs & maintenance 683w
Building regulations, Wind 600w
Business expansion scheme, Rented housing 530-1w
Capital value rating 665w
Caravan sites, Bradford 492-3w
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Official cars 188w
Community charge 660-4w
Community charge, Administrative costs 663w, 715-6w
Community charge, Exservicemen 663w
Community charge, Mentally disadvantaged 481w
Community charge, Ministers of religion 481w
Community charge, Non-metropolitan counties 482-3w
Community charge, North Yorkshire County Council 660w

***Chope, Mr Christopher**—continued*
Community charge, Nurses' training 97w
Community charge, Offshore workers 660w
Community charge, Overseas workers 713-4w
Community charge, Rents 391w
Community charge, Second homes 482w
Community charge, Standard spending assessments 664-5w
Community charge, Students 481w
Community charge, Transitional relief 185w, 599-600w, 665w
Community charge, Youth training scheme 599w
Community charge benefits 662w
Community charge capping 488w, 663-4w, 666w
Community charge capping, Basildon 662w
Community charge capping, Local government expenditure 185w
Council house rents, Rent increases 265w, 675w
Council house sales, House prices 98w
Council tenants, Council house transfers 715w
Crown Suppliers, Audit 92w
Crown Suppliers, Consultants 605-6w, 683-4w
Crown Suppliers, Contracts 92w
Crown Suppliers, Government departments 478w
Crown Suppliers, Privatisation 605w
Crown Suppliers, Procurement 91-2w
Crown Suppliers, Public contracts 478w
Defective housing, Reinstatement grants 97-8w
Dept of the Environment, Architects 1112
Dept of the Environment, Cash limits 104w, 714w
Disabled facilities grants, Lifts 395w
Empty housing, Kirklees District Council 678w
Empty property, Dept of the Environment 189w
Energy conservation, Housing construction 267w
Estate Action, Liverpool 600w
Homelessness, Mortgage defaulters 672w
House of Commons accommodation, Day nurseries 191w
House prices, Greater London 98w
Households, Yorkshire & Humberside 684w
Housing, Public expenditure 94-6w
Housing & handicapped, Voluntary organisations 267w
Housing associations, Housing improvement 184w, 392-4w
Housing associations, Rent increases 184w
Housing construction 600-1w
Housing Corporation, Finance 98w
Housing finance, Liverpool 681w
Housing improvement, Government grants to local authorities 673w
Housing problems, Liverpool 1117-8
Housing revenue accounts, Transitional relief 394w
Housing standards, Dampness 183w
Housing starts, York 601w
Housing starts, Yorkshire & Humberside 711w
Internal delivery service, Security vetting 101w
Local government expenditure 479-81w
Local government expenditure, Domestic rates 478-9w
Local government expenditure, Educational finance 669w
Local government expenditure, Local authority powers 665w
Local government expenditure, Metropolitan districts 481-2w
Local government expenditure, Standard spending assessments 480w, 659-60w, 664-5w
Local government expenditure, Waltham Forest 680w
Local government finance 479w
Local government finance, Capital 488w

***Chope, Mr Christopher**—continued*
Local government finance, Dorset County Council 478w
Local government finance, Humberside 480w
Local government finance, Local income tax 480w
Local government finance, Revenue support grant 489w
Local government finance, Somerset 487-8w
Local government functions, Community charge 185w
Local government staff 485-6w
Local government staff, Manpower 485w
Local government staff, Non-metropolitan counties 486w
Low cost home ownership schemes, Housing finance 668w
Metropolitan Police, Local government finance 392w
Mortgages, Private rented housing 489w
New towns, Mortgages 713w
Non-domestic rates, Bournemouth 391w
Palace of Westminster, Hairdressing 103w
Parliamentary Estate, Repairs & maintenance 606w
Property Holdings, Manpower 101w
Property Services Agency, British residents abroad 99-100w
Property Services Agency, Downing Street 598w
Property Services Agency, Privatisation 101w, 189-90w, 313w, 489-90w
Property Services Agency, Security vetting 101w
Public sector housing, Greater Manchester 395w
Rates & rating, Birmingham 665w
Rates & rating, Bournemouth Borough Council 661w
Rates & rating, Lancashire 479-80w
Rates & rating, Non-ratepayers 97w
Rates & rating, Small businesses 599w
Rates & rating, Waltham Forest 661w
Rented housing, London boroughs 92-4w
Revenue support grant 662w
Revenue support grant, Oxfordshire 662w
Revenue support grant, Wandsworth 663w
Royal Parks Constabulary 1113
South Yorkshire Fire & Civil Defence Authority, Finance 92w
Standard community charge, Local authorities 185w
Standard spending assessments, Departmental publications 494w
Standard spending assessments, Humberside 482w
Standard spending assessments, Lancashire County Council 666w
Standard spending assessments, London boroughs 96-8w
Standard spending assessments, Non-metropolitan counties 494w
Standard spending assessments, Suffolk 660w
Steelcase Stafor, Government contracts 606w
Tenants' choice, Private rented housing 675w
Transitional relief, Coventry 483w
Transitional relief, Grimsby 599w
Uniform business rate 678w
Uniform business rate, Bournemouth Borough Council 184-5w
Uniform business rate, Cricket 484w
Uniform business rate, Harrogate Borough Council 660w
Uniform business rate, Small businesses 265w
Uniform business rate, Sports facilities 484-5w, 601-2w, 674w
Uniform business rate, Wandsworth 678-9w

Chronically sick
Budgeting 556w

Church Commissioners
439w
Agricultural land 881
Income 439w, 881
Rents 880-1

Church of England
Wealth 439w

Churchill, Mr Winston
Questions
Aircraft, Radio 592-3w
Community charge, Non-payment 152

Circuses
Vocational education 625w

CITB
see Construction Industry Training Board

Citizens' Advice Bureaux
Government grants 298w
Political impartiality 476

Citizens' Advice Scotland
475-6

City action teams
44w
North West region 676w

City colleges for the technology of the arts
Educational finance 381-2w

City of Westminster
Underground railways 233w

City technology colleges
Bradford 708w
Educational finance 381-2w
Haberdashers' Aske's School (23:03:90) 1414-22

Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982
Questions
260w

Civil Aviation Authority (Borrowing Powers) Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
Royal Assent (19:03:90) 888

Civil emergency adviser
Conferences 137w
Costs 137w

Civil engineering
Contracts for services 704w

Civil Legal Aid (Financial Conditions) (Scotland) Regulations 1990
Debates etc.
(12:03:90) 29

Civil list
Royal Family 528w

Civil servants
Arthur Andersen 73w
Astra Training Services 579w
Conditions of employment 527w
Local government finance 452w
Members 440w
Offshore safety 631w

Civil service agencies
Magistrates' courts 634w
Managers 609w
Passport Office 458w
Private sector 609w
Women's employment 609w

Civil Service College
609w

Civil service dispersal
611w

Civil service manpower
Community charge 619w
Dept of Education & Science 706-8w
Dept of Employment 216w
Dept of Energy 630-1w
Dept of Health 568w
Dept of Social Security 640-2w

Civil service manpower—continued
Dept of the Environment 709-10w
Dept of Transport 539w, 649w
Environmentally sensitive areas 572-3w
Health & Safety Executive 211w
Home Office 636-7w
Immigration applications 16w
Inland Revenue 689w
Lord Chancellor 791-2w
Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food 732-4w
Ministry of Defence 718-9w
National Engineering Laboratory 43w
Northern Ireland 140-1w, 612w
Office of Arts & Libraries 420-1w
Offshore safety 631-2w
Property Services Agency 99-100w
Public relations 3w, 7-8w, 13w, 23w, 31w, 36w, 39-40w, 47-8w, 50w, 55-6w, 69-70w, 83w, 89w, 101-2w, 112-3w, 150w, 166w, 171-2w, 218w
Roads 539w
Slaughterhouses 325w
Statistics 4w, 7w, 14w, 22-3w, 31-2w, 36w, 40-1w, 47-50w, 53-6w, 72w, 83w, 89w, 101w, 112w, 128w, 165-6w, 216-8w, 305-6w
Town & country planning 674w
Treasury 376w

Civil service pensions
689w

CJ How
Investor protection 302w

Clapham Common
London assessment studies 4

Clapham Rail Accident Inquiry
8

Clark, Mr Alan, Minister of State for Defence Procurement
Questions
AWACS, Defence contracts 289w
Civil service manpower, Ministry of Defence 718-9w
European fighter aircraft, Expenditure 433-4w
Harrier aircraft, Defence contracts 290w
IUKADGE, Intellectual property 524w
Public relations, Ministry of Defence 50w
Rapier missiles, Costs 434w
Statistics, Ministry of Defence 49-50w
Taylor Scott, Lt Cdr, Air accidents 288-9w

Clark, Dr David
Questions
Set-aside schemes, Land use 738w
Slaughterhouses 737w
Slaughterhouses, Civil service manpower 325w
Slaughterhouses, European Commission 736w
Slaughterhouses, Export licensing 736w
Slaughterhouses, Food exports 736w
Slaughterhouses, North Torrington 737w
Slaughterhouses, Production 736w

Clark, Dr Michael
Questions
British Rail, Public service obligation grant 536-7w
Commuters, Railway travel 124w
Jobclubs 208w

Clark, Sir William
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990, Industry (22:03:90) 1322, 1324
Questions
Business statements 1240
Inflation 653

Clark Kincaid
697w

Clarke, James Pius
481-2

Clarke, Rt Hon Kenneth, Secretary of State for Health
Debates etc.
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 211, 340, 341-2, 356-7, 360, 364-82, 386, 426-34 passim
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Allocation of time motion & Rep (14:03:90) 494-503, 549, 550-3, 555, 566, 592, 607-11
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, 3R (15:03:90) 695-6, 721-2
Questions
Advertising, Dept of Health 183w
Ambulance services, Pay settlements 553w
British Medical Association 545w
Community care, Finance 999
District health authorities, Debts 560w
Family doctors, Budgeting 281w, 542w
Family doctors, Contracts of employment 551w
Health hazards, Nuclear weapons tests 724w
Hospital closures, Macclesfield Health Authority 1000-1
Littlemore Hospital, Capital investment 1000
NHS, Manpower 999
NHS, Trade unions 998-9
NHS hospital trusts 995-6
NHS hospital trusts, Health services 544w
NHS hospital trusts, West Lambeth Health Authority 995
Nurses, Career structure 1002-3
Nurses, Manpower 1003
Nurses, Pay 1002-3
Prescriptions, Budgeting 993-4
Public relations, Dept of Health 55w
Regional health authorities 550w
South Western Regional Health Authority, Public appointments 281w
West Middlesex University Hospital, Hospital waiting lists 999-1000
"Working for Patients White Paper", Publicity 571w

Clarke, Mr Tom
Debates etc.
Business statements (13:03:90) 452
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 194, 196, 365, 380, 405-6
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Allocation of time motion & Rep (14:03:90) 600-2, 610, 611
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, 3R (15:03:90) 691-2, 721-4
Questions
Community care, Finance 999
Dept of Trade & Industry, Departmental reorganisation 300w
Low pay 207w
Vietnam, Development aid 17-8

Clay, Mr Bob
Questions
Bombings, Birmingham 745-6w
British Shipbuilders, Factory closures 697w
Community charge 1110
Industries, Investment 593w
Inverclyde enterprise zone, Employment opportunities 353-4w
Land acquisition, EC law 593w
North East Shipbuilders 301w
North East Shipbuilders, European Commission 698w
North East Shipbuilders, Factory closures 697-8w
Residential care, Fees & charges 542w
Shipbuilding, Foreign investment in UK 697w
Shipbuilding, Sunderland 697w
Shipbuilding, West Germany 301w
Tyne & Wear Development Corporation, Employment opportunities 696-7w

Cleddau bridge
Road tolls (19:03:90) 983-90

Clelland, Mr David
Debates etc.
Arts finance (13:03:90) 165-6
Questions
Dept of Trade & Industry, Departmental reorganisation 300w
Employment training 209w
Residential care, Fees & charges 542w

Climate
Research facilities 19-20

Climbing
Access to countryside 1113

Closure of debate
Speaker's rulings & statements (13:03:90) 435

Clothing
Armed forces training 200-2w
Handicapped (16:03:90) 861-8

Clothing industry
GATT 295w

Clwyd
Community charge 877

Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Debates etc.
Ethiopia; Famine (12:03:90) 28
Questions
Vietnam, Development aid 18-9

Clyde Port Authority Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
2R order read (15:03:90) 649, (22:03:90) 1219

Clyde Submarine Base
Radiation hazards 334w

Clydewest 2000
582-3w

Coal consumption
Energy consumption 319-20w

Coal Industry Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
Lords amendts (15:03:90) 778-84
Royal Assent (19:03:90) 888

Coal Industry (Borrowing Powers) Order 1990
Debates etc.
(19:03:90) 888

Coal mining
Occupational pensions 443w
South Wales 443w

Coastal protection
(21:03:90) 1211-8
Dorset 656w

Cochlear implants
Finance 560w

COD Donnington
Fires 58w

Codes of practice
Abortion 730w
Conveyancing 109w
Prisoners' rights 17-8w
Social Fund 73w

COE
see Council of Europe

Cohen, Mr Harry
Debates etc.
Business statements (15:03:90) 679
Hare Coursing (Abolition) Bill, 1R (13:03:90) 172
Redbridge London Borough Council Bill, 3R (20:03:90) 1078, 1080-1
Questions
Air ambulance services, Greater London 728w
Armed forces, HIV infection 49w
Armed forces deployment 719w

Cohen, Mr Harry—continued
Armed forces deployment, USA 515-6w
Bombings, Birmingham 746w
Breast cancer, Screening 727w
Cancer, Social class 727w
Community charge, Debts 151
Council house rents, Rent increases 675w
Debts 687w
Defence expenditure, Patents 771w
Household Cavalry, Crimes of violence 720w
Inflation, EC countries 371w
IUKADGE, Intellectual property 524w
Maternity services, Hospitals 762w
Maternity services, NHS hospital trusts 762w
Mentally disturbed offenders, Bail hostels 636w
Midwives, Conditions of employment 728w
Ministry of Defence, Patents 719-20w
Mortgage defaulters, Interest rates 664
NHS, Public sector assets 569w
North East Thames Regional Health Authority, Finance 762w
Portage, Educational finance 707w
Prison population, Prisoners' release 796w
Publicity, Dept of Education & Science 419w
Publicity, Dept of Employment 504w
Publicity, Dept of Energy 631w
Publicity, Dept of Health 728w
Publicity, Dept of Social Security 739w
Publicity, Dept of Trade & Industry 613-4w
Publicity, Dept of Transport 689-90w
Publicity, Foreign & Commonwealth Office 716w
Publicity, Home Office 635-6w
Publicity, Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food 799w
Publicity, Ministry of Defence 771-2w
Publicity, Office of Arts & Libraries 526-7w
Publicity, Overseas Development Administration 531w
Publicity, Prime Minister 516w
Publicity, Scottish Office 646w
Publicity, Treasury 761w
Racial discrimination, EC action 796w
Radiation hazards, Disclosure of information 712w
Radiation hazards, Radioactive Incident Monitoring Network 712w
Railway safety, King's Cross 654-5w
Residential care, Fees & charges 542w
Security industry, Self-regulating organisations 756w
Water supply industry, Privatisation 712w

COI
see Central Office of Information

Coleman, Mr Donald
Questions
Council housing, Wales 875
European Development Bank 650

Collective community charge
53w, 246w, 771w
Health service staff 731w
Local government finance 714w
NHS 731w
Nurses' homes 730w

Colombia
Mercenaries 608w

Colvin, Mr Michael
Debates etc.
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 252
Questions
Airlines, USA 1-2
Atrazine, Licensing 240w
Big Ben, Repairs & maintenance 683w
Dept of the Environment, Cash limits 714w
Firearms certificates, Fees & charges 356w
Income support, Residential care 455w
Noise control, Gun sports 679w
North Sea, Capital investment 399w
Pollution control, North Sea 312w
Poultry, Testing 240w

Colvin, Mr Michael—continued
Procurement, Government departments 616w
Railway track, Weedkillers 148-9w
Taxation 656-7
Vocational education, Aircrew 626w

COMA
see Committee on Medical Aspects of Food Policy

COMARE
see Committee on Medical Aspects of Radiation in the Environment

Commercial surrogacy
Prosecutions 476w

Commercial television
Teletext 757-8w

Commission of the European Communities
see European Commission

Committee of Vice Chancellors & Principals
627w

Committee on Medical Aspects of Food Policy
179w, 469w
Dentists 468w
Sugar 468-9w

Committee on Medical Aspects of Radiation in the Environment
108w

Committee on Safety of Medicines
560w

Commodities
Agricultural & Food Research Council 34-5w

Common agricultural policy
Costs 448w

Community care
(13:03:90) 178-441, 549w, (15:03:90) 684-731
Alcoholism 561w
Departmental publications 246-50w
Finance 120w, 999
Footwear 69w
Government grants 65-6w
Guillotine (14:03:90) 494-640
Home helps 553w
Inspection units 385w
Loans 65-6w
Local government functions 388-9w
Mentally ill 1001-2
Preston 288w
Scotland 120w
Social Fund 288w
Terminal care 454w

Community care plans
467w

Community charge
660-4w, 694w, 1010, 1110, 1116-7
Administrative costs 246-w, 663w, 715-6w
Armed forces 413w
Barking & Dagenham 153
Burnley 1006-7
Business 468
Caerphilly 877
Civil service manpower 619w
Clwyd 877
Debts 151
Domestic rates 666w
Exservicemen 663w
Humberside 1007-8
Islington 1117
Kent 392w
Lancashire 886, 1115
Local government expenditure 663-4
Local government finance 716w
Local government functions 185w
Local government revenue 617w, 666w
Local government services 1111
Local government staff 1111-2
Low incomes 265w

Community charge—continued
Low pay 149
Macclesfield Borough Council 665w
Mentally disadvantaged 481w
Middlesbrough 1009
Ministers of religion 481w
Montgomery 879
Newport 878-9
Non-metropolitan counties 482-3w
Non-payment 150, 152, 157w, 663, 1009, 1234
North Yorkshire County Council 660w
Northern Ireland 226w
Nurses' training 97w
Offshore workers 660w
Orders & regulations 105w
Overseas workers 713-4w
Pensioners 656w
Personal income 265w
Public petitions (13:03:90) 460, (16:03:90) 794
Rates & rating 1110-1
Rents 391w
Retail price index 652-3
Revenue support grant 265-6w
Scotland 150, 1232-4
Scottish councils 702-3w
Second homes 482w
South Pembrokeshire 878
Standard spending assessments 664-5w
Students 481w
Transitional relief 185w, 315-6w, 391-2w, 483-4w, 599-600w, 665w, 1116-7
Valuation services 609w
Wales 246w, 344w, 347w, 442-3w, 617-9w
Youth training scheme 391w, 484w, 599w

Community charge benefits
662w, 1111, 1116-7
Attendance allowance 404w
Billing 661w
Capital rules 404w, 740-4w, 1232, 1235-6
Carers 404w
Ex gratia payments 1232-3
Personal income 334-5w, 788-9w
Personal savings 66w, 1112
Scotland 593w, 1111
Social security claims 788w

Community charge capping
488w, 663-4w, 666w
Administrative costs 1109-10
Basildon 662w
Bedfordshire County Council 1109
Cardiff 877
Local government expenditure 185w
South Glamorgan 877, 879-80
Wales 878

Community charge exemptions
315w
Mentally ill 367-8w
Refuges 246w

Community charge register
Computer privacy 748w

Community Charges (Administration & Enforcement) Regulations 1989
Questions
246w

Community councils
Wales 617-9w

Community health councils
280w, 554-5w
Expenditure 555w

Community health services
Geriatric patients 444w
Geriatrics 444w
Maternity services 762w

Community policing
753w

Community service orders
Prison population 1224

Commuters
Railway travel 124w
Travelling expenses 644w

Companies
46w
Enterprise initiative 306-8w
Local authorities 491-2w
Manpower 46w

Companies Act 1985
Questions
431w

Companies Act 1989
Questions
14-5, 169-70w, 586-7w, 591w
Documents 316w

Companies political contributions
(13:03:90) 173-5

Companies Registration Office (England & Wales)
Company accounts 304w

Companies (Summary Financial Statement) Regulations 1990
Questions
586w

Company accounts
432w
Audit 42-3w, 169w, 587w, 695-6w
Companies Registration Office (England & Wales) 304w
Costs 305w
Disclosure of information 586w
Wealth 42w, 432w, 695w

Company cars
Central London 535w
Taxation 530w

Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986
Questions
589w, 591w
Al-Fayed Investment Holdings 469

Company investigations
Bank services 591w
Company reports 586w
Disclosure of information 588-9w
Evidence 587w, 589w
House of Fraser 13-5, 306w
Insider trading 169-70w
Institute of Chartered Accountants in England & Wales 695w
Securities & Investments Board 430w

Company liquidations
302w

Company names
306-8w

Company reports
Accountants 43w, 695w
Company investigations 586w
Industrial accidents 431w
Pay 431w

Company taxation
377-8w

Compensation
AIDS 557-8w
Barlow Clowes 401w
China 449w
Crime victims 753w, 1231-2
Eggs 81w
Investor protection 305w
Medical malpractice 178w
MV Marchioness 6
Radiotherapy 1005
Storms 384w
Vaccine damaged children 642w

Competition
294w
Air fares 10
Czechoslovakia 792w
Environment protection 313w
Local government services 189w
Office of Fair Trading 590w

Complaints
Low flying 331w
Security Service Tribunal 139w

Complaints—continued
Traffic Commissioners 152w

Complaints against police
Broadwater Farm Estate 455w

Composite tax rate system
Tax yields 164-5w

Composition labelling
Food 800w
Mineral waters 85w, 240-1w

Comptroller & Auditor General
see National Audit Office

Compulsory purchase
Leeds Development Corporation 606w

Computer applications
Family doctors 554w

Computer privacy
Community charge register 748w

Computers in government departments
Contracts for services 455w
Dept of Social Security 455w
Social Fund 740w

Computers in National Health Service
559w
Nurses 53w

Concessionary coal
Housing benefits 73w

Concessionary fares
Elderly 383w

Conditions of employment
Civil servants 527w
Midwives 728w
Property Services Agency 101w
Unofficial strikes 143

Confederation of British Industry
291w, 299w, 373w, 469-70, 871
Interest rates 658-9
Labour costs 659

Conferences
Civil emergency adviser 137w
NHS 700w
Sea pollution 447w
Wind power 630w

Conflict of interests
Consultants 683-4w
Health service staff 385w, 569w
Independent Broadcasting Authority 509w

Conifers
Land pollution 269w
Water pollution 269w

Consolidated Fund debates
Speaker's rulings & statements (22:03:90) 1249

Consolidated Fund (No 2) Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
1R (15:03:90) 777

Constitutions
Fiji 35w
Namibia 525w
Republic of Ireland (14:03:90) 641-8

Construction
Channel tunnel 120w
East London River Crossing 537w
Hospitals 562w
Kilroot power station 436w
Naval bases 202-3w

Construction costs
Conway tunnel road scheme 349w
Jubilee line 146-7w

Construction Industry Training Board
211w

Construction materials
Dumping 429w

Consultancy initiative
306-8w

Consultants
Conflict of interests 683-4w
Crown Suppliers 605-6w, 683-4w
Electricity supply industry 5-6w
Water supply industry 185-6w, 714-5w

Consumer advice centres
Government grants 298w

Consumer credit
Interest rates 292w

Consumer Credit Act 1974
Questions
Business 766w

Consumer expenditure
Price increases 9-10w
Tax yields 374w

Consumer goods
Product safety 295w

Consumer protection
Pesticides 74-5w
Trading standards departments 464-5

Consumption
Investment 375w

Contempt of court
Prisoners 509w

Contingency reserve
10w

Contractorisation
Atomic Weapons Research Establishment 522w, 524-5w

Contracts
Audit 431w
Crown Suppliers 92w, 189-90w
Kleinwort Benson 591w
NHS review 57w

"Contracts for Health Services: Operating Contracts Consultation Paper"
57w, 182w

Contracts for services
Civil engineering 704w
Computers in government departments 455w
Health services 15w, 558w, 561w
Local authorities 672-3w
Local government services 617-8w
NHS 176-7w, 182w, 542-3w
Public bodies 704w
Wales 617-8w

Contracts of employment
Family doctors 551w

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 1988
Questions
344w

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species
717-8w

Conveyancing
Codes of practice 109w
Disclosure of information 109w, 111w
Fees & charges 111w
Law of Property (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1989 316w
Law reform 108w, 110w, 112w
Legal aid scheme 111w
Professional misconduct 109w
Professional qualifications 110w
Scotland 108-12w

Convictions
Insider trading 613w

Conway, Mr Derek
Questions
Access to Parliament, Westminster Hall 884
Mortgages 655

Conway tunnel road scheme
Construction costs 349w

Cook, Mr Frank
Debates etc.
Steel framed houses, Nottingham (20:03:90) 1089
Tees & Hartlepool Port Authority Bill, 2R (15:03:90) 733, 738, 742, 749, 751, 753-5, 758, 760, 762, 764-5, 767-9
Questions
Interest rates, Manufacturing industries 270w

Cook, Mr Robin
Debates etc.
Business statements (13:03:90) 442
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 197-204, 212, 255-8, 265-6, 339-64, 417-35
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Allocation of time motion & Rep (14:03:90) 494, 503-6, 547
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, 3R (15:03:90) 688-9, 720
Questions
Business expansion scheme, Tax allowances 165w
District health authorities, Public appointments 477w
Health service staff, Average earnings 764-6w
NHS hospital trusts 996
Nurses, Manpower 1003
Prime Minister, Information services 38-9w
"Working for Patients White Paper", Publicity 571w

Cook-chill catering
Wakefield Health Authority 366w

Coombs, Mr Anthony
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990, Industry (22:03:90) 1293-7
Questions
Association of County Councils 394-5w
Countryside Commission, Finance 678w
Family doctors, Budgeting 281w
Hospitals, Construction 562w
Manufacturing industries, Productivity 1234-5
Religious education, Teacher training 34w
Tax yields 656
VAT, New businesses 370-1w
West Midlands Residuary Body, Public appointments 769w

Coombs, Mr Simon
Questions
Community care, Mentally ill 1001-2
Neighbourhood watch schemes 749w
Neighbourhood watch schemes, Police 1222
Railway Inspectorate, Health & Safety Executive 9
Unemployment benefits, Social security abuse 212w

Cope, Rt Hon John, Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office
Debates etc.
Appropriation (Northern Ireland) Order 1990 (12:03:90) 72-5, 76
Northern Ireland (Emergency & Prevention of Terrorism Provisions) (Continuance) Order 1990 (12:03:90) 65-9
Questions
Audit, Northern Ireland Office 227w
Civil service manpower, Northern Ireland 140-1w
Community charge, Northern Ireland 226w
Day care of children, Northern Ireland Office 513w
Equal opportunities, Northern Ireland Office 226w, 513-4w, 624w
Extradition, Republic of Ireland 622w
Northern Ireland Dept of Health & Social Services, Equal opportunities 512w
Prisoners, Suicide 2w, 226w

Cope, Rt Hon John—continued
Privatisation, Northern Ireland Office 514w
Railway network, Terrorism 512w

Corbett, Mr Robin
Debates etc.
Broadcasting Bill, Hybrid Bills (14:03:90) 490
Questions
B3227, Road signs 540w
Interest rates, Manufacturing industries 270w
Neighbourhood watch schemes, Police patrolling 1222
Plants, Upper Waiting Hall 769w
Wages councils 203w

Corbyn, Mr Jeremy
Debates etc.
Public transport (23:03:90) 1366, 1379, 1383-4, 1390, 1401, 1407
Questions
Bombings, Birmingham 745-6w
Business statements 1245

Cormack, Mr Patrick
Debates etc.
Arts finance (13:03:90) 162
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 252
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Allocation of time motion & Rep (14:03:90) 502, 506-10, 515, 573
War Crimes Bill, 2R (19:03:90) 888-9, 900, 904, 909, 934, 963, 967
Questions
Art works, Export licensing 317w

Cornwall
Family doctors 549w
Unemployment 147

Corporate plans
Training & enterprise councils 148-9

Corporation tax
161-2w, 375w
EC countries 161-2w, 375w

Cosmetics
Animal experiments 43w

Cost benefit analysis
Catalytic converters 127w

Cot deaths
Bedding 46-7w
Fire resistant materials 997-8
Health education 997

Couchman, Mr James
Debates etc.
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Allocation of time motion & Rep (14:03:90) 532, 533, 583-4, 590
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, 3R (15:03:90) 684-5
Questions
Employment 139
Standard community charge 658-9w

Council house rents
1104-6
Rent increases 265w, 675w

Council house sales
1105
House prices 98w
Inflation 163w
Local government revenue 701-2w
Personal loans 163w

Council house transfers
Council tenants 715w

Council housing
Cumbernauld & Kilsyth District Council 115w
Wales 873-5

Council of Europe
25

Council of Ministers
Intervention stocks 278w

Council tenants
Council house transfers 715w

Councillors
Resignations 1116

Councillors' attendance allowances
676w

Councillors' disqualification
603w

Countryside Commission
1113
Finance 678w

County court bailiffs
91w

County courts
531w
Cheques 426-7w
Debts 427w

Court of Appeal
15
Bombings 1225-6

Courts & Legal Services Bill (HL) 1989/90
Questions
531w

Cousins, Mr Jim
Debates etc.
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 242-3, 409, 410
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Allocation of time motion & Rep (14:03:90) 528-30, 571
Questions
Bombings, Birmingham 745-6w
Newcastle Health Authority 546w
Nurses, Career structure 1002-3
Transplant surgery, Newcastle Health Authority 1008

Covent Garden
Archaeological sites 494-5w

Coventry
Transitional relief 483w

Cowes
Bridges 2-3

Cowley
Rover Group 303w

Cox, Mr Tom
Debates etc.
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Allocation of time motion & Rep (14:03:90) 561-2
Questions
Balance of trade, OECD countries 378w
Community charge capping 664w
Cyprus, Peace negotiations 39w
Interest rates, Manufacturing industries 270w
London assessment studies 121w, 156w
Prison employment 397-9w
Prison hospitals, Greater London 757w
Prison staff, Training 16w
Prisoners, English language 138-9w
Prisons, Telephones 796-7w
Segregation of prisoners 797-8w
South West Thames Regional Health Authority, Finance 461w
Sri Lanka, Overseas aid 16-7
Work permits, Teachers 209w

CPS
see Centre for Policy Studies

Crack
Drug seizures 752w
Metropolitan Police 752w

Crafts Council
(13:03:90) 155-70

Cran, Mr James
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990, Industry (22:03:90) 1300, 1313-6
Business statements (15:03:90) 679

Credit cards
171w

Cricket
Uniform business rate 484w

Crime
Greater London 510w
Touting 260w

"Crime Justice & Protecting the Public White Paper"
749w
National Association of Probation Officers 756w

Crime prevention
754w
Neighbourhood watch schemes 1221-2
Police 1221-2

Crime victims
Compensation 753w, 1231-2
Statistics 753w, 756w, 1230
Women 1230

Crimes of violence
Household Cavalry 720w
Wandsworth Prison 508w

Criminal injuries compensation
1231-2

Criminal Injuries Compensation Board
1231-2

Criminal investigation
House of Fraser 89w

Criminal Justice Act 1988
Questions
15

Criminal Law Act 1977
Questions
139w

Criminal proceedings
Beaulieu Group 527w
Nazi war crimes (19:03:90) 887-975

Criminal statistics
Domestic violence 748-9w

Crisis loans
64-5w, 284-8w

Critchley, Mr Julian
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990 (21:03:90) 1174-6

Crowd control
Sportsgrounds 633w

Crowd safety
Pop festivals 138w

Crown courts
Barrow-in-Furness 91w

Crown Estate Commissioners
580-1w

Crown immunity
NHS 563-4w

Crown Suppliers
102w
Audit 92w
Consultants 605-6w, 683-4w
Contracts 92w, 189-90w
Government departments 478w
Privatisation 101w, 313w, 605w
Procurement 91-2w
Public contracts 478w

Cruise missiles
NATO 637w
Submarines 637w

Cryer, Mr Bob
Debates etc.
Business statements (13:03:90) 453, (15:03:90) 677
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 357, 359, 373, 375, 421, 422-3

Cryer, Mr Bob—continued
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, House of Commons division of time (13:03:90) 457
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Allocation of time motion & Rep (14:03:90) 524-6
Oral question time intervention (22:03:90) 1226
Questions
Astra Training Services, Civil servants 579w
Back pain, Industrial health & safety 576-7w
Back pain, Lost working days 578w
Business statements 1244
City technology colleges, Bradford 708w
Community charge, Standard spending assessments 665w
Hazardous wastes, North Sea 197w
Hazardous wastes, Seas & oceans 196w
Hospitals 516w
International conferences, North Sea 188w
Law of the Sea Convention, Seabed mining 145w
New York 516w
NHS finance, Self-governing hospitals 472w
School population, Bradford 521w
Skills Training Agency, Privatisation 579w
Training, Government grants 141

CSM
see Committee on Safety of Medicines

CTCC
see Central Transport Consultative Committee

Cumbernauld
115w
Owner occupied housing 115w
Social security recipients 288w

Cumbernauld & Kilsyth District Council
Council housing 115w
House renovation grants 115w
Repairs & maintenance 115w

Cumbernauld Development Corporation
Pay 115w

Cumbria
Radiation hazards 489w

Cummings, Mr John
Questions
Disabled workers, Easington District Council 342w
Employment training, Peterlee 415w
Foreign tourists, Northumberland 414w
Interest rates, Manufacturing industries 270w
Mines & Quarries Inspectorate, Manpower 500w
Unemployment, Seaham 500w
Youth training scheme, Peterlee 500w

Cunliffe, Mr Lawrence
Questions
Residential care, Elderly 541w
Separate taxation of wife's earnings, Low incomes 369w
Uniform business rate, Small businesses 265w

Cunningham, Dr John
Debates etc.
Business statements (15:03:90) 672
Questions
Access to Parliament, Westminster Hall 884
Business statements 1237-8
Electoral register, Expenditure 354w
Leukaemia 60w

Curriculum
Child rearing 519w
Languages education 324w
Physical education 321w
School buildings 518w

Currie, Mrs Edwina
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990, Industry (22:03:90) 1258
Families (16:03:90) 801, 813-20, 824, 835
Questions
Drug abuse, International conferences 746-7w
GATT, Unfair trading practices 472
Registration of births deaths & marriages 998

Curry, Mr David, Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture
Debates etc.
Agriculture (16:03:90) 857-9
Questions
Advertising, Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food 83-4w
Agricultural chemicals, Industrial health & safety 195-6w
Agricultural land 735w
Agricultural workers, Manpower 197-8w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Experimental farms 78w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Research 197w
Civil service manpower, Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food 732-4w
Coastal protection, Dorset 656w
Common agricultural policy, Costs 448w
Council of Ministers, Intervention stocks 278w
EC free food scheme 446w
Eggs, Production 243-4w
Environmentally sensitive areas, Civil service manpower 572-3w
Fish, Sea pollution 84-5w
Fish diseases, Research 242w
Fish farming, Rivers 445w
Fish farming, Trout 445w
Fisheries, Acid rain 446w
Fishing gear, EC law 448w
Fishing gear, Scotland 448w
Fishing quotas, Irish Sea 445-6w
Flood control, Expenditure 107w
Food, International conferences 573w
Food prices 81w
GATT, Agricultural support systems 799w
Green pound, EC countries 194w
Green pound, Wheat 193-6w
Hazardous wastes, North Sea 197w
Hazardous wastes, Seas & oceans 196w
Horticulture, Gas tariffs 195w
Industrial wastes, North Sea 75-7w
Lindane, Sea pollution 87w
Management consultants, Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food 86-7w
New Forest Review 446w
Organic farming, Government assistance 196w
Organic farming, Harmonisation of standards 195w
Pollution monitoring, Irish Sea 106-7w
Poultry, Animal welfare 197w
Prawns, Fish conservation 447-8w
Prawns, Fishing catches 801-2w
Prawns, Fishing gear 448w
Privatisation, Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food 83w
Public relations, Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food 82-3w
Publicity, Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food 799w
Radioactive waste disposal, Irish Sea 85w
Salmon, Licensing 573w
Salmon, Sea fishing 447w
Salmonella, Food hygiene 78w
Sea pollution, Conferences 447w
Sea pollution, Plankton 84w
Sheep premiums 447w
Shellfish, Licensing 448w
Statistics, Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food 83w
Veterinary investigation service, Fees & charges 76w
Veterinary investigation service, Operating costs 76w

Custodial treatment
Custodial treatment—continued
Sentencing 456w
Young offenders 457w

Customs & Excise
Drug crimes 758w
Petitions 611w

CVCP
see Committee of Vice Chancellors & Principals

Cycleways
Royal parks 600w

Cycling
Arrests 680-1w
Greater London 648-9w
Road accidents 648-9w
Royal parks 680-1w

Cyprus
Peace negotiations 39w

Czechoslovakia
528w
Competition 792w
Joint ventures 767w

Dairy farming
Carmarthen 347w

Dairy Produce Quotas (Amendment) (No 2) Regulations 1990
Questions
574w

Dairy products
Production quotas 574w

Dalyell, Mr Tam
Debates etc.
Arts finance (13:03:90) 169
Public transport (23:03:90) 1379-80, 1385, 1398-9, 1411
Questions
Alcoholic drinks, Young people 351w
Asbestos, Industrial health & safety 216w
Brazil, Rain forests 440w
Civil servants, Conditions of employment 527w
Crown Suppliers, Audit 92w
Crown Suppliers, Consultants 605-6w, 683-4w
Crown Suppliers, Contracts 92w
Crown Suppliers, Privatisation 605w
Director of Public Prosecutions 89w
Food hygiene, Bakery products 353w
Fossils, Bathgate 413w
Internal delivery service, Security vetting 101w
Iron & steel industry, Armadale 290w
Kidneys, Transplant surgery 279w
Property Holdings, Manpower 101w
Property Services Agency, Army in Northern Ireland 49w
Property Services Agency, British residents abroad 99-100w
Property Services Agency, Privatisation 101w, 189-90w, 313w
Property Services Agency, Security vetting 101w
Science Museum, Attendance 8w
Skills Training Agency, Privatisation 575w
Spain, National parks 526w
Steelcase Stafor, Government contracts 606w
Student loans, Teachers 626w
UK companies abroad, Environment protection 400-1w
Wallace, Colin 355w, 514w

Dampness
Housing standards 183w

Danbury
Speed limits 540w

Darling, Mr Alistair
Debates etc.
War Crimes Bill, 2R (19:03:90) 962-6
Questions
Interest rates, Manufacturing industries 270w

Darlington Borough Council
478-9w

Data Protection Act 1984
Questions
170w

Data Protection Registrar
748w

Davies, Rt Hon Denzil
Questions
Community charge, Wales 442-3w
EC budget contributions 411-2w
National income 277w
National income, Pay 10w
Nuclear power, Subsidies 399w
Self-employed 131w
Tax burden 410w
Uniform business rate, Wales 349w

Davies, Mr Quentin
Debates etc.
Arts finance (13:03:90) 163
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, 3R (15:03:90) 714-8
Questions
Health services, Contracts for services 561w
Prison population 743-4w
Training 141

Davies, Mr Ron
Questions
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy 735-6w
Civil servants, Members 440w
Community charge, Caerphilly 877
Environmentally sensitive areas, Civil service manpower 572-3w
Environmentally sensitive areas, Expenditure 572w
Fish Farming Advisory Committee, Scotland 580-1w
Fungicides, Agricultural research 241w
Nazi war crimes 747w
Nutrition & health 179w
Organic farming, Harmonisation of standards 195w
Poultry, Animal welfare 197w
Rabies, Disease control 241w
Residential care, Elderly 541w
Training 206w

Davis, Mr David
Questions
Health services finance, Supra-regional services 556w
Young offenders, Parental responsibility 746w

Davis, Mr Terry
Debates etc.
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 397-400
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Allocation of time motion & Rep (14:03:90) 571-3, 574
Questions
Action for Jobs, Central Office of Information 506w
Action for Jobs, Publicity 136w
Cancer, Shropshire 58w
Dept of the Environment, Cash limits 104w
Parliamentary Estate, Repairs & maintenance 606w
Road safety, Expenditure 123w

Day, Mr Stephen
Questions
Breathalysers, Police powers 756w
River pollution, Waste disposal 683w
Road accidents 127w

Day care of children
Northern Ireland Office 513w
Scotland 586w
Women's employment 144, 504-5w, 586w

Day centres
Mentally handicapped 546-7w

Day nurseries
Approved training organisations 136w
House of Commons accommodation 191w

Day nurseries—continued
Tax allowances 376w

Deaf
York University 763w

Death
Heart diseases 118w
Industrial diseases 502-3w
Offshore accidents 632w, 777-8w
Railway workers 148w
Smoking 555-6w

Death rate
Post-neonatal mortality 453w

Debt collection
688-9w

Debts
687w
Community charge 151
County courts 427w
Developing countries 9w
District health authorities 560w
Interest rates 380w
Mortgages 654-5
Prisoners 509w

Debts written off
Banks 380w
Social Fund 74w

Defective housing
Reinstatement grants 97-8w

Defence contracts
AWACS 289w
AWE Aldermaston 771w
Harrier aircraft 290w
Vanguard submarines 411w

Defence Council
201w
Armed forces casualties 200-1w
Armed forces training 199-200w, 202w

Defence equipment
Arms control negotiations 330w

Defence expenditure
Patents 771w

Defence land
Access to countryside 331w

Defence research
Chemical & biological warfare 202w

Degrees
Mandatory student grants 628w

Deloitte Haskins & Sells
579w
Skills Training Agency 575w

Delors report
376w

Democracy
Eastern Europe 792-3w

Demolition
Houses 103-4w

Demonstrations
Arrests 755w

Dental charges
541w, 1005

Dental health
567w
Children 468w
Scotland 119w
Sugar 469w, 568w

Dental Laboratories Association
477w

Dental services
NHS 476-7w

Dentists
Committee on Medical Aspects of Food Policy 468w

Dentists—continued
Disciplinary proceedings 280w
Overseas workers 763-4w

Dentists' Register
763-4w

Dentures
477w
NHS complaints 476-7w

Departmental circulars
Rape 751-2w

Departmental forms
Child health 366w
Official stationery 701w
Wakefield 367-8w
Welsh language 287-8w

Departmental publications
Community care 246-50w
Hazardous materials 488-9w
NHS review 246-50w
Standard spending assessments 494w

Departmental reorganisation
300w
Dept of Trade & Industry 300w

Departmental responsibilities
Electricity supply industry 3w
Inner city areas 191-2w

Deportation
750w
Al-Fayed, Mohammed 743w

Deposited papers
Speaker's rulings & statements (12:03:90) 26-8

Deprivation indicators
623w
Family doctors 366w, 438w

Dept of Education & Science
Advertising 32-3w
Audit 521w
Civil service manpower 706-8w
Management consultants 33w
Privatisation 32w
Public relations 31w
Publicity 419w
Statistics 31-2w

Dept of Employment
142
Advertising 131-2w
Audit 580w
Civil service manpower 216w
Management consultants 259w
Privatisation 259w
Public relations 133w, 218w
Publicity 504w
Statistics 216-8w

Dept of Energy
630w, 632w
Advertising 5-6w
Civil service manpower 630-1w
Management consultants 5w
Privatisation 3w
Public relations 3-4w, 23w
Publicity 631w
Statistics 4w

Dept of Health
427w
Advertising 183w
Civil service manpower 568w
Economic regions 568w
Management consultants 57w, 570w
NHS Income Generation Unit 387w
Public relations 55w
Publicity 728w
Statistics 53-4w

Dept of Health & Social Security
Publicity 739w

Dept of Social Security
73w
Advertising 71-2w

Dept of Social Security—continued
Civil service manpower 640-2w
Computers in government departments 455w
Management consultants 72-3w
Privatisation 71w
Public relations 69-71w
Publicity 739w
Statistics 72w

Dept of the Environment
Advertising 191w
Architects 1112
Cash limits 104w, 714w
Civil service manpower 709-10w
Empty property 189w
Kleinwort Benson 104w
Management consultants 103w
Privatisation 102w
Public relations 101-2w, 191w
Public sector housing 395w
Statistics 101w

Dept of Trade & Industry
172w, 300w, 613w
Advertising 173-4w
Advisory bodies 402w
Departmental reorganisation 300w
Expenditure 296w
Inner cities initiative 44-5w
Management consultants 173w
Privatisation 172-3w
Public relations 171-2w
Publicity 613-4w
Statistics 305-6w

Dept of Trade inquiries
Accountants 431w
BOM Holdings 431w
House of Fraser 587-91w
Ministerial powers 589w
Publishing 431w
Sound Diffusion 43w

Dept of Transport
Advertising 151w
Civil service manpower 539w, 649w
Housing tenure 537w
Kleinwort Benson 152w
Management consultants 310w
Privatisation 150-2w
Public relations 150w
Public sector housing 233w
Publicity 689-90w
Statistics 128w

Derbyshire
Mental health services 183w

Deregulation reviews
467-8

Derelict land
Land reclamation 681w
Privatisation 669w
Public sector 669w

Derelict land grants
681w
Vacant land 1108
Yorkshire & Humberside 669w

DES
see Dept of Education & Science

Developing countries
Debts 9w
EC aid 531-2w

"Developing Services for Disabled People"
365w

Development aid
61w
Uganda 64w
Vietnam 17-20

Development Board for Rural Wales
245w, 616w

Devlin, Mr Tim
Debates etc.
Arts finance (13:03:90) 164
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 374

***Devlin, Mr Tim**—continued*
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Allocation of time motion & Rep (14:03:90) 602-3
Republic of Ireland, Extradition (13:03:90) 171
Tees & Hartlepool Port Authority Bill, 2R (15:03:90) 740, 742, 746, 750, 753-7, 759, 765
Questions
Arts, Ministers' domestic visits 515w
Derelict land, Public sector 669w
Hospital waiting lists, Northern region 557w
Kirkham Prison, Prisoners 360w
Land ownership & tenure, Foreign investment in UK 397w
Unemployment, Young people 204w

Devon
Local education authorities 323w
Local government finance 487-8w
Special education 225w

Devon & Cornwall Police
Manpower 755w

Devon County Council
Food hygiene 325w

Dewar, Mr Donald
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990, Points of Order (20:03:90) 1027
Rate support Grant (Scotland) Order 1990 (19:03:90) 977-9
Questions
Widows, Housing benefits 743w

Dewe Rogerson
Electricity supply industry 5w

Dewsbury Health Authority
Ambulance services 367w

Dial-a-ride
Greater London 124w

Dickens, Mr Geoffrey
Debates etc.
Northern Ireland (Emergency & Prevention of Terrorism Provisions) (Continuance) Order 1990 (12:03:90) 44
Public transport (23:03:90) 1349, 1351, 1378, 1388-90
Republic of Ireland, Extradition (14:03:90) 487
Questions
Balance of trade, Industry 661
Bombings, Birmingham 1227
Eastern Europe, Democracy 792-3w
Industry, Exports 470
Mental health services, Health services finance 559-60w
Nurses, Pay 1003
Unofficial strikes, Lost working days 142-3

Diesel vehicles
Air pollution control 690-1w

"Dietary Sugars & Human Disease"
468-9w

Diminished responsibility
Sentencing 633w

Diphtheria
177-8w

Diplomatic relations
Iraq (15:03:90) 667-71

DIR76/160/EEC
313w

Director of Public Prosecutions
13-5, 88-9w

Directors
Disqualifications 429-30w
House of Fraser 591w
National Engineering Laboratory 44w

Disability employment credit
Disabled workers 67w
Personal savings 67w

***Disability employment credit**—continued*
Working hours 67w

Disabled facilities grants
Lifts 395w

Disabled Persons (Employment) Act 1944
Questions
252w

Disabled Persons (Services Consultation & Representation) Act 1986
Questions
363-5w, 565-7w
Ministerial responsibility 567w
Voluntary organisations 182w

Disabled workers
210w
Disability employment credit 67w
Easington District Council 342w
Employment 146
Employment services 142
Expenditure 142
Government departments 235w
Handicap benefits 67w
Labour market 135w
Survey techniques 135w
Training 147
Working hours 134-5w

Disaster relief
Ethiopia 63-4w

Disciplinary proceedings
Dentists 280w
Hospital doctors 280w
Scottish Conveyancing & Confirmation Practitioners Board 110w

Disclosure of information
Company accounts 586w
Company investigations 588-9w
Conveyancing 109w, 111w
Health & Safety Executive 218w, 504w
Lonrho 431w
Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food 800w
Motor vehicle registration 456w
Radiation hazards 712w

Disease control
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy 326w
Prisons 1223
Rabies 241w

Disley bypass
Road construction 533w

Disposable syringes
Drug abuse 474w
Health hazards 765w
Hepatitis 474w, 765w

Disqualifications
Directors 429-30w

District health authorities
Debts 560w
Expenditure 180w
Performance related pay 348-9w
Public appointments 477w
Storms 282w
Wales 348-9w, 772-3w

DLA
see Dental Laboratories Association

Dobson, Mr Frank
Questions
Advertising, Cabinet Office 41w
Advertising, Central Office of Information 167-8w
Advertising, Dept of Education & Science 32-3w
Advertising, Dept of Employment 131-2w
Advertising, Dept of Energy 5-6w
Advertising, Dept of Health 183w
Advertising, Dept of Social Security 71-2w
Advertising, Dept of the Environment 191w
Advertising, Dept of Trade & Industry 173-4w

***Dobson, Mr Frank**—continued*
Advertising, Dept of Transport 151w
Advertising, Foreign & Commonwealth Office 37w
Advertising, Home Office 23-4w
Advertising, Lord Chancellor 90w
Advertising, Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food 83-4w
Advertising, Ministry of Defence 51w
Advertising, Office of Arts & Libraries 9w
Advertising, Office of Population Censuses & Surveys 56w
Advertising, Prime Minister 41w
Advertising, Privy Council 47-8w
Advertising, Scottish Office 113-4w
Advertising, Training Agency 134w
Advertising, Treasury 276-7w
Advertising, Welsh Office 14-6w
Bankside power station, Archaeological sites 494w
Bankside power station, Land values 319w, 400w
Bankside power station, Listed buildings 494w
Bankside power station, Nuclear Electric 400w
British Gas, Privatisation 142-4w, 691w
Carbon dioxide, Air pollution 493w
Central Electricity Generating Board, Property transfer 318-9w
Covent Garden, Archaeological sites 494-5w
Dept of Trade & Industry, Advisory bodies 402w
Domestic electrical appliances, Harmonisation of standards 401w
Drax power station, Flue gas desulphurisation 317-8w
Electricity supply industry, Privatisation 5-6w
Energy consumption, Coal consumption 319-20w
Energy consumption, Nuclear power 320w
Management consultants, Cabinet Office 41-2w
Management consultants, Central Office of Information 168w
Management consultants, Dept of Education & Science 33w
Management consultants, Dept of Employment 259w
Management consultants, Dept of Energy 5w
Management consultants, Dept of Health 57w
Management consultants, Dept of Social Security 72-3w
Management consultants, Dept of the Environment 103w
Management consultants, Dept of Trade & Industry 173w
Management consultants, Dept of Transport 310w
Management consultants, Foreign & Commonwealth Office 35-6w
Management consultants, Home Office 360w
Management consultants, Lord Chancellor 91w
Management consultants, Metropolitan Police 24w
Management consultants, Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food 86-7w
Management consultants, Ministry of Defence 51w
Management consultants, Office of Arts & Libraries 9w
Management consultants, Office of Population Censuses & Surveys 57w
Management consultants, Prime Minister 42w
Management consultants, Privy Council 48w
Management consultants, Scottish Office 114w
Management consultants, Training Agency 134w
Management consultants, Treasury 277w
Management consultants, Welsh Office 15w

Dobson, Mr Frank*—*continued
Nuclear Electric, Treasury statements of guarantee 400w
Privatisation, Cabinet Office 42w
Privatisation, Central Office of Information 167w
Privatisation, Dept of Education & Science 32w
Privatisation, Dept of Employment 259w
Privatisation, Dept of Energy 3w
Privatisation, Dept of Social Security 71w
Privatisation, Dept of the Environment 102w
Privatisation, Dept of Trade & Industry 172-3w
Privatisation, Dept of Transport 150-2w
Privatisation, Foreign & Commonwealth Office 37w
Privatisation, Home Office 360w
Privatisation, Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food 83w
Privatisation, Ministry of Defence 51w
Privatisation, Northern Ireland Office 514w
Privatisation, Office of Arts & Libraries 8w
Privatisation, Prime Minister 42w
Privatisation, Scottish Office 113w
Privatisation, Training Agency 133-4w
Privatisation, Treasury 10-1w
Privatisation, Water supply industry 185-6w
Privatisation, Welsh Office 14w
Public relations, Cabinet Office 39-40w
Public relations, Central Office of Information 166w
Public relations, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster 47w
Public relations, Dept of Education & Science 31w
Public relations, Dept of Employment 133w, 218w
Public relations, Dept of Energy 3-4w, 23w
Public relations, Dept of Health 55w
Public relations, Dept of Social Security 69-71w
Public relations, Dept of the Environment 101-2w, 191w
Public relations, Dept of Trade & Industry 171-2w
Public relations, Dept of Transport 150w
Public relations, Foreign & Commonwealth Office 36-8w
Public relations, Lord Chancellor 89-90w
Public relations, Metropolitan Police 23w
Public relations, Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food 82-3w
Public relations, Ministry of Defence 50w
Public relations, Office of Arts & Libraries 7-8w
Public relations, Office of Population Censuses & Surveys 55-6w
Public relations, Prime Minister 39-40w
Public relations, Privy Council 47-8w
Public relations, Scottish Office 112-3w
Public relations, Training Agency 132-3w, 218w
Public relations, Treasury 166w, 276w
Public relations, Welsh Office 13-4w
Statistics, Cabinet Office 40-1w
Statistics, Central Office of Information 165w
Statistics, Dept of Education & Science 31-2w
Statistics, Dept of Employment 216-8w
Statistics, Dept of Energy 4w
Statistics, Dept of Health 53-4w
Statistics, Dept of Social Security 72w
Statistics, Dept of the Environment 101w
Statistics, Dept of Trade & Industry 305-6w
Statistics, Dept of Transport 128w
Statistics, Foreign & Commonwealth Office 36w
Statistics, Home Office 22-3w
Statistics, Lord Chancellor 89w
Statistics, Metropolitan Police 22w
Statistics, Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food 83w
Statistics, Ministry of Defence 49-50w

Dobson, Mr Frank*—*continued
Statistics, Office of Arts & Libraries 7w
Statistics, Office of Population Censuses & Surveys 54-6w
Statistics, Prime Minister 40w
Statistics, Privy Council 47-8w
Statistics, Scottish Office 112w
Statistics, Training Agency 216-8w
Statistics, Treasury 165-6w
Statistics, Welsh Office 14w

Water supply industry, Consultants 714-5w 129w

Docks & Harbours (Rateable Values) (Scotland) Order 1990
Debates etc.
(12:03:90) 29

Documents
Companies Act 1989 316w

DOE
see Dept of the Environment

Dogs
Blood sports 282w
Liability for animals 750w
Pet foods 800w
Public petitions (21:03:90) 1210

Domestic electrical appliances
Harmonisation of standards 401w
Safety standards 401w

Domestic rates
Bournemouth Borough Council 478w
Community charge 666w
Local government expenditure 478-9w
Local government revenue 666w
Scotland 404w

Domestic violence
Criminal statistics 748-9w
Metropolitan Police 459w, 749w
West Midlands Police 748w

Domestic wastes
Recycling 190w, 479

Doran, Mr Frank
Questions
Child benefit 334w
Dept of Trade & Industry, Expenditure 296w
Offshore accidents, Death 632w, 777-8w
Offshore safety, Civil servants 631w
Offshore safety, Civil service manpower 631-2w

Dorset
Coastal protection 656w

Dorset County Council
184-5w
Local government finance 478w

Douglas, Mr Dick
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990 (21:03:90) 1139
Budget March 1990, Industry (22:03:90) 1253
Budget March 1990, Points of Order (20:03:90) 1028
Questions
Business statements 1247-8
Community charge, Non-payment 1009
Local government revenue, Scotland 778-84w

Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James*, *Under-Secretary of State for Scotland
Debates etc.
Rate support Grant (Scotland) Order 1990 (19:03:90) 976-7, 981-2
Questions
Admissibility of evidence, Scottish courts 580w
Airports, Scotland 581w
Alcoholic drinks, Young people 351w
Audit, Lord Advocate 582w
Caledonian MacBrayne, Public appointments 114-5w

Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James*—*continued
Capital investment, Glasgow District Council 702w
Capital investment, Scottish councils 702w
Civil engineering, Contracts for services 704w
Community charge, Scottish councils 702-3w
Conveyancing, Codes of practice 109w
Conveyancing, Disclosure of information 109w, 111w
Conveyancing, Fees & charges 111w
Conveyancing, Law reform 112w
Conveyancing, Legal aid scheme 111w
Conveyancing, Professional misconduct 109w
Conveyancing, Professional qualifications 110w
Conveyancing, Scotland 108w, 110w
Council housing, Cumbernauld & Kilsyth District Council 115w
Education, Local government expenditure 585w
Fish Farming Advisory Committee, Scotland 580-1w
Food hygiene, Bakery products 353w
Government grants to local authorities, Glasgow District Council 585w
Government grants to local authorities, Scotland 414w
Homelessness, Scotland 259-60w
House renovation grants, Cumbernauld & Kilsyth District Council 115w
Housing construction, Scotland 582w
Legal profession, Scotland 110-1w
Local government borrowing, Scotland 585w
Local government revenue, Glasgow District Council 701-2w
Local government revenue, Scotland 778-84w
Local income tax, Local government revenue 702w
Local income tax, Scotland 581-2w
Loch Lomond, National parks 157w
Nature conservation, Scotland 647-8w
Offshore accidents, Death 777-8w
Phoenix House Trust, Drug rehabilitation centre 704w
Prestwick Airport, Roads 581w
Red Deer Commission, Finance 158w
Scottish Agricultural College, Public appointments 351w
Scottish Conveyancing & Confirmation Practitioners Board, Buildings 111w
Scottish Conveyancing & Confirmation Practitioners Board, Disciplinary proceedings 110w
Scottish Conveyancing & Confirmation Practitioners Board, Finance 108w, 110w
Scottish Conveyancing & Confirmation Practitioners Board, Fines 110w
Scottish Conveyancing & Confirmation Practitioners Board, Income 108w
Scottish Conveyancing & Confirmation Practitioners Board, Manpower 107-8w
Scottish Conveyancing & Confirmation Practitioners Board, Pay 110w
Scottish Conveyancing & Confirmation Practitioners Board, Public appointments 107-8w
Scottish Conveyancing & Confirmation Practitioners Board, Solicitors 108w
Sewage, Waste disposal 116w
Solicitors, Scotland 109w
Warrant sales, Scotland 157w
Western Scottish Omnibuses, Buy outs 582-3w
White fronted geese, Islay 116w

Dounreay
Leukaemia 108w

Down
Roads 437w

Downe Hospital
Anaesthetics 311w

Downing Street
Property Services Agency 598w

DPP
see Director of Public Prosecutions

Drax power station
Flue gas desulphurisation 317-8w

Drift nets
447w

Driver & Vehicle Licensing Centre
456w

Driving instruction
535-6w
EC countries 536w
Road accidents 535w

Drug abuse
Benzodiazepines 731-2w
Disposable syringes 474w
Educational finance 629w
Health education 636w, 870
Hepatitis 474w
International conferences 746-7w
Medical treatments 725w
Neighbourhood watch schemes 637w
Prison medical services 796w
Prisons 512w
Probation 795w
Publicity 732w

Drug crimes
Customs & Excise 758w
Police 795w
Proceeds of crime 747w

Drug rehabilitation centre
Government grants 704w
Phoenix House Trust 704w

Drug seizures
687w, 750w
Crack 752w

Drug treatment centres
725w

Drugs
Abortion 180w, 541w
Animal feed 194w
Licensing 367w

DTI
see Dept of Trade & Industry

DTP
see Dept of Transport

Dual carriageways
A2 151w
A303 126w

Duffy, Mr A E P
Questions
Confederation of British Industry, Interest rates 658-9
Employment opportunities, Sheffield 204w
Extradition, Republic of Ireland 483
Hospital closures, Sheffield Health Authority 554w
Unemployment, Northern region 139

Dumfries
Transport of radioactive materials 525w, 777w

Dumping
Construction materials 429w
Eastern Europe 429w

Dunn, Mr Bob
Questions
Business statements 1242-3
Crime victims, Compensation 753w
Middle schools 522w
Take-home pay, Married men 371w

Dunnachie, Mr Jimmy
Questions
Dept of Trade & Industry, Expenditure 296w
Railway Inspectorate, Relocation of employees 146w
Residential care, Elderly 541w

Dunnachie, Mr Jimmy—continued
Teletext, Commercial television 757-8w
Uniform business rate, Sports facilities 484w

Dunwoody, Mrs Gwyneth
Debates etc.
Public transport (23:03:90) 1351, 1358, 1364, 1386-8
Questions
Dept of Trade & Industry, Expenditure 296w
Robert Jones & Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital 177w
Robert Jones & Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital, Hospital patients 177w

Duration of unemployment
Northern Ireland 227-8w

Durham County Council
478-9w

DVLC
see Driver & Vehicle Licensing Centre

Dykes, Mr Hugh
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990, Industry (22:03:90) 1256
Public transport (23:03:90) 1348, 1351, 1357
Questions
Balance of trade 291w
Houses, Demolition 103-4w
Kenya, Ministers' visits abroad 61w
NHS hospital trusts 545w
Police, Pay settlements 356w
Public transport, Metropolitan line 11
Town & country planning, Urban areas 673w
Training, EC countries 206w
Special education 29w

Eadie, Mr Alexander
Debates etc.
Business statements (13:03:90) 448
Questions
Dept of Trade & Industry, Expenditure 296w

EAGGF
see European Agricultural Guidance & Guarantee Fund

Ealing
School administration 144w

Early day motions
Speaker's rulings & statements (15:03:90) 679

Early retirement
Teachers 517w
Teachers' pensions 417w

Earned income
Tax rates & bands 421-4w

Earnings limits
National insurance contributions 154w

Easington District Council
Disabled workers 342w

East Germany
Balance of trade 291w
EC external relations 759w
EC grants & loans 759-60w
Investment 694w
Joint ventures 767-8w
Overseas trade 767w
Privatisation 767w
Property law 408w
Shipbuilding 301w

East London
Road traffic control 533w

East London river crossing
Construction 537w
Costs 537w
Housing 537w

East London river crossing—continued
Public inquiries 537w

East Midlands
Manufacturing industries 651
RECHAR 301w

Eastern Europe
Democracy 792-3w
Dumping 429w
Environment protection 713w
Export credit guarantees 768w
Food aid from EC 531-2w
National security 608w
Overseas aid 59w
Privatisation 526w
Unofficial strikes 143

Eastern Health & Social Services Board
311w, 512w

Eastham, Mr Ken
Questions
Architecture 1112-3
Employment training, Greater Manchester 210w
Local government expenditure, Educational finance 670w
Regional aid 293w
Tourist industry, Government grants 140

EC action
Alternative medicine 180-1w
Biotechnology 573w
Genetically modified organisms 494w
Handicapped 153-4w
Languages education 417-8w
Pesticides 75w
Poultry meat 799-800w
Racial Discrimination 796w
Railway transport 532-3w
Transport infrastructure 532-3w
Water pollution 313w

EC aid
Developing countries 531-2w

EC budget contributions
411-2w, 687-8w

EC Commission
see European Commission

EC countries
Corporation tax 161-2w, 375w
Driving instruction 536w
Employment 214w
Green pound 194w
Immigration controls 458w
Inflation 272w, 371w
Narcotics 687w
National income 372-3w
Retirement pensions 643-4w
River pollution 670w, 675w
Road tolls 540w
Training 206w
Urban transport 128w

EC external relations
East Germany 759w

EC external trade
Trade barriers 471-2

EC Finance Council
274-5w
Economic & monetary union 376w

EC free food scheme
446w

EC grants & loans
Cheshire Business & Innovation Centre 463
East Germany 759-60w
Integrated development operations 349w
Rural areas 583w, 592w
Scotland 583w

EC Industry Council
301-2w, 402w, 476-7

EC institutions
Balance of payments 610w

EC Internal Market Council
294w

EC internal trade
693w
Cars 328w
Engineering industries 464
European Council 38w
Inner city areas 44w
Norfolk 464
Procurement 299w

EC law
Business travel 170-1w
Fishing gear 448w
Health & Safety Executive 212w
Land acquisition 593w
Planning permission 393w
Smoke & chimney gases 317-8w
Transport of hazardous materials 600-1w
Water treatment 314-5w

EC social charter
129w
Employment opportunities 139
European Commission 661-2

EC transport policy
Air routes 123w

ECGD
see Export Credits Guarantee Department

ECOFIN
see EC Finance Council

Economic & monetary union
376w
EC Finance Council 376w

Economic growth
371w
North East region 1008

Economic policy
Inflation 652
Labour Party 474-5
Scotland 1010

Economic regions
Dept of Health 568w
Employment 204-6w
Labour market 363w
Mortgages 164w
Public expenditure 410w
Tax yields 410w

Economic sanctions
South Africa 156w, 329w
Textile industry 480

Economic situation
Budget March 1990 (21:03:90) 1125-208
Germany 609w
USSR 615w
West Germany 609w

Education
Local government expenditure 585w

Education support grants
517-8w, 707w

Educational aid
West Africa 381-3w

Educational buildings
Scotland 454w

Educational finance
Buckinghamshire County Council 143-4w
City colleges for the technology of the arts 381-2w
City technology colleges 381-2w
Drug abuse 629w
Gypsies 321-3w
Local education authorities 418w
Local government expenditure 669-70w
Open University 219w
Portage 707w
School administration 26w
Scotland 353w, 585w
Welsh language 518-9w

Educational needs
Gypsies 321w

Educational policy
Northumberland 628w

Educational qualifications
Inner London boroughs 627-8w
Youth training scheme 209w

Educational standards
English education 625w
Staffordshire 663-4

***Eggar, Mr Tim**, Minister of State, Department of Employment*
Questions
Action for Jobs, Central Office of Information 506w
Action for Jobs, Publicity 136w
Advertising, Dept of Employment 131-2w
Advertising, Training Agency 134w
Astra Training Services, Civil servants 579w
Audit, Dept of Employment 580w
Dept of Employment, Civil service manpower 216w
Disabled workers 210w
Disabled workers, Employment 146
Disabled workers, Employment services 142
Disabled workers, Labour market 135w
Disabled workers, Survey techniques 135w
Disabled workers, Training 147
Disabled workers, Working hours 134-5w
EC social charter 129w
Employment opportunities, Local authorities 213w
Employment opportunities, National Garden Festival 1990 251-2w
Employment schemes, Expenditure 783w
Engineers, Recruitment 149
European business information centres, Finance 207w
Health & Safety Executive, EC law 212w
House of Commons staff, Industrial relations 343w
Job interview guarantee scheme, Take-up of employment 215w
Jobclubs 208w
Jobclubs, Stretford 501w
Management consultants, Dept of Employment 259w
National Institute of Economic & Social Research, Vocational training 210w
New businesses, Yorkshire & Humberside 766-7w
Privatisation, Dept of Employment 259w
Privatisation, Training Agency 133-4w
Public relations, Dept of Employment 133w, 218w
Public relations, Training Agency 132-3w, 218w
Publicity, Dept of Employment 504w
Quota of disabled workers 210-1w, 607w
Quota of disabled workers, Prosecutions 252w
Quota of disabled workers, Public sector 252w
Restart programme, Interviews 213w
Self-employed, Manpower 207-8w
Sheltered employment 135w
Skillcentres, Handicapped 134w
Skills Training Agency, Deloitte Haskins & Sells 575w
Skills Training Agency, Privatisation 216w, 575w, 579w
Small businesses 214w
Training & enterprise councils 208w, 575w
Training & enterprise councils, Government grants 497-9w
Training & enterprise councils, Public appointments 575w
Unemployment, Cornwall 147
Unemployment, Wales 137-8
Unemployment, Worcester 137
Unemployment benefits, Availability for work 131-2w
Unemployment benefits, Social security abuse 212w, 343w
Work permits, Teachers 209w

Eggs
Compensation 81w
Food poisoning 467w
Imports 243-4w

***Eggs**—continued*
Production 243-4w
Salmonella 77-8w, 82w, 193-4w, 281-2w

EIB
see European Investment Bank

Elderly
Budgeting 556w
Bus services 383w
Concessionary fares 383w
Handicapped 66w
Prescription drugs 367w
Residential care 541w
Screening 570-1w

Election expenditure
General elections (13:03:90) 173-5

Electoral register
Expenditure 354w

Electricity Act 1989
Questions
National Grid Company 632w

Electricity disconnections
South Down 436w
Storms 436w

Electricity supply industry
Consultants 5-6w
Departmental responsibilities 3w
Dewe Rogerson 5w
Kleinwort Benson 6w
Northern Ireland 139-40w
Privatisation 5-6w, 691-2w
Scotland 705-6w

Electricity tariffs
691-2w
Northern Ireland 139-40w

Electromagnetic interference
Safety measures 266w
USSR 266w

Electronic equipment
Balance of trade 303w
Exhaust emission controls 539w

Electronic surveillance
Offenders 633w, 797-8w

Electronics industry
Japan 475
Skill shortages 303w

Elephants
Nature conservation 64w

Emergency planning
Expenditure 137w

Emery, Sir Peter
Debates etc.
Business statements (15:03:90) 682
Questions
A303, Dual carriageways 126w
Eggs, Production 243-4w
Local government expenditure, Non-metropolitan counties 657-8w
Patients, Medical treatments 547-8w
Poultry, Salmonella 243w
Rate support grants, Non-metropolitan counties 656-7w
Salmonella, Eggs 281-2w

Employers' contributions
Fraud 154-5w

Employment
139, 203w, 258w, 732w
Disabled workers 146
EC countries 214w
Economic regions 204-6w
Lancashire 500w
Private sector 205w
Tourist industry 140
Vietnam 407w
West Midlands 204w

Employment Bill 1989/90
Questions
Unofficial strikes 142-3

Employment discrimination
Age 213w

Employment level
Nuclear weapons 638-9w
Wages councils 257w

Employment of Children Act 1973
Questions
368w

Employment opportunities
EC social charter 139
Inverclyde enterprise zone 353-4w
Local authorities 213w
National Garden Festival 1990 251-2w
Newtownabbey 436w
Part-time employment 205w
Sheffield 204w
Training 207w
Tyne & Wear Development Corporation 696-7w

Employment protection
213w

Employment schemes
Expenditure 783w

Employment Select Committee
(21:03:90) 1206

Employment Service
249-51w

Employment services
Disabled workers 142

Employment training
129w, 209-10w, 249-51w, 304w, 336-42w, 414w, 783w
Costs 207w
Greater Manchester 210w
Offshore drilling 134w
Offshore workers 342-3w
Peterlee 415w, 500w
Training agents 498w
Training managers 498w
Yorkshire & Humberside 210w

Empty housing
Greater Manchester 137-8w, 233w
Kirklees District Council 678w

Empty property
Dept of the Environment 189w

Energy conservation
Broadcasting 6w
Building alterations 267w
Hospitals 476w
Housing construction 267w

Energy consumption
Coal consumption 319-20w
Nuclear power 320w

Energy prices
Retail price index 370w

Energy research
Alternative energy 318w

Engineering Council
149

Engineering industries
EC internal trade 464
Skilled workers 619-20w
South Wales 619-20w

Engineers
Manpower 607w
Recruitment 149

English education
Educational standards 625w
Primary education 625w

English Heritage
see Historic Buildings & Monuments Commission for England

"English House Condition Survey, 1986"
183w

English language
Chile 16
Prisoners 138-9w
South America 16

English Tourist Board
414w

Enterprise initiative
44w, 169w
Companies 306-8w

Enterprise training
Ogmore 607w

Enterprise zones
Sunderland 697w

Entertainment licensing
Pop festivals 138w

Entertainments (Increased Penalties) Bill 1989/90
Questions
Acid house 754w

Entitlement to Employment & Training Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
Order for resuming adjourned 2R read (16:03:90) 860

Environment
White papers 674w

Environment protection
155w
Areas of outstanding natural beauty 676w
Competition 313w
Eastern Europe 713w
Environmental policy 678w
Genetically modified organisms 493w
Housing construction 667w
Labelling 1113-4
Road construction 309w
Roads 125-6w
UK companies abroad 400-1w

Environment Protection Bill (HL) 1989/90
Questions
311w

Environment Select Committee
1103

Environmental health
RAF Fylingdales 720w
Veterinary investigation service 76w

Environmental impact assessment
7w, 142w, 656w, 720w
Acid rain 677w
Tidal power 492w

Environmental policy
Environment protection 678w

Environmentally sensitive areas
Civil service manpower 572-3w
Expenditure 572w

Equal opportunities
Child care 706w
Northern Ireland Dept of Health & Social Services 512w
Northern Ireland Office 226w, 513-4w, 624w

ERDF
see European Regional Development Fund

Essex
Transport policy 7

Essex County Council
540w

Estate Action
Liverpool 600w

Estate agents
Office of Fair Trading 765-6w

Eston
64-5w

Estonia
1009-10

Ethics
Genetically modified organisms 685-6w

Ethiopia
Disaster relief 63-4w
Food aid 17, 63w

Ethnic minorities
Accountants 430w
Government grants to local authorities 282-4w
Prison population 354-6w, 798w
Special constables 746-7w, 1221

Europe
Aerospace industry 302w

European Agricultural Guidance & Guarantee Fund
531-2w

European Bank for Reconstruction & Development
see European Development Bank

European business information centres
Finance 207w

European City of Culture
Glasgow 585w

European Commission
192-3w, 195w, 278w, 291w, 294w, 301w, 349w, 592-3w
EC social charter 661-2
North East Shipbuilders 698w
Slaughterhouses 736w

European communities
Members 440w

European Convention on Human Rights
460w

European Council
EC internal trade 38w
Germany 328w

European currency unit
Floating debt 688w

European Development Bank
380w, 650
Capital investment 526w

European fighter aircraft
Expenditure 433-4w

European Investment Bank
Attendance 160-1w
Channel tunnel 160w, 527w
Exchange risk guarantee scheme 409w
Loans 161w, 527-8w
Public appointments 160-1w

European monetary system
376w, 609-10w
Exchange rates 155w, 369-70w, 650
Inflation 369-70w
Interest rates 659
West Germany 369w

European Regional Development Fund
349w, 592w

Eurotunnel
527w

Evans, Mr David
Questions
Aerospace industry, Government grants 467
Community charge 1010
Councillors' attendance allowances 676w
Deportation 750w
North West Thames Regional Health Authority, Career structure 559w
Road tax, Tax evasion 121w
Small businesses 214w

Evans, Mr John
Questions
Armed forces civilians, Radiation hazards 333w
Atomic Weapons Research Establishment, Administrative costs 638w

Evans, Mr John—continued
Balance of trade, Manufactured goods 378w
Chevaline warheads 524w
Insider trading, Company investigations 169-70w
Local government expenditure, Standard spending assessments 664-5w
Mersey Regional Health Authority, Finance 571w
Nuclear submarines, Radiation hazards 333-4w
Nuclear weapons, Employment level 638-9w
Nuclear weapons, Transport of radioactive materials 524w
Offenders, Electronic surveillance 633w
Submarines, Costs 638w

Evennett, Mr David
Questions
Central Transport Consultative Committee 496w
Metropolitan Police, Recruitment 752w
Network SouthEast, Railway travel 496w
NHS, Information technology 559w

Everyman Theatre Liverpool
420w

Evidence
Company investigations 587w, 589w
Office of Fair Trading 588w

Ewing, Mr Harry
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990, Points of Order (20:03:90) 1030
Business statements (13:03:90) 454, (15:03:90) 676
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 294, 297-300, 303
Rate support Grant (Scotland) Order 1990 (19:03:90) 980-1
Questions
Non-departmental public bodies 515w
Post Office, Upper Waiting Hall 766w
VAT 371w

Ewing, Mrs Margaret
Debates etc.
Community charge, Scotland (22:03:90) 1250
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 190, 278-80
Questions
Conveyancing, Codes of practice 109w
Conveyancing, Disclosure of information 109w, 111w
Conveyancing, Fees & charges 111w
Conveyancing, Law reform 112w
Conveyancing, Legal aid scheme 111w
Conveyancing, Professional misconduct 109w
Conveyancing, Professional qualifications 110w
Conveyancing, Scotland 108w, 110w
Disabled workers, Employment 146
Family doctors, Budgeting 582w
Legal profession, Scotland 110-1w
Multiply handicapped, Social services 352w
Multiply handicapped, Special education 352w
Scottish Conveyancing & Confirmation Practitioners Board, Buildings 111w
Scottish Conveyancing & Confirmation Practitioners Board, Disciplinary proceedings 110w
Scottish Conveyancing & Confirmation Practitioners Board, Finance 108w, 110w
Scottish Conveyancing & Confirmation Practitioners Board, Fines 110w
Scottish Conveyancing & Confirmation Practitioners Board, Income 108w
Scottish Conveyancing & Confirmation Practitioners Board, Manpower 107-8w
Scottish Conveyancing & Confirmation Practitioners Board, Pay 110w
Scottish Conveyancing & Confirmation

Ewing, Mrs Margaret—continued
Practitioners Board, Public appointments 107-8w
Scottish Conveyancing & Confirmation Practitioners Board, Solicitors 108w
Solicitors, Scotland 109w

Ex gratia payments
Community charge benefits 1232-3

Examination boards
33w

Exchange control
374w

Exchange cover scheme
409w

Exchange rates
European monetary system 155w, 369-70w, 650
Small businesses 270w
Tourist industry 141

Exchange risk guarantee scheme
European Investment Bank 409w

Exercise Northaxe 2/90
332-3w
Aircraft 332w
Military aircraft 332w
Warships 332w

Exhaust emission controls
Electronic equipment 539w
Motor vehicle testing 649w

Exhibitions
Alternative energy 691w

Exmouth Docks Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
2R order read (15:03:90) 649, (22:03:90) 1219

Experimental farms
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy 78w

Export credit guarantees
Eastern Europe 768w

Export Credits Guarantee Department
473
Privatisation 477-8

Export licensing
Art works 235w, 317w
Slaughterhouses 736-7w

Export of live animals
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy 326w
Horses 242w, 734w

Export promotion
British Overseas Trade Board 297-8w
West Germany 478

Exports
698-9w
Furs 303w
Government assistance 290w
Imports 375w
Industry 470
Japan 296w

Express Newspapers
728w

Exservicemen
Community charge 663w

External financial reporting
431-2w

Extradition
Republic of Ireland 481-6, 622w

Eye disorders
Expenditure 119w
Hospital waiting lists 468w

Eye tests
NHS charges (21:03:90) 1209
Public petitions (21:03:90) 1209

Eye tests—continued
Scotland 119w

FAC
see Food Advisory Committee

Factories
Strathclyde 119w

Factory closures
British Shipbuilders 697w
North East Shipbuilders 697-8w

Factory Inspectorate
Manpower 147

Fair Employment Commission for Northern Ireland
512w
Public appointments 622w
Religion 622w

Fair Trading Act 1973
Questions
171w

Fairbairn, Sir Nicholas
Debates etc.
War Crimes Bill, 2R (19:03:90) 946, 948

Falkland Islands
Penguins 38w

Fallon, Mr Michael, an Assistant Whip
Debates etc.
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 424

Families
Homelessness 672w
Private Members' motions (16:03:90) 795-850

Family benefits
Expenditure 738-9w

Family credit
Liverpool 154w
Social security claims 642w
Take-up 154w

Family doctors
Budgeting 281w, 542w, 556w, 582w, 623-4w, 729w, 993
Child health 366w
Computer applications 554w
Contracts of employment 551w
Cornwall 549w
Deprivation indicators 366w, 438w
Lancashire 729w
Medical education 181w
Northern Ireland 438w, 623-4w
Prescription drugs 549w
Prescriptions 475w
Scotland 582w

Family income
Rates & rating 593-4w

Farmers
Industrial health & safety 130-1w

Farr, Sir John
Questions
Hospital visitor benefits, Social Fund 595w
Hospitals, Urban areas 763w
Nurses, Career structure 386w
Structure plans 183w

Faslane
Naval bases 334w

Fast food
Pay 130w

Fastcastle
Air accidents 435w

Fatchett, Mr Derek
Questions
Average earnings 343w
Child care, Social workers 553w
City technology colleges, Educational finance 381-2w

Fatchett, Mr Derek—continued
Languages education, EC action 417-8w
Leeds Development Corporation, Advertising 268w
Leeds Development Corporation, Compulsory purchase 606w
Leeds Development Corporation, Expenditure 715w
Leeds Development Corporation, Publicity 268w
Licensed teachers 33w
Physical education, Curriculum 321w
Training & enterprise councils, Public appointments 575w
Urban development corporations, Expenditure 1106

Faulds, Mr Andrew
Debates etc.
Arts finance (13:03:90) 164
Business statements (15:03:90) 675-6
Republic of Ireland, Extradition (14:03:90) 490
Questions
Business statements 1245
Iraq, Judgments 24

Favell, Mr Tony
Debates etc.
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Allocation of time motion & Rep (14:03:90) 516
Questions
Advisory services, Stockport 476

FCO
see Foreign & Commonwealth Office

FDA
see First Division Association

Fearn, Mr Ronnie
Questions
Benzodiazepines, Drug abuse 731-2w
Benzodiazepines, Prescriptions 731-2w
Bridges, Repairs & maintenance 3
Buses 656w
Council house rents, Rent increases 265w
Council tenants, Council house transfers 715w
Homelessness, Hostels 1118-20
Interest rates, Small businesses 270w
Network SouthEast, Transport subsidies 309w
Prescription charges 550w
Prescriptions, Chemists shops 731w
Road construction, Air pollution 775w
Road construction, Carbon dioxide 775-6w
Road traffic, Road construction 776w
Women 154

Federation of Highlands & Islands Fishermen
647w

Fees & charges
Conveyancing 111w
Firearms certificates 356w
Management consultants 5w, 9w, 15w, 24w, 33w, 35-6w, 41-2w, 48w, 51w, 57w, 72-3w, 86-7w, 91w, 114w, 134w, 168w, 173w, 259w, 277w, 310w, 360w
Pre-school education 996-7
Residential care 542w
Veterinary investigation service 76w

Felgate, Lorne
Special education 30w

Fenner, Dame Peggy
Questions
Agricultural land 735w
Railway transport, Noise control 533w
Shipbuilding, Trade fairs 478-9
Veterinary medicine, Licensing 572w

FEOGA
see European Agricultural Guidance & Guarantee Fund

Ferries
Scotland 515w

Fertilisers
Water pollution 269w

Field, Mr Barry
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990, Industry (22:03:90) 1299
Coastal protection (21:03:90) 1213-4, 1215
Uniform business rate, Hotels (15:03:90) 786-7
Questions
Acid rain, Research 770w
Crime prevention 754w
Eastern Europe, Overseas aid 59w
Employment discrimination, Age 213w
HMS Endurance 48w
HMS Endurance, Greenhouse effect 48w
Horticulture, Gas tariffs 195w
Mineral waters, Bacteria 86w
Mineral waters, Benzene 86w
NHS hospital trusts 546w
Pesticides, EC action 75w
Prisoners, Hepatitis 1223
Royal Parks Constabulary 1113
Rural development areas 675w
Stamp duties, Tax yields 162w
Standard spending assessments, Departmental publications 494w
Standard spending assessments, Non-metropolitan counties 494w
Transport supplementary grants, Road works 2-3

Field, Mr Frank
Debates etc.
Families (16:03:90) 811, 812, 814, 820-5, 829, 833, 838, 840
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 208-10, 218, 223, 247, 249, 251
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, 3R (15:03:90) 716-7
Questions
Cassel Hospital, Hospital closures 364w
Cassel Hospital, Self-governing hospitals 386w
Church Commissioners, Agricultural land 881
Civil service dispersal 611w
Community care, Mentally ill 1002
Hospital waiting lists, Psychiatry 386w
Income support, Birkenhead 739w
NHS, Psychiatry 462w
Nurses' training, Psychology 462w
Post Office 290w
Psychiatry, Mental health services 364w
Public sector earnings 275-6w
"Reform of Social Security Consultation Paper" 455w
Women's employment, Pay 275w

Fields, Mr Terry
Questions
Child care, Social workers 553w

Fiji
Constitutions 35w

Financial Intermediaries Managers & Brokers' Association
298w, 302w, 305w

Financial services
Accounting 696w
Financial Services Act 1986 298w
Liability 306w
Takeovers 589-91w

Financial Services Act 1986
Questions
42w, 169-70w, 306w
Financial services 298w
Investor protection 298w

Fines
Health & Safety Executive 212w
Scottish Conveyancing & Confirmation Practitioners Board 110w

Finucane, Dermot
481-2

Fire prevention
Geriatric hospitals 444w
Leisure facilities 509w

Fire resistant materials
46-7w
Cot deaths 997-8

Fire service pensions
Police pensions 510-1w

Firearms certificates
Fees & charges 356w

Firearms (Variation of Fees) Order 1990
Questions
356w

Fires
COD Donnington 58w

Fireworks
Injuries 614-6w

First Division Association
441-2w

Fish
Irish Sea 84-5w
Sea pollution 84-5w

Fish conservation
Prawns 447-8w
Shellfish 447-8w

Fish diseases
Research 242w

Fish farming
Pesticides 88w
Rivers 445w
Scotland 353w
Seals 353w
Trout 445w

Fish Farming Advisory Committee
Scotland 580-1w

Fisher, Mr Mark
Debates etc.
Arts finance (13:03:90) 156-8, 170
Coal Industry Bill, Lords amendts (15:03:90) 779-81
Questions
Arts, Budgeting 9w
Post Office 290w
Road safety, Expenditure 123w

Fisheries
Acid rain 446w
Ullapool 647w
Yorkshire & Humberside 446w

Fishery protection
North Sea 155w
Scotland 451-2w

Fishing catches
693w
Prawns 801-2w

Fishing crews
Unemployment benefits 785w

Fishing gear
EC law 448w
Prawns 448w
Scotland 448w, 452w

Fishing quotas
Irish Sea 445-6w

Fishing vessels
Immersion suits 124-5w

Flannery, Mr Martin
Debates etc.
Arts finance (13:03:90) 168
Business statements (13:03:90) 444
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 387, 394, 426, 433
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, 3R (15:03:90) 710, 720
Northern Ireland (Emergency & Prevention of Terrorism Provisions) (Continuance) Order 1990 (12:03:90) 30, 43, 45, 51
Questions

Flannery, Mr Martin—continued
Child care, Social workers 553w

Flats
Porthcawl 518w

Floating debt
European currency unit 688w

Flood control
738w
Expenditure 107w

Flood damage
243-5w

Floods
Government grants to local authorities 243-4w
North Wales 243-5w, 350w
Towyn 143w, 872-3

Flue-gas desulphurisation
Drax power station 317-8w

Flynn, Mr Paul
Questions
Acid rain, Lincolnshire 266w
Air pollution, North Sea 312w
Armed forces cadets, Iraq 772w
Armed forces training 720-1w
Asthma, Prescription charges exemptions 621-2w
Bazoft, Farzad, Trials 264w
Child care, Social workers 553w
Community charge, Newport 878-9
Community charge, Wales 344w
Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 1988 344w
Crime victims, Statistics 756w
EC Industry Council 402w
Exhaust emission controls, Electronic equipment 539w
Export credit guarantees, Eastern Europe 768w
Fish diseases, Research 242w
Germany, Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty 717w
Industrial diseases, Asbestos 502-3w
Industrial health & safety, Microelectronics industry 503w
Industrial health & safety, Scotland 503-4w
Industrial health & safety, Wales 503w
Iraq, Nuclear weapons 793w
Iraq, Trials 450w
Jordan 427w
Land pollution 490w
Languages education 625w
Lithuania, Recognition of states 449-50w
Malpas bypass, Road construction 15w
Medicinal implants, Heart pacemakers 58w
Military alliances, Nuclear power 433-4w
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty 694w
"Nuclear Safety at Electricite de France" 691w
Nuclear test ban, International conferences 450w
Nuclear weapons tests, USSR 330-1w
Overseas students, Iraq 760-1w
Pollution control, USSR 615w
Recycling, Newsprint 598w
Recycling, Tyres 681-2w
Sea pollution, North Sea 487w
Seagate Microelectronics, Hazardous materials 503-4w
State earnings related pension scheme 664-5
Tax allowances, Health insurance 10w
Technology transfer, Poland 592w
Toxic substances bulletin 344w
USSR, Nuclear weapons tests 145w
Waste disposal, Tyres 682w
Water pollution, Lake Baikal 490w
West Germany 451w

Food
Composition labelling 800w
International conferences 573w
Pesticide residues 74-5w

Food Advisory Committee
Public appointments 735w

Food aid
Ethiopia 17, 63w

Food aid from EC
Eastern Europe 531-2w

Food colourings
Cherries 327w

Food consumption
Meat 736w

Food contamination
Animal feed 242w

Food exports
Horse meat 242w
Slaughterhouses 736w

Food flavourings
Food labelling 242w

Food hygiene
Bakery products 353w
Devon County Council 325w
Microwave ovens 87w
Poultry meat 799-800w
Salmonella 78w

Food inspection
Poultry meat 325w

Food irradiation
Benzene 571w

Food labelling
Food flavourings 242w

Food packaging
Industrial health & safety 130w
Pesticides 130w

Food poisoning
368w
Eggs 467w
Salmonella 467w

Food prices
81w

Food Safety Bill (HL) 1989/90
Questions
325w
Local government expenditure 448w

Food standards
Margarine 325w
Novel food 87w
Pet foods 800w
Research 87-8w, 521w

Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Debates etc.
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Allocation of time motion & Rep (14:03:90) 510-3
Questions
Business statements 1241

Football
Hooliganism 460w, 1115-6
Public order policing 1114-5

Football Spectators Act 1989
Questions
460w

Footwear
Community care 69w

Foreign adoptions
694w

Foreign Affairs Select Committee
145w, (21:03:90) 1206

Foreign & Commonwealth Office
Advertising 37w
Audit 526w
Higher civil servants 264w
Management consultants 35-6w
Privatisation 37w
Public relations 36-8w
Publicity 716w
Statistics 36w

Foreign companies in UK
Capital movements 271-2w
Industrial investment 466

Foreign Compensation (People's Republic of China) Order 1987
Questions
449w

Foreign investment in UK
Land ownership & tenure 397w
North West region 295-6w
Public expenditure controls 663
Shipbuilding 697w

Foreign languages
324w, 625w

Foreign patients
NHS 469w
NHS reciprocal arrangements 725-7w

Foreign policy
Vietnam 18

Foreign relations
South Africa 156w

Foreign tourists
Expenditure 140, 211w
Northumberland 414w

Forest Moor
Naval bases 202-3w

Forestry
Sri Lanka 17

Forestry Commission
446w

Forgery
Postage stamps 170w

Forman, Mr Nigel
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990, Industry (22:03:90) 1278, 1281-4
Questions
HM Inspectorate of Constabulary, Annual reports 794w

***Forsyth, Mr Michael**, Under-Secretary of State for Scotland*
Debates etc.
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 180-1, 184, 186, 187, 191-6, 267, 272, 283, 285, 289, 294, 295, 300-4
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, 3R (15:03:90) 684-93, 696
Questions
Eye disorders, Expenditure 119w
Eye tests, Scotland 119w
Family doctors, Budgeting 582w
Gaelic language 584-5w
Health, Social problems 453w
Health education, Scotland 158-9w
Heart diseases, Death 118w
Heart diseases, Hospital patients 118w
Heart diseases, Medical research 261-4w
Heart diseases, Surgery 262w
Junior hospital doctors, Working hours 116w
Leukaemia, Dounreay 108w
Mental health, Research 120w
Mental health services, Scotland 117w
Mental illness, Medical research 117-8w
Mental illness, Scotland 116w
NHS, Scotland 453-4w
Post-neonatal mortality, Death rate 453w
Speech therapists, Greater Glasgow Health Board 454w
Speech therapists, Manpower 584w
Speech therapists, Vacancies 454w
Terminal care, Community care 454w
Touting, Crime 260w
Touting, Police powers 260w
Touting, Scottish Sports Council 260w
Touting, Sports 260w

Forsythe, Mr Clifford
Debates etc.
Appropriation (Northern Ireland) Order 1990 (12:03:90) 84-8

***Forth, Mr Eric**, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Industry and Consumer Affairs*
Questions
Advertising, Dept of Trade & Industry 173-4w
Advisory services, Finance 475-6
Advisory services, Stockport 476
Aircraft, Radio 592-3w
Batteries, Lead 301w
Business, Consumer Credit Act 1974 766w
Business travel, Package holidays 170-1w
Chlorinated solvents, Recycling 666-7w
Citizens' Advice Bureaux, Government grants 298w
Citizens' Advice Bureaux, Political impartiality 476
Consumer credit, Interest rates 292w
Consumer goods, Product safety 295w
Dept of Trade & Industry, Advisory bodies 402w
Dept of Trade & Industry, Expenditure 296w
Domestic electrical appliances, Harmonisation of standards 401w
Electronic equipment, Balance of trade 303w
Electronics industry, Skill shortages 303w
Exports, Japan 296w
Fireworks, Injuries 614-6w
Information technology, Skill shortages 293w
Information technology, Training 292w
Management consultants, Dept of Trade & Industry 173w
National Consumer Council, Rantzen, Esther 465-6
Office of Fair Trading, Estate agents 765-6w
Pollution control, USSR 615w
Post Office 290w
Post Office, Upper Waiting Hall 766w
Postage stamps, Forgery 170w
Privatisation, Dept of Trade & Industry 172-3w
Product liability 291w
Public relations, Dept of Trade & Industry 171-2w
Publicity, Dept of Trade & Industry 613-4w
Recycling, Domestic wastes 479
Recycling Advisory Group 291w, 479
Refrigerators, Safety standards 615w
Spirits, Measurement 777w
Statistics, Dept of Trade & Industry 305-6w
Technology transfer, Poland 592w
Trade barriers, Japan 296w
Trade fairs, Waste disposal 587w
Trading standards departments 300w
Trading standards departments, Consumer protection 464-5
Trading standards departments, Furniture industry 465
Trading standards departments, Mileometers 464-5
Trading standards departments, Petrol pumps 465
UK companies abroad, Environment protection 400-1w

Forth Ports Authority (Rateable Values) (Scotland) Order 1990
Debates etc.
(12:03:90) 29

Fossil fuel levy
428w

Fossils
Bathgate 413w

Foulkes, Mr George
Debates etc.
Business statements (13:03:90) 450
Community charge, Scotland (22:03:90) 1249-50
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 304
Private notice question intervention (22:03:90) 1244, 1245

***Foulkes, Mr George**—continued*
Questions
Airports, Scotland 581w
British Rail 122w
Business statements 1247
Lorries, Spray suppression 12
Low flying, Complaints 331w
Low flying, Military aircraft 331-2w
Prestwick Airport, Air traffic control 497w
Prestwick Airport, Air travel 497w
Prestwick Airport, Roads 581w
VAT, Pay 370w

Fowler, Rt Hon Sir Norman
Debates etc.
Families (16:03:90) 805-8

Fox hunting
Railway property 125w

Franks, Mr Cecil
Questions
Crown courts, Barrow-in-Furness 91w
Foreign tourists, Expenditure 140
Immigration appeals, Administrative delays 717w
Nurses' training 177w
Voluntary organisations, Pre-school education 562-3w

Fraser, Mr John
Debates etc.
Capital Allowances Bill (HL), 2R (12:03:90) 128
Questions
Domestic violence, Criminal statistics 749w
House of Fraser, Company investigations 14-5
Housing associations, Housing improvement 184w
School admission, Bromley 520w
South circular road 120w

Fraud
Army in Northern Ireland 602w
Audit 42w
Ballykelly 602w
Cars 464-5
Employers' contributions 154-5w
National insurance contributions 154-5w
Statistics 756w

Free school meals
School administration 709w

***Freeman, Mr Roger**, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Dept of Health*
Debates etc.
Handicapped, Clothing (16.03:90) 863-8
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 406-11
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Allocation of time motion & Rep (14:03:90) 589-91
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, 3R (15:03:90) 703-4, 724-7
Speech therapy (12:03:90) 133-6
Questions
Advertising, Office of Population Censuses & Surveys 56w
Air ambulance services, Greater London 728w
Alternative medicine, EC action 180-1w
Benzodiazepines, Drug abuse 732w
Cancer, Pontefract Health Authority 724w
Cancer, Shropshire 58w
Cancer, Social class 727w
Cancer, Statistics 620w
Cassel Hospital, Hospital closures 364w
Cochlear implants, Finance 560w
Committee on Medical Aspects of Food Policy, Dentists 468w
Committee on Medical Aspects of Food Policy, Sugar 468-9w
Community care, Mentally ill 1001-2
Community health councils 280w
Community health councils, Expenditure 555w
Cook-chill catering, Wakefield Health Authority 366w

***Freeman, Mr Roger**—continued*
Cot deaths, Fire resistant materials 997-8
Deaf, York University 763w
Dental charges 541w
Dental health 567w
Dental health, Children 468w
Dental health, Sugar 469w, 568w
Dental services, NHS 476-7w
Dentists, Overseas workers 763-4w
Dentures 477w
Departmental forms, Wakefield 367-8w
Dept of Health, Economic regions 568w
Dept of Health, Management consultants 570w
Disabled Persons (Services Consultation & Representation) Act 1986 565-7w
Disabled Persons (Services Consultation & Representation) Act 1986, Ministerial responsibility 567w
Disabled Persons (Services Consultation & Representation) Act 1986, Voluntary organisations 182w
District health authorities, Expenditure 180w
District health authorities, Storms 282w
Drug abuse, Disposable syringes 474w
Drug abuse, Medical treatments 725w
Family doctors, Computer applications 554w
Food poisoning 368w
Food poisoning, Eggs 467w
Food poisoning, Salmonella 467w
Handicapped, Local authority associations 365w
Handicapped, Special education 365w
Health hazards, Disposable syringes 765w
Health services, Contracts for services 558w
Health services, Road accidents 475w
Health services finance 558w
Health services finance, Population studies 557w
Health services finance, Supra-regional services 556w
Hepatitis 58-60w
Hepatitis, Disposable syringes 765w
Hepatitis, Health education 563w
Hepatitis, Refuse disposal 474w
Hepatitis, Vaccination 473-4w
Hospital admissions, Population projection 621w
Hospital beds, Intensive care 563w
Hospital beds, Yorkshire & Humberside 364w
Hospital catering, Per capita costs 551-2w
Hospital finance, Yorkshire & Humberside 469-72w
Hospital patients, Northern Regional Health Authority 278-80w
Hospital waiting lists, Yorkshire & Humberside 462-6w
Hospitals, Construction 562w
Hospitals, Energy conservation 476w
Hospitals, Red alerts 52w
Hospitals, Urban areas 763w
Households 723-4w
Huddersfield Health Authority, Finance 544w
Infant mortality, Western Europe 726w
Kidneys, Transplant surgery 279w
Leukaemia 60w
Malaria, Notifiable diseases 182w
Management consultants, Dept of Health 57w
Management consultants, Office of Population Censuses & Surveys 57w
Medical malpractice, Compensation 178w
Medical treatment abroad, Costs 365-6w
Medicinal implants, Heart pacemakers 58w
Members' correspondence, Administrative delays 764w
Mental health community care 363-4w, 547w
Mental health community care, Government grants 365w
Mental health services 363-5w
Mental health services, Derbyshire 183w
Mental health services, Government grants 364-5w

Freeman, Mr Roger—continued
Mental health services, Health services finance 559-60w
Mental patients 569w
Mental patients, Hospital discharges 174-6w
Mentally handicapped, Day centres 546-7w
Mentally ill, Community charge exemptions 367-8w
Mersey Regional Health Authority, Finance 571w
Neuroblastoma, Infant mortality 477w
Newton Lodge Secure Unit 475w
NHS, Contracts for services 182w, 542-3w
NHS, Crown immunity 563-4w
NHS, Foreign patients 469w
NHS, Information technology 559w
NHS, Psychiatry 462w
NHS, Public sector assets 569w
NHS finance, Inflation 561w, 621w, 1006
NHS finance, Regional health authorities 461-2w
NHS Income Generation Unit, Dept of Health 387w
NHS review, Contracts 57w
North East Thames Regional Health Authority, Finance 762w
Nutrition & health 179w
Old people's homes, Local government social services 388w
Patients, Hospital consultants 729w
Perinatal mortality 725-6w
Personal social services, Rate support grants 473w
Population projection 363w
Portsmouth & South East Hampshire Health Authority 543w
Prescription charges 550w
Prosthetics, Finance 729w
Psychiatry, Mental health services 364w
Public relations, Office of Population Censuses & Surveys 55-6w
Publicity, Dept of Health 728w
Radiotherapy, Compensation 1005
Regional health authorities, Land acquisition 279w
Registration of births deaths & marriages 998
Resource management initiative 562w
Robert Jones & Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital 177w
Robert Jones & Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital, Hospital patients 177w
Salmonella, Eggs 281-2w
Smoking, Death 555-6w
South West Thames Regional Health Authority, Finance 557w
Southend Health Authority, Finance 564w
Special hospitals, Self-mutilation 181w
Special hospitals, Women 181w
Statistics, Dept of Health 53-4w
Statistics, Office of Population Censuses & Surveys 54-6w
Vaccination 52w
Vaccination, Children 52w, 550-1w
Vaccination, Take-up 177-8w
Wessex Health Authority, Finance 544w
Yorkshire Regional Health Authority, Finance 564-6w

French, Mr Douglas
Questions
Barlow Clowes, Compensation 401w
CJ How, Investor protection 302w
Law of Property (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1989 235w
Local education authorities, Billing 30w
Mailing lists 170w
Motor insurance, Road traffic offences 147w
Securities & Investments Board, Company investigations 430w
Standard community charge, Local authorities 185w

Fresh Meat Export (Hygiene & Inspection) Regulations 1987
Questions
736w

Fresh Start
Prison staff 750w

Frontiers
Poland 156w

Fun eating at school today campaign
South West region 144w

Fungicides
Agricultural research 241w

Furniture industry
Trading standards departments 465

Furs
Exports 303w

Further education
Young people 628w

Fyfe, Mrs Maria
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990 (21:03:90) 1140-1, 1144, 1176-7
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 187-8
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Allocation of time motion & Rep (14:03:90) 606-7
Rate support Grant (Scotland) Order 1990 (19:03:90) 981
Questions
Capital investment, Glasgow District Council 702w
Capital investment, Scottish councils 702w
Cervical cancer, Screening 543w
Civil servants, Local government finance 452w
Crime, Greater London 510w
Government grants to local authorities, Glasgow District Council 585w
House of Commons accommodation, Day nurseries 191w
Human rights, Women 408-9w
Kuwait, Human rights 409w
Local government borrowing, Scotland 85w
Local government revenue, Glasgow District Council 701-2w
Palace of Westminster, Hairdressing 103w
Post Office 290w

Fylde
Sewage 186w

GAA Group Holdings
see Garston AmHurst Associates Group

Gaelic Athletic Association
Government grants to voluntary organisations 227w

Gaelic language
584-5w

Gale, Mr Roger
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990, Industry (22:03:90) 1300-4, 1326
Business statements (13:03:90) 448
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 240-2
Questions
Credit cards 171w
Prison population, Community service orders 1224
Prisoners, Interviews 460w
Sentencing 751w

Galloway, Mr George
Debates etc.
Bazoft, Farzad (15:03:90) 670-1
Questions
Bombings, Birmingham 745w
Export Credits Guarantee Department, Privatisation 477-8

Gaming Act 1968
Questions
457w

Gaming machines
Young people 755w

Garel-Jones, Mr Tristan, Treasurer of Her Majestys Household
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990 (21:03:90) 1133

Garrett, Mr John
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990, Industry (22:03:90) 1257, 1284-8

Garrett, Mr Ted
Questions
Exports, Government assistance 290w

Garston AmHurst Associates Group
306w

Gas & Electricity Industries (Rateable Values) (Amendment) Order 1990
Debates etc.
(19:03:90) 888

Gas meters
3w

Gas pipelines
Natural gas 2-3w

Gas tariffs
Horticulture 195w

Gateshead
251-2w

GATT
91-2w, 479-80
Agricultural support systems 799w
Clothing industry 295w
Import duties 471-2
Multifibre arrangement 472-3
Textile industry 295w
Unfair trading practices 472

Gaza strip
264-5w
Israel 35w

GCE A level
Teachers 53w

General Agreement on Tariffs & Trade
see GATT

General elections
Election expenditure (13:03:90) 173-5

"General Household Survey, 1986"
723-4w

Genetically modified organisms
344w, 493-4w, 783-4w
Bakers yeast 800w
EC action 494w
Environment protection 493w
Ethics 685-6w

Geriatric hospitals
Fire prevention 444w
Health service staff 444w
South Glamorgan Health Authority 444w
Wales 444w

Geriatric patients
Community health services 444w
South Glamorgan Health Authority 444-5w

Geriatrics
Community health services 444w

Germany
792-3w
Economic situation 609w
European Council 328w
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty 717w

Gibraltar
Sovereignty 145w

Gill, Mr Christopher
Questions
Companies 46w
District health authorities, Wales 772-3w
EC free food scheme 446w
Employment, Private sector 205w

Gill, Mr Christopher*—*continued
Government assistance to industry, Government grants 297w
Leptospirosis, Vaccination 734w
Occupational pensions 405-6w
Production quotas, Dairy products 574w
Student loans 708-9w
Tax yields, Consumer expenditure 374w
West Midlands Regional Health Authority, Manpower 1005-6

Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990 (21:03:90) 1148-50

Glasgow
116-8w
European City of Culture 585w
Technology academies 452w
Urban programme 645-6w

Glasgow District Council
Capital investment 702w
Government grants to local authorities 585w
Local government revenue 701-2w

Glasgow Underground (Rateable Values) (Scotland) Order 1990
Debates etc.
(12:03:90) 29

Glyn, Sir Alan
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990 (20:03:90) 1050-1
War Crimes Bill, 2R (19:03:90) 887, 951, 957
Questions
House of Commons staff, Working conditions 883

Godman, Dr Norman A
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990, Industry (22:03:90) 1258
Questions
Archaeological sites, Seas & oceans 328w
Business statements 1249
Caledonian MacBrayne, Public appointments 114-5w
Exports, Government assistance 290w
Ferries, Scotland 515w
Fishery protection, North Sea 155w
Fishing catches 693w
Fishing vessels, Immersion suits 124-5w
Heart diseases, Surgery 262w

Gold
Albania 451w

Gold sinny wrasse
88w

Golding, Mrs Llin
Questions
Water supply industry, Privatisation 266w

Goodhart, Sir Philip
Debates etc.
Public transport (23:03:90) 1362-5

Goods vehicles
Safety equipment 6-7

Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Questions
Arts, Ministers' domestic visits 515w
British Medical Association 548w
Integrated pollution control 676-7w
Law of Property (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1989, Conveyancing 316w

Goodwill
Accounting 432w

Gordon, Ms Mildred
Debates etc.
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, 3R (15:03:90) 705
Questions
Blackwall tunnel, Road traffic 533w
Community health councils 554w

Gordon, Ms Mildred*—*continued
Road traffic, Bow 648w
Road traffic control, East London 533w

Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Debates etc.
Families (16:03:90) 817, 822
Questions
Business, Bureaucracy 467-8
Czechoslovakia 528w
Czechoslovakia, Competition 792w
East Germany, Property law 408w
Eastern Europe, National security 608w
Eastern Europe, Privatisation 526w
Eggs, Compensation 81w
Eggs, Salmonella 77-8w, 82w
Electricity supply industry, Departmental responsibilities 3w
Environment protection, Eastern Europe 713w
European Development Bank 380w
European monetary system 609-10w
Food Advisory Committee, Public appointments 735w
Food poisoning, Eggs 467w
Food poisoning, Salmonella 467w
Food prices 81w
Hormone treatments, Preventive medicine 462w
Housing policy 667w
Inflation 653
Interest rates 423-4w
Joint ventures, Czechoslovakia 767w
Joint ventures, East Germany 767-8w
Lithuania, Privatisation 608w
New towns, Mortgages 713w
NHS, Contracts for services 176-7w
Overseas trade, East Germany 767w
Passport Office, Civil service agencies 458w
Poultry, Animal Health Act 1981 81w
Poultry, Salmonella 81-2w
Salmonella, Food hygiene 78w
Transport policy, Essex 7
Underground railways, City of Westminster 233w
UNESCO 608w
Valuation services, Operating costs 609w
West Germany, Privatisation 767w

Gorst, Mr John
Debates etc.
War Crimes Bill, 2R (19:03:90) 891-2, 896, 905, 909, 921, 926

Gould, Mr Bryan
Questions
Acid rain, Environmental impact assessment 677w
Buildings, Greenhouse effect 680w
Carbon dioxide, Air pollution control 680w
Community charge 1117
Community charge capping, Administrative costs 1109-10
Mental patients, Hospital discharges 174-6w
Meteorological Office, Greenhouse effect 771w
Smoke & chimney gases, Air pollution control 679-80w

Govan Shipbuilders
697w

Government assistance
Exports 290w
Organic farming 196w

Government assistance to industry
British Shipbuilders 697w
Expenditure 298w
Government grants 297w
Lancashire 169w
Laura Ashley 616w

Government contracts
Steelcase Stafor 606w

Government departments
Crown Suppliers 478w
Disabled workers 235w
Procurement 616w

Government grants
Aerospace industry 467
Citizens' Advice Bureaux 298w
Community care 65-6w
Consumer advice centres 298w
Drug rehabilitation centre 704w
Government assistance to industry 297w
Local enterprise companies 497-9w
London Underground 122w
Mental health community care 365w
Mental health services 364-5w
Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin 443w
Parents Against Injustice 468w
Tourist industry 140, 414w
Training 141
Training & enterprise councils 497-9w
UN Fund for Drug Abuse Control 407w
Victim support schemes 458-9w
Welsh language 869
West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive 496w

Government grants to local authorities
Children's Act 1989 723w
Ethnic minorities 282-4w
Floods 243-4w
Glasgow District Council 585w
Gypsies 321-3w
Housing improvement 673w
Scotland 414w
Special schools 324-5w
Transitional relief 483-4w
Voluntary schools 324-5w

Government grants to voluntary organisations
Gaelic Athletic Association 227w
Hospices 1003-4
Offenders 356-9w

"Government Purchasing"
616w

Gow, Mr Ian
Debates etc.
Business statements (13:03:90) 450
Northern Ireland (Emergency & Prevention of Terrorism Provisions) (Continuance) Order 1990 (12:03:90) 35, 57-60
War Crimes Bill, 2R (19:03:90) 892, 893
Questions
Bombings, Birmingham 1226-7
Channel tunnel, Railway network 121w
Community charge 664w
Extradition, Republic of Ireland 482-3
Iraq, Judgments 22-3
Nurses, NHS 552w
Welsh assembly 443w

Graham, Mr Thomas
Questions
Community health councils 555w
Iron & steel industry, Scotland 476-7
Western Scottish Omnibuses, Buy outs 582-3w

Grant, Sir Anthony
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990 (20:03:90) 1054-7
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 225-6, 229-31
Questions
Trading standards departments, Petrol pumps 465

Grant, Mr Bernie
Questions
EC Industry Council 301-2w

Great Grimsby
482w

Greater Glasgow Health Board
Speech therapists 454w

Greater London
Air ambulance services 728w
Crime 510w
Cycling 648-9w
Dial-a-ride 124w
House prices 98w
Local government finance 392w
Parish councils (14:03:90) 491-3

***Greater London**—continued*
Police consultative groups 796w
Prison hospitals 757w
Public transport 5, 11-2
Regional health authorities 279w
Roads 125-6w
Transport 122w

Greater Manchester
Employment training 210w
Empty housing 137-8w, 233w
National Health Service & Community Care Bill 1989/90 178-9w
Public sector housing 395w
Roads 534-5w

Greater Manchester Police Authority
Inquiries 757w

Green pound
EC countries 194w
Wheat 193-6w

Greenbelt
Housing construction 667-8w

Greenhouse effect
Buildings 680w
HMS Endurance 48w
Meteorological Office 771w

Greenway, Mr Harry
Debates etc.
Business statements (15:03:90) 675
Families (16:03:90) 807, 848-50
Questions
London Underground, Railway safety 655w
Mental patients 569w
Official engagements 157w, 329w, 516w, 695w
Overseas trade, South Africa 169w
Police community liaison committees, London boroughs 511w
Roads, Greater London 125-6w
Treasury, Civil service manpower 376w

Greenway, Mr John
Questions
Capital value rating 664w
NHS, Manpower 999
Rape, Sentencing 751w
Sheep premiums 447w

Gregory, Mr Conal
Questions
Goods vehicles, Safety equipment 6-7
Households, Yorkshire & Humberside 684w
Housing starts, York 601w
Housing starts, Yorkshire & Humberside 711w
Motor vehicle testing, Licensing 309-10w
New businesses, Yorkshire & Humberside 766-7w
Pupil-teacher ratios, Primary education 520w
Tourist industry 140

Grieve Committee
see Fish Farming Advisory Committee

Griffiths, Mr Nigel
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990 (21:03:90) 1135, 1139
Questions
Bedding, Cot deaths 46-7w
Community charge benefits, Capital rules 1235
Health & Safety Executive, Fines 212w
Housing construction 600-1w
Housing construction, Scotland 582w
Housing construction, Wales 517w
National Consumer Council, Rantzen, Esther 465-6
Sewage, Waste disposal 116w

Griffiths, Mr Peter
Debates etc.
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 217, 233-5

Griffiths, Mr Win
Debates etc.
By elections, Mid-Staffordshire (23:03:90) 1341
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 330, 331-3
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Allocation of time motion & Rep (14:03:90) 585-7, 590
Questions
Civil service pensions 689w
Community health councils 554w
Customs & Excise, Petitions 611w
Debt collection 688-9w
Flats, Porthcawl 518w
Health service staff, Conflict of interests 385w, 569w
Licensed teachers, Wales 517-8w
Local authorities, Wales 443-4w
Local government pensions 601w
Police pensions, Fire service pensions 510-1w

Grimsby
Transitional relief 599w

***Grist, Mr Ian**, Under-Secretary of State for Wales*
Debates etc.
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 322-4, 327, 329, 333, 335
Questions
Cancer, Medical treatments 872
Cancer, North Wales 244w
Cancer, Statistics 349-50w
Cancer, Wales 15w, 143w, 400w, 444w, 516-7w
Community charge exemptions, Refuges 246w
Council housing, Wales 875
District health authorities, Performance related pay 348-9w
District health authorities, Wales 772-3w
Flats, Porthcawl 518w
Geriatric hospitals, Fire prevention 444w
Geriatric hospitals, Health service staff 444w
Geriatric patients, Community health services 444w
Geriatrics, Community health services 444w
Health services, Contracts for services 15w
Homelessness, Wales 873-4
Housing construction, Wales 517w, 874
Local government finance, Wales 344-8w
NHS, Conferences 700w
NHS administration, North Wales 874-5
NHS administration, Training 700w
NHS review, Departmental publications 246-50w
St David's Hospital Cardiff 444-5w
Sea pollution, Kinmel Bay 12w
Secretaries of State, Wales 876
South Glamorgan Health Authority, Finance 445w
Spoil heaps, Mid Glamorgan 876
Terminal care, Home care services 443w

Grocott, Mr Bruce
Questions
Remand in custody, Medical examinations 355-6w

Grylls, Mr Michael
Questions
Business, Bureaucracy 468-9

Guatemala
264w

Guildford Four Inquiry
17-8w

Guillotine
Community care (14:03:90) 494-640
Speaker's rulings & statements (13:03:90) 447, 456, 457

***Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn**, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food*
Questions
Food, Composition labelling 800w
Milk, Production quotas 192-3w
Pet foods, Food standards 800w
Poultry meat, EC action 799-800w
Production quotas, Dairy products 574w
Set-aside schemes, Land use 738w
Slaughterhouses 737w
Slaughterhouses, European Commission 736w
Slaughterhouses, Export licensing 736w
Slaughterhouses, Food exports 736w
Slaughterhouses, North Torrington 737w
Slaughterhouses, Production 736w
Sulphadimidine, Veterinary drugs 799w

Gun sports
Noise control 679w

Gwynedd County Council
244w

Gwynedd Technical College Bangor
12w

Gynaecology
(13:03:90) 461-2

Gypsies
Educational finance 321-3w
Educational needs 321w
Government grants to local authorities 321-3w

Haberdashers' Aske's School
City technology colleges (23:03:90) 1414-22

Hague, Mr William
Debates etc.
Agriculture (16:03:90) 851-5
Questions
Civil list, Royal Family 528w
Manufacturing industries, Productivity 376w
National Rivers Authority, Pollution control 675-6w
NHS hospital trusts, Health services 544w
Sentencing 751w

Hairdressing
Palace of Westminster 103w

***Hamilton, Mr Archie**, Minister of State for the Armed Forces*
Questions
Advertising, Ministry of Defence 51w
Armed forces, Community charge 413w
Armed forces, HIV infection 49w
Armed forces, West Germany 51w
Armed forces casualties, Armed forces training 201w
Armed forces casualties, Defence Council 200-1w
Armed forces civilians, Radiation hazards 333w
Armed forces deployment, Brunei 412-3w
Armed forces discharges, Homosexuality 52w
Armed forces training, Armed forces officers 202w
Armed forces training, Clothing 200-2w
Armed forces training, Defence Council 199-200w, 202w
Armed forces training, Heatstroke 198-201w
Armed forces training, Medical examinations 202w
Arms control negotiations, Defence equipment 330w
Clyde Submarine Base, Radiation hazards 334w
Defence land, Access to countryside 331w
Exercise Northaxe 2/90 332-3w
Exercise Northaxe 2/90, Aircraft 332w
Exercise Northaxe 2/90, Military aircraft 332w
Exercise Northaxe 2/90, Warships 332w
Military alliances, Nuclear power 433-4w
NATO, Arms control negotiations 290w

Hamilton, Mr Archie*—*continued
Naval bases, Forest Moor 202-3w
Nuclear submarines, Radiation hazards 333-4w
Nuclear submarines, Radioactive waste disposal 412w
Nuclear weapons tests, USSR 330-1w
Property Services Agency, Army in Northern Ireland 49w
Public footpaths, Menwith with Darley 48w
Public relations, Ministry of Defence 50w
Royal Hospital Chelsea 435w

Hamilton, Mr Neil
Debates etc.
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 420, 424
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Allocation of time motion & Rep (14:03:90) 581
Questions
Offenders, Government grants to voluntary organisations 356-9w

Hampson, Dr Keith
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990, Industry (22:03:90) 1266
Questions
Overseas trade, Hungary 471
Student grants, Mature students 628w
Sunday trading 747w

Handicap benefits
Disabled workers 67w
Occupational deafness 68w
Social security recipients 66-7w

Handicapped
Clothing (16:03:90) 861-8
EC action 153-4w
Elderly 66w
Income support 67w
Local authority associations 365w
Local government social services 182-3w
Skillcentres 134w
Special education 365w
Unemployment 146
Youth training scheme 415w

Handicapped children
Abortion Act 1967 730w
Attendance allowance 154w

Handicapped students
Scotland 452-3w
Student grants 419-20w, 452-3w, 1008

Handyaids
153-4w

Handynet
153-4w

Hanley, Mr Jeremy
Debates etc.
Capital Allowances Bill (HL), 2R (12:03:90) 128
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 418, 419
Questions
Iraq, Judgments 23-4
MV Marchioness, Public inquiries 5-6
Richter, Ian, Iraq 327-8w
Unpaid taxes, Personal income 273-4w

Hannam, Mr John
Questions
Community care plans 467w
Disability employment credit, Working hours 67w
Disabled workers, Employment services 142
Handicapped, Elderly 66w
Handicapped, Local authority associations 365w
Handicapped, Special education 365w
Hospices 1004
Medical records, Parent & child 53w
Mental health community care, Government grants 365w

Hannam, Mr John*—*continued
Mental health services 363-5w
Mental health services, Government grants 364-5w
Sheltered employment 135w
Vaccination 52w
Vaccination, Children 52w
Vaccination, Take-up 177-8w

Hard core unemployed
203-4w
Action credit scheme 129w
Unemployment 139-40
Young people 203w

Hardy, Mr Peter
Questions
Antarctic, Snow & ice 450w
Employment opportunities, Part-time employment 205w
Fossil fuel levy 428w
Iraq, Judgments 25
Local government expenditure, Local authority powers 665w
NHS finance, Inflation 561w
Roads, Expenditure 125w
Social Fund, Social security benefits rules 740w
Vacant land, Derelict land grants 1108

Hare Coursing (Abolition) Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
1R (13:03:90) 172

Hargreaves, Mr Andrew
Debates etc.
Human embryo experiments, Public petitions (21:03:90) 1210

Hargreaves, Mr Ken
Debates etc.
Human embryo experiments, Public petitions (15:03:90) 784-5
Questions
RU486, Licensing 541w

Harman, Ms Harriet
Debates etc.
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 371, 375, 376, 377, 378-9
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Allocation of time motion & Rep (14:03:90) 515, 532-5, 547-50, 551, 562-3, 591-3, 596-7
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, 3R (15:03:90) 685-91
Questions
Breast cancer, Screening 570w
Dept of Health, Management consultants 570w
Elderly, Screening 570-1w
Health service staff 620w
Medical laboratory scientific officers, Manpower 386w
Prescriptions, Budgeting 993-4

Harmonisation of legislation
Safety standards 464-5
Tyre tread depths 689w

Harmonisation of standards
Domestic electrical appliances 401w
Organic farming 195w
Welding 501-2w

Harrier aircraft
Defence contracts 290w

Harris, Mr David
Debates etc.
2R (20:03:90) 1084-6
Penzance South Pier Extension Bill, 2R (20:03:90) 1084-6
Questions
Fireworks, Injuries 614-6w
South West Water, Waste disposal 679w
Unemployment, Older workers 205w

Harrogate Borough Council
660w
Uniform business rate 660w

Hartlepool Health Authority
Cervical cancer 179w

Haselhurst, Mr Alan
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990 (21:03:90) 1152-6

Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Debates etc.
War Crimes Bill, 2R (19:03:90) 889, 894-900
Questions
Bazoft, Farzad, Capital punishment 662
Bombings, Birmingham 1227-8

Hayes, Mr Jerry
Debates etc.
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 388, 390
Questions
Cot deaths, Fire resistant materials 997

Haynes, Mr Frank
Debates etc.
Arts finance (13:03:90) 169
Coal Industry Bill, Lords amendts (15:03:90) 782
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 419
Questions
Manufacturing industries, Industrial investment 469-70

Hayward, Mr Robert
Questions
Community charge, Transitional relief 185w
Community charge benefits, Carers 404w
Community charge benefits, Social security claims 788w
Local government expenditure, Standard spending assessments 480w
Local government functions, Community charge 185w
Public order policing, Bristol 361-2w
Secondary education, Avon 418w
Social security benefits, Capital rules 740-1w

Hazardous materials
Departmental publications 488-9w
Microelectronics industry 503w
Planning permission 313w
Safety measures 344w, 503w
Seagate Microelectronics 503-4w
Wood 580w

Hazardous wastes
Imports 684w
North Sea 187-8w, 197w, 768-9w
Seas & oceans 196w

HBMC
see Historic Buildings & Monuments Commission for England

HCC
see House of Commons Commission

Headington
Bus lanes 690w
Road traffic control 690w

Headteachers
Recruitment 517w
Wales 517w

Health
Social problems 453w

Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974
Questions
442w

Health & Safety Executive
138w, 145, 146w, 148, 344w, 500w, 503-4w, 783-4w
Civil service manpower 211w
Disclosure of information 218w, 504w
EC law 212w
Finance 146
Fines 212w
Industrial accidents 147

Health & Safety Executive*—*continued
Manpower 146, 149-50
Railway Inspectorate 9

Health education
AIDS 545w
Cot deaths 997
Drug abuse 636w, 870
Expenditure 636w
Hepatitis 563w
Local government expenditure 629w
Scotland 158-9w
Wales 870-1

Health hazards
Disposable syringes 765w
Nuclear weapons tests 724w

Health insurance
Tax allowances 10w

Health physics
Sellafield 629-30w

Health service staff
620w
Average earnings 764-6w
Collective community charge 731w
Conflict of interests 385w, 569w
Geriatric hospitals 444w
Hepatitis 473-4w
Hospitals 544w
Rents 731w

Health services
Contracts for services 15w, 558w, 561w
Inner city areas 179w
NHS administration 562w
NHS hospital trusts 544w
Patients 551w
Road accidents 475w

Health services finance
558w
Mental health services 559-60w
Population studies 557w
Supra-regional services 556w

Heart diseases
Death 118w
Hospital patients 118w
Medical research 261-4w
Scotland 118w, 158-9w, 261-4w
Surgery 262w, 389-90w, 474w

Heart pacemakers
Medicinal implants 58w

Heath, Rt Hon Edward
Debates etc.
War Crimes Bill, 2R (19:03:90) 920-4, 925

Heathcoat-Amory, Mr David,
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of the Environment
Debates etc.
Uniform business rate, Hotels (15:03:90) 789-92
Questions
Access to countryside 1113
Access to countryside, Walking 1113
Acid rain, Research 770w
Air pollution, North Sea 312w
Boundary Commission for England, Humberside 768w
Chlorofluorocarbons, Waste disposal 490w
Councillors' attendance allowances 676w
Councillors' disqualification 603w
Countryside Commission, Finance 678w
Domestic wastes, Recycling 190w
Hazardous materials, Departmental publications 488-9w
Hazardous wastes, North Sea 187-8w, 768-9w
Industrial wastes, Pollution control 105w
International conferences, North Sea 188w
Land pollution, Conifers 269w
Local government constituencies, Oxford 715w
Local government pensions 601w
Local government services, Competition 189w

Heathcoat-Amory, Mr David*—*continued
Local government staff, Pension rights 491w
London Residuary Body, Property transfer 268w
National parks, South Downs 676w
National Rivers Authority 682-3w
National Rivers Authority, Pollution control 675-6w
Noise control 711w
Plants, Upper Waiting Hall 769w
Pollution control, North Sea 312w
Pollution monitoring, Algae 492w
Privatisation, Water supply industry 185-6w
Radiation hazards, Cumbria 489w
Recycling, Industries 268w
Recycling, Joint ventures 190w
Recycling, Newsprint 598w
Recycling, Paper 713w
Recycling, Tyres 681-2w
River pollution, EC countries 675w
River pollution, North West region 602w
River pollution, River Mersey 603-4w
River pollution, Waste disposal 683w
Rural development areas 675w
Sea pollution, Irish Sea 315w
Sea pollution, North Sea 487w, 671w
Sea pollution, Yorkshire & Humberside 682w
Sewage, Bristol Channel 491w
Sewage, Fylde 186w
Sewage, Irish Sea 395-6w
Sewage, Seas & oceans 187w
South West Water, Waste disposal 679w
Tidal power, Environmental impact assessment 492w
United Kingdom Acid Waters Review Group 667w
Waste disposal, Chemicals 105-6w
Waste disposal, Tyres 682w
Water charges, Infrastructure 312w
Water companies, Public access 184w
Water filters, Bacteria 104w
Water pollution, Capital investment 311w
Water pollution, Fertilisers 269w
Water supply industry, Privatisation, 266w
West Midlands Residuary Body, Public appointments 769w
West Yorkshire Residuary Body, Public appointments 769-70w

Heatstroke
199-201w
Armed forces training 198-201w

Hedges & ditches
185w

Heffer, Mr Eric S
Debates etc.
Arts finance (13:03:90) 161-2
Public transport (23:03:90) 1373
Questions
Unofficial strikes, Conditions of employment 143
Young offenders, Parental responsibility 1228-9

Helios programme
153-4w

Henderson, Mr Doug
Questions
Community charge 663w
Community health councils 554w
Manufacturing industries, West Midlands 466
Multifibre arrangement 306w

Hepatitis
58-60w
Disposable syringes 474w, 765w
Drug abuse 474w
Health education 563w
Health service staff 473-4w
Injuries 474w
Prison staff 399w
Prisoners 1223
Refuse disposal 473-4w
Vaccination 473-4w

Hereford & Worcester
Road accidents 121w

Hertfordshire County Council
478-9w

Hertsmere Borough Council
Planning permissions 601w
Religious buildings 601w

Hetherington Committee
see War Crimes Inquiry

Hicks, Mrs Maureen
Questions
Aerospace industry, Europe 302w
British citizenship, Administrative delays 634-5w
Cervical cancer, Screening 995
Community charge, Non-payment 1234
Community charge capping 666w
Restart programme, Interviews 213w
Teachers' pensions, Early retirement 417w
Vaccination, Children 550w

Hicks, Mr Robert
Questions
BBC 752-3w
South Western Regional Health Authority, Public appointments 281w

HIDB
see Highlands & Islands Development Board

Hidden Committee
see Clapham Rail Accident Inquiry

High court
Social Fund 73w

Higher civil servants
Accountants 613w
Foreign & Commonwealth Office 264w
Home Office 507w

Higher education
Tuition fees 624w

Highlands & Islands Development Board
646-8w

Hill, Mr James
Debates etc.
Penzance South Pier Extension Bill, 2R (20:03:90) 1084

Hillsborough Stadium Inquiry
460w, 495w

Hinchliffe, Mr David
Debates etc.
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 215-7, 218, 225, 378, 411
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Allocation of time motion & Rep (14:03:90) 525, 596
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, 3R (15:03:90) 692, 704-9
Questions
Cook-chill catering, Wakefield Health Authority 366w
Crowd control, Sportsgrounds 633w
Departmental forms, Wakefield 367-8w
Dept of Health 427w
Employment opportunities, Local authorities 213w
Furs, Exports 303w
Mortgage interest rates, Homelessness 657
Railway property, Fox hunting 125w
Residential care, Elderly 541w

Hind, Mr Kenneth
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990, Industry (22:03:90) 1260-1
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Allocation of time motion & Rep (14:03:90) 499, 503, 530-1, 550-1
Questions
Animal feed, Food contamination 242w
Employment, Lancashire 500w

***Hind, Mr Kenneth**—continued*
Estate Action, Liverpool 600w
Family doctors, Budgeting 542w
Hard core unemployed 203-4w
Housing benefits, Social security benefits rules 639w
Housing finance, Liverpool 681w
Housing problems, Liverpool 1118
Industrial investment 373w
Land reclamation, Derelict land 681w
Olympic games, Manchester 1236
Prisoners on remand, Police custody 1225
Regional aid, Lancashire 428-9w
Rolling stock 9-10
Unemployment, Lancashire 500-1w
Unemployment, North West region 138
Vacant land, Land ownership & tenure 668w

Historic Buildings & Monuments Commission for England
213w

HIV infection
Armed forces 49w

HM Factory Inspectorate
see Factory Inspectorate

HM Fire Service Inspectorate
Audit 510w

HM Inspectorate of Constabulary
Annual reports 794w

HM Inspectorate of Prisons
510w
Prison hospitals 757w

HMS Endurance
48w
Greenhouse effect 48w

Hodson Committee
see Arts Funding Reorganisation Steering Committee

Hoey, Miss Kate
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990, Industry (22:03:90) 1279-81
Questions
Energy conservation, Housing construction 267w
Homelessness, Lambeth 1118-9
London assessment studies, Clapham Common 4
NHS hospital trusts, West Lambeth Health Authority 995
Rented housing, London boroughs 92-4w

***Hogg, Mr Douglas**, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Corporate Affairs*
Questions
Aerospace industry 428w
Aerospace industry, Europe 302w
Aerospace industry, Government grants 467
Aerospace industry, Trade unions 467
Balance of trade, UK trade with EC 474
British Shipbuilders, Factory closures 697w
Car industry 299w
Cheshire Business & Innovation Centre, EC grants & loans 463
Confederation of British Industry 299w
Cosmetics, Animal experiments 43w
Dept of Trade & Industry, Departmental reorganisation 300w
Dept of Trade & Industry, Inner cities initiative 44-5w
EC grants & loans, Rural areas 592w
EC Industry Council 301-2w, 402w
EC internal trade, Inner city areas 44w
EC internal trade, Norfolk 464
Electronics industry, Japan 475
Enterprise initiative, Companies 306-8w
Foreign investment in UK, North West region 295-6w
Government assistance to industry, Government grants 297w
Government assistance to industry, Lancashire 169w

***Hogg, Mr Douglas**—continued*
Industrial investment, West Midlands 475
Industries, Investment 593w
Industry, Exports 470
Industry, Interest rates 470
Inner cities initiative, Hulme 303-4w
Iron & steel industry, Armadale 290w
Iron & steel industry, Scotland 476-7
Labour Party, Economic policy 474-5w
Land acquisition, EC law 593w
Mailing lists 170w
Manufacturing industries, Birmingham 466
Manufacturing industries, Industrial investment 469-70
Manufacturing industries, West Midlands 466
National Economic Development Council 302w
National Engineering Laboratory, Civil service manpower 43w
National Engineering Laboratory, Directors 44w
National Engineering Laboratory, Ministers' domestic visits 44w
National Technology Centre, Finance 698w
North East Shipbuilders 301w
North East Shipbuilders, European Commission 698w
North East Shipbuilders, Factory closures 697-8w
Professional access project, Scotland 698w
RECHAR, East Midlands 301w
Regional aid 293w, 297w
Regional aid, Lancashire 428-9w
Rover Group, Cowley 303w
Shipbuilding 300w
Shipbuilding, Foreign investment in UK 697w
Shipbuilding, Sunderland 697w
Shipbuilding, West Germany 301w
Trade formalities, Japan 477
Tyne & Wear Development Corporation, Employment opportunities 696-7w

Hogg, Mr Norman
Questions
Cervical cancer, Screening 994-5
Confederation of British Industry 299w
Council housing, Cumbernauld & Kilsyth District Council 115w
Cumbernauld Development Corporation, Pay 115w
House renovation grants, Cumbernauld & Kilsyth District Council 115w
New towns development corporations, Pay 115-6w
Prescription drugs 475w
Social security recipients, Scotland 288w

Holiday play schemes
513w

Holt, Mr Richard
Debates etc.
Tees & Hartlepool Port Authority Bill, 2R (15:03:90) 732-6, 738, 743-4, 748-9, 752-3, 759, 770
Questions
Community charge, Middlesbrough 1009
Employment, EC countries 214w
Trading standards departments, Furniture industry 465

Holy Loch
412w
Submarines 523-4w

Home care services
Terminal care 443w

Home helps
Community care 553w

Home Office
137w
Advertising 23-4w
Civil service manpower 636-7w
Higher civil servants 507w
Management consultants 360w
Privatisation 360w
Public sector housing 137-8w

***Home Office**—continued*
Publicity 635-6w
Statistics 22-3w

Home Robertson, Mr John
Debates etc.
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, 3R (15:03:90) 696
Walker, Peter, Ministerial changes (13:03:90) 457
Questions
Business statements 1250
Community charge, Non-payment 150
Confederation of British Industry 299w

Homelessness
Bed & breakfast accommodation 672w
Families 672w
Hostels 1118-20
Housing policy 672w
Lambeth 1118-9
Mortgage defaulters 672w
Mortgage interest rates 657
Scotland 259-60w
Wales 873-4
Yorkshire & Humberside 657
Young people 621w

Homicide
Romero, Archbishop 330w

Homosexuality
Armed forces discharges 52w
Isle of Man 460w
Jersey 460w

Hong Kong
Balance of trade 699w
Ivory 717-8w
Passports 407-8w

Hood, Mr Jimmy
Debates etc.
Tees & Hartlepool Port Authority Bill, 2R (15:03:90) 756-7
Questions
Car industry 299w
Cervical cancer, Screening 543w

Hooliganism
Football 460w, 1115-6

Hormone treatments
Preventive medicine 462w

Horse meat
Food exports 242w

Horses
Export of live animals 242w, 734w

Horticulture
Gas tariffs 195w

Hosiery & knitwear industry
Leicestershire 209w

Hospices
1004-5
Government grants to voluntary organisations 1003-4

Hospital admissions
Population projection 621w

Hospital beds
Intensive care 563w
Yorkshire & Humberside 364w

Hospital catering
Per capita costs 551-2w

Hospital closures
Cassel Hospital 364w
Macclesfield Health Authority 1000-1
Sheffield Health Authority 554w

Hospital consultants
Manpower 180w
Patients 729w

Hospital discharges
Mental patients 174-6w

Hospital doctors
Disciplinary proceedings 280w

Hospital finance
Yorkshire & Humberside 469-72w

Hospital Medical Staffing Inquiry
544w

Hospital patients
Heart diseases 118w
Northern Regional Health Authority 278-80w
Psychiatry 462w
Robert Jones & Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital 177w

Hospital visitor benefits
Social Fund 595w

Hospital waiting lists
557w
Eye disorders 468w
Northern Ireland 759w
Northern region 557w
Psychiatry 386w
Trent Regional Health Authority 387-8w
West Middlesex University Hospital 999-1000
Yorkshire & Humberside 462-6w

Hospitals
516w
Construction 562w
Energy conservation 476w
Health service staff 544w
Maternity services 762w
Property insurance 282w
Red alerts 52w
Urban areas 763w

Hostels
Homelessness 1118-20

Hotels
Uniform business rate (15:03:90) 786-92

House of Commons
441-2w

House of Commons accommodation
Day nurseries 191w

House of Commons broadcasting
Speaker's rulings & statements (23:03:90) 1341

House of Commons Commission
442w

House of Commons debates
Leicestershire 440w
Transitional relief 770w

House of Commons division of time
Speaker's rulings & statements (13:03:90) 452

House of Commons divisions
Speaker's rulings & statements (15:03:90) 770-4

House of Commons galleries
(13:03:90) 457-9

House of Commons Library
(12:03:90) 26-8

House of Commons order & disorder
Speaker's rulings & statements (13:03:90) 461-2

House of Commons procedure
Oral questions 886

House of Commons Refreshment Dept
see Refreshment Dept

House of Commons staff
Industrial health & safety 442w
Industrial relations 343w, 441-2w
Manpower 441w
Pay 882-3
Training 441w
Working conditions 883

House of Commons stationery
Speaker's rulings & statements (15:03:90) 685

House of Commons (Services) Select Committee
(15:03:90) 685

House of Fraser
316w, 591w, 743w
Company investigations 13-5, 306w
Criminal investigation 89w
Dept of Trade inquiries 587-91w
Directors 591w

House of Lords reporting
Speaker's rulings & statements (19:03:90) 934

House of Lords staff
Industrial relations 343w

House prices
Council house sales 98w
Greater London 98w

House renovation grants
Cumbernauld & Kilsyth District Council 115w

Household Cavalry
Crimes of violence 720w

Households
723-4w
North Yorkshire 684w
Yorkshire & Humberside 684w

Houses
Demolition 103-4w

Housing
East London river crossing 537w
Public expenditure 94-6w
Vacant land registers 1107-8

Housing Act 1988
Questions
184w

Housing & handicapped
Lifts 395w
Voluntary organisations 267w

Housing & Planning Act 1986
Questions
313w

Housing association grant
92-6w

Housing associations
Housing improvement 184w, 392-4w
Liverpool 681w
Rent increases 184w
South West region 98w
Water charges 605w

Housing benefits
Capital rules 741-4w
Concessionary coal 73w
Expenditure 738-9w
Rent increases 675w
Social security benefits rules 73w, 639w
Social security recipients 645w
Widows 743w
Youth training scheme 639w

Housing construction
600-1w
Agricultural land 674w
Energy conservation 267w
Environment protection 667w
Greenbelt 667-8w
Land use 668w
Planning permission 667-8w
Scotland 582w
South East region 668w
Wales 517w, 874

Housing Corporation
92w, 94-6w, 184w, 392-4w, 681w
Finance 98w
Public sector borrowing (12:03:90) 129

Housing Corporation Advances (Increase of Limit) Order 1990
Debates etc.
(12:03:90) 129

Housing finance
Liverpool 681w
Low cost home ownership schemes 668w

Housing for Wales
873-4

Housing improvement
Government grants to local authorities 673w
Housing associations 184w, 392-4w

Housing investment programmes
Liverpool 1117-8

Housing policy
667w
Homelessness 672w

Housing problems
Liverpool 1117-8

Housing revenue accounts
97-8w, 265w, 1117-8
Transitional relief 394w

Housing standards
Dampness 183w

Housing starts
York 601w
Yorkshire & Humberside 711w

Housing tenure
Dept of Transport 537w

***Howard, Rt Hon Michael**, Secretary of State for Employment*
Questions
Employment 139
Employment, EC countries 214w
Hard core unemployed, Young people 203w
Industrial training 206w
Tourism, Stonehenge 213w
Training 141
Training, Government grants 141
Training, Labour force survey 141-2
Training, Training & enterprise councils 141
Training & enterprise councils 208w
Training & enterprise councils, Corporate plans 148-9
Unemployment 138-9
Unemployment, Hard core unemployed 139-40
Unemployment, North West region 138
Unemployment, Northern region 139
Unemployment, Oldham 138
Women's employment, Day care of children 144
Women's employment, Part-time employment 145

***Howarth, Mr Alan**, Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science*
Debates etc.
Haberdashers' Aske's School (23:03:90) 1419-22
Questions
Blue Coat School Liverpool 143w
Curriculum, Child rearing 519w
Educational finance, Buckinghamshire County Council 143-4w
Educational finance, Drug abuse 629w
Educational finance, Gypsies 321-3w
Educational needs, Gypsies 321w
Felgate, Lorne, Special education 30w
Fun eating at school today campaign, South West region 144w
Licensed teachers 33w
Local education authorities, Devon 323w
Local education authority training grant scheme 520w
Middle schools 522w
Portage, Educational finance 707w
Primary education, Landkey 418-9w
Religious education, Teacher training 34w
School admission, Bromley 520w
School buildings, Primary education 626w
School buildings, Repairs & maintenance 625-6w

***Howarth, Mr Alan**—continued*
School closures, Inner London boroughs 30w
School milk, School administration 709w
School population 25w
School population, Bradford 521w
Secondary education, Avon 418w
Special education 26-9w
Special education, Dyslexia 29w
Special education, Local education authorities 225w
Special education, School population 418w
Teacher training, University College Swansea 225w
Teacher training, University of Wales 219-23w
Teachers' pensions, Early retirement 417w
Vocational education, Circuses 625w
Voluntary schools, Government grants to local authorities 324-5w

Howarth, Mr George
Questions
Cervical cancer, Screening 543w
County courts, Cheques 426-7w
County courts, Debts 427w
Local government expenditure, Educational finance 670w

***Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey**, Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons*
Questions
Access to Parliament, Westminster Hall 884-5
Accountants, Royal charters 439w
Advertising, Privy Council 47-8w
Brazil, Rain forests 440w
Business statements 1237-50
Civil servants, Members 440w
Community charge, Lancashire 886
European communities, Members 440w
House of Commons debates, Leicestershire 440w
Lord President of the Council, Ministerial duties 439-40w
Management consultants, Privy Council 48w
Members' facilities, Repairs & maintenance 884-5
Members' interests 440w
Oral questions, House of Commons procedure 886
Public relations, Privy Council 47-8w
Statistics, Privy Council 47-8w
Westminster Hall 883-4
Westminster Hall, Monuments 885-6

Howell, Rt Hon David
Debates etc.
Bazoft, Farzad (15:03:90) 668
Questions
District health authorities, Storms 282w

Howell, Rt Hon Denis
Questions
Football, Hooliganism 1115-6
Kashmir, Self-determination of States 329-30w

Howell, Mr Ralph
Questions
Housing benefits, Expenditure 738-9w
One parent benefit 595w
Tax thresholds, Tax rates & bands 761w
Training, Costs 130w
Women's employment, Day care of children 504-5w

Howells, Mr Geraint
Questions
Dental charges 541w
European monetary system, Inflation 369-70w
Exchange rates, Small businesses 270w
Uniform business rate 678w

Howells, Dr Kim
Debates etc.
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 324-6
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, 3R (15:03:90) 700-1
Questions
Car industry 299w
Child workers 174w
Crime victims, Statistics 753w
Housing construction, Wales 874
Inflation 372w
Land pollution, Wales 1103-4
Spoil heaps, Mid Glamorgan 876

Hoyle, Mr Doug
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990, Industry (22:03:90) 1280, 1298-301, 1332
Business statements (13:03:90) 449-50
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 350, 396, 409
Questions
Business statements 1244
Car industry 299w
Cheshire Business & Innovation Centre, EC grants & loans 463
Computers in government departments, Contracts for services 455w
Flood control, Expenditure 107w
Invisible trade balance 651

HSE
see Health & Safety Executive

Huddersfield Health Authority
Finance 544w

Hughes, Mr John
Questions
Albania, Gold 451w
Contingency reserve 10w
Missing persons, Children 755w
National Economic Development Council 302w
NHS, Contracts for services 543w
Tenants' choice, Private rented housing 675w

Hughes, Mr Robert
Debates etc.
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 185-7, 192, 193-4, 275, 282-8
Questions
National Economic Development Council 302w

Hughes, Mr Robert G
Questions
Council house rents 1105
Kenya, Ministers' visits abroad 17
Mental health community care 547w
Neighbourhood watch schemes, Road signs 1230-1
Privatisation 375-6w
South Africa, Overseas aid 433w

Hughes, Mr Roy
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990 (20:03:90) 1047-50
Questions
Balance of trade, UK trade with EC 474
Homelessness, Housing policy 672w
Poultry, Licensing 85-6w
Poultry, Testing 85-6w
Prescription charges, Price increases 550w
Unemployment, Wales 880
Welsh language, Languages education 870

Hughes, Mr Sean
Questions
Competition 294w
Dentists, Overseas workers 763-4w
Mortgage interest rates 370w
Office of Fair Trading, Estate agents 765-6w

Hughes, Mr Simon
Debates etc.
London Local Government Bill, 1R (14:03:90) 491-3
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 369, 370, 371, 382-9
Questions
Capital investment, Business 273w
Church of England, Wealth 439w
House of Commons staff, Training 441w
Lord President of the Council, Ministerial duties 439-40w
MV Marchioness, Compensation 6
Secretaries of State, Wales 876
Training & enterprise councils, Corporate plans 148-9
Uniform business rate, Wandsworth 678-9w
Wandsworth Prison, Crimes of violence 508w

Hull
Transitional relief 599w

Hull Prison
Young offenders 1229

Hulme
Inner cities initiative 303-4w

Human embryo experiments
Public petitions (12:03:90) 129, (15:03:90) 784-5, (16:03:90) 793, 794, (21:03:90) 1210

Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill (HL) 1989/90
Questions
476w

Human rights
Chad 145w
Kuwait 409w
Romania 35w
Sri Lanka 17
Sudan 525w
Women 408-9w
Zimbabwe 515w

Humberside
Boundary Commission for England 768w
Community charge 1007-8
Local government finance 480w
Revenue support grant 482w
Standard spending assessments 482w

Humberside County Council Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
2R order read (15:03:90) 649, (22:03:90) 1219

Humberstone
Property development (21:03:90) 1209
Public petitions (21:03:90) 1209

Hume, Mr John
Questions
Family doctors, Budgeting 623-4w
Family doctors, Deprivation indicators 438w

Hungary
Overseas investment 470-1
Overseas trade 470-1

***Hunt, Mr David**, Minister for Local Government and Inner Cities*
Questions
Capital value rating 664w
Collective community charge 771w
Collective community charge, Local government finance 714w
Community charge 1116-7
Community charge, Islington 1117
Community charge, Kent 392w
Community charge, Local government finance 716w
Community charge, Orders & regulations 105w
Community charge, Pensioners 656w
Community charge, Personal income 265w
Community charge, Rates & rating 1110

Hunt, Mr David*—*continued
Community charge, Revenue support grant 265-6w
Community charge, Transitional relief 315-6w, 391-2w, 483-4w
Community charge, Youth training scheme 391w, 484w
Community charge benefits 1116-7
Community charge capping, Administrative costs 1109-10
Community charge capping, Bedfordshire County Council 1109
Community charge exemptions 315w
Derelict land, Privatisation 669w
Derelict land, Public sector 669w
Derelict land grants, Yorkshire & Humberside 669w
Domestic rates, Community charge 666w
Inner cities initiative, Expenditure 265w
Inner cities initiative, North West region 676w
Inner cities initiative, Publicity 785w
Leeds Development Corporation, Rented housing 1106-7
Local authorities, Companies 491-2w
Local authorities, Contracts for services 672-3w
Local government expenditure 599w
Local government expenditure, Educational finance 669-70w
Local government expenditure, Non-metropolitan counties 657-8w
Local government finance 315w
Local government finance, Nottingham 666w
Local government finance, Urban programme 391w
Local government revenue, Domestic rates 666w
Local income tax 395w
Rate support grants, Non-metropolitan counties 656-7w
Rented housing, Liverpool 1107
Standard community charge 658-9w
Transitional relief, House of Commons debates 770w
Urban development corporations, Expenditure 1106

Hunter, Mr Andrew
Questions
AIDS, Blood transfusions 558w
Football, Hooliganism 460w
Housing construction, Land use 668w
South Africa, Violence 693w
Terrorism, International cooperation 748w
West Germany 39w
Zimbabwe, Human rights 515w

***Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas**, Secretary of State for Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs*
Debates etc.
Bazoft, Farzad, Ministerial statements (15:03:90) 667-71

Hybrid Bills
Speaker's rulings & statements (14:03:90) 488-90

Hythe Kent Marina Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
2R* (15:03:90) 649

I Spy Strangers
(13:03:90) 457-9

IBA
see Independent Broadcasting Authority

ICA
see Institute of Chartered Accountants in England & Wales

ILEA
see Inner London Education Authority

ILEA Residential Special Schools Working Party
760w

Ilford
(20:03:90) 1058-83

Illegal immigrants
750w

Illsley, Mr Eric
Questions
Local government expenditure, Educational finance 669-70w
NHS, Contracts for services 543w

ILO
see International Labour Organisation

IMF
see International Monetary Fund

Immersion suits
Fishing vessels 124-5w

Immigrants
Israel 408w

Immigration appeals
717w
Administrative delays 717w

Immigration applications
Civil service manpower 16w
Members 16w

Immigration controls
EC countries 458w

Immigration rules
794w

Immunity from prosecution
Negligence 160w
Water companies 160w

Import controls
Transport of hazardous materials 103w

Import duties
GATT 471-2

Imports
270w
Eggs 243-4w
Exports 375w
Hazardous wastes 684w
Paper 713w
Prawns 801-2w

Incinerators
Waste disposal 196w

Incitement to murder
Prosecutions 139w

Income
Church Commissioners 439w, 881
Metropolitan Police 507-8w
Scottish Conveyancing & Confirmation Practitioners Board 108w

Income Generation Unit
see NHS Income Generation Unit

Income support
Birkenhead 739w
Handicapped 67w
Nursing homes 455w
Residential care 69-70w, 455w
Social Fund 74w
Social security benefits reductions 74w
Young people 68-70w
Youth training scheme 576w

Income tax
611w, 653-4
Married men 425w
Tax rates & bands 278w, 425-6w

Independent Broadcasting Authority
Conflict of interests 509w

Independent Television Commission
757-8w

Index linking
Occupational pensions 738w

India
(22:03:90) 1333-40

Indonesia
Arms exports 433w
Overseas aid 432-3w

Indonesia*—*continued
Overseas trade 615w

Industrial accidents
Company reports 431w
Health & Safety Executive 147

Industrial & Freight Transport (Rateable Values) (Scotland) Order 1990
Debates etc.
(12:03:90) 29

Industrial diseases
Asbestos 502-3w
Death 502-3w

Industrial disputes
Ambulance services 461w
Lost working days 214w

Industrial health & safety
211-2w
Agricultural chemicals 195-6w
Asbestos 216w
Back pain 576-7w
Farmers 130-1w
Food packaging 130w
House of Commons staff 442w
Microelectronics industry 503-4w
Part-time employment 145
Scotland 503-4w
Wales 503w

Industrial Injuries Advisory Council
739w

Industrial investment
271w, 373w, 423w
Foreign companies in UK 466
Manufacturing industries 469-70
West Midlands 475

Industrial policy
297w

Industrial relations
House of Commons staff 343w, 441-2w
House of Lords staff 343w

Industrial research
Manufacturing industries 651-2

Industrial training
206w

Industrial wastes
North Sea 75-7w
Pollution control 105w
Waste disposal 314w

Industries
Investment 593w
Recycling 268w

Industry
Balance of trade 661
Budget March 1990 (22:03:90) 1253-332
Exports 470
Interest rates 470

Infant Life Preservation Act 1929
Questions
730w

Infant mortality
568-9w
Medical research 569w
Neuroblastoma 477w
Western Europe 726w

Inflation
371-2w, 653
Council house sales 163w
EC countries 272w, 371w
Economic policy 652
European monetary system 369-70w
Interest rates 151-2, 660
Local government finance 371w
Mortgage interest rates 163-4w
NHS finance 561w, 621w, 1006
OECD countries 659

Information services
Prime Minister 38-9w
Telex Monitors 38-9w

Information technology
NHS 559w
Skill shortages 293w
Training 292w

Infrastructure
Water charges 312w

Ingram, Mr Adam
Questions
Competition 294w
National Engineering Laboratory, Civil service manpower 43w
National Engineering Laboratory, Directors 44w
National Engineering Laboratory, Ministers' domestic visits 44w
National Technology Centre, Finance 698w

Inheritance tax
Shares 374w

Injuries
Fireworks 614-6w
Hepatitis 474w

Inland Revenue
273-4w, 379w, 609w, 688-9w
Civil service manpower 689w
Manpower 657-8, 761-2w

Inner cities initiative
Dept of Trade & Industry 44-5w
Expenditure 265w
Hulme 303-4w
Moss Side 303-4w
Newham 265w
North West region 676w
Publicity 785w
Transport supplementary grants 537-8w

Inner city areas
Departmental responsibilities 191-2w
EC internal trade 44w
Health services 179w

Inner London boroughs
Educational qualifications 627-8w
School closures 30w

Inner London Education Authority
709w, (23:03:90) 1414-22
Special schools 760w

Inquiries
Greater Manchester Police Authority 757w
West Midlands Police 458w

Insider trading
Company investigations 169-70w
Convictions 613w
Law reform 297w

Insolvency Act 1986
Questions
429w

Insolvency Service
696w

Inspection units
Community care 385w

Institute of Chartered Accountants in England & Wales
Company investigations 695w

Institute of Food Research
34w, 87-8w, 521w

Integrated development operations
EC grants & loans 349w
Wales 349w

Integrated pollution control
676-7w

Intellectual property
Biotechnology 573w
IUKADGE 524w

Intelligence services
Northern Ireland 13

Intensive care
Hospital beds 563w
Manchester 153

Interest rates
372w, 423-4w, 654-5, 657, 659
Confederation of British Industry 658-9
Consumer credit 292w
Debts 380w
European monetary system 659
Industry 470
Inflation 151-2, 660
Manufacturing industries 270w
Mortgage defaulters 664
Mortgage relief 659-60
Small businesses 270w
Trade competitiveness 469-70
Wales 871-2

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
19-20

Internal delivery service
Security vetting 101w

International Conference on the Protection of the North Sea
328-9w

International conferences
Drug abuse 746-7w
Food 573w
North Sea 188w
Nuclear test ban 450w
Wind power 630w

International cooperation
Police 1114-5
Radiation hazards 712w
Terrorism 748w

International Labour Organisation
343w

International Monetary Fund
688w

International Society for Krishna Consciousness
601w

International Stock Exchange of the UK & Republic of Ireland
see Stock Exchange

International trade
Agricultural products 799w

Intervention prices
Sheep meat 193-6w

Intervention stocks
Council of Ministers 278w

Interviews
Prisoners 460w
Restart programme 213w

Invalidity benefits
Social security recipients 154w

Inverclyde enterprise zone
Employment opportunities 353-4w

Inverclyde Royal Hospital
262w

Investment
Business 373w
Consumption 375w
East Germany 694w
Industries 593w
London Underground 122w
Network SouthEast 496w

Investment business
Liability 306w

Investment income
Mortgage relief 270w
Tax rates & bands 421-4w

Investor protection
CJ How 302w
Compensation 305w
Financial Services Act 1986 298w
Money Management Financial Services 43w
Self-regulating organisations 303w

Invisible trade balance
9w, 651
Balance of trade 661

Ionizing radiation
Sellafield 629w

IPCC
see Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

Iraq
Armed forces cadets 772w
Bazoft, Farzad 450w
Diplomatic relations (15:03:90) 667-71
Judgments 21-5
Nuclear weapons 793w
Overseas students 760-1w
Prisoners 408w, 662, 793w
Richter, Ian 327-8w
Trials 450w

Irish Sea
Fish 84-5w
Fishing quotas 445-6w
Pollution monitoring 106-7w
Radioactive waste disposal 85w, 412w
Radioactivity 107w
Sea pollution 315w
Sewage 395-6w
Waste disposal 84w

Iron & steel industry
Armadale 290w
Respiratory diseases 575w
Scotland 476-7

Irvine, Mr Michael
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990, Industry (22:03:90) 1308-10
War Crimes Bill, 2R (19:03:90) 946-8
Questions
Drug crimes, Proceeds of crime 747w
Family doctors, Computer applications 554w
Housing construction, Land use 668w
Road construction 126w
Unit trusts 591w

Irving, Sir Charles
Questions
Offenders, Electronic surveillance 797-8w
Prisoners, Suicide 18-21w

Islay
Barnacle geese 116w
White fronted geese 116w

Isle of Man
Homosexuality 460w

Islington
Community charge 1117

Israel
Gaza strip 35w
Immigrants 408w
Occupied territories 408w

ITE
see Stock Exchange

IUKADGE
Intellectual property 524w

Ivory
64w
Hong Kong 717-8w

Jack, Mr Michael
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990 (21:03:90) 1181-3
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 224, 243-4
Questions
Acid house, Lancashire 356w
Aerospace industry 428w
Aerospace industry, Trade unions 467
Arts finance 413w
Assisted places scheme, Parental contributions 382w
Community care, Inspection units 385w

Jack, Mr Michael—continued
Community charge, Lancashire 886, 1115
Government assistance to industry, Lancashire 169w
Heart diseases, Surgery 389-90w, 474w
Hospital admissions, Population projection 621w
Local income tax 395w
NHS administration, North Wales 874-5
Patients, Hospital consultants 729w
Rain forests 699w
Rateable value, Lancashire 528w
Road construction, Transport supplementary grants 228-34w, 650-4w
Sri Lanka, Forestry 17

Jackson, Mr Robert, Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science
Questions
Agricultural & Food Research Council, Commodities 34-5w
Committee of Vice Chancellors & Principals 627w
Food standards, Research 521w
Further education, Young people 628w
Higher education, Tuition fees 624w
Institute of Food Research 34w, 521w
Languages education, EC action 417-8w
Mandatory student grants, Degrees 628w
Open University, Educational finance 219w
Overseas students, Iraq 760-1w
Overseas students, Universities 25w
Polytechnics 519w
Student grants, Mature students 628w
Student loans, Teachers 626w
Student Loans Company, Expenditure 219w
Trinity College of Music 624w
Universities' Funding Council Scottish Committee 627w
Universities' Funding Council Welsh Committee 628w
University of Wales, Student numbers 626-8w
University of Wales, University finance 144w, 522-3w
Vocational education, Aircrew 626w

Jammu
329-30w

Janman, Mr Tim
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990, Industry (22:03:90) 1288, 1291, 1293, 1319-22
Questions
Balance of trade, Hong Kong 699w
Domestic wastes, Recycling 190w
Libyan Arab Republic, Military aid 608w
Public expenditure 374w
Rape, Sentencing 751w
Recycling, Industries 268w
Recycling, Joint ventures 190w
River pollution, EC countries 670w
Training, Costs 207w
Unofficial strikes, Law reform 143

Janner, Mr Greville
Debates etc.
War Crimes Bill, 2R (19:03:90) 898, 920, 954-61
Questions
Business statements 1246
Director of Public Prosecutions 89w
Fire prevention, Leisure facilities 509w
GATT, Clothing industry 295w
Health services, Inner city areas 179w
Hosiery & knitwear industry, Leicestershire 209w
Pop festivals, Crowd safety 138w
Pop festivals, Entertainment licensing 138w

Japan
Electronics industry 475
Exports 296w
Trade barriers 296w
Trade formalities 477

JCVI
see Joint Committee on Vaccination & Immunisation

Jersey
Homosexuality 460w

Jerusalem
Resettlement 449w

Jessel, Mr Toby
Debates etc.
Arts finance (13:03:90) 159
Business statements (15:03:90) 678
War Crimes Bill, 2R (19:03:90) 908
Questions
Arts, Ministers' domestic visits 515w
Family doctors, Contracts of employment 551w
West Middlesex University Hospital, Hospital waiting lists 999-1000

Job interview guarantee scheme
Take-up of employment 215w

Jobclubs
208w, 783w
Stretford 501w

Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Questions
AWACS, Defence contracts 289w

Johnston, Sir Russell
Questions
Iraq, Judgments 23
Romero, Archbishop, Homicide 330w
Vietnam, Foreign policy 18

Joint Committee on Vaccination & Immunisation
52w

Joint ventures
Czechoslovakia 767w
East Germany 767-8w
Recycling 190w

Jones, Mr Barry
Debates etc.
Walker, Peter, Ministerial changes (13:03:90) 455
Questions
Bridges, River Severn 383w
Floods, North Wales 243-4w
Floods, Towyn 873
Interest rates, Wales 871-2
Laura Ashley, Government assistance to industry 616w
Veterinary medicine, Bangor 773w
Ysgol Belmont 617w

Jones, Mr Gwilym
Questions
Agricultural land, North Wales 245w
Community charge, Non-payment 150
Community charge capping, South Glamorgan 877
Floods, Towyn 143w
Welsh language, Languages education 869-70
Welsh Office, Cash limits 245w

Jones, Mr Ieuan Wyn
Debates etc.
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 245, 326-8
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, 3R (15:03:90) 688, 718-9
Questions
Asbestos, Palace of Westminster 683w
Cancer, North Wales 244w
Family doctors, Medical education 181w
Food, International conferences 573w
Housing construction, Wales 874
Interest rates, Mortgage relief 659-60
Prisoners on remand, Psychiatry 396w
Telephone exchanges, Wales 13w
Terminal care, Home care services 443w
United Kingdom Acid Waters Review Group 667w
Universities' Funding Council Welsh Committee 628w

Jones, Mr Martyn
Questions
Capital investment, Manufacturing industries 11w
Chlorinated solvents, Recycling 666-7w

Jones, Mr Martyn—continued
Competition 294w
Crime victims, Statistics 1230
Exhaust emission controls, Motor vehicle testing 649w
Export of live animals, Horses 734w
Interest rates, Wales 871
Refrigerators, Chlorofluorocarbons 104w
Trades Union Congress 378w
Welsh language, Adult education 350w

Jones, Mr Robert B
Questions
Local government expenditure, Domestic rates 478-9w
Planning permission, Hertsmere Borough Council 601w
Refrigerators, Waste disposal 311w

Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Questions
Business statements 1239-40
School administration, Budgeting 26w
Tornado aircraft, Air accidents 639w

Jordan
427w

Jubilee line
233w
Construction costs 146-7w
Railway track 146-7w

Judgments
Abortion 730w
Iraq 21-5
Republic of Ireland (14:03:90) 641-8, 662

Junior hospital doctors
Scotland 116w
Working hours 116w, 477w

Juries
460w

K formulae
Water charges 490-1w

Kashmir
(22:03:90) 1333-40
Self-determination of states 329-30w

Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Questions
Iraq, Judgments 21-2

Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Debates etc.
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 206, 384
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Allocation of time motion & Rep (14:03:90) 533
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, 3R (15:03:90) 717, 724
Questions
Unemployment, North West region 664

Kennedy, Mr Charles
Debates etc.
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 182, 190-1, 235-7
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Allocation of time motion & Rep (14:03:90) 498, 519, 520-1, 556-8, 594-5, 604-6
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, 3R (15:03:90) 690, 711-4
Questions
Family credit, Social security claims 642w
Family doctors, Deprivation indicators 366w
Fisheries, Ullapool 647w
Nurses, Computers in National Health Service 53w
Nurses, Research finance 764w

Kent
Community charge 392w
Road construction 233-4w

Kenya
Ministers' visits abroad 17, 61w

Key, Mr Robert
Questions
Flood control 738w
Inland Revenue, Manpower 657-8
Registration of births deaths & marriages 998
Special constables, Recruitment 1220
Tourism, Stonehenge 213w

Kidneys
Transplant surgery 279w

Kilfedder, Mr James
Debates etc.
Appropriation (Northern Ireland) Order 1990 (12:03:90) 81-4
Northern Ireland (Emergency & Prevention of Terrorism Provisions) (Continuance) Order 1990 (12:03:90) 32
Questions
Extradition, Republic of Ireland 481-2
Northern Ireland health & social services boards, Finance 512w
Teachers, Unfair dismissal 1-2w

Kilroot power station
Construction 436w

King, Mr Roger
Debates etc.
Public transport (23:03:90) 1349, 1357, 1360-1, 1366, 1373, 1405-7
Questions
Inland Revenue, Manpower 658
Manufacturing industries, Birmingham 466
Rates & rating, Birmingham 665w
Special constables, Manpower 746-7w

King's Cross
Railway safety 654-5w

Kinmel Bay
Sea pollution 12w

Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990 (20:03:90) 1030-57
Budget March 1990, Points of Order (20:03:90) 1021
Questions
Community charge, Humberside 1007-8
Community charge, Scotland 1232-3
Interest rates, Inflation 151-2

Kirkham Prison
Prisoners 360w

Kirkhope, Mr Timothy
Questions
Mineral waters, Carbon dioxide 242w
Mineral waters, Chemicals 85w
Self-employed, Manpower 207-8w
Water filters, Bacteria 104w

Kirklees District Council
Empty housing 678w
Rent arrears 678w

Kirkwood, Mr Archy
Debates etc.
Business statements (13:03:90) 443
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 188-90, 270, 276, 277, 304-5, 435
Questions
Animal feed, Drugs 194w
Community charge 663w
GATT, Import duties 471-2
Military aircraft, Air accidents 435w
Prawns, Fish conservation 447-8w
Prawns, Fishing catches 801-2w
Social services, Personal records 369w

Kleinwort Benson
Contracts 591w
Dept of the Environment 104w
Dept of Transport 152w
Electricity supply industry 6w

Klondiking
647w

Knapman, Mr Roger
Questions
Community charge, Administrative costs 663w
Interest rates, Inflation 660

Knapman, Mr Roger—continued
Pre-school education, Voluntary organisations 996-7
Water pollution, Capital investment 311w

Knight, Dame Jill
Debates etc.
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 249
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Allocation of time motion & Rep (14:03:90) 508
Questions
Mental health community care 547w
USSR, War crimes 451w

Know-how Fund
Poland 236-40w

Knox, Mr David
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990 (20:03:90) 1045-7
Questions
Interest rates 372w
Prison population 745w

Kuwait
Human rights 409w

Kvaerner Industries
697w

Labelling
Environment protection 1113-4

Labour costs
Confederation of British Industry 659

Labour force survey
Training 141-2

Labour market
Disabled workers 135w
Economic regions 363w

Labour Party
Economic policy 474-5

Laing Properties
Takeovers 428w

Lake Baikal
Water pollution 490w

Lambeth
Homelessness 1118-9
Revenue support grant 663w
Skillcentres 216w

Lambie, Mr David
Questions
Optical charges 559w
Regional aid 297w

Lamond, Mr James
Debates etc.
Business statements (13:03:90) 451
Questions
NHS, Contracts for services 543w
Regional aid 297w
Unemployment, Oldham 138

Lamont, Rt Hon Norman, Chief Secretary to the Treasury
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990 (21:03:90) 1134-44
Budget March 1990, Industry (22:03:90) 1301
Questions
Balance of payments, UK trade with EC 424w
Balance of trade 270w, 378w
Balance of trade, Manufactured goods 378w
Budget 163w
Business, Investment 373w
Capital investment 273w
Capital investment, Business 273w
Capital investment, Manufacturing industries 11w, 651
Capital movements, Foreign companies in UK 271-2w
Central Government, Manpower 423w

Lamont, Rt Hon Norman—continued
Contingency reserve 10w
Debts, Interest rates 380w
Economic growth 371w
Exports, Imports 375w
Imports 270w
Industrial investment 271w, 373w, 423w
Inflation, Council house sales 163w
Inflation, Local government finance 371w
Interest rates, Manufacturing industries 270w
Investment, Consumption 375w
Invisible trade balance 9w
Manufacturing industries, East Midlands 651
Manufacturing industries, Industrial research 651-2
Negligence, Immunity from prosecution 160w
Personal loans, Council house sales 163w
Price increases, Consumer expenditure 9-10w
Productivity 378w
Productivity, Manufacturing industries 269w
Public expenditure 374w
Public expenditure, Objects in lieu of tax 10w
Public sector assets 275w
Public sector earnings 275-6w
Retail price index, Energy prices 370w
Self-employed 374w
Separate taxation of wife's earnings, Low incomes 369w
Tax yields 656
Taxation 656-7
Taxation, National income 655-6

Lancashire
Acid house 356w
Community charge 886, 1115
Employment 500w
Family doctors 729w
Government assistance to industry 169w
Rateable value 528w
Rates & rating 479-80w
Regional aid 428-9w
Road construction 534w
Unemployment 500-1w

Lancashire County Council
Standard spending assessments 666w

Land acquisition
EC law 593w
Regional health authorities 279w
Sunderland 593w
Vacant land 1107-8

Land ownership & tenure
Foreign investment in UK 397w
Vacant land 668w

Land pollution
490w, 1104
Conifers 269w
Local authorities 1103
Radioactive wastes 1104
Wales 1103-4

Land reclamation
Derelict land 681w
Liverpool 681w

Land use
Housing construction 668w
Set-aside schemes 738w

Land values
Bankside power station 319w, 400w
Sudbury House 400w

Landkey
Primary education 418-9w

Lang, Mr Ian, Minister of State for Scotland
Questions
Assisted places scheme, Costs 158w
Assisted places scheme, Scotland 583-4w
Child care, Equal opportunities 706w
Community care, Finance 120w

Lang, Mr Ian*—*continued
Cumbernauld Development Corporation, Pay 115w
Educational buildings, Scotland 454w
Educational finance, Scotland 353w
Factories, Strathclyde 119w
Fisheries, Ullapool 647w
Fishery protection, Scotland 451-2w
Fishing gear, Scotland 452w
Handicapped students, Student grants 452-3w
Inverclyde enterprise zone, Employment opportunities 353-4w
Low pay, Scotland 584w
Multiply handicapped, Social services 352w
Multiply handicapped, Special education 352w
New towns development corporations, Pay 115-6w
Pre-school education, Scotland 120w
Public expenditure, Scotland 646-8w
Sea lice, Pest control 88w
Seals, Fish farming 353w
Self-governing schools, Scotland 158w
Student grants, Scotland 157-8w, 647w
Student loans, Scotland 523w
Technology academies, Expenditure 159w, 413w
Technology academies, Glasgow 452w
Technology academies, Scotland 452w
Tourist industry, Scotland 351w
Urban programme, Glasgow 645-6w
White fish, Prices 261w
Women's employment, Day care of children 586w

Languages education
625w
Curriculum 324w
EC action 417-8w
Education & industry 628w
Welsh language 12w, 869-70

LASERPC
see London & South East Regional Planning Conference

Latham, Mr Michael
Debates etc.
Bazoft, Farzad (15:03:90) 670
Questions
Community charge 694w
European monetary system, Exchange rates 155w
GCE A level, Teachers 33w
Training & enterprise councils 208w

Laura Ashley
Government assistance to industry 616w

Law enforcement
USA 427w

Law of Property (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1989
Questions
235w
Conveyancing 316w

Law of the Sea Convention
Seabed mining 145w

Law reform
Conveyancing 108w, 110w, 112w
Insider trading 297w
Town & country planning 673w
Unofficial strikes 143

Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Bill (HL) 1989/90
Questions
107-12w, 580w

Law Society of Scotland
108w

Lawrence, Mr Ivan
Questions
Admissibility of evidence, Scottish courts 580w
County courts 531w
Extradition, Republic of Ireland 484-5

Lawrence, Mr Ivan*—*continued
House of Fraser, Company investigations 14
Negligence, Immunity from prosecution 160w

Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990 (21:03:90) 1126

Lay visitors
Southwark 795w

Le Vay Committee
see Magistrates' Courts Review

Lead
Batteries 301w

Leadbitter, Mr Ted
Debates etc.
Tees & Hartlepool Port Authority Bill, 2R (15:03:90) 736-47, 760, 766
War Crimes Bill, 2R (19:03:90) 935-8
Questions
Cervical cancer, Screening 179w
Horse meat, Food exports 242w
Hospital patients, Northern Regional Health Authority 278-80w
NHS, Contracts for services 543w
Regional aid 297w

Leader of the House of Commons
439-40w

Lebanon
Political refugees 360w

Lee, Mr John
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990 (20:03:90) 1042-3
Questions
Health services, NHS administration 562w

Leeds
Road traffic control 536w

Leeds Development Corporation
1106
Advertising 268w
Compulsory purchase 606w
Expenditure 715w
Publicity 268w
Rented housing 1106-7

Legal aid scheme
Conveyancing 111w

Legal documents
(15:03:90) 683
Takeovers 589w

Legal profession
Scotland 110-1w

"Legal Profession in Scotland"
110-1w

Legislation
Welsh language 11-2w

Leicestershire
House of Commons debates 440w
Hosiery & knitwear industry 209w

Leigh, Mr Edward
Debates etc.
Agriculture (16:03:90) 856
Business statements (13:03:90) 449
Marriage (Registration of Buildings) Bill, 2R order read (16:03:90) 860
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 178, 424
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, 3R (15:03:90) 691, 720-1

Leighton, Mr Ron
Questions
Employment training, Costs 207w
Inner cities initiative, Expenditure 265w
Network SouthEast 125w
Parking offences, Newham 508w
Part-time employment, Training 414w
Skills Training Agency, Deloitte Haskins & Sells 575w

Leighton, Mr Ron*—*continued
Transport infrastructure, EC action 532-3w
UK trade with EC, Balance of trade 291w
Women's employment, Day care of children 144
Youth training scheme, Per capita costs 499-500w

Leisure facilities
Fire prevention 509w

Leptospirosis
Vaccination 734w

Lester, Mr Jim
Questions
Vietnam, Development aid 18

Lestor, Miss Joan
Debates etc.
Families (16:03:90) 825, 829-34

Leukaemia
60w
Children 704w
Dounreay 108w
Telecommunications industry 251w

Lewes Prison
753w

Lewis, Mr Terry
Questions
A580, Road works 534w
Balance of trade, Manufactured goods 292w
Community charge benefits 662w

Liability
Financial services 306w
Investment business 306w

Liability for animals
Dogs 750w

Libyan Arab Republic
Military aid 608w

Licensed teachers
33w
Wales 517-8w

Licensing
Atrazine 240w
Drugs 367w
Motor vehicle testing 309-10w
Poultry 85-6w
RU486 541w
Salmon 573w
Shellfish 448w
Veterinary medicine 572w
Waste disposal 75-7w, 186w

Licensing laws
Northern Ireland (12:03:90) 127

Licensing (Northern Ireland) Order 1990
Debates etc.
(12:03:90) 127

Lifts
Disabled facilities grants 395w
Housing & handicapped 395w

Light dues
Sailing boats 495w

Lilley, Mr Peter*, *Financial Secretary to the Treasury
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990 (21:03:90) 1133, 1159, 1191, 1201-8
Consolidated Fund (No 2) Bill, 1R (15:03:90) 777
Questions
Business expansion scheme, Rented housing 163w
Business expansion scheme, Tax allowances 165w
Capital allowances 527w
Capital gains tax, Taxpayers 273w
Company cars, Taxation 530w
Company taxation 377-8w

Lilley, Mr Peter—continued
Composite tax rate system, Tax yields 164-5w
Corporation tax 161-2w, 375w
Corporation tax, EC countries 375w
Debt collection 688-9w
Debts written off, Banks 380w
Earned income, Tax rates & bands 421-4w
European Investment Bank, Loans 527-8w
European monetary system, Exchange rates 370w
Income tax 611w, 653-4
Income tax, Married men 425w
Income tax, Tax rates & bands 278w, 425-6w
Inflation 653
Inflation, EC countries 272w
Inheritance tax, Shares 374w
Inland Revenue, Civil service manpower 689w
Inland Revenue, Manpower 657-8, 761-2w
Interest rates 657
Low incomes, Tax thresholds 424-6w
Mortgage interest rates 370w
Mortgage interest rates, Homelessness 657
Mortgage interest rates, Owner occupied housing 378w
Mortgage relief 377w, 528-9w
Mortgage relief, Investment income 270w
Mortgage relief, Scotland 377w
Mortgages 529-30w
Mortgages, Economic regions 164w
Personal equity plans 379w
Personal income, Tax rates & bands 272w
Personal savings 374w
Personal taxation, Merchant seamen 410w
Privatisation 375-6w
Privatisation, Treasury 10-1w
Profit sharing 162w
Profit sharing, Pay incentives 761w
Rateable value, Lancashire 528w
Retail price index 409w
Retail price index, Mortgage relief 411w
Retail price index, Rents 275w
Schedule E income tax, Women 409w
Stamp duties, Tax yields 162w
Take-home pay, Married men 371w
Tax allowances, Banks 379w
Tax allowances, Day nurseries 376w
Tax allowances, Health insurance 10w
Tax burden, Married men 426w
Tax burden, Personal income 530w
Tax thresholds, Tax rates & bands 761w
Tax yields, Consumer expenditure 374w
Tax yields, Economic regions 410w
Trades Union Congress 378w
Unpaid taxes, Personal income 273-4w
Valuation services, Operating costs 609w
Women's employment, Pay 275w

Lincolnshire
Acid rain 266w

Lincolnshire & Humberside Arts Association
(13:03:90) 155-70

Lindane
580w
Sea pollution 87w
Transport of hazardous materials 127w

Line of route
885

Listed buildings
Bankside power station 494w

Litherland, Mr Robert
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990 (21:03:90) 1161-2
Questions
Business statements 1245
Hepatitis, Health education 563w
Mortgage defaulters 369w

Lithuania
662-3
Privatisation 608w
Recognition of states 449-50w

Litter
311w
Railway land 147-8w

Littlemore Hospital
Capital investment 1000

Liver diseases
Transplant surgery 1008

Liverpool
420w
Arts Council grants 420w
Estate Action 600w
Family credit 154w
Housing associations 681w
Housing finance 681w
Housing investment programmes 1117-8
Housing problems 1117-8
Land reclamation 681w
Rented housing 1107

Livingstone, Mr Ken
Questions
Balance of trade, Manufactured goods 291w
Network SouthEast 125w

Livsey, Mr Richard
Debates etc.
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 320-2
Public transport (23:03:90) 1365-8
Questions
Community charge capping 666w
Employment training 209-10w
Homelessness, Wales 873-4
Imports 270w

Llandrillo College
12w

Lloyd, Sir Ian
Questions
Breathalysers 24w
Breathalysers, Police powers 355w
Electronics industry, Japan 475
Neighbourhood watch schemes 749w

Lloyd, Mr Peter, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Home Office
Questions
Al-Fayed, Mohammed, Deportation 743w
Animal welfare, Wild animals 794w
Arrests, Demonstrations 755w
Arson, Wales 138w
Blood sports, Dogs 282w
Breathalysers 24w
Breathalysers, Police powers 355w, 756w
British citizenship 755w
British citizenship, Administrative delays 634-5w
Community policing 753w
Crime victims, Statistics 756w
Deportation 750w
Devon & Cornwall Police, Manpower 755w
Dogs, Liability for animals 750w
Domestic violence, Criminal statistics 748-9w
Drug crimes, Police 795w
Electoral register, Expenditure 354w
Firearms certificates, Fees & charges 356w
Football, Hooliganism 460w
Gaming machines, Young people 755w
Homosexuality, Jersey 460w
Immigration applications, Members 16w
Immigration rules 794w
Lay visitors, Southwark 795w
Management consultants, Metropolitan Police 24w
Meibion Glyndwr, Wales 16-7w
Metropolitan Police, Crack 752w
Metropolitan Police, Domestic violence 459w, 759w
Metropolitan Police, Recruitment 752w
Missing persons 750-1w
Missing persons, Children 755w
Northumbria Police Authority 754w
Police 749w
Police, Pay settlements 356w
Police, Recruitment 762w
Police, Rent allowances 756w
Police community liaison committees, London boroughs 511w

Lloyd, Mr Peter—continued
Police consultative groups, Greater London 796w
Political refugees, Lebanon 360w
Pop festivals, Crowd safety 138w
Pop festivals, Entertainment licensing 138w
Prisoners' rights, Codes of practice 17-8w
Public order, Local authorities 752w
Public order policing, Bristol 361-2w
Public relations, Metropolitan Police 23w
Rape, Departmental circulars 751-2w
Special constables 1221
Special constables, Ethnic minorities 1221
Special constables, Expenditure 361w
Special constables, Manpower 360-1w, 746-7w
Special constables, Pay incentives 1221
Special constables, Recruitment 746-7w, 1220-1
Special constables, Training 361w
Statistics, Metropolitan Police 22w
West Midlands Police, Domestic violence 748w
West Midlands Police, Inquiries 458w

Lloyd, Mr Tony
Questions
Approved training organisations, Day nurseries 136w
Catalytic converters, Cost benefit analysis 127w
Consumer credit, Interest rates 292w
Dept of Trade & Industry, Inner cities initiative 44-5w
EC internal trade, Inner city areas 44w
Fish, Sea pollution 84-5w
Greater Manchester Police Authority, Inquiries 757w
Guatemala 264w
Health & Safety Executive, Civil service manpower 211w
Health & Safety Executive, Disclosure of information 218w, 504w
Health & Safety Executive, Manpower 146
Inner cities initiative, Hulme 303-4w
Inner city areas, Departmental responsibilities 191-2w
Intensive care, Manchester 153
Jobclubs, Stretford 501w
Pollution monitoring, Irish sea 106-7w
Public sector housing, Dept of Transport 233w
Public sector housing, Greater Manchester 395w
Public sector housing, Home Office 137-8w
Radioactive waste disposal, Irish Sea 85w
River pollution, North West region 602w
River pollution, River Mersey 603-4w
Roads, Public expenditure 149w
Sea pollution, Irish Sea 315w
Sea pollution, Plankton 84w
Sewage, Fylde 186w
Sewage, Irish Sea 395-6w
Sewage, Seas & oceans 187w
Sunset Radio 397w

Loans
Community care 65-6w
European Investment Bank 161w, 527-8w
Social Fund 74w

Local authorities
Companies 491-2w
Contracts for services 672-3w
Employment opportunities 213w
Land pollution 1103
Neighbourhood watch schemes 1230-1
Public order 752w
Standard community charge 185w
Wales 443-4w

Local authority associations
Handicapped 365w

Local authority powers
Local government expenditure 665w

Local education authorities
Billing 30w
Child workers 368w
Devon 323w

Local education authorities—continued
Educational finance 418w
Special education 225w

Local education authority training grant scheme
33w, 520w, 870

Local enterprise companies
Government grants 497-9w

Local Government Act 1966
Questions
282-4w

Local Government Act 1972
Questions
Wales 11w

Local Government Act 1988
Questions
189w

Local Government & Housing Act 1989
Questions
315w, 603w

Local government borrowing
Scotland 585w

Local government constituencies
Oxford 715w

Local government expenditure
479-81w, 599w
Bedfordshire County Council 1109
Community charge 663-4
Community charge capping 185w
Domestic rates 478-9w
Education 585w
Educational finance 669-70w
Food Safety Bill (HL) 1989/90 448w
Health education 629w
Local authority powers 665w
Metropolitan districts 481-2w
Non-metropolitan counties 657-8w
Non-metropolitan districts 481-2w
Personal social services 473w
Rates & rating 619w
Standard spending assessments 480w, 659-60w, 664-5w
Wales 619w
Waltham Forest 680w

Local government finance
315w, 479w
Capital 488w
Civil servants 452w
Collective community charge 714w
Community charge 716w
Devon 487-8w
Dorset County Council 478w
Greater London 392w
Humberside 480w
Inflation 371w
Local income tax 480w
Metropolitan Police 392w
Northern Ireland 226w
Nottingham 666w
Revenue support grant 489w
Somerset 487-8w
Urban programme 391w
Wales 344-8w

Local government functions
Community care 388-9w
Community charge 185w

Local government pensions
601w

Local government revenue
Community charge 617w, 666w
Council house sales 701-2w
Domestic rates 666w
Glasgow District Council 701-2w
Local income tax 702w
Scotland 778-84w
Uniform business rate 678-9w

Local government services
Community charge 1111
Competition 189w

Local government services—continued
Contracts for services 617-8w

Local government social services
Handicapped 182-3w
Old people's homes 388w

Local government staff
485-6w
Community charge 1111-2
Manpower 485w
Non-metropolitan counties 486w
Pension rights 491w

Local income tax
395w
Local government finance 480w
Local government revenue 702w
Scotland 581-2w, 702w

Local radio
Broadcasting bias 17w
Manchester 397w

Loch Lomond
National parks 157w

Lochaber Power Company (Rateable Values) (Scotland) Order 1990
Debates etc.
(12:03:90) 29

Lockerbie
Air accidents 2

Lofthouse, Mr Geoffrey
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990 (20:03:90) 1045
Questions
Consumer credit, Interest rates 292w
Crowd control, Sportsgrounds 633w
Health & Safety Executive, EC law 212w
Optical charges 559w
Rape, Departmental circulars 752w

London & South East Regional Planning Conference
Planning permission 394w

London assessment studies
121-2w, 156w, 533w, (14:03:90) 640
Clapham Common 4
Public opinion 532w

London boroughs
Police community liaison committees 511w
Rented housing 92-4w
Standard spending assessments 96-8w

London Docklands Railway Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
2R order read (15:03:90) 649, (22:03:90) 1219

London Local Authorities (No 2) Bill (HL) 1988/89
Debates etc.
2R order read (15:03:90) 650, (22:03:90) 1219

London Local Government Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
1R (14:03:90) 491-3

London Regional Transport
129w

London Regional Transport (Penalty Fares) Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
2R order read (15:03:90) 649, (22:03:90) 1219

London Residuary Body
Property transfer 268w

London Underground
11, 233w, 654-5w
Children 773-4w
Government grants 122w
Investment 122w
One person operation 655w
Railway accidents 774-5w
Railway safety 497-8w, 655w

London Underground—continued
Underground railways 773-4w

London Underground Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
2R order read (15:03:90) 649, (22:03:90) 1219

London Underground (Victoria) Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
2R order read (15:03:90) 649, (22:03:90) 1219

Long stay patients
174-6w

Lonrho
Disclosure of information 431w

Lord, Mr Michael
Questions
Special constables, Manpower 746-7w

Lord Advocate
Audit 582w

Lord Chancellor
Advertising 90w
Civil service manpower 791-2w
Management consultants 91w
Public relations 89-90w
Statistics 89w

Lord President of the Council
Ministerial duties 439-40w

Lorries
Road tax 147w
Spray suppression 12

Lost working days
Back pain 578w
Industrial disputes 214w
Unofficial strikes 142-3

Low cost home ownership schemes
Housing finance 668w

Low flying
Complaints 331w
Military aircraft 331-2w

Low incomes
Community charge 265w
Prescription charges exemptions 461w
Separate taxation of wife's earnings 369w
Tax thresholds 424-6w

Low pay
207w, 502w
Community charge 149
Scotland 584w
Wages councils 252-8w

Low Pay Unit
149

Low rateable value areas grants
480w

Loyden, Mr Eddie
Debates etc.
Oral question time intervention (13:03:90) 145
Questions
Citizens' Advice Bureaux, Political impartiality 476
Community charge 662w
Optical charges 559w
Rented housing, Liverpool 1107
Tape recorded evidence, Police interrogation 753w

LRT
see London Regional Transport

Luce, Rt Hon Richard, Minister of State, Privy Council Office (Minister for the Arts)
Debates etc.
Arts finance, Ministerial statements (13:03:90) 155-70
Questions
Advertising, Office of Arts & Libraries 9w

Luce, Rt Hon Richard—*continued*
Art works, Export licensing 235w, 317w
Arts, Budgeting 9w
Arts, Tourism 413w
Arts Council grants, Liverpool 420w
Arts Council grants, Playhouse Theatre Liverpool 420w
Arts finance 413w
Arts finance, Merseyside 420w
Civil servants, Conditions of employment 527w
Civil service agencies, Managers 609w
Disabled workers, Government departments 235w
Fossils, Bathgate 413w
Management consultants, Office of Arts & Libraries 9w
Museums & galleries, Repairs & maintenance 420w
Office of Arts & Libraries, Expenditure 420-1w
Privatisation, Office of Arts & Libraries 8w
Public relations, Office of Arts & Libraries 7-8w
Publicity, Office of Arts & Libraries 526-7w
Science Museum, Attendance 8w
Statistics, Office of Arts & Libraries 7w

Lyell, Rt Hon Sir Nicholas, *Solicitor-General*
Debates etc.
2R & rem stages* (12:03:90) 128
Capital Allowances Bill (HL), 2R (12:03:90) 128

M1
Road traffic 151-2w
Road works 126w

M4
Wales 13w

McAllion, Mr John
Questions
Consumer credit, Interest rates 292w
Dental charges 541w
Quota of disabled workers 210-1w

McAvoy, Mr Thomas
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990 (21:03:90) 1183-6
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 288-94, 302
Questions
Batteries, Lead 301w
Business statements 1248
Dental charges 1005
Drug abuse, Health education 636w
Taxation, National income 655-6
Uniform business rate, Sports facilities 485w
Wages councils 129w

McCallum Committee
see Universities' Funding Council Scottish Committee

McCartney, Mr Ian
Debates etc.
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 209, 231-3, 294, 355-6, 425, 426-8, 429
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Allocation of time motion & Rep (14:03:90) 519, 526, 534, 536
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, 3R (15:03:90) 708, 713
Questions
Batteries, Lead 301w
Dental charges 541w

Macclesfield Borough Council
Community charge 665w

Macclesfield Health Authority
Hospital closures 1000-1

McCrea, Rev William
Debates etc.
Appropriation (Northern Ireland) Order 1990 (12:03:90) 88-93
Northern Ireland (Emergency & Prevention of Terrorism Provisions) (Continuance) Order 1990 (12:03:90) 46, 68

McCrea, Rev William—*continued*
Questions
Extradition, Republic of Ireland 483
Northern Ireland Fire Authority, Appeals 436w

McCrindle, Mr Robert
Questions
Broadcasting Bill 1989/90 754w
Business, Self-regulating organisations 469
Business travel, Package holidays 170-1w
Council house rents 1105
European monetary system, West Germany 369w
Investment business, Liability 306w
Securities & Investments Board 300w

Macdonald, Mr Calum
Questions
Balance of trade, East Germany 291w
British Rail 123w
China, Compensation 449w
Exercise Northaxe 2/90 332-3w
Exercise Northaxe 2/90, Aircraft 332w
Exercise Northaxe 2/90, Military aircraft 332w
Exercise Northaxe 2/90, Warships 332w
Gaelic language 584-5w
Industrial investment 373w
Light dues, Sailing boats 495w
Nature conservation, Scotland 647-8w

McFall, Mr John
Questions
Business statements 1241
Clyde Submarine Base, Radiation hazards 334w
Higher education, Tuition fees 624w
Industrial investment 373w
Leukaemia, Dounreay 108w
Loch Lomond, National parks 157w
Pollution control, North Sea 312w

Macfarlane, Sir Neil
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990 (20:03:90) 1036-8
Questions
Business, Consumer Credit Act 1974 766w

McGrady, Mr Eddie
Debates etc.
Appropriation (Northern Ireland) Order 1990 (12:03:90) 93-8, 101
Questions
Downe Hospital, Anaesthetics 311w
Electricity disconnections, Storms 436w
Roads, Expenditure 437-8w

MacGregor, Rt Hon John, *Secretary of State for Education & Science*
Questions
Assisted places scheme, Parental contributions 382w
Handicapped students, Student grants 419-20w
National Curriculum Modern Foreign Languages Working Group 324w
Student loans 708-9w
Teachers, Pay 323-4w

McKay, Mr Allen
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990 (21:03:90) 1195-6
Budget March 1990, Industry (22:03:90) 1302, 1320-2
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Allocation of time motion & Rep (14:03:90) 531
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, 3R (15:03:90) 687, 706
Steel framed houses, Nottingham (20:03:90) 1093, 1100
Questions
Balance of trade 378w
Health & Safety Executive, Manpower 149-50
Housing construction, Environment protection 667w
Recycling Advisory Group 479

MacKay, Mr Andrew
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990 (21:03:90) 1163-5
Questions
Public order, Local authorities 752w
Unemployment 204w

McKelvey, Mr William
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990, Industry (22:03:90) 1272-5
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 275, 277, 290
Questions
Business statements 1249-50
Community charge benefits, Scotland 1311
Dental charges 541w

Maclean, Mr David, *Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture*
Debates etc.
Coastal protection (21:03:90) 1214-6
Questions
Animal feed, Drugs 194w
Animal feed, Food contamination 242w
Atrazine, Licensing 240w
Beef, Benzene 571w
Biotechnology, Intellectual property 573w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy 326w, 735-6w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Antelopes 573-4w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Carmarthen 656w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Disease control 326w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Export of live animals 326w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, National Farmers' Union 326w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Scrapie 326w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Sheep 326-7w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Slaughterhouses 79-80w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Yorkshire & Humberside 79-80w
British Nutrition Protection Board 573w
Cherries, Food colourings 327w
Eggs, Compensation 81w
Eggs, Salmonella 77-8w, 82w, 193-4w
Environmentally sensitive areas, Expenditure 572w
Export of live animals, Horses 734w
Flood control 738w
Food Advisory Committee, Public appointments 735w
Food hygiene, Devon County Council 325w
Food labelling, Food flavourings 242w
Food Safety Bill (HL) 1989/90, Local government expenditure 448w
Food standards, Research 87-8w
Fungicides, Agricultural research 241w
Horse meat, Food exports 242w
Leptospirosis, Vaccination 734w
Margarine, Food standards 325w
Mineral waters, Bacteria 86w
Mineral waters, Benzene 86w
Mineral waters, Carbon dioxide 242w
Mineral waters, Chemicals 85w
Mineral waters, Composition labelling 240-1w
Mineral waters, Trade descriptions 240w
Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food, Disclosure of information 800w
Novel food, Food standards 87w
Pesticides, Agricultural production 74w
Pesticides, Consumer protection 74-5w
Pesticides, EC action 75w
Poultry, Animal Health Act 1981 81w
Poultry, Licensing 85-6w
Poultry, Salmonella 81-2w, 243w, 327w
Poultry, Testing 85-6w, 240w
Rabies, Disease control 241w
Scrapie 327w
Scrapie, Cattle 327w
Slaughterhouses, Civil service manpower 325w

Maclean, Mr David*—*continued
Transmissible encephalopathies, Animal feed 734w
Veterinary medicine, Licensing 572w

McLeish, Mr Henry
Questions
AIDS, Blood transfusions 557-8w
House of Commons staff, Industrial health & safety 442w
House of Commons staff, Industrial relations 343w, 441-2w
Training, Labour force survey 141-2
Unemployment benefits, Social security abuse 343w

Maclennan, Mr Robert
Debates etc.
Arts finance (13:03:90) 159
War Crimes Bill, 2R (19:03:90) 899
Questions
Gaming machines, Young people 755w
Neighbourhood watch schemes, Crime prevention 1222
Red Deer Commission, Finance 158w
Scottish Agricultural College, Public appointments 351w

McLoughlin, Mr Patrick*, *Under-Secretary of State for Transport
Debates etc.
Tees & Hartlepool Port Authority Bill, 2R (15:03:90) 747-9
Questions
Air fares, Competition 10
Air routes, EC transport policy 123w
Air traffic control 126-7w
Aircraft noise, Noise control 654w
Fishing vessels, Immersion suits 124-5w
Light dues, Sailing boats 495w
Manchester Airport, Air fares 10-1
MV Marchioness, Compensation 6
MV Marchioness, Public inquiries 5-6
Prestwick Airport, Air traffic control 497w
Prestwick Airport, Air travel 497w
Regional airports, Passengers 121w
Transport of hazardous materials, Lindane 127w
Wrecks, River Thames 776w

McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
Debates etc.
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Allocation of time motion & Rep (14:03:90) 558-9, 609
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, 3R (15:03:90) 709-11
Northern Ireland (Emergency & Prevention of Terrorism Provisions) (Continuance) Order 1990 (12:03:90) 66
Questions
Electricity tariffs, Northern Ireland 139-40w
Hospital beds, Intensive care 563w
Industrial training 206w
Royal Hospital Chelsea 435w

McNair-Wilson, Sir Patrick
Questions
New Forest Review 446w

McNamara, Mr Kevin
Debates etc.
Appropriation (Northern Ireland) Order 1990 (12:03:90) 77, 125
Northern Ireland (Emergency & Prevention of Terrorism Provisions) (Continuance) Order 1990 (12:03:90) 36-42, 54
Questions
Day care of children, Northern Ireland Office 513w
Equal opportunities, Northern Ireland Office 226w, 513-4w, 624w
Extradition, Republic of Ireland 485-6
Prisoners, Suicide 2w, 226w

McWilliam, Mr John
Questions
Recycling Advisory Group 291w

Madden, Mr Max
Debates etc.
Business statements (15:03:90) 680-1
Human embryo experiments, Public petitions (16:03:90) 793
India (22:03:90) 1333-6
Members' interests (13:03:90) 177
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 347-8, 359, 379-80, 400-2, 422
Questions
Balance of trade, OECD countries 660
British citizenship 755w
Business statements 1246
Caravan sites, Bradford 492-3w
Educational finance, Gypsies 321-3w
Educational needs, Gypsies 321w
GATT, Multifibre arrangement 472-3
Immigration appeals 717w
Naval bases, Forest Moor 202-3w
RAF Fylingdales, Environmental health 720w
Road traffic control, Leeds 536w
School milk, School administration 709w
Social Fund, Bradford 284-8w
Social Fund, Computers in government departments 740w
Special constables, Ethnic minorities 1221
Sri Lanka, Human rights 17
Trolleybuses, Bradford 496w

Madel, Mr David
Questions
Community charge capping, Bedfordshire County Council 1109
M1, Road works 126w

MAFF
see Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food

Maginnis, Mr Ken
Debates etc.
Northern Ireland (Emergency & Prevention of Terrorism Provisions) (Continuance) Order 1990 (12:03:90) 33-4, 35, 45, 48-53
Republic of Ireland, Extradition (13:03:90) 171
Republic of Ireland, Judgments (14:03:90) 641-5

Magistrates' courts
Civil service agencies 634w

Magistrates' Courts Review
634w

Magnet schools
709w

Mahon, Mrs Alice
Debates etc.
Business statements (13:03:90) 452
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 207, 212-3, 239, 352, 359, 368, 379, 394, 409, 411, 420, 433
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Allocation of time motion & Rep (14:03:90) 498, 559-60
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, 3R (15:03:90) 715
Questions
AIDS, Blood transfusions 558w
Balance of trade, OECD countries 378w
Bombings, Birmingham 745w
British Telecom, Telephone charges 666
Cambodia, Refugees 792w
Disabled workers 210w
Environmental impact assessment 656w
Low pay, Scotland 584w
Women's employment, Day care of children 144

Mailing lists
170w

Major, Rt Hon John*, *Chancellor of the Exchequer
Debates etc.
Budget, Ministerial statements (20:03:90) 1011-29

Major, Rt Hon John*—*continued
Questions
Bank notes 273w
Civil list, Royal Family 528w
EC budget contributions 411-2w
European monetary system, Exchange rates 369w
Inflation 653
Inflation, Economic policy 652
Interest rates 654-5
Mortgage defaulters 369w
Mortgages 655
Mortgages, Debts 654-5
National income 277w
National income, Pay 10w
Owner occupied housing 654
Retail price index, Community charge 652-3
Tax burden 410w

Malaria
Notifiable diseases 182w

Malins, Mr Humfrey
Debates etc.
Road construction, Public petitions (14:03:90) 640
Questions
Judgments, Republic of Ireland 662

Mallon, Mr Seamus
Questions
Bombings, Birmingham 1227

Malpas bypass
Road construction 15w

Management consultants
Cabinet Office 41-2w
Central Office of Information 168w
Dept of Education & Science 33w
Dept of Employment 259w
Dept of Energy 5w
Dept of Health 57w, 570w
Dept of Social Security 72-3w
Dept of the Environment 103w
Dept of Trade & Industry 173w
Dept of Transport 310w
Expenditure 103w, 570w
Fees & charges 5w, 9w, 15w, 24w, 33w, 35-6w, 41-2w, 48w, 51w, 57w, 72-3w, 86-7w, 91w, 114w, 134w, 168w, 173w, 259w, 277w, 310w, 360w
Foreign & Commonwealth Office 35-6w
Home Office 360w
Lord Chancellor 91w
Metropolitan Police 24w
Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food 86-7w
Ministry of Defence 51w
Office of Arts & Libraries 9w
Office of Population Censuses & Surveys 57w
Prime Minister 42w
Privy Council 48w
Scottish Office 114w
Training Agency 134w
Treasury 277w
Welsh Office 15w

Management techniques
Northern Ireland Office 624w

Managers
Civil service agencies 609w

Manchester
501w
Intensive care 153
Local radio 397w
Olympic games 1236

Manchester Airport
Air fares 10-1

Manchester Prison
796-7w

Mandatory student grants
Degrees 628w

Manpower
Accountants 607w
Agricultural workers 197-8w

***Manpower**—continued*
Bailiffs 91w
Central Government 423w
Companies 46w
Devon & Cornwall Police 755w
Engineers 607w
Factory Inspectorate 147
Health & Safety Executive 146, 149-50
Hospital consultants 180w
House of Commons staff 441w
Inland Revenue 657-8, 761-2w
Local government staff 485w
Medical laboratory scientific officers 386w
Members' staff 882
Mines & Quarries Inspectorate 500w
NHS 999
Nurses 1003
Property Holdings 101w
Scottish Conveyancing & Confirmation Practitioners Board 107-8w
Self-employed 207-8w
Social security 406-7w
Special constables 360-1w, 746-7w
Speech therapists 584w
Wages councils 252-8w
West Midlands Regional Health Authority 1005-6

Mans, Mr Keith
Questions
Community charge, Local government staff 1111-2
Drug seizures 750w
Nurses, Pay 1002
Pollution control, North Sea 106w
Sea pollution, North Sea 671w
Tourist industry, Self-employed 211w

Manufactured goods
Balance of trade 291-2w, 378w

Manufacturing industries
Birmingham 466
Capital investment 11w, 651
East Midlands 651
Industrial investment 469-70
Industrial research 651-2
Interest rates 270w
Productivity 269w, 376w, 1234-5
West Midlands 466

Maples, Mr John
Debates etc.
Haberdashers Askes School (23:03:90) 1414-9, 1422
Questions
Community charge, Barking & Dagenham 153
Resource management initiative 562w

Marek, Dr John
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990, Industry (22:03:90) 1277, 1322-8
Questions
Fiji, Constitutions 35w
Taxation, National income 656

Margarine
Food standards 325w

Marginal tax rates
Social security benefits 401-3w
Tax rates & bands 401-3w

Marine animals
Animal diseases 242w

Marland, Mr Paul
Debates etc.
Business statements (15:03:90) 676
Questions
Dental health 567w
Dental health, Sugar 568w

Marlow, Mr Tony
Questions
Armed conflict, UN resolutions 38w
Iraq, Bazoft, Farzad 450w
M1, Road traffic 151-2w

Marriage (Registration of Buildings) Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
2R order read (16:03:90) 860, (23:03:90) 1412

Married men
Income tax 425w
Take-home pay 371w
Tax burden 426w

Marshall, Mr David
Questions
Air transport, USA 124w
Citizens' Advice Bureaux, Government grants 298w

Marshall, Mr Jim
Debates etc.
Appropriation (Northern Ireland) Order 1990 (12:03:90) 75-81
Questions
Bombings, Birmingham 745-6w
Citizens' Advice Bureaux, Government grants 298w
Uniform business rate, Sports facilities 674w

Marshall, Mr John
Questions
Arts, Tourism 413w
Centre for Policy Studies 89w
Civil service agencies, Managers 609w
Community charge capping 488w
Educational qualifications, Inner London boroughs 627-8w
Interest rates 657
London Underground, Investment 122w
Mental health community care 363-4w
Postal deliveries, Privatisation 478
Productivity 378w
Rent control, Barnet 880-1
Sunday trading 396w
VAT, NHS 424w

Marshall, Mr Michael
Debates etc.
Bazoft, Farzad (15:03:90) 669

Martin, Mr David
Questions
Curriculum, Child rearing 519w
Magistrates' courts, Civil service agencies 634w
Mental health services, Health services finance 560w
Museums & galleries, Repairs & maintenance 420w
Noise control 711w

Martin, Mr Michael J
Questions
Advisory services, Finance 475-6
Phoenix House Trust, Drug rehabilitation centre 704w

Martlew, Mr Eric
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990 (21:03:90) 1146, 1154, 1163, 1173-4, 1190
Questions
AIDS, Blood transfusions 558w
Trading standards departments, Consumer protection 464-5

Maternity services
Community health services 762w
Hospitals 762w
NHS hospital trusts 762w

Mature students
Student grants 628w

***Maude, Mr Francis**, Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office*
Questions
Advertising, Foreign & Commonwealth Office 37w
Antarctic, Snow & ice 450w
Armed conflict, UN resolutions 38w
Brunei, Treaties 449w

***Maude, Mr Francis**—continued*
China, Compensation 449w
European Development Bank, Capital investment 526w
Falkland Islands, Penguins 38w
Fiji, Constitutions 35w
Gibraltar, Sovereignty 145w
Guatemala 264w
Higher civil servants, Foreign & Commonwealth Office 264w
Hong Kong, Passports 407-8w
Kashmir, Self-determination of States 329-30w
Management consultants, Foreign & Commonwealth Office 35-6w
North Korea 330w
Privatisation, Foreign & Commonwealth Office 37w
Public relations, Foreign & Commonwealth Office 36-8w
Romero, Archbishop, Homicide 330w
Spain, National parks 526w
Statistics, Foreign & Commonwealth Office 36w
UN Fund for Drug Abuse Control, Government grants 407w
UNESCO 145w
Vietnam, Employment 407w

***Mawhinney, Dr Brian**, Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland*
Debates etc.
Republic of Ireland, Judgments (14:03:90) 646-8
Questions
Gaelic Athletic Association, Government grants to voluntary organisations 227w
Multiply handicapped, Children 436w
Multiply handicapped, Special education 437w
Multiply handicapped, Teacher training 437w
Pre-school education, Northern Ireland 1-2w
Teachers, Unfair dismissal 1-2w

Maxton, Mr John
Debates etc.
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 181-3, 184, 191, 192, 193, 267-74, 277, 280, 282, 303
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Allocation of time motion & Rep (14:03:90) 588-9, 590
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, 3R (15:03:90) 684, 693-7
Questions
Community charge benefits, Personal income 334-5w
Community charge benefits, Scotland 593w
Mortgage relief, Scotland 377w
Rate rebates, Scotland 404w
Rates & rating, Family income 593-4w
Trading standards departments, Mileometers 464-5

Maxwell-Hyslop, Mr Robin
Questions
Food hygiene, Devon County Council 325w
Food Safety Bill (HL) 1989/90, Local government expenditure 448w
Interest rates, European monetary system 659
Local education authorities, Devon 323w
Local government expenditure 599w
Special education, Local education authorities 225w

May Inquiry
see Guildford Four Inquiry

***Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick**, Attorney-General*
Debates etc.
War Crimes Bill, 2R (19:03:90) 926
Questions
Advertising, Lord Chancellor 90w
Al-Fayed, Mohammed, Perjury 316w
Bailiffs, Manpower 91w

***Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick**—continued*
Bombings, Birmingham 15
Centre for Policy Studies 89w
Civil service manpower, Lord Chancellor 791-2w
County courts 531w
County courts, Cheques 426-7w
County courts, Debts 427w
Crown courts, Barrow-in-Furness 91w
Director of Public Prosecutions 88-9w
House of Fraser, Company investigations 13-5
House of Fraser, Criminal investigation 89w
Intelligence services, Northern Ireland 13
Law of Property (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1989 235w
Law of Property (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1989, Conveyancing 316w
Management consultants, Lord Chancellor 91w
No-fault compensation 790w
Official stationery, Departmental forms 701w
Probate, Administrative delays 701w
Probate, Relocation of employees 701w
Public relations, Lord Chancellor 89-90w
Social security appeals, Administrative delays 790w
Statistics, Lord Chancellor 89w

Maze Prison
481-2

Meacher, Mr Michael
Questions
Arthur Andersen, Civil servants 73w
Attendance Allowance Board 740w
Community charge benefits, Capital rules 741-4w
Commuters, Travelling expenses 644w
Pensioners, Personal income 596-7w
Personal income, Tax rates & bands 272w
Personal pensions, National insurance contributions 645w
Retirement pensions 596-7w
Retirement pensions, Personal income 596-7w
Retirement pensions, Social security benefits uprating 597w
Retirement pensions, Women 598w
Social Fund, Debts written off 74w
Social Fund, Expenditure 73-4w
Social Fund, High court 73w
Social Fund, Social security claims 404w
Social security, Manpower 406-7w
Social security benefits, Administrative costs 335-6w
Social security benefits, Capital rules 787-8w
Social security benefits, Expenditure 595-6w
Social security benefits, Social security recipients 598w
Social security benefits reductions, Capital rules 785-7w

Meale, Mr Alan
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990 (21:03:90) 1194-6
Handicapped, Clothing (16:03:90) 861-3, 865, 866-7
Redbridge London Borough Council Bill, 3R (20:03:90) 1062, 1064, 1067-70, 1072
Tees & Hartlepool Port Authority Bill, 2R (15:03:90) 760, 768, 770
Questions
AIDS, Blood transfusions 557-8w
Child workers 174w
Revenue support grant 662w
Trading standards departments 300w

Measurement
Spirits 777w

Meat
Food consumption 736w

Medical audit
Finance 563w

Medical education
Family doctors 181w

Medical ethics
Surrogate motherhood 476w

Medical examinations
Armed forces training 202w
Remand in custody 355-6w

Medical laboratory scientific officers
Manpower 386w

Medical malpractice
Compensation 178w
Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital 1005

Medical records
Parent & child 53w

Medical research
552w
Heart diseases 261-4w
Infant mortality 569w
Mental illness 117-8w

Medical Research Council
453w

Medical treatment abroad
Costs 365-6w

Medical treatments
Cancer 872
Drug abuse 725w
Patients 547-9w

Medicinal implants
Heart pacemakers 58w

Medicines Control Agency
367w

Meibion Glyndŵr
Wales 11w, 16-7w

***Mellor, Mr David**, Minister of State, Home Office*
Questions
BBC 752-3w
BBC, Broadcasting bias 17w
Broadcasting Bill 1989/90 754w
Computer privacy, Community charge register 748w
Drug abuse, Health education 636w
Drug abuse, International conferences 746-7w
Drug abuse, Neighbourhood watch schemes 637w
Drug abuse, Prison medical services 796w
Drug seizures 750w
Hull Prison, Young offenders 1229
Independent Broadcasting Authority, Conflict of interests 509w
Prison administration, Segregation of prisoners 745w
Prison employment 397-9w
Prison hospitals, Greater London 757w
Prison population 362w, 743-5w, 1223-4
Prison population, Community service orders 1224
Prison population, Ethnic minorities 354-6w, 798w
Prison population, Prisoners' release 796w
Prison population, Young offenders 1224-5
Prison staff, Fresh Start 750w
Prison staff, Hepatitis 399w
Prison staff, Training 16w
Prisoners, AIDS 511w
Prisoners, Asthma 25w
Prisoners, Debts 509w
Prisoners, English language 138-9w
Prisoners, Hepatitis 1223
Prisoners, Interviews 460w
Prisoners, Suicide 18-21w
Prisoners on remand, Police custody 1225
Prisoners on remand, Prison overcrowding 21-2w
Prisoners on remand, Prisoners' rights 21w
Prisoners on remand, Psychiatry 396w
Prisons, Drug abuse 512w
Prisons, Privatisation 456w
Prisons, Race relations 354w
Prisons, Repairs & maintenance 753w
Prisons, Telephones 796-7w

***Mellor, Mr David**—continued*
Religious broadcasting, Broadcasting controls 793w
Remand in custody, Medical examinations 355-6w
Risley Remand Centre 510w
Segregation of prisoners 797-8w
Sunday trading 396w, 747w
Sunset Radio 397w
Teletext, Commercial television 757-8w
Vulnerable prisoner units 794-5w
Vulnerable prisoner units, Prison population 795w
Wandsworth Prison, Crimes of violence 508w
Young offenders, Custodial treatment 457w

Members
Civil servants 440w
European communities 440w
Immigration applications 16w

Members' conduct
Speaker's rulings & statements (21:03:90) 120, (13:03:90) 417, (14:03:90) 465, (15:03:90) 654, 659, (20:03:90) 1001, (22:03:90) 1231

Members' correspondence
Administrative delays 68w, 764w

Members' deaths
Roberts, Allan (22:03:90) 1217

Members' facilities
Repairs & maintenance 884-5

Members' interests
440w
Speaker's rulings & statements (13:03:90) 176, 177, 178, 179, 422, 423

Members' interventions
Speaker's rulings & statements (12:03:90) 92, 111, (13:03:90) 151, 225, 303, 304, 357, 426, (14:03:90) 500, (15:03:90) 686, 736, 749-50, 764, (19:03:90) 910, (21:03:90) 1202, 1205, (22:03:90) 1228

Members' seating
Speaker's rulings & statements (22:03:90) 1306

Members' speeches
Speaker's rulings & statements (12:03:90) 114, (13:03:90) 380, (14:03:90) 519, (19:03:90) 934, (21:03:90) 1125, 1170, 1183, 1190, 1159, (22:03:90) 1253

Members' staff
Manpower 882

Mental health
Research 120w
Scotland 120w

Mental Health Act 1983
Questions
367-8w, 507w

Mental health community care
363-4w, 547w
Government grants 365w

Mental health services
363-5w
Capital investment 1000
Derbyshire 183w
Government grants 364-5w
Health services finance 559-60w
Psychiatry 364w
Scotland 117w

Mental illness
Medical research 117-8w
Scotland 116-8w

Mental patients
569w
Hospital discharges 174-6w

Mentally disadvantaged
Community charge 481w

Mentally disturbed offenders
Bail hostels 636w
Newton Lodge Secure Unit 507w

Mentally handicapped
Day centres 546-7w

Mentally ill
Community care 1001-2
Community charge exemptions 367-8w

Menwith with Darley
Public footpaths 48w

Mercenaries
Colombia 608w

Merchant seamen
Occupational deafness 739w
Personal taxation 410w

Mercury Communications Limited (Rateable Values) (Scotland) Order 1990
Debates etc.
(12:03:90) 29

Mergers
Audit 696w

Mersey Regional Health Authority
Finance 571w
NHS hospital trusts 57-8w

Mersey tunnel
Road tolls 127w

Merseyside
Arts finance 420w
Tourism 211w

Merseyside Arts Trust
(13:03:90) 155-70

Meteorological Office
Greenhouse effect 771w

Metropolitan districts
Local government expenditure 481-2w

Metropolitan line
Public transport 11

Metropolitan Police
508w
Crack 752w
Domestic violence 459w, 749w
Income 507-8w
Local government finance 392w
Management consultants 24w
Public relations 23w
Recruitment 752w
Statistics 22w

Meyer, Sir Anthony
Questions
Floods, Towyn 872
Housing construction, Wales 874
Welsh Office, Cash limits 350w

Michael, Mr Alun
Debates etc.
Business statements (13:03:90) 445
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 310-8, 323, 327, 336-7
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Allocation of time motion & Rep (14:03:90) 498, 499, 566-8, 575-6, 610
Questions
Cancer, Statistics 349-50w
Cancer, Wales 15w, 143w, 400w, 444w, 516-7w
Child workers 173-4w
Community health councils 280w
Health education, Wales 870-1
Health services, Contracts for services 15w
NHS, Contracts for services 182w
NHS review, Contracts 57w
NHS review, Departmental publications 246-50w
Traffic examiners, Cardiff 10

Michie, Mr Bill
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990 (21:03:90) 1150-2
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 408, 419
Questions
Community charge, Standard spending assessments 664-5w

Michie, Mr Bill—continued
Consumer goods, Product safety 295w

Michie, Mrs Ray
Debates etc.
Rate support Grant (Scotland) Order 1990 (19:03:90) 979-80
Speech therapy (12:03:90) 130-3
Questions
British Medical Association 545w
Community charge, Scottish councils 702-3w
Fishery protection, Scotland 451-2w
Local income tax, Local government revenue 702w
Local income tax, Scotland 581-2w
Nature Conservancy Council 667w

Microelectronics industry
Hazardous materials 503w
Industrial health & safety 503-4w

Microwave ovens
Food hygiene 87w

Microwaves
USSR 266w

Mid Glamorgan
Spoil heaps 876

Mid Wales Development Board
616w

Middle schools
522w

Middlesbrough
Community charge 1009

Mid-Staffordshire
NHS 998-9

Midwives
Career structure 763w
Conditions of employment 728w
NHS 552w
Professional qualifications 177w
Training 552w

Mileometers
Trading standards departments 464-5

Military aid
Libyan Arab Republic 608w
Namibia 145-6w

Military aircraft
Air accidents 435w
Exercise Northaxe 2/90 332w
Low flying 331-2w

Military alliances
Nuclear power 433-4w

Milk
Production quotas 192-3w, 347w

Milk Marketing Board
347w

Mills, Mr Iain
Questions
Community charge 660-1w
National income, EC countries 372-3w
Recycling, Paper 713w
Tyre tread depths, Harmonisation of legislation 689w

Mineral waters
Bacteria 86w
Benzene 86w
Carbon dioxide 242w
Chemicals 85w
Composition labelling 85w, 240-1w
Trade descriptions 240w

Mines & Quarries Inspectorate
Manpower 500w

Mines & Quarries (Rateable Values) (Scotland) Order 1990
Debates etc.
(12:03:90) 29

Minimum wage
502w

Ministerial changes
Speaker's rulings & statements (13:03:90) 446, 455, 456, 457

Ministerial duties
Lord President of the Council 439-40w

Ministerial powers
Dept of Trade inquiries 589w

Ministerial responsibility
Disabled Persons (Services Consultation & Representation) Act 1986 567w

Ministerial speeches
Speaker's rulings & statements (14:03:90) 562, 566, (23:03:90) 1376

Ministerial statements
Arts finance (13:03:90) 155-70
Bazoft, Farzad (15:03:90) 667-71
Budget (20:03:90) 1011-29
Speaker's rulings & statements (13:03:90) 159, 167, (14:03:90) 488, (22:03:90) 1249, 1250, 1251

Ministers
Accountants 613w
Railway travel 496w

Ministers' domestic visits
Arts 515w
National Engineering Laboratory 44w

Ministers of religion
Community charge 481w

Ministers' visits abroad
Kenya 17, 61w

Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food
572-3w
Advertising 83-4w
Civil service manpower 732-4w
Disclosure of information 800w
Management consultants 86-7w
Privatisation 83w
Public relations 82-3w
Publicity 799w
Statistics 83w

Ministry of Defence
478w
Advertising 51w
Civil service manpower 718-9w
Management consultants 51w
Patents 719-20w
Privatisation 51w
Public relations 50w
Publicity 771-2w
Statistics 49-50w

Ministry of Defence Votes A
(15:03:90) 775, 776, 777

Miscampbell, Mr Norman
Questions
Family doctors, Budgeting 729w

Miscarriages of justice
17-8w

Misrepresentation
Takeovers 591w

Missing persons
750-1w
Children 755w

Mitchell, Mr Andrew
Debates etc.
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Allocation of time motion & Rep (14:03:90) 502
Questions
Arms control negotiations, Defence equipment 330w
Chlorofluorocarbons, Air pollution control 666w
Elderly , Budgeting 556w
Tanzania, Overseas aid 62w

***Mitchell, Mr Andrew**—continued*
Unemployment, Young people 204w
Young offenders, Parental responsibility 458w

Mitchell, Mr Austin
Questions
Accountants, Manpower 607w
Accountants, Ministers 613w
Accountants, Professional organisations 43w, 430w
Accountants, Royal charters 439w
Accounting, Financial services 696w
Accounting, Goodwill 432w
Accounting, Professional qualifications 586-7w
Audit, Annual reports 695w
Audit, Company accounts 43w, 169w, 587w, 695-6w
Audit, Contracts 431w
Audit, Fraud 42w
Audit, Mergers 696w
Auditing Practices Committee, Voting rights 432w
Balance of payments, UK trade with EC 424w
BOM Holdings, Dept of Trade inquiries 431w
Boundary Commission for England, Humberside 768w
Community charge, Second homes 482w
Community charge, Transitional relief 599-600w
Company accounts 432w
Company accounts, Companies Registration Office (England & Wales) 304w
Company accounts, Costs 305w
Company accounts, Disclosure of information 586w
Company accounts, Wealth 42w, 432w, 695w
Company investigations, Company reports 586w
Company reports, Industrial accidents 431w
Company reports, Pay 431w
Consumer goods, Product safety 295w
Dept of Trade inquiries, Publishing 431w
East Germany, EC external relations 759w
East Germany, EC grants & loans 759-60w
East Germany, Investment 694w
EC budget contributions 687-8w
External financial reporting 431-2w
Fraud, Statistics 756w
House prices, Greater London 98w
Households 723-4w
Housing benefits, Social security recipients 645w
Insider trading, Convictions 613w
Institute of Chartered Accountants in England & Wales, Company investigations 695w
Local government expenditure, Metropolitan districts 481-2w
Local government expenditure, Standard spending assessments 659-60w
Local government finance 479w
Local government finance, Humberside 480w
Local government finance, Revenue support grant 489w
Lonrho, Disclosure of information 431w
Low incomes, Tax thresholds 424-6w
Mortgage relief 377w
Mortgage relief, Investment income 270w
Rates & rating, Lancashire 479-80w
Rates & rating, Non-ratepayers 97w
Rent rebates, Social security recipients 643-4w
Retail price index, Rents 275w
Sound Diffusion, Dept of Trade inquiries 43w
Standard spending assessments, Humberside 482w
Transitional relief, Grimsby 599w

Mitchell Committee
see Noise Insulation Standards For New Railway Lines Committee

MMC
see Monopolies & Mergers Commission

MMFS
see Money Management Financial Services

Moate, Mr Roger
Questions
Railway transport, Noise control 776-7w

Mobility allowance
Social security benefits disqualification 404w

MOD
see Ministry of Defence

Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Debates etc.
Northern Ireland (Emergency & Prevention of Terrorism Provisions) (Continuance) Order 1990 (12:03:90) 60-3
War Crimes Bill, 2R (19:03:90) 904-5
Questions
Agricultural production, Beef 384-5w
Agriculture, Northern Ireland 438w
Extradition, Republic of Ireland 482

Money Management Financial Services
305w
Investor protection 43w

Monopolies & Mergers Commission
171w, 428w, 696w

Monro, Sir Hector
Debates etc.
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 274-8
Questions
Cancer hazards, Scotland 704w

Montgomery
Community charge 879

Monuments
Westminster Hall 885-6

Morgan, Mr Rhodri
Debates etc.
National Health Service & Communtity Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 329-31
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Allocation of time motion & Rep (14:03:90) 555
Questions
Community charge capping, South Glamorgan 879-80
Curriculum, School buildings 518w
Electricity tariffs 691w
Engineering industries, Skilled workers 619-20w
Geriatric hospitals, Fire prevention 444w
Geriatric hospitals, Health service staff 444w
Geriatric patients, Community health services 444w
Geriatrics, Community health services 444w
Headteachers, Recruitment 517w
Hospitals, Energy conservation 476w
Members' facilities, Repairs & maintenance 885
NHS, Conferences 700w
NHS, Contracts for services 543w
NHS administration, Training 700w
St David's Hospital Cardiff 444-5w
South Glamorgan Health Authority, Finance 445w
Teachers, Early retirement 517w
Teachers, Resignations 517w
University of Wales, University finance 522-3w
West Midlands Police, Domestic violence 748w
Wood, Hazardous materials 580w

Morley, Mr Elliot
Debates etc.
Agriculture (16:03:90) 855-7
Questions
Consumer goods, Product safety 295w

***Morley, Mr Elliot**—continued*
Fishing gear, EC law 448w
Fishing gear, Scotland 448w, 452w
NHS, Contracts for services 542-3w
Prawns, Fishing gear 448w
Shellfish, Licensing 448w

Morris, Rt Hon Alfred
Debates etc.
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 219-21
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Allocation of time motion & Rep (14:03:90) 517-8
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, 3R (15:03:90) 725-8
Questions
Business statements 1240
Disabled Persons (Services Consultation & Representation) Act 1986, Voluntary organisations 182w
Handicapped, EC action 153-4w
Handicapped, Local government social services 182-3w
Hospices 1004
Manchester Airport, Air fares 10-1
Mobility allowance, Social security benefits disqualification 404w
National Grid Company, Electricity Act 1989 632w
Neuroblastoma, Infant mortality 477w
Personal social services, Rate support grants 473w

Morris, Mr Michael
Debates etc.
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Allocation of time motion & Rep (14:03:90) 560-1, 570, 575, 606
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, 3R (15:03:90) 701-4
Questions
British Nutrition Protection Board 573w
Committee on Medical Aspects of Food Policy, Sugar 468-9w
Dental health, Sugar 469w
Drugs, Licensing 367w
Family doctors, Child health 366w
Prescription drugs, Elderly 367w
Prescriptions, Budgeting 1007
Prescriptions, Family doctors 475w
Vacant land, Land ownership & tenure 668w

***Morrison, Rt Hon Peter**, Minister of State for Energy*
Questions
Alternative energy, Exhibitions 691w
Alternative energy, Tyres 784w
Offshore accidents, Death 632w
Offshore safety, Civil servants 631w
Offshore safety, Civil service manpower 631-2w
Offshore structures, Chemicals 784w
Wind power, Conferences 630w
Wind power, International conferences 630w

Mortgage defaulters
369w
Homelessness 672w
Interest rates 664
Repossession orders 679w

Mortgage interest rates
370w
Homelessness 657
Inflation 163-4w
Owner occupied housing 378w

Mortgage relief
377w, 528-9w
Interest rates 659-60
Investment income 270w
Retail price index 411w
Scotland 377w

Mortgages
529-30w, 655
Debts 654-5
Economic regions 164w

Mortgages—continued
New towns 713w
Private rented housing 489w
Teachers 34w

Moss, Mr Malcolm
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990 (21:03:90) 1193, 1195, 1199
Questions
Brazil, Rain forests 61w
Community charge, Islington 1117
Eggs, Salmonella 193-4w
NHS hospital trusts, Health services 544w
Training, Costs 207w

Moss Side
Inner cities initiative 303-4w

Moss Side Hospital
181w

Motor insurance
Road traffic offences 147w

Motor vehicle registration
Disclosure of information 456w

Motor vehicle testing
Exhaust emission controls 649w
Licensing 309-10w

Motoring
Taxation 12-3

Motorways
Road construction 126w

Mowlam, Ms Marjorie
Questions
Al-Fayed Investment Holdings, Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986 469
Armed forces deployment, Brunei 412-3w
British Rail 123w
Brunei, Treaties 449w
Business statements 1246-7
Community care, Government grants 65-6w
Dept of Employment, Civil service manpower 216w
House of Fraser, Dept of Trade inquiries 587-91w
Independent Broadcasting Authority, Conflict of interests 509w
Inner cities initiative, Publicity 785w
Social Fund, Redcar 64-5w

***Moynihan, Mr Colin**, Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Sport)*
Questions
Community charge, Lancashire 1115
Environmental impact assessment 656w
Football, Hooliganism 1115-6
Football, Public order policing 1114-5
Housing construction, Greenbelt 667-8w
Inner city areas, Departmental responsibilities 191-2w
Land reclamation, Derelict land 681w
Leeds Development Corporation, Advertising 268w
Leeds Development Corporation, Compulsory purchase 606w
Leeds Development Corporation, Expenditure 715w
Leeds Development Corporation, Publicity 268w
Noise control, Gun sports 679w
Planning permission 393w
Planning permission, EC law 393w
Planning permission, Sites of special scientific interest 393-4w
Sportsgrounds 1115
Vacant land, Land ownership & tenure 668w

Mozambique
South Africa 156-7w

MRC
see Medical Research Council

Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin
Government grants 443w

Mullin, Mr Chris
Debates etc.
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, 3R (15:03:90) 716
Questions
Arms exports, Indonesia 433w
Bombings, Birmingham 15, 459w, 1225-6
Indonesia, Overseas aid 432-3w
NHS, Contracts for services 542-3w
Overseas trade, Indonesia 615w
Salmon, Sea fishing 447w

Multifibre arrangement
306w
GATT 472-3

Multiply handicapped
Children 436w
Northern Ireland 436-7w, 622w
Scotland 352w
Social services 352w, 622w
Special education 352w, 437w
Teacher training 437w

Murphy, Mr Paul
Questions
Community charge capping, Wales 878
Community charge exemptions, Refuges 246w
EC Internal Market Council 294w
Ethiopia, Food aid 63w
Mandatory student grants, Degrees 628w
Rape, Departmental circulars 751-2w
Road finance, Wales 878

Museums & galleries
Repairs & maintenance 420w

MV Marchioness
Compensation 6
Public inquiries 5-6

NACAB
see National Association of Citizens' Advice Bureaux

NACNE
see National Advisory Committee on Nutrition Education

Namibia
Constitutions 525w
Military aid 145-6w
Overseas aid 612w

NAO
see National Audit Office

NAPO
see National Association of Probation Officers

Narcotics
EC countries 687w

National Advisory Committee on Nutrition Education
179w

National Assistance Act 1948
Questions
182-3w

National Association of Citizens' Advice Bureaux
475-6

National Association of Probation Officers
"Crime Justice & Protecting the Public White Paper" 756w

National Association of Victims' Support Schemes
458-9w

National Asthma Campaign
621-2w

National Audit Office
92w, 189-90w

National Coal Board
see British Coal Corporation

National Consumer Council
Rantzen, Esther 465-6

National Curriculum Modern Foreign Languages Working Group
324w

National Deaf Blind & Rubella Association
see SENSE

National Economic Development Council
302w, 474

National Engineering Laboratory
Civil service manpower 43w
Directors 44w
Ministers' domestic visits 44w

National Farmers' Union
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy 326w

National Finance
see Treasury

National Football Intelligence Unit
460w

National Garden Festival 1990
Employment opportunities 25[redacted]

National Girobank
Cheque cards 409w

National Grid Company
Electricity Act 1989 632w

National Health Service & Community Care Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
Rep (13:03:90) 178-441
Allocation of time motion & Rep (14:03:90) 494-640
3R (15:03:90) 684-731
Questions
179w, 246-50w, 729w
Greater Manchester 178-9w

National Health Service (Charges to Overseas Visitors) Regulations 1982
Questions
725-7w

National Health Service Hospitals (Opting Out) Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
1R (21:03:90) 1121-3

National income
168w, 277w
EC countries 372-3w
Pay 10w
Taxation 655-6

National Institute of Economic & Social Research
Vocational training 210w

National insurance contributions
334w
Earnings limits 154w
Fraud 154-5w
Personal income 154w
Personal pensions 645w

National Museum of Science & Industry
see Science Museum

National parks
Loch Lomond 157w
South Downs 676w
Spain 526w

National Radiological Protection Board
266w

National Rivers Authority
107w, 445-6w, 602-4w, 682-3w, 738w
Pollution control 675-6w

National security
Eastern Europe 608w

National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
Child abuse 154

National Technology Centre
Finance 698w

NATO
330w
Arms control negotiations 290w
Cruise missiles 637w

NATO Nuclear Planning Group
330-1w

Natural Environment Research Council
48w

Natural gas
Gas pipelines 2-3w

Nature Conservancy Council
667w

Nature Conservancy Council for Scotland
647-8w

Nature conservation
Elephants 64w
North Sea 670-1w
Scotland 647-8w

Naval bases
Construction 202-3w
Faslane 334w
Forest Moor 202-3w

NAVSS
see National Association of Victims' Support Schemes

Nazi war crimes
747w
Criminal proceedings (19:03:90) 887-975

NCB
see British Coal Corporation

Neale, Mr Gerrard
Questions
Deaf, York University 763w
Patients, Medical treatments 549w

Near market research
34-5w
Finance 521w

NEDC
see National Economic Development Council

NEDO
see National Economic Development Council

***Needham, Mr Richard**, Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland*
Questions
Fair Employment Commission for Northern Ireland, Public appointments 622w
Family doctors, Budgeting 623-4w
Hospital waiting lists, Northern Ireland 759w
Multiply handicapped, Social services 622w
Unemployment, Northern Ireland 623w

Negligence
Immunity from prosecution 160w

Neighbourhood watch schemes
396w, 749w, 1231
Crime prevention 1221-2
Drug abuse 637w
Local authorities 1230-1
Police 1222
Police patrolling, 1222, 1231
Road signs 1230-1

NEL
see National Engineering Laboratory

Nellist, Mr Dave
Debates etc.
Tees & Hartlepool Port Authority Bill, 2R (15:03:90) 774
Questions
Ambulance services, Industrial disputes 461w
Bailiffs, Manpower 91w
Community charge 663w

***Nellist, Mr Dave**—continued*
Community charge, Non-payment 663
Computer privacy, Community charge register 748w
Employment 258w
NHS, Contracts for services 543w
Transitional relief, Coventry 483w
Wages councils, Employment level 257w
Wages councils, Manpower 252-8w

Nelson, Mr Anthony
Questions
Handicapped students, Student grants 1008
Iraq, Judgments 25

NERC
see Natural Environment Research Council

Network SouthEast
125w, 496w, 536-7w, (23:03:90) 1342-413
Investment 496w
Railway travel 496w
Transport subsidies 309w

***Neubert, Mr Michael**, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces*
Questions
Armed forces cadets, Iraq 772w
Armed forces deployment 719w
Armed forces training 720-1w
Arms exports, Indonesia 433w
Atomic Weapons Research Establishment, Administrative costs 638w
Atomic Weapons Research Establishment, Contractorisation 522w, 524-5w
AWE Aldermaston, Defence contracts 771w
Chemical & biological warfare, Defence research 202w
Chevaline warheads 524w
Cruise missiles, Submarines 637w
Defence expenditure, Patents 771w
HMS Endurance 48w
HMS Endurance, Greenhouse effect 48w
Household Cavalry, Crimes of violence 720w
Low flying, Complaints 331w
Low flying, Military aircraft 331-2w
Management consultants, Ministry of Defence 51w
Meteorological Office, Greenhouse effect 771w
Military aircraft, Air accidents 435w
Ministry of Defence, Patents 719-20w
Nuclear weapons, Employment level 638-9w
Nuclear weapons, Transport of radioactive materials 524w
Privatisation, Ministry of Defence 51w
Publicity, Ministry of Defence 771-2w
Radar, Radiation hazards 722-3w
RAF Fylingdales, Environmental health 720w
RAF Fylingdales, Radiation hazards 722-3w
Submarines, Costs 638w
Submarines, Holy Loch 523-4w
Tornado aircraft, Air accidents 639w
Transport of radioactive materials, Road accidents 525w
Trident submarines, Sonar 198w
Upholder class submarines 435w
Vanguard submarines, Defence contracts 411w
Warships, Ports 638w

Neuroblastoma
Infant mortality 477w

New businesses
VAT 370-1w
Yorkshire & Humberside 766-7w

New Forest
200w, 446w

New Forest Review
446w

New towns
Mortgages 713w

New towns development corporations
Pay 115-6w

New York
516w

Newcastle Health Authority
546w
Transplant surgery 1008

Newham
Inner cities initiative 265w
Parking offences 508w
Wheel clamps 508w

Newport
880
Community charge 878-9

Newry & Mourne District Council
Roads 437-8w

Newspaper press
Prime Minister 150-1
Sea pollution 487w

Newsprint
Recycling 598w

***Newton, Rt Hon Tony**, Secretary of State for Social Security*
Debates etc.
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 245-55, 256, 265-6
Questions
Occupational pensions 405-6w
Occupational Pensions Board, Public appointments 405w

Newton Lodge Secure Unit
475w
Mentally disturbed offenders 507w

Newtownabbey
Employment opportunities 436w

Next steps initiative
609w

NFU
see National Farmers' Union

NHS
Collective community charge 731w
Conferences 700w
Contracts for services 176-7w, 182w, 542-3w
Crown immunity 563-4w
Dental services 476-7w
Foreign patients 469w
Information technology 559w
Manpower 999
Mid-Staffordshire 998-9
Midwives 552w
Nurses 385w, 466-7w, 552w
Psychiatry 462w
Public sector assets 569w
Scotland 453-4w
Trade unions 998-9
VAT 424w
Wales 700w

NHS administration
Health services 562w
North Wales 874-5
Training 700w
Wales 15w, 700w

NHS charges
Eye tests (21:03:90) 1209

NHS charges exemptions
Terminal care 730-1w

NHS complaints
Dentures 476-7w

NHS finance
Inflation 561w, 621w, 1006
Regional health authorities 461-2w
Scotland 454w
Self-governing hospitals 472w

NHS hospital trusts
15w, 39w, (13:03:90) 178-441, 545-6w, (15:03:90) 684-731, 728w, 995-6, (21:03:90) 1121-3

NHS hospital trusts—continued
Health services 544w
Maternity services 762w
Mersey Regional Health Authority 57-8w
St Thomas' Hospital 995
Voting methods 545-6w
West Lambeth Health Authority 995

NHS Income Generation Unit
Dept of Health 387w

NHS internal market
561w, (15:03:90) 684-731

NHS reciprocal arrangements
Foreign patients 725-7w

NHS review
15w, (12:03:90) 130, 182w, 281w, 387w, 472w, 548w, 728w, 759w, 874-5
Contracts 57w
Departmental publications 246-50w

Nicaragua
Overseas aid 62w

***Nicholls, Mr Patrick**, Under-Secretary of State for Employment*
Questions
Accountants, Manpower 607w
Action credit scheme, Hard core unemployed 129w
Approved training organisations, Day nurseries 136w
Asbestos, Industrial health & safety 216w
Average earnings 343w, 502w
Average earnings, Part-time employment 501w
Back pain, Industrial health & safety 576-7w
Back pain, Lost working days 578w
Company reports, Industrial accidents 431w
Construction Industry Training Board 211w
Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 1988 344w
Disabled workers, Easington District Council 342w
Employment 203w, 258w, 732w
Employment, Economic regions 204-6w
Employment, Lancashire 500w
Employment, Private sector 205w
Employment, West Midlands 204w
Employment discrimination, Age 213w
Employment opportunities, Part-time employment 205w
Employment opportunities, Sheffield 204w
Employment protection 213w
Employment training 129w, 209-10w, 249-51w, 336-42w
Employment training, Costs 207w
Employment training, Greater Manchester 210w
Employment training, Offshore drilling 134w
Employment training, Peterlee 415w
Employment training, Training agents 498w
Employment training, Yorkshire & Humberside 210w
Enterprise training, Ogmore 607w
Fast food, Pay 130w
Foreign tourists, Expenditure 140, 211w
Foreign tourists, Northumberland 414w
Genetically modified organisms 344w, 783-4w
Hard core unemployed 203-4w
Health & Safety Executive 145, 148
Health & Safety Executive, Civil service manpower 211w
Health & Safety Executive, Disclosure of information 218w, 504w
Health & Safety Executive, Finance 146
Health & Safety Executive, Fines 212w
Health & Safety Executive, Industrial accidents 147
Health & Safety Executive, Manpower 146, 149-50
Hosiery & knitwear industry, Leicestershire 209w

Nicholls, Mr Patrick—continued
Industrial diseases, Asbestos 502-3w
Industrial health & safety 211-2w
Industrial health & safety, Farmers 130-1w
Industrial health & safety, Food packaging 130w
Industrial health & safety, Microelectronics industry 503w
Industrial health & safety, Scotland 503-4w
Industrial health & safety, Wales 503w
Iron & steel industry, Respiratory diseases 575w
Lost working days, Industrial disputes 214w
Low pay 207w, 502w
Low Pay Unit 149
Management consultants, Training Agency 134w
Mines & Quarries Inspectorate, Manpower 500w
Minimum wage 502w
Offshore workers, Employment training 342-3w
Part-time employment, Training 414w
Seagate Microelectronics, Hazardous materials 503-4w
Self-employed 131w, 208w
Social security claims 130w
Statistics, Dept of Employment 216-8w
Statistics, Training Agency 216-8w
Technical & vocational education initiative 212-3w
Telecommunications industry, Leukaemia 251w
Tourism, Merseyside 211w
Tourist industry 140
Tourist industry, Exchange rates 141
Tourist industry, Government grants 140, 414w
Tourist industry, Self-employed 211w
"Toxic Substances Bulletin" 344w
Training 206w
Training, Costs 130w, 207w
Training, EC countries 206w
Training, Employment opportunities 207w
Training, Expenditure 206w
Training Agency, Finance 215w
Training & enterprise councils, Tynemouth 208w
Unemployment 204-5w
Unemployment, Ashford 257-9w
Unemployment, Bury 204w
Unemployment, Lancashire 500-1w
Unemployment, Older workers 205w
Unemployment, Seaham 500w
Unemployment, Young people 204w
Unofficial strikes, Conditions of employment 143
Unofficial strikes, Eastern Europe 143
Unofficial strikes, Law reform 143
Unofficial strikes, Lost working days 142-3
Wages councils 129w, 203w
Wages councils, Employment level 257w
Wages councils, Manpower 252-8w
Welding, Harmonisation of standards 501-2w
Welding, Vocational training 502w
Women's employment, Day care of children 504-5w
Women's employment, Working mothers 214w
Wood, Hazardous materials 580w
Youth training scheme, Educational qualifications 209w
Youth training scheme, Handicapped 415w
Youth training scheme, Income support 576w
Youth training scheme, Per capita costs 499-500w
Youth training scheme, Peterlee 500w
Youth training scheme, Special education 342w
Youth training scheme, Take-up of employment 209w
Youth training scheme, Training allowances 342w, 416w, 576w, 784w

Nicholson, Mr David
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990 (21:03:90) 1129
Budget March 1990, Industry (22:03:90) 1263
Questions
Council house rents 1105-6
Disabled workers, Employment services 142
Employment schemes, Expenditure 783w
Family doctors, Computer applications 554w
Fish farming, Rivers 445w
Fish farming, Trout 445w
Foreign patients, NHS reciprocal arrangements 725-7w
Fun eating at school today campaign, South West region 144w
Green pound, EC countries 194w
Green pound, Wheat 193-6w
Local government expenditure 479-81w
Local government finance, Somerset 487-8w
Local government staff 485-6w
Sentencing 751w
Severn barrage, Tidal power 142w
Tax burden, Married men 426w
Young people, Homelessness 621w

Nicholson, Miss Emma
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990 (21:03:90) 1177-9
Gynaecology (13:03:90) 461-2
Questions
Agricultural land, Property development 674w
Hard core unemployed, Young people 203w
Milk, Production quotas 192-3w
Prison population 1223-4

NIESR
see National Institute of Economic & Social Research

NIFA
see Northern Ireland Fire Authority

Nitrates
85w

Nitrogen oxides
690-1w

No-fault compensation
790w

Noise control
711w
Aircraft noise 654w
Gun sports 679w
Railway transport 533w, 776-7w

Noise Insulation Standards For New Railway Lines Committee
776-7w

Noise Laws Review Group
711w

Non-departmental public bodies
515w
Business 467-8

Non-domestic rates
Bournemouth 391w

Non-employed contributions
Retirement pensions 153w

Non-fossil fuel obligation
784w

Non-governmental organisations
17-8, 44-5w, 188w, 191-2w

Non-metropolitan counties
Community charge 482-3w
Local government expenditure 657-8w
Local government staff 486w
Rate support grants 656-7w
Standard spending assessments 494w

Non-metropolitan districts
Local government expenditure 481-2w

Non-payment
Community charge 150, 152, 157w, 663, 1009, 1234

Non-ratepayers
Rates & rating 97w

Norfolk
Acid rain 266w
EC internal trade 464

Norris, Mr Steve
Debates etc.
Public transport (23:03:90) 1343
Questions
Handicapped students, Student grants 419-20w
North Sea, Nature conservation 671w
School closures, Inner London boroughs 30w
Young offenders, Parental responsibility 1229

North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
see NATO

North East region
Economic growth 1008

North East Shipbuilders
301w, 697w
European Commission 698w
Factory closures 697-8w

North East Thames Regional Health Authority
Finance 762w

North East Wales Institute of Higher Education
12w

North Korea
330w

North Sea
Air pollution 312w
Algae 487w
Capital investment 399w
Fishery protection 155w
Hazardous wastes 187-8w, 197w, 768-9w
Industrial wastes 75-7w
International conferences 188w
Nature conservation 670-1w
Oil pollution 7w
Pollution control 106w, 312w
Sea pollution 487w, 671w
Waste disposal 670-1w
White fish 155w

North Torrington
Slaughterhouses 737w

North Wales
Agricultural land 245w
Cancer 244w, 872
Floods 243-5w, 350w
NHS administration 874-5

North West region
City action teams 676w
Foreign investment in UK 295-6w
Inner cities initiative 676w
Nursing homes 68w
River pollution 602w
Unemployment 138, 664

North West Thames Regional Health Authority
Career structure 559w

North West Water Authority
603-4w

North Western Regional Health Authority
874-5

North Yorkshire
Households 684w

North Yorkshire County Council
Community charge 660w
Transport supplementary grants 649-50w

Northern Ireland
Agriculture 438w
Appropriations in aid (12:03:90) 72-127
Beef 384-5w, 438-9w
Civil service manpower 140-1w, 612w
Community charge 226w
Duration of unemployment 227-8w
Electricity supply industry 139-40w
Electricity tariffs 139-40w
Family doctors 438w, 623-4w
Hospital waiting lists 759w
Intelligence services 13
Licensing laws (12:03:90) 127
Local government finance 226w
Multiply handicapped 436-7w, 622w
Pre-school education 1-2w
Prisoners 2w, 226w
Railway network 512w
Rate increases 225-6w
Storms 384w
Teachers 1-2w
Terrorism (12:03:90) 30-71
Unemployment 623w

Northern Ireland Act 1974 (Amendment) Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
2R order read (16:03:90) 860

Northern Ireland Dept of Health & Social Services
623w
Equal opportunities 512w

Northern Ireland (Emergency & Prevention of Terrorism Provisions) (Continuance) Order 1990
Debates etc.
(12:03:90) 30-71

Northern Ireland Fire Authority
Appeals 436w

Northern Ireland Fish Producers Organisation
445-6w

Northern Ireland health & social services boards
759w
Finance 512w
Recruitment 384w

Northern Ireland Office
Audit 227w
Day care of children 513w
Equal opportunities 226w, 513-4w, 624w
Management techniques 624w
Privatisation 514w

Northern region
Hospital waiting lists 557w
Unemployment 139

Northern Regional Health Authority
Hospital patients 278-80w

Northumberland
Educational policy 628w
Foreign tourists 414w

Northumberland Health Authority
559w

Northumbria Police Authority
754w

Norway
Shipbuilding 697w

Notifiable diseases
Malaria 182w

Nottingham
Local government finance 666w
Steel framed houses (20:03:90) 1087-102

Nottingham Park Estate Bill (HL) 1988/89
Debates etc.
Rep* (14:03:90) 463

Novel food
Food standards 87w

NRA
see National Rivers Authority

NRPB
see National Radiological Protection Board

NSPCC
see National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children

Nuclear Electric
Bankside power station 400w
Sudbury House 400w
Treasury statements of guarantee 400w

Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty
694w
Germany 717w

Nuclear physics
Research finance 318w

Nuclear power
Energy consumption 320w
Military alliances 433-4w
Subsidies 399w

"Nuclear Safety at Electricite de France"
691w

Nuclear submarines
523w, 638w
Radiation hazards 333-4w
Radioactive waste disposal 412w

Nuclear test ban
525w
International conferences 450w

Nuclear weapons
Employment level 638-9w
Iraq 793w
Transport of radioactive materials 524w

Nuclear weapons tests
Health hazards 724w
USSR 145w, 330-1w

Nurses
Career structure 386w, 1002-3
Computers in National Health Service 53w
Manpower 1003
NHS 385w, 466-7w, 552w
Pay 1002-3
Recruitment 53w
Research finance 764w

Nurses' homes
731w
Board & lodging charges 53w, 730w
Collective community charge 730w

Nurses' training
177w, 552w
Community charge 97w
Psychology 462w

Nursing homes
Business expansion scheme 165w
Income support 455w
North West region 68w

Nutrition & health
179w

OAL
see Office of Arts & Libraries

Objects in lieu of tax
Public expenditure 10w

O'Brien, Mr William
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990 (21:03:90) 1190-4
Redbridge London Borough Council Bill, 3R (20:03:90) 1059, 1063-76
Questions
Cancer, Pontefract Health Authority 724w
Cancer, Statistics 620w
Councillors' disqualification 603w
Employment training, Yorkshire & Humberside 210w
Housing benefits, Concessionary coal 73w
Newton Lodge Secure Unit 475w
Newton Lodge Secure Unit, Mentally disturbed offenders 507w

***O'Brien, Mr William**—continued*
NHS hospital trusts, Voting methods 546w
Vacant land, Land acquisition 1108

Observer
264w

Occupational deafness
Handicap benefits 68w
Merchant seamen 739w

Occupational pensions
405-6w
Coal mining 443w
Index linking 738w
Unemployment benefits 335w

Occupational Pensions Board
Public appointments 405w

Occupied territories
35w, 408w, 449w
Israel 408w
Universities 264-5w

ODA
see Overseas Development Administration

OECD countries
Balance of trade 378w, 660
Inflation 659

Offences Against the Person Act 1861
Questions
139w

Offenders
Electronic surveillance 633w, 797-8w
Government grants to voluntary organisations 356-9w

Office of Arts & Libraries
Advertising 9w
Civil service manpower 420-1w
Expenditure 420-1w
Management consultants 9w
Privatisation 8w
Public relations 7-8w
Publicity 526-7w
Statistics 7w

Office of Fair Trading
110w, 171w, 591w
Competition 590w
Estate agents 765-6w
Evidence 588w
Takeovers 588w

Office of Gas Supply
3w

Office of Population Censuses & Surveys
620w
Advertising 56w
Management consultants 57w
Public relations 55-6w
Statistics 54-6w

Office of the Social Security Commissioners
see Social Security Commissioners

Offices
Traffic areas 536w

Official cars
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster 188w

Official engagements
157w, 329w, 516w, 695w

Official hospitality
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster 47w

Official stationery
Departmental forms 701w

Offset arrangements
289w

Offshore accidents
Death 632w, 777-8w
Scotland 777-8w

Offshore drilling
Employment training 134w

Offshore Petroleum Industry Training Board
342-3w

Offshore safety
Civil servants 631w
Civil service manpower 631-2w
Finance 632w

Offshore structures
Chemicals 784w

Offshore workers
Community charge 660w
Employment training 342-3w

OFGAS
see Office of Gas Supply

OFT
see Office of Fair Trading

Ogmore
Enterprise training 607w

Oil pollution
North Sea 7w

Old people's homes
Local government social services 388w

Older workers
Unemployment 205w

Oldham
Unemployment 138

Olympic games
Manchester 1236

One parent benefit
595w
Barnsley 405w
South Yorkshire 405w

One person operation
London Underground 655w

O'Neill, Mr Martin
Questions
Harrier aircraft, Defence contracts 290w
Radar, Radiation hazards 722-3w
RAF Fylingdales, Radiation hazards 722-3w
Taylor Scott, Lt Cdr, Air accidents 288-9w

Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Questions
Prime Minister, Newspaper press 150-1

OPCS
see Office of Population Censuses & Surveys

Open University
Educational finance 219w

Operating costs
Valuation services 609w
Veterinary investigation service 76w

Operation Clockwork Orange
13

Oppenheim, Mr Phillip
Questions
Association of District Councils 673w
Bank of England 373-4w
Budget March 1990 1235-6
Confederation of British Industry 299w
Local government staff, Non-metropolitan counties 486w
Owner occupied housing 654

Optical charges
559w

Oracle Teletext
757-8w

Oral questions
House of Commons procedure 886
Speaker's rulings & statements (15:03:90) 652, 655, (20:03:90) 993, 994

Orders & regulations
Community charge 105w
Uniform business rate 105w

Organic farming
Government assistance 196w
Harmonisation of standards 195w

Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Debates etc.
War Crimes Bill, 2R (19:03:90) 897
Questions
Community policing 753w
Hospital waiting lists 557w
Shipbuilding 300w
Women's employment, Working mothers 214w

Overseas aid
Africa 59-60w
Eastern Europe 59w
Expenditure 61w
Indonesia 432-3w
Namibia 612w
Nicaragua 62w
Rehabilitation 60-1w
South Africa 63w, 433w
Sri Lanka 16-7
Tanzania 62w
Vietnam 62w

Overseas Development
see Foreign & Commonwealth Office

Overseas Development Administration
19-20
Publicity 531w

Overseas investment
Hungary 470-1
South Africa 265w

Overseas students
Iraq 760-1w
Universities 25w

Overseas trade
East Germany 767w
Hungary 470-1
Indonesia 615w
South Africa 169w

Overseas workers
Community charge 713-4w
Dentists 763-4w

Owen, Rt Hon David
Debates etc.
Bazoft, Farzad (15:03:90) 670
Budget March 1990 (20:03:90) 1038-42

Owner occupied housing
654
Cumbernauld 115w
Mortgage interest rates 378w

Oxford
Local government constituencies 715w

Oxfordshire
Revenue support grant 662w

Oxleas Wood
Tunnels 4-5

P & O
428w

Package holidays
Business travel 170-1w

Paice, Mr James
Questions
Business, Investment 373w
Training, Training & enterprise councils 141
Training & enterprise councils 208w

Paisley, Rev Ian
Debates etc.
Appropriation (Northern Ireland) Order 1990 (12:03:90) 92, 111, 113, 126, 127
Northern Ireland (Emergency & Prevention of Terrorism Provisions) (Continuance) Order 1990 (12:03:90) 34, 42-8, 52, 58, 59
Questions
Agricultural production, Beef 438-9w

Palace of Westminster
885
Asbestos 683w
Hairdressing 103w

Paper
Imports 713w
Recycling 313w, 713w

Parent & child
Medical records 53w

Parental contributions
Assisted places scheme 382w

Parental responsibility
Young offenders 458w, 746w, 1228-9

Parents Against Injustice
Government grants 468w

Parish, Daphne
21-2, 408w, 450w, 793w

Parish councils
Greater London (14:03:90) 491-3

Parking offences
Newham 508w

***Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil**, Secretary of State for Transport*
Questions
Air accidents, Lockerbie 2
Air transport, USA 124w
Airlines, USA 1-2
British Rail 122w
London assessment studies, Clapham Common 4
Public transport, Greater London 5
Railway Inspectorate, Health & Safety Executive 9
Railway safety 8-9
Rolling stock 9-10
South circular road 4, 120w
Tunnels, Oxleas Wood 4-5

Parliamentary Estate
Repairs & maintenance 606w

Parry, Mr Robert
Questions
Employment training 210w
Risley Remand Centre 510w
Taxation 370w

Part-time employment
Average earnings 501w
Employment opportunities 205w
Industrial health & safety 145
Training 414w
Women's employment 145

Passengers
Regional airports 121w

Passport Office
Civil service agencies 458w

Passports
Hong Kong 407-8w

Pasteurisation
77-8w, 82w

Patchett, Mr Terry
Questions
Bus services, Elderly 383w
Community care, Local government functions 388-9w
Hospital waiting lists, Trent Regional Health Authority 387-8w
Housing construction, Greenbelt 667-8w
NHS hospital trusts, Voting methods 545-6w
NHS review 387w
Old people's homes, Local government social services 388w
One parent benefit, Barnsley 405w
One parent benefit, South Yorkshire 405w
Private patients, Trent Regional Health Authority 388w
Shipbuilding 300w

Patents
Defence expenditure 771w
Ministry of Defence 719-20w

Patients
Health services 551w
Hospital consultants 729w
Medical treatments 547-9w

***Patten, Rt Hon Chris**, Secretary of State for the Environment*
Questions
Acid rain, Environmental impact assessment 677w
Advertising, Dept of the Environment 191w
Buildings, Greenhouse effect 680w
Carbon dioxide, Air pollution control 680w
Civil service manpower, Dept of the Environment 709-10w
Community charge 1110
Community charge, Local government services 1111
Community charge, Local government staff 1111-2
Community charge, Rates & rating 1110-1
Community charge benefits 1111
Community charge benefits, Personal savings 1112
Community charge benefits, Scotland 1111
Kleinwort Benson, Dept of the Environment 104w
Labelling, Environment protection 1113-4
Management consultants, Dept of the Environment 103w
Planning permission, Hertsmere Borough Council 601w
Pollution control, North Sea 106w
Privatisation, Dept of the Environment 102w
Public relations, Dept of the Environment 101-2w, 191w
Smoke & chimney gases, Air pollution control 679-80w
Statistics, Dept of the Environment 101w
Waste disposal, North Sea 670w
Widowers' benefits 395w

***Patten, Rt Hon John**, Minister of State, Home Office*
Debates etc.
Families (16:03:90) 810, 829, 834-41, 847, 850
War Crimes Bill, 2R (19:03:90) 956, 966-70
Questions
Acid house, Entertainments (Increased Penalties) Bill 1989/90 754w
Acid house, Lancashire 356w
Bombings, Birmingham 396w, 459w, 745-6w
Civil emergency adviser, Conferences 137w
Complaints against police, Broadwater Farm Estate 455w
Crime, Greater London 510w
"Crime Justice & Protecting the Public White Paper" 749w
Crime prevention 754w
Crime victims, Compensation 753w, 1231-2
Crime victims, Statistics 753w, 1230
Crowd control, Sportsgrounds 633w
Drug abuse, Probation 795w
Drug crimes, Proceeds of crime 747w
Emergency planning, Expenditure 137w
Fire prevention, Leisure facilities 509w
Fraud, Statistics 756w
Incitement to murder, Prosecutions 139w
Juries 460w
Kirkham Prison, Prisoners 360w
Mentally disturbed offenders, Bail hostels 636w
Neighbourhood watch schemes 396w, 749w, 1231
Neighbourhood watch schemes, Police patrolling 1231
Neighbourhood watch schemes, Road signs 1230-1
Newton Lodge Secure Unit, Mentally disturbed offenders 507w
Offenders, Electronic surveillance 633w, 797-8w

***Patten, Rt Hon John**—continued*
Offenders, Government grants to voluntary organisations 356-9w
Racial discrimination, EC action 796w
Rape, Sentencing 751w
Rugby, Sportsgrounds 495w
Security industry, Self-regulating organisations 756w
Sentencing 751w
Sentencing, Custodial treatment 456w
Sentencing, Diminished responsibility 633w
Victim support schemes, Government grants 458-9w
"Victims Charter" 396w
Young offenders, Parental responsibility 458w, 746w

Pawsey, Mr James
Questions
Africa, Overseas aid 59-60w
Bingo, Advertising controls 457w
Employment 203w, 732w
Health services, NHS administration 562w
Medical treatment abroad, Costs 365-6w
Members' correspondence, Administrative delays 68w, 764w
National Curriculum Modern Foreign Languages Working Group 324w
NHS, Foreign patients 469w
School population 25w
Special constables, Expenditure 361w
Special constables, Manpower 360-1w
Special constables, Recruitment 1220
Special constables, Training 361w

Pay
Company reports 431w
Cumbernauld Development Corporation 115w
Fast food 130w
House of Commons staff 882-3
National income 10w
New towns development corporations 115-6w
Nurses 1002-3
Refreshment Dept 882-3
Scottish Conveyancing & Confirmation Practitioners Board 107-8w, 110w
Teachers 323-4w
VAT 370w
Women's employment 275w

Pay incentives
Profit sharing 761w
Special constables 1220-1

Pay settlements
Ambulance services 553w
Police 356w
Speech therapists 564w

PCFC
see Polytechnics & Colleges' Funding Council

Peace negotiations
Cyprus 39w

Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Debates etc.
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 250
Questions
Community charge, Nurses' training 97w
West Yorkshire Residuary Body, Public appointments 769-70w
Women's employment, Part-time employment 145

"Peckham Report National Immunisation Study"
52w

Pedestrian crossings
Tremadog 244w

Pendry, Mr Tom
Questions
Business statements 1246
Football, Public order policing 1114-5
NHS hospital trusts, Voting methods 546w
Severe disability premium, Social security recipients 67w

Penguins
Falkland Islands 38w

Pension rights
Local government staff 491w

Pensioners
454w
Additional pensions 785w
Community charge 656w
Personal income 152-3w, 596-7w

Pensions
Atomic Weapons Research Establishment 524-5w

Penwith District Council
(20:03:90) 1084-6

Penzance harbour
(20:03:90) 1084-6

Penzance South Pier Extension Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
2R (20:03:90) 1084-6
2R order read (15:03:90) 649

Per capita costs
Hospital catering 551-2w
Transitional relief 185w
Youth training scheme 499-500w

Performance related pay
District health authorities 348-9w

Performance review
Training & enterprise councils 148-9

Perinatal mortality
725-6w

Perjury
Al-Fayed, Mohammed 316w

Perry Committee
see New Forest Review

Personal Community Charge (Exemption for the Severely Mentally Impaired) Order 1990
Questions
481w

Personal Community Charge (Students) Regulations 1989
Questions
97w

Personal equity plans
379w

Personal income
Child benefit 789w
Community charge 265w
Community charge benefits 334-5w, 788-9w
National insurance contributions 154w
Pensioners 152-3w, 596-7w
Retirement pensions 596-7w
Tax burden 530w
Tax rates & bands 272w
Unpaid taxes 273-4w

Personal loans
Council house sales 163w

Personal pensions
Advertising 664-5
National insurance contributions 645w

Personal records
Social services 369w

Personal savings
374w
Budget March 1990 1232
Community charge benefits 66w, 1112
Disability employment credit 67w

Personal social services
Local government expenditure 473w
Rate support grants 473w

Personal taxation
Merchant seamen 410w

Pest control
Sea lice 88w

Pesticide residues
Food 74-5w

Pesticides
Agricultural production 74w
Agricultural workers 130-1w
Consumer protection 74-5w
EC action 75w
Fish farming 88w
Food packaging 130w

Pet foods
Dogs 800w
Food standards 800w

Peterlee
Employment training 415w, 500w
Unemployment 500w
Youth training scheme 500w

Petitions
Customs & Excise 611w

Petrol
Road tax 540w

Petrol pumps
Trading standards departments 465

Phoenix House Trust
Drug rehabilitation centre 704w

Phonecards
Prisoners 796-7w

Phosphates
269w

Phosphorus
187w
Water pollution 269w

Physical education
Curriculum 321w

Piers
(20:03:90) 1084-6

Pike, Mr Peter L
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990 (21:03:90) 1137
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 386
Questions
Church Commissioners, Income 881
Community charge, Burnley 1006-7
Community charge, Local government services 1111
Company cars, Taxation 530w
Family doctors, Contracts of employment 551w
Local government staff, Pension rights 491w
Official engagements 329w
Petrol, Road tax 540w
Prescription charges exemptions, Low incomes 461w
Road construction, Public expenditure 540w
School buildings, Repairs & maintenance 625-6w
Standard spending assessments, Lancashire County Council 666w
Travel concessions, Blind 383w

Plankton
Sea pollution 84w

Planning appeals
Sites of special scientific interest 679w

Planning permission
393w
EC law 393w
Hazardous materials 313w
Hertsmere Borough Council 601w
Housing construction 667-8w
London & South East Regional Planning Conference 394w
Sites of special scientific interest 393-4w, 679w
Treaties 393w

Plants
Upper Waiting Hall 769w

Playhouse Theatre Liverpool
420w
Arts Council grants 420w

Points of order
Speaker's rulings & statements (13:03:90) 171, 379, (14:03:90) 533, (15:03:90) 682-3, 770-4, (20:03:90) 1027, (21:03:90) 1140-1, 1144, (22:03:90) 1236, (23:03:90) 1409

Poland
Frontiers 156w
Know-how Fund 236-40w
Pollution control 592w
Technology transfer 592w

Police
749w
Crime prevention 1221-2
Drug crimes 795w
International cooperation 1114-5
Neighbourhood watch schemes 1222
Pay settlements 356w
Ports 754w
Recruitment 762w
Rent allowances 756w

Police Advisory Board
746-7w

Police (Amendment) Regulations 1990
Questions
362-3w

Police community liaison committees
London boroughs 511w

Police Complaints Authority
455w

Police consultative groups
Greater London 796w

Police custody
Prisoners on remand 1225

Police Federation of England & Wales
756w

Police housing
Rent allowances 362-3w, 633w

Police interrogation
Tape recorded evidence 753w

Police patrolling
Neighbourhood watch schemes 1222, 1231

Police pensions
Fire service pensions 510-1w

Police powers
Breathalysers 355w, 635w, 756w
Touting 260w

Police stations
Terrorism 457w

Political impartiality
Citizens' Advice Bureaux 476

Political Parties (Income & Expenditure) Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
1R (13:03:90) 173-5

Political prisoners
South Africa 35w

Political refugees
Lebanon 360w

Polluter pays principle
105w

Pollution control
Industrial wastes 105w
National Rivers Authority 675-6w
North Sea 106w, 312w
Poland 592w
River pollution 106w, 683w
USSR 615w

Pollution monitoring
Algae 492w
Beaches 682w

Pollution monitoring—continued
Irish Sea 106-7w

Polytechnics
519w

Polytechnics & Colleges' Funding Council
519w

Pontefract Health Authority
Cancer 724w

Poole Borough Council
Rates & rating 661w

Pop festivals
Crowd safety 138w
Entertainment licensing 138w

Population projection
363w
Hospital admissions 621w

Population studies
Health services finance 557w

Portage
Educational finance 707w

Porter, Mr Barry
Debates etc.
Arts finance (13:03:90) 161
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 181, 258
Northern Ireland (Emergency & Prevention of Terrorism Provisions) (Continuance) Order 1990 (12:03:90) 40, 46
Supplementary questions, Calling of Members (21:03:90) 1121-2

Porter, Mr David
Questions
Community charge, Offshore workers 660w
Local authorities, Contracts for services 672-3w
Mortgages, Private rented housing 489w
Narcotics, EC countries 687w
Police housing, Rent allowances 633w
Standard spending assessments, Suffolk 660w
Vaccination, Children 551w
Welding, Harmonisation of standards 501-2w
Welding, Vocational training 502w
Widowers' benefits 395w

Porthcawl
Flats 518w

Portillo, Mr Michael, Minister for Public Transport
Debates etc.
Public transport (23:03:90) 1350, 1354, 1375, 1377-86, 1394, 1411
Questions
A13, Road works 8
Automatic train protection, Railway technology 310w
British Rail 123w
British Rail, Public service obligation grant 536-7w
Bus services, Elderly 383w
Central Transport Consultative Committee 496w
Channel tunnel, Construction 120w
Channel tunnel, Railway network 121w
Commuters, Railway travel 124w
Dial-a-ride, Greater London 124w
Docklands light railway 129w
Jubilee line, Construction costs 146-7w
London Underground, Government grants 122w
London Underground, Investment 122w
London Underground, One person operation 655w
London Underground, Railway accidents 774-5w
London Underground, Railway safety 497-8w, 655w
London Underground, Underground railways 773-4w
Network SouthEast 125w

Portillo, Mr Michael—continued
Network SouthEast, Investment 496w
Network SouthEast, Railway travel 496w
Network SouthEast, Transport subsidies 309w
Public transport, Greater London 11-2
Public transport, Metropolitan line 11
Rail Europe 124w
Railway Inspectorate, Relocation of employees 146w
Railway land, Litter 147-8w
Railway property, Fox hunting 125w
Railway safety, King's Cross 654-5w
Railway track, Weedkillers 148-9w
Railway transport, Noise control 533w, 776-7w
Railway travel, Ministers 496w
Railway travel, West Midlands 122w
Railway workers, Death 148w
Railway workers, Railway transport 123w
Transport infrastructure, EC action 532-3w
Transport policy, Essex 7
Transport policy, South East region 7-8
Travel concessions, Blind 383w
Trolleybuses, Bradford 496w
Underground railways, City of Westminster 233w
Urban transport, EC countries 128w

Ports
Police 754w
Warships 638w

Portsmouth & South East Hampshire Health Authority
543w

Post Office
170w, 290w, 478
Upper Waiting Hall 766w

Postage stamps
Forgery 170w

Postal deliveries
Privatisation 478

Post-neonatal mortality
Death rate 453w
Scotland 453w

Poultry
Animal Health Act 1981 81w
Animal welfare 197w
Licensing 85-6w
Salmonella 81-2w, 243w, 327w
Testing 85-6w, 240w

Poultry Breeding Flocks & Hatcheries (Registration & Testing) Order 1989.
Questions
240w

Poultry Flocks Hatcheries & Processed Animal Protein (Fees) Order 1990
Questions
85-6w

Poultry Laying Flocks (Testing & Registration) Order 1989
Questions
85-6w, 240w

Poultry meat
EC action 799-800w
Food hygiene 799-800w
Food inspection 325w

Powell, Mr Ray
Debates etc.
Business statements (13:03:90) 446
Walker, Peter, Ministerial changes (13:03:90) 455
Questions
Community charge, Standard spending assessments 664-5w
Enterprise training, Ogmore 607w
Parents Against Injustice, Government grants 468w

Powell, Mr William
Debates etc.
War Crimes Bill, 2R (19:03:90) 935, 939-41
Questions
Namibia, Overseas aid 612w

Powell, Mr William—continued
Uganda, Development aid 64w
Westminster Hall, Monuments 885-6

Prawns
Fish conservation 447-8w
Fishing catches 801-2w
Fishing gear 448w
Imports 801-2w

Pre-school education
997
Costs 520-1w
Fees & charges 996-7
Northern Ireland 1-2w
Scotland 120w
Voluntary organisations 562-3w, 996-7

Pre-school Playgroups' Association
996-7

Prescott, Mr John
Debates etc.
Public transport (23:03:90) 1375, 1377, 1378
Tees & Hartlepool Port Authority Bill, 2R (15:03:90) 736
Questions
Air accidents, Lockerbie 2
Railway safety 9

Prescription charges
550w
Price increases 550w

Prescription charges exemptions
Asthma 621-2w
Cancer 550w
Low incomes 461w

Prescription drugs
475w
Budgeting 556w
Elderly 367w
Family doctors 549w

Prescriptions
Benzodiazepines 731-2w
Budgeting 993-4, 1007
Chemists shops 731w
Family doctors 475w

Press conferences
756w

Preston
Community care 288w
Social Fund 405w

Prestwick Airport
Air traffic control 497w
Air travel 497w
Railway network 581w
Roads 581w

Preventive medicine
Hormone treatments 462w

Price, Sir David
Debates etc.
Arts finance (13:03:90) 164
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 253
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, 3R (15:03:90) 697-700

Price increases
Consumer expenditure 9-10w
Prescription charges 550w

Prices
White fish 261w

Primarolo, Ms Dawn
Debates etc.
Business statements (13:03:90) 452-3
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 224, 238-40, 367, 368, 393, 407
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Allocation of time motion & Rep (14:03:90) 583
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, 3R (15:03:90) 698-9, 701

Primarolo, Ms Dawn—*continued*
Questions
Action credit scheme, Hard core unemployed 129w
Average earnings, Part-time employment 501w
Bombings, Birmingham 745-6w
Child benefit, Social security benefits rates 153w
Council house rents, Rent increases 675w
Housing associations, Housing improvement 392-4w
Housing associations, Rent increases 184w
Housing Corporation, Finance 98w
Job interview guarantee scheme, Take-up of employment 215w
NHS hospital trusts, Voting methods 545-6w

Primary education
English education 625w
Landkey 418-9w
Pupil-teacher ratios 520w
School buildings 626w
Welsh language 518w

Prime Minister
Advertising 41w
Information services 38-9w
Management consultants 42w
Newspaper press 150-1
Privatisation 42w
Public relations 39-40w
Publicity 516w
Statistics 40w

Prison administration
Segregation of prisoners 745w

Prison employment
397-9w

Prison governors
354w

Prison hospitals
Greater London 757w
HM Inspectorate of Prisons 757w

Prison medical services
Drug abuse 796w

Prison overcrowding
Prisoners on remand 21-2w

Prison population
362w, 743-5w, 1223-4
Alternatives to prison 1223-4
Community service orders 1224
Ethnic minorities 354-6w, 798w
Prisoners' release 796w
Vulnerable prisoner units 795w
Young offenders 1224-5

Prison staff
Fresh Start 750w
Hepatitis 399w
Training 16w
Vaccination 399w

Prisoners
AIDS 511w
Asthma 25w
Contempt of court 509w
Debts 509w
English language 138-9w
Hepatitis 1223
Interviews 460w
Iraq 408w, 662, 793w
Kirkham Prison 360w
Northern Ireland 2w, 226w
Phonecards 796-7w
Suicide 2w, 18-21w, 226w

Prisoners on remand
Police custody 1225
Prison overcrowding 21-2w
Prisoners' rights 21w
Psychiatry 396w
Young offenders 1229

Prisoners' release
Bombings 1225-6
Prison population 796w

Prisoners' release—*continued*
Terrorism 662

Prisoners' rights
Codes of practice 17-8w
Prisoners on remand 21w

Prisons
Disease control 1223
Drug abuse 512w
Privatisation 456w
Race relations 354w
Repairs & maintenance 753w
Telephones 796-7w

Prisons Inspectorate
see HM Inspectorate of Prisons

Private Bills
Speaker's rulings & statements (15:03:90) 732, 751

Private Members' motions
Agriculture (16:03:90) 851-9
Families (16:03:90) 795-850
Public transport (23:03:90) 1342-413

Private notice questions
Speaker's rulings & statements (14:03:90) 484

Private patients
Trent Regional Health Authority 388w

Private rented housing
Mortgages 489w
Tenants' choice 675w

Private sector
Civil service agencies 609w
Employment 205w
Remand centres 1225

Privatisation
375-6w
British Gas 142-4w, 691w
Cabinet Office 42w
Central Office of Information 167w
Crown Suppliers 101w, 313w, 605w
Dept of Education & Science 32w
Dept of Employment 259w
Dept of Energy 3w
Dept of Social Security 71w
Dept of the Environment 102w
Dept of Trade & Industry 172-3w
Dept of Transport 150-2w
Derelict land 669w
East Germany 767w
Eastern Europe 526w
Electricity supply industry 5-6w, 691-2w
Export Credits Guarantee Department 477-8
Foreign & Commonwealth Office 37w
Home Office 360w
Lithuania 608w
Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food 83w
Ministry of Defence 51w
Northern Ireland Office 514w
Office of Arts & Libraries 8w
Postal deliveries 478
Prime Minister 42w
Prisons 456w
Property Services Agency 101w, 189-90w, 313w, 489-90w
Scottish Office 113w
Skills Training Agency 216w, 575w, 579w
Training Agency 133-4w
Treasury 10-1w
Water supply industry 102w, 185-6w, 266w, 712w
Welsh Office 14w
West Germany 767w

Privy Council
Advertising 47-8w
Management consultants 48w
Public relations 47-8w
Statistics 47-8w

Probate
701w
Administrative delays 701w

Probate—*continued*
Relocation of employees 701w

Probation
Drug abuse 795w

Procedure Select Committee
(21:03:90) 1206

Proceeds of crime
Drug crimes 747w

Procurement
Crown Suppliers 91-2w
EC internal trade 299w
Government departments 616w

Product liability
291w

Product safety
Consumer goods 295w

Production quotas
Dairy products 574w
Milk 192-3w, 347w

Productivity
378w
Manufacturing industries 269w, 376w, 1234-5

Professional access project
Scotland 698w

Professional misconduct
Conveyancing 109w

Professional organisations
Accountants 43w, 430w

Professional qualifications
Accounting 586-7w
Conveyancing 110w
Midwives 177w

Profit sharing
162w
Pay incentives 761w

Project 2000
97w, 177w, 466-7w

Property development
Agricultural land 674w
Humberstone (21:03:90) 1209

Property Holdings
Manpower 101w

Property insurance
Hospitals 282w

Property law
East Germany 408w

Property Services Agency
478w, 1112
Army in Northern Ireland 49w
British residents abroad 99-100w
Civil service manpower 99-100w
Conditions of employment 101w
Downing Street 598w
Privatisation 101w, 189-90w, 313w, 489-90w
Security vetting 101w

Property transfer
Central Electricity Generating Board 318-9w
London Residuary Body 268w

Prosecutions
Commercial surrogacy 476w
Incitement to murder 139w
Quota of disabled workers 252w

Prosthetics
Finance 729w

Protection of Animals Act 1911
Questions
459w

PSA
see Property Services Agency

Psychiatry
Hospital patients 462w
Hospital waiting lists 386w
Mental health services 364w
NHS 462w
Prisoners on remand 396w

Psychology
Nurses' training 462w

Public access
Water companies 184w

Public appointments
Caledonian MacBrayne 114-5w
District health authorities 477w
European Investment Bank 160-1w
Fair Employment Commission for Northern Ireland 622w
Food Advisory Committee 735w
Occupational Pensions Board 405w
Scottish Agricultural College 351w
Scottish Conveyancing & Confirmation Practitioners' Board 107-8w
South Western Regional Health Authority 281w
Training & enterprise councils 575w
West Midlands Residuary Body 769w
West Yorkshire Residuary Body 769-70w

Public bodies
Contracts for services 704w

Public contracts
Crown Suppliers 478w

Public expenditure
374w
Economic regions 410w
Housing 94-6w
Objects in lieu of tax 10w
Road construction 540w
Roads 149w
Scotland 646-8w
Transport supplementary grants 149w

Public expenditure controls
Foreign investment in UK 663

Public footpaths
Menwith with Darley 48w
Wales 772w

Public inquiries
East London river crossing 537w
MV Marchioness 5-6

Public libraries
Welsh districts 11w

Public opinion
London assessment studies 532w

Public order
Local authorities 752w

Public order policing
Bristol 361-2w
Football 1114-5

Public petitions
Community charge (13:03:90) 460, (16:03:90) 794
Dogs (21:03:90) 1210
Eye tests (21:03:90) 1209
Human embryo experiments (12:03:90) 129, (15:03:90) 784-5, (16:03:90) 793, 794, (21:03:90) 1210
Humberstone (21:03:90) 1209
Religious broadcasting (21:03:90) 1207-8
Road construction (14:03:90) 640
Speaker's rulings & statements (13:03:90) 460

Public relations
Cabinet Office 39-40w
Central Office of Information 166w
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster 47w
Civil service manpower 3w, 7-8w, 13w, 23w, 31w, 36w, 39-40w, 47-8w, 50w, 55-6w, 69-70w, 83w, 89w, 101-2w, 112-3w, 150w, 166w, 171-2w, 218w
Dept of Education & Science 31w

Public relations*—*continued
Dept of Employment 133w, 218w
Dept of Energy 3-4w, 23w
Dept of Health 55w
Dept of Social Security 69-71w
Dept of the Environment 101-2w, 191w
Dept of Trade & Industry 171-2w
Dept of Transport 150w
Expenditure 4w, 8w, 13-4w, 31w, 36-8w, 40w, 47-8w, 50w, 55w, 70-1w, 82-3w, 90w, 113w, 132-3w, 150w, 166w, 172w, 191w, 276w
Foreign & Commonwealth Office 36-8w
Lord Chancellor 89-90w
Metropolitan Police 23w
Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food 82-3w
Ministry of Defence 50w
Office of Arts & Libraries 7-8w
Office of Population Censuses & Surveys 55-6w
Prime Minister 39-40w
Privy Council 47-8w
Scottish Office 112-3w
Training Agency 132-3w, 218w
Treasury 166w, 276w
Welsh Office 13-4w

Public sector
Derelict land 669w
Quota of disabled workers 252w

Public sector assets
275w
NHS 569w
Water supply industry 712w

Public sector borrowing
Housing Corporation (12:03:90) 129

Public sector earnings
275-6w

Public sector housing
Dept of the Environment 395w
Dept of Transport 233w
Greater Manchester 395w
Home Office 137-8w

Public service obligation grant
(23:03:90) 1342-413
British Rail 536-7w

Public transport
Greater London 5, 11-2
Metropolitan line 11
Private Members' motions (23:03:90) 1342-413

Publicity
Action for Jobs 136w
AIDS 545w
Dept of Education & Science 419w
Dept of Employment 504w
Dept of Energy 631w
Dept of Health 728w
Dept of Health & Social Security 739w
Dept of Social Security 739w
Dept of Trade & Industry 613-4w
Dept of Transport 689-90w
Drug abuse 732w
Foreign & Commonwealth Office 716w
Home Office 635-6w
Inner cities initiative 785w
Leeds Development Corporation 268w
Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food 799w
Ministry of Defence 771-2w
Office of Arts & Libraries 526-7w
Overseas Development Administration 531w
Prime Minister 516w
Road works 650w
Scottish Office 646w
Social security benefits 403w
Treasury 761w
"Working for Patients White Paper" 571w

Publishing
Dept of Trade inquiries 431w

Punjab
(22:03:90) 1333-40

Pupil-teacher ratios
Primary education 520w
Secondary education 520w

Quarter days
Scotland (15:03:90) 683

Questionnaires
Recycling 190w

Quin, Ms Joyce
Debates etc.
Arts finance (13:03:90) 165
Questions
European business information centres, Finance 207w
Export promotion, West Germany 478
Labelling, Environment protection 1113-4
Prisoners on remand, Prison overcrowding 21-2w
Prisons, Repairs & maintenance 753w

Quota of disabled workers
210-1w, 607w
Prosecutions 252w
Public sector 252w

Rabies
Disease control 241w

RAC
see Royal Automobile Club

Race relations
Prisons 354w

Racial discrimination
EC action 796w

Radar
Radiation hazards 722-3w

Radiation Exposed Crown Employees (Benefits) Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
2R order read (16:03:90) 860, (23:03:90) 1412

Radiation hazards
Armed forces civilians 333w
Clyde Submarine Base 334w
Cumbria 489w
Disclosure of information 712w
International cooperation 712w
Nuclear submarines 333-4w
Radar 722-3w
Radioactive Incident Monitoring Network 712w
RAF Fylingdales 722-3w
Scotland 108w

Raiice, Mr Giles
Debates etc.
Arts finance (13:03:90) 164-5
Budget March 1990, Industry (22:03:90) 1264

Radio
Aircraft 592-3w

Radio Authority
793w

Radioactive Incident Monitoring Network
Radiation hazards 712w

Radioactive Material (Road Transport) Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
1R (19:03:90) 887

Radioactive waste disposal
Irish Sea 85w, 412w
Nuclear submarines 412w
River Clyde 412w

Radioactive wastes
99w
Land pollution 1104

Radioactivity
Irish Sea 107w

Radiotherapy
Compensation 1005

RAF Fylingdales
Environmental health 720w
Radiation hazards 722-3w

Raffan, Mr Keith
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990, Industry (22:03:90) 1274-9
Questions
Cancer, Medical treatments 872
Community charge, Clwyd 877
Immigration rules 794w

Rail Europe
124w

Railway accidents
London Underground 774-5w

Railway Inspectorate
310w, 654-5w, 774-5w
Health & Safety Executive 9
Relocation of employees 146w

Railway land
Litter 147-8w

Railway network
Capital investment (23:03:90) 1342-413
Channel tunnel 121w
Northern Ireland 512w
Prestwick Airport 581w
River Severn 442w
Terrorism 512w

Railway property
Fox hunting 125w

Railway safety
8-9
King's Cross 654-5w
London Underground 497-8w, 655w

Railway signals
310w

Railway technology
Automatic train protection 310w

Railway track
Jubilee line 146-7w
Weedkillers 148-9w

Railway transport
Carbon dioxide 775-6w
EC action 532-3w
Noise control 533w, 776-7w
Railway workers 123w

Railway travel
Blind 383w
Commuters 124w
Ministers 496w
Network SouthEast 496w
South East region 309w
West Midlands 122w

Railway workers
Death 148w
Railway transport 123w

Rain forests
699w
ACP-EEC Joint Assembly 61w
Brazil 61w, 440w

Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Debates etc.
Arts finance (13:03:90) 160
Families (16:03:90) 795-805, 813, 831, 839
Questions
Tanzania 62w

Rampton Hospital
181w

Randall, Mr Stuart
Questions
European monetary system, Exchange rates 369w
Prison population, Young offenders 1224-5

Rantzen, Esther
National Consumer Council 465-6

Rape
Departmental circulars 751-2w
Sentencing 751w

Rapier missiles
Costs 434w

Rate increases
Northern Ireland 225-6w

Rate rebates
Scotland 404w
Social security recipients 643-5w

Rate Support Grant (Scotland) Order 1990
Debates etc.
(19:03:90) 976-82

Rate support grants
Non-metropolitan counties 656-7w
Personal social services 473w
Scotland (19:03:90) 976-82

Rateable value
Lancashire 528w

Rates & rating
Administrative costs 715-6w
Birmingham 665w
Bournemouth Borough Council 661w
Community charge 1110-1
Family income 593-4w
Lancashire 479-80w
Local government expenditure 619w
Non-ratepayers 97w
Poole Borough Council 661w
Small businesses 599w
Waltham Forest 661w

Rathbone, Mr Tim
Debates etc.
Arts finance (13:03:90) 165
Questions
Engineers, Recruitment 149
Health education, Drug abuse 870
National parks, South Downs 676w
Official engagements 157w, 329w, 516w
Pre-school education, Northern Ireland 1-2w
Pre-school education, Scotland 120w
Regional health authorities 550w
Tax allowances, Day nurseries 376w

RECHAR
East Midlands 301w

Recognition of states
Lithuania 449-50w

Recruitment
Engineers 149
Headteachers 517w
Metropolitan Police 752w
Northern Ireland health & social services boards 384w
Nurses 53w
Police 762w
Special constables 746-7w, 1220-1

Recycling
Chlorinated solvents 666-7w
Domestic wastes 190w, 479
Industries 268w
Joint ventures 190w
Newsprint 598w
Paper 313w, 713w
Questionnaires 190w
Tyres 681-2w

Recycling Advisory Group
291w, 479

Red alerts
Hospitals 52w

Red Deer Commission
Finance 158w

Redbridge Borough Council
(20:03:90) 1058-83

Redbridge London Borough Council Bill 1988/89
Debates etc.
3R order read (15:03:90) 649

Redbridge London Borough Council Bill 1988/89—continued
3R (20:03:90) 1058-83

Redcar
Social Fund 64-5w

Redmond, Mr Martin
Debates etc.
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 357, 389-92
National Health Service Hospitals (Opting Out) Bill, 1R (21:03:90) 1121-3
Penzance South Pier Extension Bill, 2R (20:03:90) 1084-6
Redbridge London Borough Council Bill, 3R (20:03:90) 1060-1, 1066, 1069-70, 1073, 1078
Questions
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Experimental farms 78w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Research 197w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Slaughterhouses 79-80w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Yorkshire & Humberside 79-80w
Fisheries, Acid rain 446w
Hazardous materials, Departmental publications 488-9w
Hong Kong, Passports 407-8w
Hospitals, Red alerts 52w
Industrial wastes, North Sea 75w
Iraq, Prisoners 408w, 793w
Israel, Gaza strip 35w
Israel, Immigrants 408w
Israel, Occupied territories 408w
Jerusalem, Resettlement 449w
Juries 460w
Laing Properties, Takeovers 428w
Medical malpractice, Compensation 178w
Nazi war crimes 747w
Personal taxation, Merchant seamen 410w
Police stations, Terrorism 457w
Prisoners on remand, Prisoners' rights 21w
Public expenditure, Objects in lieu of tax 10w
Railway workers, Death 148w
Sea pollution, Yorkshire & Humberside 682w
South Africa, Political prisoners 35w
South Yorkshire Fire & Civil Defence Authority, Finance 92w
Tourist industry, Government grants 414w
Tourist industry, Scotland 351w
Transmissible encephalopathies, Animal feed 734w

Redundancy
Wheal Jane mine 147

***Redwood, Mr John**, Under-Secretary of State for Corporate Affairs*
Questions
Accountants, Ministers 613w
Accountants, Professional organisations 43w, 430w
Accounting, Financial services 696w
Accounting, Goodwill 432w
Accounting, Professional qualifications 586-7w
Al-Fayed Investment Holdings, Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986 469
Audit, Annual reports 695w
Audit, Company accounts 43w, 169w, 587w, 695-6w
Audit, Contracts 431w
Audit, Fraud 42w
Audit, Mergers 696w
Auditing Practices Committee, Voting rights 432w
Balance of trade 291w
Balance of trade, Biotechnology 297w
Balance of trade, East Germany 291w
Balance of trade, Hong Kong 699w
Balance of trade, Manufactured goods 291-2w
Bankruptcy 304w, 429w
Barlow Clowes, Compensation 401w
BOM Holdings, Dept of Trade inquiries 431w

***Redwood, Mr John**—continued*
British Overseas Trade Board, Export promotion 297-8w
Business, Bureaucracy 467-9
Business, Community charge 468
Business, Self-regulating organisations 469
CJ How, Investor protection 302w
Companies 46w
Company accounts 432w
Company accounts, Companies Registration Office (England & Wales) 304w
Company accounts, Costs 305w
Company accounts, Disclosure of information 586w
Company accounts, Wealth 42w, 432w, 695w
Company investigations, Company reports 586w
Company liquidations 302w
Company reports, Pay 431w
Competition 294w
Credit cards 171w
Dept of Trade inquiries, Publishing 431w
Directors, Disqualifications 429-30w
Dumping, Construction materials 429w
EC Internal Market Council 294w
EC internal trade, Procurement 299w
European Commission 294w
Export credit guarantees, Eastern Europe 768w
Export Credits Guarantee Department 473
Export Credits Guarantee Department, Privatisation 477-8
Export promotion, West Germany 478
Exports 698-9w
Exports, Government assistance 290w
External financial reporting 431-2w
Financial Services Act 1986, Financial services 298w
Financial Services Act 1986, Investor protection 298w
Furs, Exports 303w
GATT, Clothing industry 295w
GATT, Import duties 471-2
GATT, Multifibre arrangement 472-3
GATT, Textile industry 295w
GATT, Unfair trading practices 472
Government assistance to industry, Expenditure 298w
House of Fraser, Company investigations 306w
Insider trading, Company investigations 169-70w
Insider trading, Convictions 613w
Insider trading, Law reform 297w
Institute of Chartered Accountants in England & Wales, Company investigations 695w
Investment business, Liability 306w
Investor protection, Compensation 305w
Joint ventures, Czechoslovakia 767w
Joint ventures, East Germany 767-8w
Laing Properties, Takeovers 428w
Lonrho, Disclosure of information 431w
Money Management Financial Services, Investor protection 43w
Multifibre arrangement 306w
Overseas investment, South Africa 265w
Overseas trade, East Germany 767w
Overseas trade, Hungary 470-1
Overseas trade, Indonesia 615w
Overseas trade, South Africa 169w
Postal deliveries, Privatisation 478
Securities & Investments Board 300w
Securities & Investments Board, Company investigations 430w
Self-regulating organisations, Investor protection 303w
Shipbuilding, Trade fairs 478-9
Sound Diffusion, Dept of Trade inquiries 43w
Stock Exchange 294w
Textile industry, Balance of trade 479-80
Textile industry, Economic sanctions 480
UK trade with EC, Balance of trade 291w
UK trade with EC, Subsidies 473-4
Unit trusts 591w

***Redwood, Mr John**—continued*
Ward, Adrian, Securities & Investments Board 305w
West Germany 302w

Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Debates etc.
Bazoft, Farzad (15:03:90) 669-70
War Crimes Bill, 2R (19:03:90) 894, 900, 929-32, 933
Questions
Buildings, Architecture 673w
District health authorities, Debts 560w

"Reform of Social Security Consultation Paper"
455w

Refreshment Dept
Pay 882-3

Refrigerators
Chlorofluorocarbons 104w
Safety standards 615w
Waste disposal 311w

Refugee camps
792w

Refugees
Cambodia 792w

Refuges
Community charge exemptions 246w
Wales 246w

Refuse disposal
Hepatitis 473-4w

Regional aid
293w, 297w
Lancashire 428-9w

Regional airports
Passengers 121w

Regional arts associations
(13:03:90) 155-70

Regional arts boards
(13:03:90) 155-70

Regional enterprise grants
245w

Regional health authorities
550w
Greater London 279w
Land acquisition 279w
NHS finance 461-2w

Regional selective assistance
169w, 293w, 428-9w, 646-8w

Registration of births deaths & marriages
998

Rehabilitation
Overseas aid 60-1w

Reid, Dr John
Debates etc.
Families (16:03:90) 808-13, 838
Questions
Child benefit 334w
Child workers 174w
Missing persons 750-1w
Road safety, Expenditure 123w

Reinstatement grants
Defective housing 97-8w

Religion
Fair Employment Commission for Northern Ireland 622w

Religious broadcasting
Broadcasting controls 793w
Public petitions (21:03:90) 1207-8

Religious buildings
Hertsmere Borough Council 601w

Religious education
Teacher training 34w

Relocation of employees
Probate 701w
Railway Inspectorate 146w

Remand centres
Private sector 1225

Remand in custody
Medical examinations 355-6w

Rent allowances
Police 756w
Police housing 362-3w, 633w

Rent arrears
Kirklees District Council 678w

Rent control
Barnet 880-1

Rent increases
Council house rents 265w, 675w
Housing associations 184w
Housing benefits 675w

Rent rebates
Social security recipients 643-4w

Rented housing
Business expansion scheme 163w, 530-1w
Leeds Development Corporation 1106-7
Liverpool 1107
London boroughs 92-4w
Urban development corporations 1106

***Renton, Mr Tim**, Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury*
Debates etc.
Business statements (13:03:90) 442-54, (15:03:90) 672-82
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 305, 411, 435

Rents
Church Commissioners 880-1
Community charge 391w
Health service staff 731w
Retail price index 275w

Repairs & maintenance
Big Ben 683w
Bridges 3
Cumbernauld & Kilsyth District Council 115w
Members' facilities 884-5
Museums & galleries 420w
Parliamentary Estate 606w
Prisons 753w
School buildings 625-6w

Repossession orders
Mortgage defaulters 679w

Republic of Ireland
Constitutions (14:03:90) 641-8
Extradition 481-6, 622w
Judgments (14:03:90) 641-8, 662

Research
Acid rain 770w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy 197w
Fish diseases 242w
Food standards 87-8w, 521w
Mental health 120w

Research facilities
Climate 19-20

Research fellowships
384w

Research finance
Acid rain 677w
Avionics 467
Nuclear physics 318w
Nurses 764w

Resettlement
Jerusalem 449w

Residential care
Capital rules 785w
Elderly 541w
Fees & charges 542w

***Residential care**—continued*
Income support 69-70w, 455w

Resignations
Councillors 1116
Teachers 517w

Resource management initiative
562w

Respiratory diseases
Iron & steel industry 575w

Restart programme
783w
Interviews 213w

Retail price index
409w
Community charge 652-3
Energy prices 370w
Mortgage relief 411w
Rents 275w

Retirement pensions
596-7w
EC countries 643-4w
Non-employed contributions 153w
Personal income 596-7w
Social security benefits uprating 597w
Women 598w

Retrospective legislation
(19:03:90) 887-975

Revenue support grant
662w
Community charge 265-6w
Humberside 482w
Lambeth 663w
Local government finance 489w
Oxfordshire 662w
Wandsworth 663w

Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art
317w

Richardson, Ms Jo
Questions
Schedule E income tax, Women 409w
Special hospitals, Self-mutilation 181w
Special hospitals, Women 181w

Richter, Ian
Iraq 327-8w

Riddick, Mr Graham
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990 (21:03:90) 1186-90, 1196, 1199-200
Budget March 1990, Industry (22:03:90) 1262, 1269
Business statements (15:03:90) 673
Questions
Central Government, Manpower 423w
Community charge benefits, Personal savings 66w
Floating debt, European currency unit 688w
GATT, Textile industry 295w
Huddersfield Health Authority, Finance 544w
International Monetary Fund 688w
Kirklees District Council, Empty housing 678w
Local government staff, Manpower 485w
Lost working days, Industrial disputes 214w
Neighbourhood watch schemes 396w

***Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas**, Secretary of State for Trade and Industry*
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990, Industry (22:03:90) 1253-61, 1264, 1326-7
Questions
House of Fraser, Dept of Trade inquiries 587-91w
House of Fraser, Directors 591w
Insolvency Service 696w
Kleinwort Benson, Contracts 591w

***Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm**, Secretary of State for Scotland*
Questions
Advertising, Scottish Office 113-4w
Cancer hazards, Scotland 704w
Civil servants, Local government finance 452w
EC grants & loans, Rural areas 583w
Electricity supply industry, Scotland 705-6w
Management consultants, Scottish Office 114w
Privatisation, Scottish Office 113w
Public relations, Scottish Office 112-3w
Publicity, Scottish Office 646w
Statistics, Scottish Office 112w

RIMNET
see Radioactive Incident Monitoring Network

Risley Remand Centre
510w

River Clyde
Radioactive waste disposal 412w

River Mersey
602w
River pollution 603-4w

River pollution
EC countries 670w, 675w
North West region 602w
Pollution control 106w, 683w
River Mersey 603-4w
South East region 602w
Waste disposal 683w

River Severn
Bridges 383w
Railway network 442w

River Thames
602w
Wrecks 776w

Rivers
Fish farming 445w

Riverside Health Authority
364w

Road accidents
127w
Cycling 648-9w
Driving instruction 535w
Health services 475w
Hereford & Worcester 121w
Transport of radioactive materials 525w, 777w

Road construction
126w
Air pollution 775w
Badgers 152w
Carbon dioxide 775-6w
Channel tunnel 233-4w
Disley bypass 533w
Environment protection 309w
Kent 233-4w
Lancashire 534w
Malpas bypass 15w
Motorways 126w
Public expenditure 540w
Public petitions (14:03:90) 640
Road traffic 536w, 776w
South London (14:03:90) 640
Transport supplementary grants 228-34w, 650-4w

Road finance
Wales 878

Road freight transport
Transport of radioactive materials (19:03:90) 887

Road safety
Expenditure 123w

Road safety barriers
148w

Road signs
B3227 540w
Neighbourhood watch schemes 1230-1

Road tax
Lorries 147w
Petrol 540w
Tax evasion 121w

Road tolls
Cleddau bridge (19:03:90) 983-90
EC countries 540w
Mersey tunnel 127w

Road traffic
Air pollution 187w
Bedford 535w
Blackwall tunnel 533w
Bow 648w
Central London 125w
Channel tunnel 234w
M1 151-2w
Road construction 536w, 776w
Traffic censuses 234-5w

Road traffic control
Birmingham 536w
East London 533w
Headington 690w
Leeds 536w
Urban areas 648w

Road traffic offences
Motor insurance 147w

Road traffic police
456w

Road transport
539-40w

Road works
A1 649-50w
A6 773w
A13 8
A580 534w
M1 126w
Publicity 650w
Transport supplementary grants 2-3

Roads
Civil service manpower 539w
Down 437w
Environment protection 125-6w
Expenditure 125w, 437-8w
Greater London 125-6w
Greater Manchester 534-5w
Newry & Mourne District Council 437-8w
Prestwick Airport 581w
Public expenditure 149w

Robert Jones & Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital
177w
Hospital patients 177w

Roberts, Allan
Members' deaths (22:03:90) 1217

Roberts, Mr Allan
Questions
Electronic equipment, Balance of trade 303w

***Roberts, Mr Wyn**, Minister of State for Wales*
Debates etc.
Cleddau bridge, Road tolls (19:03:90) 986-90
Questions
Conway tunnel road scheme, Construction costs 349w
Curriculum, School buildings 518w
Headteachers, Recruitment 517w
Health education, Drug abuse 870
Health education, Wales 870-1
Licensed teachers, Wales 517-8w
M4, Wales 13w
Malpas bypass, Road construction 15w
Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin, Government grants 443w
Pedestrian crossings, Tremadog 244w
Public footpaths, Wales 772w

***Roberts, Mr Wyn**—continued*
Public libraries, Welsh districts 11w
Railway network, River Severn 442w
Special education, Wales 244w
Teachers, Early retirement 517w
Teachers, Resignations 517w
Welsh language, Adult education 350w
Welsh language, Educational finance 518-9w
Welsh language, Languages education 12w, 869-70
Welsh language, Legislation 11-2w
Welsh language, Primary education 518w
Ysgol Belmont 617w

Robertson, Mr George
Debates etc.
Bazoft, Farzad (15:03:90) 667
Questions
Professional access project, Scotland 698w

Robinson, Mr Geoffrey
Questions
Textile industry, Balance of trade 479-80

Robinson, Mr Peter
Debates etc.
Appropriation (Northern Ireland) Order 1990 (12:03:90) 92, 108, 110, 115-9
Northern Ireland (Emergency & Prevention of Terrorism Provisions) (Continuance) Order 1990 (12:03:90) 34, 63-5

Rogers, Mr Allan
Debates etc.
Community charge, Public petitions (13:03:90) 461
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 225, 394-5
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Allocation of time motion & Rep (14:03:90) 569
Questions
Atomic Weapons Research Establishment, Contractorisation 522w, 524-5w
European fighter aircraft, Expenditure 433-4w
Information technology, Training 292w
Rapier missiles, Costs 434w
University of Wales, University finance 144w
Upholder class submarines 435w

Rolling stock
9-10

Romania
Adoption 694w
Children 716w
Human rights 35w

Romero, Archbishop
Homicide 330w

Rooker, Mr Jeff
Debates etc.
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Allocation of time motion & Rep (14:03:90) 585, 594
War Crimes Bill, 2R (19:03:90) 916-20, 922, 933-4
Questions
Mortgage defaulters 369w

Ross, Mr Ernie
Questions
Product liability 291w

Ross, Mr William
Debates etc.
Appropriation (Northern Ireland) Order 1990 (12:03:90) 77, 85, 97, 104, 105-8, 125
Arts finance (13:03:90) 163
Budget March 1990 (21:03:90) 1165-7
Business statements (13:03:90) 449, (15:03:90) 675
Republic of Ireland, Extradition (14:03:90) 498
Questions
Army in Northern Ireland, Fraud 602w
Civil service manpower, Northern Ireland 140-1w, 612w

***Ross, Mr William**—continued*
Duration of unemployment, Northern Ireland 227-8w
Extradition, Republic of Ireland 622w
Hospital waiting lists, Northern Ireland 759w
Northern Ireland Dept of Health & Social Services, Equal opportunities 512w
Railway network, Terrorism 512w
Salmon, Licensing 573w
Unemployment, Northern Ireland 623w

Rover Group
Cowley 303w

Rowe, Mr Andrew
Debates etc.
Families (16:03:90) 823, 831, 841-5
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 217-9, 254, 342, 353, 373
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Allocation of time motion & Rep (14:03:90) 507, 509, 518-20, 522, 567, 581, 587, 592, 593-4
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, 3R (15:03:90) 694, 706
Questions
Areas of outstanding natural beauty, Environment protection 676w
Overseas aid, Rehabilitation 60-1w
Rail Europe 124w
Self-employed 374w
Women's employment, Day care of children 144

Rowland, Simon
199-201w

Rowlands, Mr Ted
Debates etc.
House of Commons broadcasting, Television (13:03:90) 459
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 318-20
Questions
Interest rates, Manufacturing industries 270w

Royal Automobile Club
12-3

Royal charters
Accountants 439w

Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital
Medical malpractice 1005

Royal Family
Civil list 528w

Royal Hospital Chelsea
435w

Royal Opera House
494-5w

Royal parks
Cycleways 600w
Cycling 680-1w

Royal Parks Constabulary
1113

Royal Society
770w

RU486
180w
Licensing 541w

Ruddock, Mrs Joan
Debates etc.
Haberdashers' Aske's School (23:03:90) 1414
Public transport (23:03:90) 1372-7, 1382, 1383, 1384-5
Tees & Hartlepool Port Authority Bill, 2R (15:03:90) 751-3
Underground railways, One person operation (14:03:90) 487
Questions
Disabled workers 210w

***Ruddock, Mrs Joan**—continued*
Jubilee line, Construction costs 146-7w
London Underground, Railway accidents 774-5w
London Underground, Railway safety 497-8w
London Underground, Underground railways 773-4w
MV Marchioness, Public inquiries 5
Public transport, Greater London 11-2
Traffic Commissioners, Complaints 152w
Transport supplementary grants, Inner cities initiative 537-8w

Rugby
Sportsgrounds 495w

***Rumbold, Mrs Angela**, Minister of State for Education and Science*
Questions
Advertising, Dept of Education & Science 32-3w
Audit, Dept of Education & Science 521w
City technology colleges, Bradford 708w
City technology colleges, Educational finance 381-2w
Civil service manpower, Dept of Education & Science 706-8w
Educational policy, Northumberland 628w
Educational qualifications, Inner London boroughs 627-8w
English education, Primary education 625w
GCE A level, Teachers 33w
Languages education 625w
Local education authorities, Billing 30w
Local education authorities, Educational finance 418w
Magnet schools 709w
Management consultants, Dept of Education & Science 33w
Physical education, Curriculum 321w
Pre-school education, Costs 520-1w
Privatisation, Dept of Education & Science 32w
Public relations, Dept of Education & Science 31w
Publicity, Dept of Education & Science 419w
Pupil-teacher ratios, Primary education 520w
School administration, Budgeting 26w
School administration, Ealing 144w
Special education, Boarding schools 760w
Statistics, Dept of Education & Science 31-2w
Teachers, Mortgages 34w

Rural areas
EC grants & loans 583w, 592w

Rural development areas
675w

***Ryder, Mr Richard**, Economic Secretary to the Treasury*
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990 (20:03:90) 1040
Budget March 1990, Industry (22:03:90) 1328-32
Questions
Advertising, Central Office of Information 167-8w
Advertising, Treasury 276-7w
Balance of trade 660-1
Balance of trade, Industry 661
Balance of trade, Invisible trade balance 661
Balance of trade, OECD countries 378w, 660
Bank of England 373-4w
Beaulieu Group, Tax evasion 527w
Charities, Tax yields 372w
Civil service dispersal 611w
Civil service manpower, Northern Ireland 612w
Civil service pensions 689w
Confederation of British Industry, Interest rates 658-9
Confederation of British Industry, Labour costs 659

***Ryder, Mr Richard**—continued*
Customs & Excise, Drug crimes 758w
Customs & Excise, Petitions 611w
Czechoslovakia 528w
Debts 687w
Debts, Developing countries 9w
EC budget contributions 687-8w
EC Finance Council 274-5w
EC Finance Council, Economic & monetary union 376w
Economic & monetary union 376w
Economic situation, West Germany 609w
European Development Bank 380w, 650
European Investment Bank, Channel tunnel 160w, 527w
European Investment Bank, Exchange risk guarantee scheme 409w
European Investment Bank, Loans 161w
European Investment Bank, Public appointments 160-1w
European monetary system 376w, 609-10w
European monetary system, Exchange rates 650
European monetary system, Inflation 369-70w
European monetary system, West Germany 369w
Exchange control 374w
Exchange rates, Small businesses 270w
Floating debt, European currency unit 688w
Inflation 371-2w
Inflation, EC countries 371w
Inflation, Mortgage interest rates 163-4w
Interest rates 372w, 423-4w, 659
Interest rates, European monetary system 659
Interest rates, Inflation 660
Interest rates, Manufacturing industries 270w
Interest rates, Mortgage relief 659-60
Interest rates, Small businesses 270w
International Monetary Fund 688w
Invisible trade balance 651
Management consultants, Central Office of Information 168w
Management consultants, Treasury 277w
Manufacturing industries, Productivity 376w
Narcotics, EC countries 687w
National Girobank, Cheque cards 409w
National income 168w
National income, EC countries 372-3w
Privatisation, Central Office of Information 167w
Public relations, Central Office of Information 166w
Public relations, Treasury 166w, 276w
Publicity, Treasury 761w
Science & technology research, West Germany 609w
Statistics, Central Office of Information 165w
Statistics, Treasury 165-6w
Taxation 370w
Treasury, Civil service manpower 376w
UK contributions to EC budget 610w
VAT 371w
VAT, Caravan sites 373w
VAT, New businesses 370-1w
VAT, NHS 424w
VAT, Pay 370w

Safety equipment
Goods vehicles 6-7

Safety measures
Electromagnetic interference 266w
Hazardous materials 344w, 503w

Safety standards
Domestic electrical appliances 401w
Harmonisation of legislation 464-5
Refrigerators 615w

Sailing boats
Light dues 495w

***Sainsbury, Mr Tim**, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs*
Debates etc.
India (22:03:90) 1336-40
Questions
Audit, Foreign & Commonwealth Office 526w
Cambodia, Refugees 792w
Colombia, Mercenaries 608w
Immigration appeals 717w
Immigration appeals, Administrative delays 717w
Publicity, Foreign & Commonwealth Office 716w
UNESCO 608w
Visas, Children 716w

St David's Hospital Cardiff
444-5w

St Ives
679w

St Thomas' Hospital
NHS hospital trusts 995

Salmon
Licensing 573w
Sea fishing 447w

Salmond, Mr Alex
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990 (21:03:90) 1130-1, 1140
Business statements (13:03:90) 450, (15:03:90) 680
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Allocation of time motion & Rep (14:03:90) 497, 531-2
Questions
Average earnings 502w
Business statements 1250
Economic policy, Scotland 1010
Employment training, Offshore drilling 134w
Interest rates 372w
Low pay 502w
Minimum wage 502w
Offshore workers, Employment training 342-3w
Property Services Agency, Privatisation 489-90w
Special constables 1221
Transport of radioactive materials, Road accidents 525w, 777w
Unemployment benefits, Fishing crews 785w

Salmonella
Eggs 77-8w, 82w, 193-4w, 281-2w
Food hygiene 78w
Food poisoning 467w
Poultry 81-2w, 243w, 327w

SAMB
see Scottish Association of Master Bakers

SAS
see Special Air Service

Satanism
Child abuse 154

Sayeed, Mr Jonathan
Debates etc.
Coastal protection (21:03:90) 1211-3
Questions
AWE Aldermaston, Defence contracts 771w
Health & Safety Executive, Finance 146
Nurses' training 552w

Scarborough Borough Council
660w

Schedule E income tax
Women 409w

School administration
Budgeting 26w, 144w
Ealing 144w
Educational finance 26w

***School administration**—continued*
Free school meals 709w
School milk 709w

School admission
Bromley 520w

School buildings
Curriculum 518w
Primary education 626w
Repairs & maintenance 625-6w
Wales 518w

School closures
Inner London boroughs 30w
Single sex schools 30w

School Examinations & Assessment Council
518w

School milk
School administration 709w

School population
25w
Bradford 521w
Special education 418w

Science & technology research
West Germany 609w

Science Museum
Attendance 8w

Scope of debate
Speaker's rulings & statements (13:03:90) 194, 333, 390, 391, 421, 433, 434, (14:03:90) 583, 584, 585, (15:03:90) 694, 695, 708, 760, 765, (20:03:90) 1064, 1068-9, 1073, 1086

Scotland
Airports 581w
Alcoholic drinks 351w
Assisted places scheme 158w, 583-4w
Bakery products 353w
Cancer hazards 704w
Community care 120w
Community charge 150, 1232-4
Community charge benefits 593w, 1111
Conveyancing 108-12w
Day care of children 586w
Dental health 119w
Domestic rates 404w
EC grants & loans 583w
Economic policy 1010
Educational buildings 454w
Educational finance 353w, 585w
Electricity supply industry 705-6w
Eye tests 119w
Family doctors 582w
Ferries 515w
Fish farming 353w
Fish Farming Advisory Committee 580-1w
Fishery protection 451-2w
Fishing gear 448w, 452w
Government grants to local authorities 414w
Handicapped students 452-3w
Health education 158-9w
Heart diseases 118w, 158-9w, 261-4w
Homelessness 259-60w
Housing construction 582w
Industrial health & safety 503-4w
Iron & steel industry 476-7
Junior hospital doctors 116w
Legal profession 110-1w
Local government borrowing 585w
Local government revenue 778-84w
Local income tax 581-2w, 702w
Low pay 584w
Mental health 120w
Mental health services 117w
Mental illness 116-8w
Mortgage relief 377w
Multiply handicapped 352w
Nature conservation 647-8w
NHS 453-4w
NHS finance 454w
Offshore accidents 777-8w
Post-neonatal mortality 453w
Pre-school education 120w

Scotland—continued
Professional access project 698w
Public expenditure 646-8w
Quarter days (15:03:90) 683
Radiation hazards 108w
Rate rebates 404w
Rate support grants (19:03:90) 976-82
Self-governing schools 158w
Social security recipients 288w
Solicitors 109w
Speech therapists 454w, 584w
Spirits 777w
Student grants 157-8w, 647w
Student loans 157-8w, 523w
Technology academies 413w, 452w
Tourist industry 351w
Touting 260w
Warrant sales 157w
Waste disposal 116w
White fish 261w
Widows 743w

***Scott, Rt Hon Nicholas**, Minister of State, Dept of Social Security*
Questions
Attendance allowance, Handicapped children 154w
Attendance allowance, Terminal care 639-40w, 740w
Attendance Allowance Board 740w
Community care, Footwear 69w
Community care, Government grants 65-6w
Community care, Preston 288w
Disability employment credit, Personal savings 67w
Disability employment credit, Working hours 67w
Disabled workers, Handicap benefits 67w
Handicap benefits, Social security recipients 66-7w
Handicapped, EC action 153-4w
Handicapped, Elderly 66w
Hospital visitor benefits, Social Fund 595w
Mobility allowance, Social security benefits disqualification 404w
Occupational deafness, Handicap benefits 68w
Occupational deafness, Merchant seamen 739w
Social Fund, Bradford 284-8w
Social Fund, Computers in government departments 740w
Social Fund, Debts written off 74w
Social Fund, Expenditure 73-4w
Social Fund, High court 73w
Social Fund, Income support 74w
Social Fund, Preston 405w
Social Fund, Redcar 64-5w
Social Fund, Social security benefits rules 740w
Social Fund, Social security claims 404w
Social security benefits, Take-up 153w

Scottish Agricultural College
Public appointments 351w

Scottish Association of Master Bakers
353w

Scottish Conveyancing & Confirmation Practitioners' Board
109-10w
Buildings 111w
Disciplinary proceedings 110w
Finance 108w, 110w
Fines 110w
Income 108w
Manpower 107-8w
Pay 107-8w, 110w
Public appointments 107-8w
Solicitors 108w

Scottish councils
Capital investment 702w
Community charge 702-3w

Scottish courts
Admissibility of evidence 580w

Scottish Development Agency
646-8w

"Scottish Health Authorities Review of Priorities for the Eighties & Nineties"
453-4w

Scottish Health Education Group
158-9w

Scottish Home & Health Dept
158-9w

Scottish Homes
704w

Scottish Hydro Electric
705-6w

Scottish Nuclear
705-6w

Scottish Office
452w
Advertising 113-4w
Management consultants 114w
Privatisation 113w
Public relations 112-3w
Publicity 646w
Statistics 112w

Scottish Power
705-6w

Scottish Sports Council
Touting 260w

Scottish Transport Group
582-3w

Scrapie
327w, 734w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy 326w
Cattle 327w

Screening
Breast cancer 570w, 727w
Cervical cancer 179w, 543w, 994-5
Elderly 570-1w

SDA
see Scottish Development Agency

Sea disposal licences
315w

Sea Fish Industry Authority
88w

Sea fishing
Salmon 447w

Sea level
(21:03:90) 1211-8

Sea lice
Pest control 88w

Sea pollution
328-9w
Conferences 447w
Fish 84-5w
Irish Sea 315w
Kinmel Bay 12w
Lindane 87w
Newspaper press 487w
North Sea 487w, 671w
Plankton 84w
Yorkshire & Humberside 682w

Seabed mining
Law of the Sea Convention 145w

SEAC
see School Examinations & Assessment Council

Seagate Microelectronics
Hazardous materials 503-4w

Seaham
415w, 500w
Unemployment 500w

Seals
Fish farming 353w

Seas & oceans
Archaeological sites 328w
Hazardous wastes 196w

Seas & oceans—continued
Sewage 187w

Seccombe, Vernon
281w

Second homes
Community charge 482w

Secondary education
Avon 418w
Pupil-teacher ratios 520w

Secretaries of State
Wales 876

Securities & Investments Board
298w, 300w, 303w, 305w
Company investigations 430w
Ward, Adrian 305w

Security Commission
514w

Security industry
Self-regulating organisations 756w

Security Service Tribunal
514w
Complaints 139w

Security vetting
Internal delivery service 101w
Property Services Agency 101w

Sedgemore, Mr Brian
Debates etc.
Arts finance (13:03:90) 167-8
Deposited papers, Backbenchers (12:03:90) 26
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Allocation of time motion & Rep (14:03:90) 589
Questions
Bombings, Birmingham 745-6w

Segregation of prisoners
797-8w
Prison administration 745w

Self-determination of states
Baltic republics of USSR 1009-10
Kashmir 329-30w

Self-employed
131w, 208w, 374w
Manpower 207-8w
Tourist industry 211w

Self-governing hospitals
Cassel Hospital 386w
Expenditure 39w
NHS finance 472w

Self-governing schools
Scotland 158w

Self-mutilation
Special hospitals 181w

Self-regulating organisations
Business 469
Investor protection 303w
Security industry 756w

Sellafield
Alarms 629-30w
Health physics 629-30w
Ionizing radiation 629w

Senile dementia
117-8w

SENSE
352w, 622w

Sentencing
751w
Custodial treatment 456w
Diminished responsibility 633w
Rape 751w

Separate taxation of wife's earnings
Low incomes 369w

Serious Fraud Office
89w

SERPLAN
see London & South East Regional Planning Conference

Set-aside schemes
Land use 738w

Settle-Carlisle railway
(23:03:90) 1342-413

Severe disability premium
Social security recipients 67w

Severe disablement allowance
Social security recipients 66-7w

Severn barrage
Tidal power 142w

Sewage
Bristol Channel 267w, 491w
Fylde 186w
Irish Sea 395-6w
Seas & oceans 187w
Waste disposal 116w, 314-5w, 679w

Sewage outfalls
267w

SFIA
see Sea Fish Industry Authority

Shard Bridge Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
2R order read (15:03:90) 649, (22:03:90) 1219

Shares
Inheritance tax 374w

Shaw, Mr David
Questions
A2, Dual carriageways 151w
Armed forces, West Germany 51w
Money Management Financial Services, Investor protection 43w

Shaw, Sir Michael
Debates etc.
Tees & Hartlepool Port Authority Bill, 2R (15:03:90) 732
Questions
Access to countryside 1113

Sheep
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy 326-7w

Sheep meat
Intervention prices 193-6w

Sheep premiums
447w

Sheerman, Mr Barry
Questions
"Crime Justice & Protecting the Public White Paper", National Association of Probation Officers 756w
Customs & Excise, Drug crimes 758w
Drug abuse, Medical treatments 725w
Drug abuse, Prison medical services 796w
Drug abuse, Probation 795w
Drug crimes, Police 795w
Educational finance, Drug abuse 629w
Hull Prison, Young offenders 1229
Lay visitors, Southwark 795w
Local government expenditure, Standard spending assessments 664-5w
Open University, Educational finance 219w
Police, Recruitment 762w
Police consultative groups, Greater London 796w
Prisoners' rights, Codes of practice 17-8w
Special constables, Recruitment 1221
Vulnerable prisoner units 794-5w
Vulnerable prisoner units, Prison population 795w

Sheffield
Employment opportunities 204w

Sheffield Health Authority
Hospital closures 554w

SHEG
see Scottish Health Education Group

Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Debates etc.
Arts finance (13:03:90) 160
Questions
Bank notes 273w
Capital investment, Manufacturing industries 651

Shelf companies
Takeovers 591w

Shellfish
Fish conservation 447-8w
Licensing 448w

Sheltered employment
135w

***Shephard, Mrs Gillian**, Under-Secretary of State for Social Security*
Questions
Additional pensions, Pensioners 785w
Advertising, Dept of Social Security 71-2w
Arthur Andersen, Civil servants 73w
Capital rules, Residential care 785w
Child benefit 334w
Child benefit, Personal income 789w
Child benefit, Social security benefits rates 153w
Child benefit, Tax rates & bands 789w
Child benefit, Tax thresholds 790w
Civil service manpower, Dept of Social Security 640-2w
Community charge benefits 662w
Community charge benefits, Billing 661w
Community charge benefits, Capital rules 404w, 741-4w
Community charge benefits, Carers 404w
Community charge benefits, Personal income 334-5w, 788-9w
Community charge benefits, Personal savings 66w
Community charge benefits, Scotland 593w
Community charge benefits, Social security claims 788w
Commuters, Travelling expenses 644w
Computers in government departments, Contracts for services 455w
Departmental forms, Welsh language 287-8w
Family credit, Social security claims 642w
Family credit, Take-up 154w
Housing benefits, Concessionary coal 73w
Housing benefits, Expenditure 738-9w
Housing benefits, Social security benefits rules 639w
Housing benefits, Social security recipients 645w
Income support, Birkenhead 739w
Income support, Residential care 69-70w, 455w
Income support, Young people 68-70w
Invalidity benefits, Social security recipients 154w
Management consultants, Dept of Social Security 72-3w
Members' correspondence, Administrative delays 68w
National insurance contributions 334w
National insurance contributions, Earnings limits 154w
National insurance contributions, Fraud 154-5w
Nursing homes, North West region 68w
Occupational pensions, Index linking 738w
One parent benefit 595w
One parent benefit, Barnsley 405w
One parent benefit, South Yorkshire 405w
Pensioners 454w
Pensioners, Personal income 152-3w, 596-7w
Personal pensions, National insurance contributions 645w
Privatisation, Dept of Social Security 71w
Public relations, Dept of Social Security 69-71w
Publicity, Dept of Social Security 739w
Rate rebates, Scotland 404w
Rates & rating, Family income 593-4w
"Reform of Social Security Consultation Paper" 455w

***Shephard, Mrs Gillian**—continued*
Rent rebates, Social security recipients 643-4w
Retirement pensions 596-7w
Retirement pensions, EC countries 643-4w
Retirement pensions, Non-employed contributions 153w
Retirement pensions, Personal income 596-7w
Retirement pensions, Social security benefits uprating 597w
Retirement pensions, Women 598w
Severe disability premium, Social security recipients 67w
Social security, Manpower 406-7w
Social security benefits, Administrative costs 335-6w
Social security benefits, Capital rules 740-1w, 787-8w
Social security benefits, Expenditure 595-6w
Social security benefits, Marginal tax rates 401-3w
Social security benefits, Publicity 403w
Social security benefits, Social security recipients 598w
Social security benefits reductions, Capital rules 785-7w
Social security recipients, Scotland 288w
Statistics, Dept of Social Security 72w
Unemployment benefits, Fishing crews 785w
Unemployment benefits, Occupational pensions 335w
Vaccine damaged children, Compensation 642w
War pensions, Administrative delays 594-5w
Widows, Housing benefits 743w

Shepherd, Mr Colin
Questions
Committee on Medical Aspects of Food Policy, Dentists 468w
Dental health, Children 468w
Export Credits Guarantee Department 473
Health services finance, Population studies 557w

Shepherd, Mr Richard
Questions
Youth training scheme, Educational qualifications 209w

Shersby, Mr Michael
Questions
Breathalysers, Police powers 635w
Derelict land, Privatisation 669w
NHS, Crown immunity 563-4w
Nurses' homes, Board & lodging charges 53w, 730w
Police 749w
Police housing, Rent allowances 362-3w
Special constables, Pay incentives 1221

SHHD
see Scottish Home & Health Dept

Shipbuilding
300w
East Germany 301w
Foreign investment in UK 697w
Norway 697w
Sunderland 696-7w
Trade fairs 478-9
West Germany 301w

Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Questions
Al-Fayed, Mohammed, Perjury 316w
House of Fraser, Directors 591w
Water supply 714w

Short, Ms Clare
Questions
Community charge capping 664w
Employment training 249-51w, 336-42w
Employment training, Training agents 498w
Home helps, Community care 553w
Income support, Young people 68-70w

***Short, Ms Clare**—continued*
Information technology, Skill shortages 293w
Population projection 363w
Social security claims 130w
Training & enterprise councils, Government grants 497-9w
Unemployment benefits, Availability for work 131-2w

Shotgun certificates
356w

Shropshire
Cancer 58w

Shropshire Health Authority
177w

SIB
see Securities & Investments Board

Sillars, Mr Jim
Debates etc.
Bazoft, Farzad (15:03:90) 669
Budget March 1990, Points of Order (20:03:90) 1028
Questions
Community charge, Scotland 1234
Social security appeals, Administrative delays 790w
UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Finance 532w
UN High Commissioner for Refugees, UK contributions 532w
Urban programme, Glasgow 645-6w

Sims, Mr Roger
Debates etc.
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 237-8
Questions
Patients, Medical treatments 547-8w
Young offenders, Parental responsibility 746w

Single sex schools
School closures 30w

Sites of special scientific interest
Planning appeals 679w
Planning permission 393-4w, 679w

Skeet, Sir Trevor
Questions
Commercial surrogacy, Prosecutions 476w
Corporation tax 161-2w
Economic situation, West Germany 609w
Inflation, EC countries 272w
Inflation, Mortgage interest rates 163-4w
Road traffic, Bedford 535w
Science & technology research, West Germany 609w
Surrogacy Arrangements Act 1985 476w
Surrogate motherhood 476w

Skill shortages
Electronics industry 303w
Information technology 293w

Skillcentres
Handicapped 134w
Lambeth 216w

Skilled workers
Engineering industries 619-20w

Skills Training Agency
133-4w, 579w
Deloitte Haskins & Sells 575w
Privatisation 216w, 575w, 579w

Skinner, Mr Dennis
Debates etc.
Arts finance (13:03:90) 170
Budget March 1990 (21:03:90) 1137
Business statements (13:03:90) 453, (15:03:90) 681
By election writs, Upper Bann (13:03:90) 459, 461
Coal Industry Bill, Lords amendts (15:03:90) 782-4
Community charge, Business motions (23:03:90) 1412

***Skinner, Mr Dennis**—continued*
Deposited papers, Backbenchers (12:03:90) 26-7
House of Fraser (12:03:90) 172
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 178, 420-1
Oral question time intervention (15:03:90) 655
Redbridge London Borough Council Bill, 3R (20:03:90) 1066, 1068-70, 1074, 1076, 1081
Tees & Hartlepool Port Authority Bill, 2R (15:03:90) 744-5
Questions
Access to Parliament, Westminster Hall 885
Bombings, Birmingham 396w
Community charge 663w
Export Credits Guarantee Department 473
House of Commons staff, Pay 882-3
House of Fraser, Company investigations 13-4
Inland Revenue, Manpower 658
NHS, Trade unions 998-9
Official engagements 695w
Price increases, Consumer expenditure 9-10w
Training, Employment opportunities 207w

Slaughterhouses
737w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy 79-80w
Civil service manpower 325w
European Commission 736w
Export licensing 736-7w
Food exports 736w
North Torrington 737w
Production 736w

Small businesses
214w
Exchange rates 270w
Interest rates 270w
Rates & rating 599w
Uniform business rate 265w

SMART awards
169w

Smith, Mr Andrew
Questions
Adoption, Romania 694w
Bombings, Birmingham 745-6w
British Rail 123w
Bus lanes, Headington 690w
Community charge, Overseas workers 713-4w
Littlemore Hospital, Capital investment 1000
Local government constituencies, Oxford 715w
Overseas aid, Expenditure 61w
Revenue support grant, Oxfordshire 662w
Road traffic control, Headington 690w
Rover Group, Cowley 303w
Teacher training, University College Swansea 225w
Teacher training, University of Wales 219-23w
Visas, Children 716w

Smith, Mr Chris
Debates etc.
Arts finance (13:03:90) 168
Budget March 1990 (21:03:90) 1201
Questions
Attendance allowance, Terminal care 639-40w
Composite tax rate system, Tax yields 164-5w
Earned income, Tax rates & bands 421-4w
Homosexuality, Jersey 460w
Housing, Public expenditure 94-6w
Income tax, Married men 425w
Income tax, Tax rates & bands 278w, 425-6w
Interest rates 657
London assessment studies 122w
London assessment studies, Public opinion 532w
London Residuary Body, Property transfer 268w

***Smith, Mr Chris**—continued*
Mortgage relief 528-9w
Mortgages 529-30w
Mortgages, Economic regions 164w
National insurance contributions, Earnings limits 154w
NHS finance, Regional health authorities 461-2w
Profit sharing, Pay incentives 761w
Public sector assets 275w
Retail price index 409w
Retail price index, Mortgage relief 411w
Social security benefits, Marginal tax rates 401-3w
Tax burden, Personal income 530w
Tax yields, Economic regions 410w

Smith, Sir Dudley
Debates etc.
Business statements (15:03:90) 676
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 203, 213-5
Questions
English language, Chile 16
Health & Safety Executive 145

Smith, Rt Hon John
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990 (21:03:90) 1125-34, 1138, 1140
Budget March 1990, Industry (22:03:90) 1257
Questions
Retail price index, Community charge 652-3

Smith, Mr John P
Questions
District health authorities, Debts 560w
European monetary system, Exchange rates 369w
Nazi war crimes 747w
Prisoners, Debts 509w

Smith, Mr Tim
Debates etc.
Bazoft, Farzad (15:03:90) 671
Budget March 1990 (21:03:90) 1128
Questions
Air fares, Competition 10
Audit, Dept of Education & Science 521w
Audit, Dept of Employment 580w
Audit, Foreign & Commonwealth Office 526w
Audit, HM Fire Service Fire Inspectorate 510w
Audit, Lord Advocate 582w
Audit, Northern Ireland Office 227w
Educational finance, Buckinghamshire County Council 143-4w
Exports 698-9w
Income tax 654
National income 168w
NHS review 548w
Official stationery, Departmental forms 701w
Probate, Administrative delays 701w
Probate, Relocation of employees 701w

Smoke & chimney gases
Air pollution control 677w, 679-80w
EC law 317-8w

Smoking
Death 555-6w

Smyth, Rev Martin
Debates etc.
Appropriation (Northern Ireland) Order 1990 (12:03:90) 74, 101, 119-20
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 418
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Allocation of time motion & Rep (14:03:90) 567-8
Northern Ireland (Emergency & Prevention of Terrorism Provisions) (Continuance) Order 1990 (12:03:90) 46
War Crimes Bill, 2R (19:03:90) 966
Questions
Business statements 1243

***Smyth, Rev Martin**—continued*
Cot deaths, Fire resistant materials 998
Family doctors, Contracts of employment 551w
Multiply handicapped, Children 436w
Multiply handicapped, Social services 622w
Multiply handicapped, Special education 437w
Multiply handicapped, Teacher training 437w
Northern Ireland health & social services boards, Recruitment 384w

Snape, Mr Peter
Questions
Balance of trade, Biotechnology 297w
Mortgage interest rates 370w
Railway travel, West Midlands 122w
Road traffic control, Birmingham 536w

Snow & ice
Antarctic 450w
British antarctic territory 450w

SO No 143
(13:03:90) 457-9

Soames, Mr Nicholas
Questions
European monetary system, Exchange rates 650
South West Thames Regional Health Authority, Finance 557w

Social class
Cancer 727w

Social Fund
Bradford 284-8w
Codes of practice 73w
Community care 288w
Computers in government departments 740w
Debts written off 74w
Expenditure 73-4w
High court 73w
Hospital visitor benefits 595w
Income support 74w
Loans 74w
Preston 405w
Redcar 64-5w
Social security benefits rules 740w
Social security claims 404w

Social problems
Health 453w

Social security
Manpower 406-7w

Social security abuse
Unemployment benefits 212w, 343w

Social security appeals
Administrative delays 790w
Unemployment benefits 335w

Social security benefits
Administrative costs 335-6w
Capital rules 740-1w, 787-8w
Expenditure 595-6w
Marginal tax rates 401-3w
Publicity 403w
Social security recipients 598w
Take-up 153w

Social security benefits disqualification
Mobility allowance 404w

Social security benefits rates
Child benefit 153w

Social security benefits reductions
Capital rules 785-7w
Income support 74w

Social security benefits rules
Housing benefits 73w, 639w
Social Fund 740w

Social security benefits uprating
Retirement pensions 597w

Social Security Bill 1989/90
Questions
405-6w

Social security claims
130w
Community charge benefits 788w
Family credit 642w
Social Fund 404w

Social Security (Claims & Payment) Regulation 1987
Questions
643-4w

Social Security Commissioners
335w, 790w

Social security recipients
Cumbernauld 288w
Handicap benefits 66-7w
Housing benefits 645w
Invalidity benefits 154w
Rate rebates 643-5w
Rent rebates 643-4w
Scotland 288w
Severe disability premium 67w
Severe disablement allowance 66-7w
Social security benefits 598w

Social services
Multiply handicapped 352w, 622w
Personal records 369w

Social Services Inspectorate
365w

Social workers
Child care 553w

Sodium
85w

Soley, Mr Clive
Questions
Council house rents 1105
Empty property, Dept of the Environment 189w
Regional aid 293w

Solicitors
Scotland 109w
Scottish Conveyancing & Confirmation Practitioners' Board 108w

Somerset
Local government finance 487-8w

Sonar
Trident submarines 198w

Sons of Glyndwr
see Meibion Glyndwr

Sound Diffusion
Dept of Trade inquiries 43w

South Africa
329w
Apartheid 156w
Economic sanctions 156w, 329w
Foreign relations 156w
Mozambique 156-7w
Overseas aid 63w, 433w
Overseas investment 265w
Overseas trade 169w
Political prisoners 35w
Violence 693w

South America
English language 16

South circular road
4, 120w

South Down
Electricity disconnections 436w

South Downs
National parks 676w

South East region
Housing construction 668w
Railway travel 309w
River pollution 602w
Transport policy 7-8

South Glamorgan
Community charge capping 877, 879-80

South Glamorgan Health Authority
Finance 445w
Geriatric hospitals 444w
Geriatric patients 444-5w

South London
Road construction (14:03:90) 640

South Pembrokeshire
Community charge 878

South Wales
Coal mining 443w
Engineering industries 619-20w

South West region
Fun eating at school today campaign 144w
Housing associations 98w
Test tube babies 620-1w

South West Thames Regional Health Authority
Finance 461w, 557w

South West Water
Waste disposal 679w

South Western Regional Health Authority
Public appointments 281w

South Yorkshire
One parent benefit 405w

South Yorkshire Fire & Civil Defence Authority
Finance 92w

Southend Health Authority
Finance 564w

Southwark
Lay visitors 795w

Sovereignty
Gibraltar 145w

Spain
National parks 526w

***Speaker and his deputies**, For rulings & statements see separate heading Speaker's rulings & statements*
Debates etc.
Amendments & new clauses (13:03:90) 180, 267, (14:03:90) 494, 547, 579, 591, 592, 593, (15:03:90) 778, (19:03:90) 887, 900
Members' deaths, Roberts, Allan (22:03:90) 1217
Orders & regulations motions (12:03:90) 29, (19:03:90) 885
Private Members' Bills, 2R order read (16:03:90) 860, (23:03:90) 1412
Procedure (12:03:90) 9, 24, 68, (13:03:90) 145, 151, 448, (14:03:90) 483, 503, 553, (15:03:90) 670, 684, (20:03:90) 1011, 1084, (22:03:90) 1231, 1233, 1234, 1244, 1245, 1259, (23:03:90) 1341
Royal Assent (19:03:90) 888

Speaker's rulings & statements
Business questions (15:03:90) 679, 681
Business statements (13:03:90) 423, 444-5
Calling of Members (12:03:90) 28, (13:03:90) 146, 406, 411, (21:03:90) 1122
Closure of debate (13:03:90) 435
Consolidated Fund debates (22:03:90) 1249
Deposited papers (12:03:90) 26-8
Early day motions (15:03:90) 679
Guillotine (13:03:90) 447, 456, 457
House of Commons broadcasting (23:03:90) 1341
House of Commons division of time (13:03:90) 452
House of Commons divisions (15:03:90) 770-4
House of Commons order & disorder (13:03:90) 461-2
House of Commons stationery (15:03:90) 685
House of Lords reporting (19:03:90) 934
Hybrid Bills (14:03:90) 488-90
Members' conduct (21:03:90) 120, (13:03:90) 417, (14:03:90) 465, (15:03:90) 654, 659, (20:03:90) 1001, (22:03:90) 1231
Members' interests (13:03:90) 176, 177, 178, 179, 422, 423

Speaker's rulings & statements—continued
Members' interventions (12:03:90) 92, 111, (13:03:90) 151, 225, 303, 304, 357, 426, (14:03:90) 500, (15:03:90) 686, 736, 749-50, 764, (19:03:90) 910, (21:03:90) 1202, 1205, (22:03:90) 1228
Members' seating (22:03:90) 1306
Members' speeches (12:03:90) 114, (13:03:90) 380, (14:03:90) 519, (19:03:90) 934, (21:03:90) 1125, 1159, 1170, 1183, 1190,(22:03:90) 1253
Ministerial changes (13:03:90) 446, 455, 456, 457
Ministerial speeches (14:03:90) 562, 566, (23:03:90) 1376
Ministerial statements (13:03:90) 159, 167, (14:03:90) 488, (22:03:90) 1249, 1250, 1251
Oral questions (15:03:90) 652, 655, (20:03:90) 993, 994
Points of order (13:03:90) 171, 379, (14:03:90) 533, (15:03:90) 682-3, 770-4, (20:03:90) 1027, (21:03:90) 1140-1, 1144, (22:03:90) 1236, (23:03:90) 1409
Private Bills (15:03:90) 732, 751
Private notice questions (14:03:90) 484
Public petitions (13:03:90) 460
Scope of debate (13:03:90) 194, 333, 390, 391, 421, 433, 434, (14:03:90) 583, 584, 585, (15:03:90) 694, 695, 708, 760, 765, (20:03:90) 1064, 1068-9, 1073, 1086
Sub judice (23:03:90) 1414
Supplementary questions (14:03:90) 464, 476, (15:03:90) 661, 662, (21:03:90) 1109, 1111, 1112, 1116, 1122, (22:03:90) 1218, 1233
Tees & Hartlepool Port Authority Bill 1989/90 (15:03:90) 732, 751
Ten minutes rule (21:03:90) 1125, 1170, 1183, 1190
Unparliamentary expressions (15:03:90) 744, 745, (21:03:90) 1194, (22:03:90) 1248

Spearing, Mr Nigel
Debates etc.
Business statements (13:03:90) 443
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 343, 353, 359, 367, 422
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, House of Commons division of time (13:03:90) 456
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Allocation of time motion & Rep (14:03:90) 553-6
Public transport (23:03:90) 1347-8, 1390-5
Questions
Automatic train protection, Railway technology 310w
Business statements 1244
Climate, Research facilities 19-20
Community charge, Ministers of religion 481w
Company cars, Central London 535w
Council of Ministers, Intervention stocks 278w
Local education authority training grant scheme 520w
London Underground, One person operation 655w
Metropolitan Police, Income 507-8w
Metropolitan Police, Local government finance 392w
Road traffic, Central London 125w
Self-governing hospitals, Expenditure 39w
Standard spending assessments, London boroughs 96-8w
Tunnels, Oxleas Wood 4-5
Victim support schemes, Government grants 458-9w
"Victims Charter" 396w
Vietnam, Employment 407w

Special Air Service
201w

Special Boat Squadron
201w

Special constables
1221
Ethnic minorities 746-7w, 1221

Special constables—continued
Expenditure 361w
Manpower 360-1w, 746-7w
Pay incentives 1220-1
Recruitment 746-7w, 1220-1
Training 361w, 1220

Special education
26-9w
Boarding schools 760w
Devon 225w
Dyslexia 29w
Felgate, Lorne 30w
Handicapped 365w
Local education authorities 225w
Multiply handicapped 352w, 437w
School population 418w
Wales 244w
Youth training scheme 342w, 576w

Special forces
201w

Special hospitals
Self-mutilation 181w
Women 181w

Special schools
Government grants to local authorities 324-5w
Inner London Education Authority 760w

Special training needs
342w, 391w, 415w, 484w

Speech therapists
Career structure 564w
Greater Glasgow Health Board 454w
Manpower 584w
Pay settlements 564w
Scotland 454w, 584w
Vacancies 454w

Speech therapy
(12:03:90) 130

Speed, Mr Keith
Questions
Channel tunnel, Road construction 233-4w
Channel tunnel, Road traffic 234w
Network SouthEast, Investment 496w
Unemployment, Ashford 257-9w

Speed governors
Buses 12

Speed limits
Danbury 540w

Speller, Mr Tony
Questions
Alternative energy, Exhibitions 691w
Community charge benefits, Capital rules 741w
Directors, Disqualifications 429-30w
Dumping, Construction materials 429w
Motor vehicle registration, Disclosure of information 456w
Primary education, Landkey 418-9w
Radiotherapy, Compensation 1005
Rates & rating, Small businesses 599w
School buildings, Primary education 626w
Sentencing, Diminished responsibility 633w
Sewage, Bristol Channel 267w, 491w
Test tube babies, South West region 620-1w
West Africa, Technical assistance 63w, 381-3w

***Spicer, Mr Michael**, Minister for Housing and Planning*
Questions
Agricultural land, Property development 674w
Agricultural land, Tourism 672w
Buildings, Architecture 673w
Council house rents 1104-6
Council house rents, Rent increases 675w
Council house sales 1105
Homelessness, Families 672w
Homelessness, Hostels 1118-20
Homelessness, Housing policy 672w

Spicer, Mr Michael—continued
Homelessness, Lambeth 1118-9
Houses, Demolition 103-4w
Housing construction, Environment protection 667w
Housing construction, Land use 668w
Housing policy 667w
Mortgage defaulters, Repossession orders 679w
Structure plans 183w
Town & country planning, Civil service manpower 674w
Town & country planning, Urban areas 673w
Vacant land, Derelict land grants 1108
Vacant land, Land acquisition 1107-8

Spinal injuries
729w

Spirits
Measurement 777w
Scotland 777w

Spoil heaps
Albion Colliery 876
Mid Glamorgan 876

Sports
Touting 260w

Sports Council
674w

Sports facilities
Uniform business rate 484-5w, 601-2w, 674w

Sportsgrounds
1115
Crowd control 633w
Rugby 495w

Spray suppression
Lorries 12

Squire, Mr Robin
Debates etc.
Redbridge London Borough Council Bill, 3R (20:03:90) 1059-65
Questions
A13, Road works 8
Buses, Speed governors 12
Community charge, Rates & rating 1110-1
Waste disposal, North Sea 670w

Sri Lanka
Forestry 17
Human rights 17
Overseas aid 16-7

Staffordshire
Educational standards 663-4

Stamp duties
Tax yields 162w

Stanbrook, Mr Ivor
Debates etc.
Republic of Ireland, Judgments (14:03:90) 645-6
Underground railways, One person operation (14:03:90) 487
War Crimes Bill, 2R (19:03:90) 889-90, 907-11, 912
Questions
Business statements 1243

Standard community charge
658-9w
Local authorities 185w

Standard spending assessments
Community charge 664-5w
Departmental publications 494w
Humberside 482w
Lancashire County Council 666w
Local government expenditure 480w, 659-60w, 664-5w
London boroughs 96-8w
Non-metropolitan counties 494w
Suffolk 660w

Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Debates etc.
Business statements (15:03:90) 675
Community charge (15:03:90) 683
Questions
Community charge, Kent 392w
Community charge, Personal income 265w
Community charge, Revenue support grant 265-6w
Community charge, Transitional relief 315-6w, 391-2w
Community charge benefits, Personal income 788-9w
Transitional relief, House of Commons debates 770w

State earnings related pension scheme
664-5

Steel, Rt Hon Sir David
Debates etc.
Bazoft, Farzad (15:03:90) 668
Human embryo experiments, Public petitions (16:03:90) 794
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 294-7
Questions
EC aid, Developing countries 531-2w
European Development Bank, Capital investment 526w
Occupied territories, Universities 264-5w
Spirits, Measurement 777w

Steel framed houses
Nottingham (20:03:90) 1087-102

Steelcase Stafor
Government contracts 606w

Steen, Mr Anthony
Questions
Town & country planning, Civil service manpower 674w
Vacant land, Land acquisition 1108

Steinberg, Mr Gerry
Debates etc.
Arts finance (13:03:90) 166
Questions
Chad, Human rights 145w
District health authorities, Expenditure 180w
Fast food, Pay 130w
Inflation, Economic policy 652
Local education authorities, Educational finance 418w
Lorries, Road tax 147w
Low cost home ownership schemes, Housing finance 668w
Nurses, NHS 385w
Overseas students, Universities 25w
Product liability 291w
Special education, School population 418w
Warrant sales, Scotland 157w

Stern, Mr Michael
Questions
Hospital waiting lists, Eye disorders 468w
Land pollution, Local authorities 1103
Official engagements 516w, 695w
Railway network, River Severn 442w
Sentencing, Custodial treatment 456w
Trinity College of Music 624w
Vocational education, Circuses 625w

Stevens, Mr Lewis
Questions
Corporation tax, EC countries 375w
Self-employed 208w

Stewart, Mr Allan
Questions
Assisted places scheme, Scotland 583-4w
Community charge, Non-metropolitan counties 482-3w
Electricity supply industry, Scotland 705-6w
Handicapped students, Student grants 452-3w
White fish, Prices 261w

Stewart, Mr Andy
Questions
Family doctors, Contracts of employment 551w
Prisoners, Asthma 25w
Technical & vocational education initiative 212-3w

Stewart, Rt Hon Ian
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990, Industry (22:03:90) 1268-72

Stock Exchange
294w

Stockport
Advisory services 476

Stokes, Sir John
Debates etc.
War Crimes Bill, 2R (19:03:90) 890, 953-4

Stonehenge
Tourism 213w

Storms
Compensation 384w
District health authorities 282w
Electricity disconnections 436w
Northern Ireland 384w

Stornoway Airport
332w

Stott, Mr Roger
Debates etc.
Appropriation (Northern Ireland) Order 1990 (12:03:90) 89, 97, 118, 121-3
Questions
Community charge capping 663-4w
Home helps, Community care 553w
Insider trading, Law reform 297w
Rugby, Sportsgrounds 495w

Strang, Mr Gavin
Questions
Armed forces discharges, Homosexuality 52w
British Medical Association 545w
Health & Safety Executive, Industrial accidents 147

Strathclyde
Factories 119w

Strathclyde Regional Council Order Confirmation Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
Rep* (13:03:90) 137
3R* (14:03:90) 463

Straw, Mr Jack
Questions
Teachers, Pay 323-4w

Stretford
Jobclubs 501w

Structure plans
183w

Student grants
Handicapped students 419-20w, 452-3w, 1008
Mature students 628w
Scotland 157-8w, 647w

Student loans
708-9w
Scotland 157-8w, 523w
Teachers 626w

Student Loans Company
Expenditure 219w

Student numbers
Teacher training 219-23w, 225w
University of Wales 626-8w

Students
Community charge 481w

Sub judice
Speaker's rulings & statements (23:03:90) 1414

Submarines
Costs 638w
Cruise missiles 637w
Holy Loch 523-4w

Subsidies
Nuclear power 399w
UK trade with EC 473-4

Sudan
Arrests 716-7w
Human rights 525w

Sudbury House
Land values 400w
Nuclear Electric 400w

Suffolk
Standard spending assessments 660w

Sugar
Committee on Medical Aspects of Food Policy 468-9w
Dental health 469w, 568w

Suicide
Prisoners 2w, 18-21w, 226w

Sulphadimidine
Veterinary drugs 799w

Sulphur dioxide
317-8w, 679-80w, 770w

Sumberg, Mr David
Debates etc.
War Crimes Bill, 2R (19:03:90) 944-6
Questions
Business statements 1243-4
"Crime Justice & Protecting the Public White Paper" 749w
Driving instruction 535-6w
Driving instruction, EC countries 536w
Driving instruction, Road accidents 535w
Foreign investment in UK, North West region 295-6w
Hospices 1004-5
Inner cities initiative, North West region 676w
Unemployment, North West region 138

Summerson, Mr Hugo
Questions
Cycleways, Royal parks 600w
Cycling, Road accidents 648-9w
Cycling, Royal parks 680-1w
Dept of the Environment, Architects 1112
Dial-a-ride, Greater London 124w
Health services finance 558w
Local government expenditure, Waltham Forest 680w
Rates & rating, Waltham Forest 661w
Training & enterprise councils 208w

Sunday Express
487w

Sunday trading
396w, 747w

Sunderland
Enterprise zones 697w
Land acquisition 593w
Shipbuilding 696-7w

Sunset Radio
397w

Supplementary questions
Speaker's rulings & statements (14:03:90) 464, 476, (15:03:90) 661, 662, (21:03:90) 1109, 1111, 1112, 1116, 1122, (22:03:90) 1218, 1233

"Supply Estimates 1988/89, Statement of Excess"
(15:03:90) 777

"Supply Estimates 1989/90, Ministry of Defence Votes A"
(15:03:90) 775

"Supply Estimates 1989/90, Supplementary Estimates"

"*Supply Estimates 1989/90, Supplementary Estimates*"—*continued*
(15:03:90) 777

"Supply Estimates 1990/91, Ministry of Defence Votes A"
(15:03:90) 776, 777

Supra-regional services
729w
Health services finance 556w

Surgery
Heart diseases 262w, 389-90w, 474w

Surrogacy Arrangements Act 1985
Questions
476w

Surrogate motherhood
476w
Medical ethics 476w

Survey techniques
Disabled workers 135w

"Sustainable Development"
678w

Tai Cymru
see Housing for Wales

Take-home pay
Married men 371w

Takeover Panel
589w

Takeovers
Financial services 589-91w
Laing Properties 428w
Legal documents 589w
Misrepresentation 591w
Office of Fair Trading 588w
Shelf companies 591w

Take-up of employment
Job interview guarantee scheme 215w
Youth training scheme 209w

Tameside Borough Council
394w

Tanzania
62w
Overseas aid 62w

Tape recorded evidence
Police interrogation 753w

Tapsell, Sir Peter
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990 (21:03:90) 1132
Budget March 1990, Industry (22:03:90) 1262
Questions
Business statements 1238-9

Tax allowances
Banks 379w
Business expansion scheme 165w
Day nurseries 376w
Health insurance 10w

Tax burden
410w
Married men 426w
Personal income 530w

Tax evasion
Beaulieu Group 527w
Road tax 121w

Tax rates & bands
Child benefit 789w
Earned income 421-4w
Income tax 278w, 425-6w
Investment income 421-4w
Marginal tax rates 401-3w
Personal income 272w
Tax thresholds 761w

Tax thresholds
Child benefit 790w
Low incomes 424-6w

Tax thresholds*—*continued
Tax rates & bands 761w

Tax yields
656
Charities 372w
Composite tax rate system 164-5w
Consumer expenditure 374w
Economic regions 410w
Stamp duties 162w

Taxation
370w, 656-7
Company cars 530w
Motoring 12-3
National income 655-6

Taxpayers
Capital gains tax 273w

Taylor, Mrs Ann
Questions
Ambulance services, Dewsbury Health Authority 367w
European monetary system, Exchange rates 370w
Housing associations, Water charges 605w
Water charges, K formulae 490-1w
Water pollution, EC action 313w
Water treatment, EC law 314-5w

Taylor, Mr Ian
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990, Industry (22:03:90) 1256
Questions
AIDS, Publicity 545w
Air routes, EC transport policy 123w
EC internal trade, Procurement 299w
Employment 139
Environmental policy, Environment protection 678w
Exports, Imports 375w
Hard core unemployed, Young people 203w
Metropolitan Police, Domestic violence 749w
Neighbourhood watch schemes 1231

Taylor, Rt Hon John David
Debates etc.
Appropriation (Northern Ireland) Order 1990 (12:03:90) 75, 80, 95, 100, 105, 108-13
Northern Ireland (Emergency & Prevention of Terrorism Provisions) (Continuance) Order 1990 (12:03:90) 35, 59
Questions
Extradition, Republic of Ireland 483-4
Fair Employment Commission for Northern Ireland, Public appointments 622w
Fishing quotas, Irish Sea 445-6w
Rate increases, Northern Ireland 225-6w
Storms, Compensation 384w
Tourist industry, Exchange rates 141

Taylor, Mr Matthew
Questions
Agricultural & Food Research Council, Commodities 34-5w
BBC, Broadcasting bias 17w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy 326w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Antelopes 573-4w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Disease control 326w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Export of live animals 326w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, National Farmers' Union 326w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Scrapie 326w
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Sheep 326-7w
Business, Community charge 468
Cherries, Food colourings 327w
Community charge 663w
Community charge, Administrative costs 715-6w
Devon & Cornwall Police, Manpower 755w

Taylor, Mr Matthew*—*continued
Family doctors, Cornwall 549w
Food, Composition labelling 800w
Food labelling, Food flavourings 242w
Food poisoning 368w
Food standards, Research 87-8w, 521w
Government assistance to industry, Expenditure 298w
Income tax 611w
Institute of Food Research 34w, 521w
Margarine, Food standards 325w
Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food, Disclosure of information 800w
Novel food, Food standards 87w
Pet foods, Food standards 800w
Poultry, Salmonella 327w
Profit sharing 162w
Scrapie 327w
Scrapie, Cattle 327w
Sea lice, Pest control 88w
Sulphadimidine, Veterinary drugs 799w
Unemployment, Cornwall 147

Taylor, Mr Teddy
Questions
Balance of payments, UK trade with EC 424w
Channel tunnel, Construction 120w
Church Commissioners, Agricultural land 881
Common agricultural policy, Costs 448w
Dental services, NHS 476-7w
Dentures 477w
EC grants & loans, Rural areas 583w, 592w
EC internal trade 693w
EC internal trade, Cars 328w
Electricity supply industry, Privatisation 6w
European communities, Members 440w
European Council, EC internal trade 38w
Felgate, Lorne, Special education 30w
Financial Services Act 1986, Financial services 298w
Germany, European Council 328w
House of Fraser, Company investigations 15, 306w
House of Fraser, Criminal investigation 89w
Investor protection, Compensation 305w
Prisons, Privatisation 456w
Southend Health Authority, Finance 564w
Special education, Dyslexia 29w
UK contributions to EC budget 610w, 693w
Ward, Adrian, Securities & Investments Board 305w

Taylor Inquiry
see Hillsborough Stadium Inquiry

Taylor Scott, Lt Cdr
Air accidents 288-9w

TCS
see Crown Suppliers

Teacher training
Multiply handicapped 437w
Religious education 34w
Student numbers 219-23w, 225w
University College Swansea 225w
University of Wales 219-23w

Teachers
Early retirement 517w
GCE A level 33w
Mortgages 34w
Northern Ireland 1-2w
Pay 323-4w
Resignations 517w
Student loans 626w
Unfair dismissal 1-2w
Wales 517w
Work permits 209w

Teachers' pensions
Early retirement 417w

Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990 (21:03:90) 1139

Technical & vocational education initiative
212-3w

Technical assistance
West Africa 63w, 381-3w

Technology academies
Expenditure 159w, 413w
Glasgow 452w
Scotland 413w, 452w

Technology transfer
Poland 592w

Tees & Hartlepool Port Authority
(15:03:90) 732-74

Tees & Hartlepool Port Authority Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
2R (15:03:90) 732-74
Speaker's rulings & statements (15:03:90) 732, 751

Telecommunications industry
Leukaemia 251w

Telephone charges
British Telecom 666

Telephone exchanges
Wales 13w

Telephones
Prisons 796-7w

Teletext
Commercial television 757-8w

Telex Monitors
Information services 38-9w

Ten minutes rule
Speaker's rulings & statements (21:03:90) 1125, 1170, 1183, 1190

Tenants' choice
Private rented housing 675w

Term & Quarter Days (Scotland) Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
1R (15:03:90) 683

Terminal care
Attendance allowance 639-40w, 740w
Community care 454w
Home care services 443w
NHS charges exemptions 730-1w
Wales 443w

Terrorism
International cooperation 748w
Northern Ireland (12:03:90) 30-71
Police stations 457w
Prisoners' release 662
Railway network 512w

Tertiary education
12w

Test tube babies
South West region 620-1w

Testing
Poultry 85-6w, 240w

Tetanus
177-8w

Textile industry
Balance of trade 479-80
Economic sanctions 480
GATT 295w

***Thatcher, Rt Hon Margaret**, Prime Minister, First Lord of the Treasury and Minister for the Civil Service*
Questions
Adoption, Romania 694w
Advertising, Cabinet Office 41w
Advertising, Prime Minister 41w
Al-Fayed Investment Holdings, Banking Act 1987 151
Archaeological sites, Seas & oceans 328w

***Thatcher, Rt Hon Margaret**—continued*
Armed forces deployment, USA 515-6w
Arts, Ministers' domestic visits 515w
Baltic republics of USSR, Self-determination of states 1009-10
Bazoft, Farzad, Capital punishment 662
British Telecom, Telephone charges 666
Budget March 1990 1235-6
Budget March 1990, Personal savings 1232
Community charge 694w, 1010
Community charge, Barking & Dagenham 153
Community charge, Burnley 1006-7
Community charge, Debts 151
Community charge, Humberside 1007-8
Community charge, Middlesbrough 1009
Community charge, Non-payment 150, 152, 663, 1009, 1234
Community charge, Scotland 1232-4
Community charge benefits, Capital rules 1235-6
Cyprus, Peace negotiations 39w
Dept of Health 427w
East Germany, EC external relations 759w
East Germany, EC grants & loans 759-60w
East Germany, Investment 694w
EC internal trade 693w
EC internal trade, Cars 328w
EC social charter, European Commission 661-2
Economic growth, North East region 1008
Economic policy, Scotland 1010
Educational standards, Staffordshire 663-4
Environment protection 155w
European Council, EC internal trade 38w
European monetary system, Exchange rates 155w
Ferries, Scotland 515w
Fishery protection, North Sea 155w
Fishing catches 693w
Foreign investment in UK, Public expenditure controls 663
Germany, European Council 328w
Handicapped students, Student grants 1008
Hospitals 516w
Intensive care, Manchester 153
Interest rates, Inflation 151-2
Jordan 427w
Judgments, Republic of Ireland 662
Lithuania 662-3
London assessment studies 156w
Management consultants, Cabinet Office 41-2w
Management consultants, Prime Minister 42w
Manufacturing industries, Productivity 1234-5
Mortgage defaulters, Interest rates 664
National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, Child abuse 154
New York 516w
Non-departmental public bodies 515w
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty 694w
Official engagements 157w, 329w, 516w, 695w
Olympic games, Manchester 1236
Poland, Frontiers 156w
Prescriptions, Budgeting 1007
Prime Minister, Information services 38-9w
Prime Minister, Newspaper press 150-1
Privatisation, Cabinet Office 42w
Privatisation, Prime Minister 42w
Procurement, Government departments 616w
Public relations, Cabinet Office 39-40w
Public relations, Prime Minister 39-40w
Publicity, Prime Minister 516w
Richter, Ian, Iraq 327-8w
Sea pollution 328-9w
Self-governing hospitals, Expenditure 39w
South Africa 329w
South Africa, Apartheid 156w
South Africa, Economic sanctions 156w, 329w
South Africa, Foreign relations 156w
South Africa, Mozambique 156-7w
South Africa, Violence 693w
State earnings related pension scheme 664-5

***Thatcher, Rt Hon Margaret**—continued*
Statistics, Cabinet Office 40-1w
Statistics, Prime Minister 40w
Transplant surgery, Newcastle Health Authority 1008
UK contributions to EC budget 693w
Unemployment, North West region 664
United Democratic Front, Finance 156w
USA, Law enforcement 427w
Wallace, Colin 514w
West Germany 39w
Women 154
Zimbabwe, Human rights 515w

Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Questions
Air pollution control, Smoke & chimney gases 677w
Chemical & biological warfare, Defence research 202w
Committee of Vice Chancellors & Principals 627w
Ethiopia, Disaster relief 63-4w
Health hazards, Nuclear weapons tests 724w
Lithuania 662-3
Nuclear test ban 525w
Public libraries, Welsh districts 11w
Retirement pensions, Non-employed contributions 153w
Road accidents, Hereford & Worcester 121w
Sea pollution, Conferences 447w
Trade fairs, Waste disposal 587w
Unemployment, Worcester 137
Veterinary investigation service, Fees & charges 76w
Veterinary investigation service, Operating costs 76w
Welsh language, Adult education 350w
Welsh language, Languages education 12w, 869
Wind power, Conferences 630w
Wind power, International conferences 630w

Thompson, Mr Donald
Debates etc.
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Allocation of time motion & Rep (14:03:90) 581
Questions
Business statements 1240
Community charge benefits 1116-7

Thompson, Mr Jack
Debates etc.
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 389
Tees & Hartlepool Port Authority Bill, 2R (15:03:90) 740, 763
Questions
British Overseas Trade Board, Export promotion 297-8w
Community charge, Youth training scheme 599w
Employment protection 213w
Youth training scheme, Income support 576w
Youth training scheme, Training allowances 576w

Thompson, Mr Patrick
Debates etc.
Human embryo experiments, Public petitions (12:03:90) 129
Questions
Family doctors, Budgeting 556w
Local government expenditure, Educational finance 669w
Training, Expenditure 206w

Thorne, Mr Neil
Debates etc.
3R (20:03:90) 1058-83
Redbridge London Borough Council Bill, 3R (20:03:90) 1058, 1067-8, 1071
Questions
Derelict land, Privatisation 669w

Thornton, Mr Malcolm
Debates etc.
Arts finance (13:03:90) 160-1
Questions
Voluntary schools, Government grants to local authorities 324-5w

Thurnham, Mr Peter
Debates etc.
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Allocation of time motion & Rep (14:03:90) 527-8
Questions
Civil engineering, Contracts for services 704w
Electricity supply industry, Privatisation 691-2w
National Rivers Authority 682-3w
Polytechnics 519w
Young offenders, Custodial treatment 457w

Tidal power
Environmental impact assessment 492w
Severn barrage 142w

Tigre
63-4w

Tonbridge & Malling
391-2w

Tornado aircraft
Air accidents 639w

Tourism
Agricultural land 672w
Arts 413w
Merseyside 211w
Stonehenge 213w

Tourist industry
140
Employment 140
Exchange rates 141
Government grants 140, 414w
Scotland 351w
Self-employed 211w

Touting
Crime 260w
Police powers 260w
Scotland 260w
Scottish Sports Council 260w
Sports 260w

Town & country planning
Civil service manpower 674w
Law reform 673w
Urban areas 673w

Town & Country Planning Act 1971
Questions
393-4w

Town & Country Planning (Compensation for Restrictions on Mineral Working) (Amendment) Regulations 1990
Debates etc.
(12:03:90) 29

Townend, Mr John
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990 (21:03:90) 1131, 1170-2
Questions
Ethnic minorities, Government grants to local authorities 282-4w
Inheritance tax, Shares 374w
Manufacturing industries, Industrial research 651-2
Poultry meat, EC action 799-800w
Special constables, Recruitment 746-7w

Townsend, Mr Cyril D
Questions
Charities, Tax yields 372w
Hospital catering, Per capita costs 551-2w
Iraq, Judgments 25
Metropolitan Police, Crack 752w
Transport, Greater London 122w

Towyn
Floods 143w, 872-3

"Toxic Subsbtances Bulletin"
344w

Tracey, Mr Richard
Debate etc.
Budget March 1990, Industry (22:03:90) 1261
Business statements (15:03:90) 674
Public transport (23:03:90) 1409-10
Questions
Business statements 1241
Community charge benefits 1111
Local government services, Competition 189w
Public transport, Greater London 5
Revenue support grant, Wandsworth 663w

Trade barriers
EC external trade 471-2
Japan 296w

Trade competitiveness
Interest rates 469-70

Trade descriptions
Mineral waters 240w

Trade fairs
Shipbuilding 478-9
Waste disposal 587w

Trade formalities
Japan 477

Trade missions
(15:03:90) 667-71

Trade policy
297w

Trade Union & Labour Relations Act 1974
Questions
441-2w

Trade unions
Aerospace industry 467
NHS 998-9

Trades Union Congress
378w

Trading standards departments
291w, 300w
Consumer protection 464-5
Furniture industry 465
Mileometers 464-5
Petrol pumps 465

Traffic areas
Offices 536w

Traffic censuses
Bicycles 234w
Road traffic 234-5w

Traffic Commissioners
Complaints 152w

Traffic examiners
Cardiff 10

Training
141, 206w
Costs 130w, 207w
Disabled workers 147
EC countries 206w
Employment opportunities 207w
Expenditure 141, 206w
Government grants 141
House of Commons staff 441w
Information technology 292w
Labour force survey 141-2
Midwives 552w
NHS administration 700w
Part-time employment 414w
Prison staff 16w
Special constables 361w, 1220
Training & enterprise councils 141

Training Agency
Advertising 134w
Finance 215w
Management consultants 134w
Privatisation 133-4w
Public relations 132-3w, 218w
Statistics 216-8w

Training agents
209w, 249-51w
Employment training 498w

Training allowances
575-6w, 607w, 639w
Youth training scheme 342w, 416w, 576w, 784w

Training & enterprise councils
208w, 499-500w, 575w
Corporate plans 148-9
Government grants 497-9w
Performance review 148-9
Public appointments 575w
Training 141
Tynemouth 208w

Training managers
209w, 249-51w
Employment training 498w

Transfrontier Shipment of Hazardous Waste Regulations 1988
Questions
103w, 684w

Transitional relief
480-2w, 617-9w, (15:03:90) 786-92, 1009
Community charge 185w, 315-6w, 391-2w, 483-4w, 599-600w, 665w, 1116-7
Coventry 483w
Government grants to local authorities 483-4w
Grimsby 599w
House of Commons debates 770w
Housing revenue accounts 394w
Hull 599w
Per capita costs 185w

Transmissible encephalopathies
Animal feed 734w

Transplant surgery
Kidneys 279w
Liver diseases 1008
Newcastle Health Authority 1008

Transport
Greater London 122w

Transport (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 1990
Debates etc.
(15:03:90) 683

Transport infrastructure
EC action 532-3w

Transport of hazardous materials
EC law 600-1w
Import controls 103w
Lindane 127w

Transport of radioactive materials
Dumfries 525w, 777w
Nuclear weapons 524w
Road accidents 525w, 777w
Road freight transport (19:03:90) 887

Transport policy
Essex 7
South East region 7-8

Transport subsidies
Network SouthEast 309w

Transport supplementary grants
Inner cities initiative 537-8w
North Yorkshire County Council 649-50w
Public expenditure 149w
Road construction 228-34w, 650-4w
Road works 2-3

Travel concessions
Blind 383w

Travelling expenses
Commuters 644w

Treasury
Advertising 276-7w
Civil service manpower 376w
Management consultants 277w
Privatisation 10-1w
Public relations 166w, 276w
Publicity 761w
Statistics 165-6w

Treasury statements of guarantee
Nuclear Electric 400w

Treaties
Brunei 449w
Planning permission 393w

Tredinnick, Mr David
Questions
Alternative medicine, EC action 180-1w
Chlorofluorocarbons, Waste disposal 490w
Educational policy, Northumberland 628w
House of Commons debates, Leicestershire 440w
Local government finance, Local income tax 480w
Manufacturing industries, East Midlands 651
Pollution control, North Sea 312w
Railway land, Litter 147-8w
Refrigerators, Safety standards 615w

Tremadog
Pedestrian crossings 244w

Trent Regional Health Authority
Hospital waiting lists 387-8w
Private patients 388w

Trials
Bazoft, Farzad 264w
Iraq 450w

Tributyl tin
580w

Trident submarines
Sonar 198w

Trinity College of Music
624w

Tripartite Commission for the Restitution of Monetary Gold
451w

***Trippier, Mr David**, Minister for the Environment and Countryside*
Questions
Acid rain, Lincolnshire 266w
Air pollution, Road traffic 187w
Air pollution control, Smoke & chimney gases 677w
Areas of outstanding natural beauty, Environment protection 676w
Bankside power station, Archaeological sites 494w
Bankside power station, Listed buildings 494w
Carbon dioxide, Air pollution 493w
Chlorofluorocarbons, Air pollution control 666w
Covent Garden, Archaeological sites 494-5w
Cycleways, Royal parks 600w
Cycling, Royal parks 680-1w
Electromagnetic interference, Safety measures 266w
Electromagnetic interference, USSR 266w
Environment, White papers 674w
Environment protection, Competition 313w
Environment protection, Eastern Europe 713w
Environmental policy, Environment protection 678w
Genetically modified organisms 493-4w
Genetically modified organisms, EC action 494w
Genetically modified organisms, Environment protection 493w
Genetically modified organisms, Ethics 685-6w
Hazardous materials, Planning permission 313w
Hazardous wastes, Imports 684w
Hedges & ditches 185w
Housing associations, Water charges 605w
Industrial wastes, Waste disposal 314w
Integrated pollution control 676-7w
Land pollution 490w, 1104
Land pollution, Local authorities 1103
Land pollution, Radioactive wastes 1104

***Trippier, Mr David**—continued*
Land pollution, Wales 1103-4
Litter 311w
Nature Conservancy Council 667w
North Sea, Nature conservation 670-1w
Paper, Recycling 313w
Pollution control, North Sea 312w
Radiation hazards, Disclosure of information 712w
Radiation hazards, Radioactive Incident Monitoring Network 712w
Radioactive wastes 99w
Refrigerators, Chlorofluorocarbons 104w
Refrigerators, Waste disposal 311w
River pollution, EC countries 670w
Sewage, Bristol Channel 267w
Sewage, Waste disposal 314w
Sites of special scientific interest, Planning permission 679w
Transport of hazardous materials, EC law 600-1w
Transport of hazardous materials, Import controls 103w
Waste disposal, North Sea 670-1w
Water charges, K formulae 490-1w
Water pollution, EC action 313w
Water pollution, Lake Baikal 490w
Water supply 714w
Water supply industry, Consultants 714-5w
Water supply industry, Privatisation 712w
Water treatment, EC law 314-5w

Trolleybuses
Bradford 496w

Trotter, Mr Neville
Debates etc.
Arts finance (13:03:90) 165
Radioactive Material (Road Transport) Bill, 1R (19:03:90) 887
Tees & Hartlepool Port Authority Bill, 2R (15:03:90) 735
Questions
Economic growth, North East region 1008
Training & enterprise councils, Tynemouth 208w

Trout
Fish farming 445w

Trust ports
(15:03:90) 732-74

TUC
see Trades Union Congress

Tuition fees
Higher education 624w

Tunnels
Oxleas Wood 4-5

Turner, Mr Dennis
Debates etc.
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, 3R (15:03:90) 707
Questions
Community charge capping 664w
Home helps, Community care 553w
Interest rates 659
Uniform business rate, Small businesses 265w
West Midlands Police, Domestic violence 748w

Twinn, Dr Ian
Questions
EC Finance Council 274-5w

Tyne & Wear Development Corporation
697w
Employment opportunities 696-7w

Tynemouth
Training & enterprise councils 208w

Tyre Disposals
682w

Tyre tread depths
Harmonisation of legislation 689w

Tyres
Alternative energy 784w
Recycling 681-2w

***Tyres**—continued*
Waste disposal 682w

UCW Aberystwyth
see University College of Wales Aberystwyth

UFC
see Universities' Funding Council

Uganda
Development aid 64w

UGC
see University Grants Committee

UK companies abroad
Environment protection 400-1w

UK contributions
UN High Commissioner for Refugees 532w

UK contributions to EC budget
610w, 693w, 759-60w

UK trade with EC
Balance of payments 424w
Balance of trade 291w, 474
Subsidies 473-4

Ullapool
Fisheries 647w

Ulster Farmers' Union
438-9w

UN
see United Nations

UN Fund for Drug Abuse Control
Government grants 407w

UN High Commissioner for Refugees
Finance 532w
UK contributions 532w

UN resolutions
Armed conflict 38w

Underground railways
City of Westminster 233w
London Underground 773-4w

Unemployment
138-9, 204-5w
Ashford 257-9w
Bury 204w
Cornwall 147
Handicapped 146
Hard core unemployed 139-40
Lancashire 500-1w
North West region 138, 664
Northern Ireland 623w
Northern region 139
Older workers 205w
Oldham 138
Peterlee 500w
Seaham 500w
Wales 137-8, 880
Worcester 137
Young people 204w

Unemployment benefits
Availability for work 131-2w
Fishing crews 785w
Occupational pensions 335w
Social security abuse 212w, 343w
Social security appeals 335w

UNESCO
145w, 608w

Unfair dismissal
Teachers 1-2w

Unfair trading practices
GATT 472

UNHCR
see UN High Commissioner for Refugees

Uniform business rate
678w
Bournemouth Borough Council 184-5w
Cricket 484w

***Uniform business rate**—continued*
Harrogate Borough Council 660w
Hotels (15:03:90) 786-92
Local government revenue 678-9w
Orders & regulations 105w
Small businesses 265w
Sports facilities 484-5w, 601-2w, 674w
Wales 349w
Wandsworth 678-9w
West Midlands 265w
York City Council 660w

Unit trusts
591w

United Democratic Front
Finance 156w

United Kingdom Acid Waters Review Group
667w

United Nations
39w, 63-4w, 145w, 792w

Universities
Occupied territories 264-5w
Overseas students 25w

Universities' Funding Council
144w

Universities' Funding Council Scottish Committee
627w

Universities' Funding Council Welsh Committee
628w

University College Cardiff
219-23w

University College of North Wales
219-23w

University College of Wales Aberystwyth
219-23w

University College Swansea
219-23w
Teacher training 225w

University finance
University of Wales 144w, 522-3w

University Grants Committee
144w

University of Wales
Student numbers 626-8w
Teacher training 219-23w
University finance 144w, 522-3w

Unofficial strikes
Conditions of employment 143
Eastern Europe 143
Employment Bill 1989/90 142-3
Law reform 143
Lost working days 142-3

Unpaid taxes
Personal income 273-4w

Unparliamentary expressions
Speaker's rulings & statements (15:03:90) 744, 745, (21:03:90) 1194, (22:03:90) 1248

Upholder class submarines
435w

Upper Waiting Hall
691w
Animals 769w
Plants 769w
Post Office 766w

Urban areas
Hospitals 763w
Road traffic control 648w
Town & country planning 673w

Urban development corporations
Expenditure 1106
Rented housing 1106

Urban programme
Glasgow 645-6w
Local government finance 391w

Urban transport
EC countries 128w

USA
Aerospace industry 302w
Air transport 124w
Airlines 1-2
Armed forces deployment 515-6w
Law enforcement 427w

USSR
Economic situation 615w
Electromagnetic interference 266w
Microwaves 266w
Nuclear weapons tests 145w, 330-1w
Pollution control 615w
War crimes 265w, 451w

Vacancies
Speech therapists 454w

Vacant land
1112
Derelict land grants 1108
Land acquisition 1107-8
Land ownership & tenure 668w

Vacant land registers
Housing 1107-8

Vaccination
52w
Children 52w, 550-1w
Hepatitis 473-4w
Leptospirosis 734w
Prison staff 399w
Take-up 177-8w

Vaccine damaged children
Compensation 642w

Vale of Glamorgan (Barry Harbour) Bill (HL) 1988/89
Debates etc.
2R order read (15:03:90) 649, (22:03:90) 1219

Valuation services
Community charge 609w
Operating costs 609w

Vanguard submarines
Defence contracts 411w

VAT
371w
Caravan sites 373w
New businesses 370-1w
NHS 424w
Pay 370w

Vaz, Mr Keith
Debates etc.
Dogs, Public petitions (21:03:90) 1210
Eye tests, Public petitions (21:03:90) 1209
Humberstone, Public petitions (21:03:90) 1209
Religious broadcasting, Public petitions (21:03:90) 1207-8
Questions
Mentally ill, Community charge exemptions 367-8w
Occupational pensions, Index linking 738w
Overseas investment, South Africa 265w
South Africa 329w
South Africa, Apartheid 156w
South Africa, Economic sanctions 156w, 329w
South Africa, Foreign relations 156w
South Africa, Mozambique 156-7w
United Democratic Front, Finance 156w
Youth training scheme, Training allowances 784w

Vehicle Inspectorate Executive Agency
10

Veterinary drugs
Sulphadimidine 799w

Veterinary investigation service
Environmental health 76w
Fees & charges 76w

***Veterinary investigation service**—continued*
Operating costs 76w

Veterinary medicine
Bangor 773w
Licensing 572w

Victim support schemes
Government grants 458-9w

"Victims Charter"
396w

VIEA
see Vehicle Inspectorate Executive Agency

Vietnam
Development aid 17-20
Employment 407w
Foreign policy 18
Overseas aid 62w

Viggers, Mr Peter
Questions
Portsmouth & South East Hampshire Health Authority 543w

Violence
South Africa 693w

Visas
Administrative delays 716w
Children 716w

Vocational education
Aircrew 626w
Circuses 625w

Vocational training
National Institute of Economic & Social Research 210w
Welding 502w

Voluntary organisations
Disabled Persons (Services Consultation & Representation) Act 1986 182w
Housing & handicapped 267w
Pre-school education 562-3w, 996-7

Voluntary schools
Government grants to local authorities 324-5w

Voluntary Service Overseas
612w

Voting methods
NHS hospital trusts 545-6w

Voting rights
Auditing Practices Committee 432w

Vulnerable prisoner units
794-5w
Prison population 795w

***Waddington, Rt Hon David**, Secretary of State for the Home Department*
Debates etc.
War Crimes Bill, 2R (19:03:90) 887-94, 896, 902, 923, 924
Questions
Advertising, Home Office 23-4w
Animal welfare, Wild animals 459w
Audit, HM Fire Service Inspectorate 510w
Bingo, Advertising controls 457w
Bombings, Birmingham 633-4w, 745w, 1225-8
Breathalysers, Police powers 635w
Civil service manpower, Home Office 636-7w
"Crime Justice & Protecting the Public White Paper", National Association of Probation Officers 756w
Ethnic minorities, Government grants to local authorities 282-4w
Greater Manchester Police Authority, Inquiries 757w
Higher civil servants, Home Office 507w
HM Inspectorate of Constabulary, Annual reports 794w
Immigration controls, EC countries 458w
Land ownership & tenure, Foreign investment in UK 397w

***Waddington, Rt Hon David**—continued*
Magistrates' courts, Civil service agencies 634w
Management consultants, Home Office 360w
Metropolitan Police, Income 507-8w
Motor vehicle registration, Disclosure of information 456w
Nazi war crimes 747w
Neighbourhood watch schemes, Crime prevention 1221-2
Neighbourhood watch schemes, Police 1222
Neighbourhood watch schemes, Police patrolling 1222
Parking offences, Newham 508w
Passport Office, Civil service agencies 458w
Police, Ports 754w
Police housing, Rent allowances 362-3w, 633w
Police pensions, Fire service pensions 510-1w
Police stations, Terrorism 457w
Privatisation, Home Office 360w
Public relations, Dept of Energy 23w
Public sector housing, Home Office 137-8w
Publicity, Home Office 635-6w
Road traffic police 456w
Security Service Tribunal, Complaints 139w
Statistics, Home Office 22-3w
Tape recorded evidence, Police interrogation 753w
Terrorism, International cooperation 748w
Wallace, Colin 355w
Young offenders, Parental responsibility 1228-9

Wages councils
129w, 203w, 502w
Employment level 257w
Low pay 252-8w
Manpower 252-8w

Wakefield
Departmental forms 367-8w

Wakefield Health Authority
Cancer 724w
Cook-chill catering 366w

***Wakeham, Rt Hon John**, Secretary of State for Energy*
Questions
Advertising, Dept of Energy 5-6w
Alternative energy, Energy research 318w
Bankside power station, Land values 319w, 400w
Bankside power station, Nuclear Electric 400w
British Gas, Privatisation 142-4w, 691w
Central Electricity Generating Board, Property transfer 318-9w
Civil service manpower, Dept of Energy 630-1w
Drax power station, Flue gas desulphurisation 317-8w
Electricity supply industry, Departmental responsibilities 3w
Electricity supply industry, Privatisation 5-6w, 691-2w
Energy conservation, Broadcasting 6w
Energy consumption, Coal consumption 319-20w
Energy consumption, Nuclear power 320w
Gas meters 3w
Management consultants, Dept of Energy 5w
Natural gas, Gas pipelines 2-3w
North Sea, Capital investment 399w
Nuclear Electric, Treasury statements of guarantee 400w
Oil pollution, North Sea 7w
Privatisation, Dept of Energy 3w
Public relations, Dept of Energy 3-4w
Publicity, Dept of Energy 631w
Severn barrage, Tidal power 142w
Statistics, Dept of Energy 4w

***Waldegrave, Rt Hon William**, Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office*
Questions
Albania, Gold 451w
Bazoft, Farzad, Trials 264w
Chad, Human rights 145w
Czechoslovakia, Competition 792w
East Germany, Property law 408w
Eastern Europe, Democracy 792-3w
Eastern Europe, National security 608w
Eastern Europe, Privatisation 526w
Germany, Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty 717w
Hong Kong, Ivory 717-8w
Human rights, Women 408-9w
Iraq, Bazoft, Farzad 450w
Iraq, Judgments 21-5
Iraq, Nuclear weapons 793w
Iraq, Prisoners 408w, 793w
Iraq, Trials 450w
Israel, Gaza strip 35w
Israel, Immigrants 408w
Israel, Occupied territories 408w
Jerusalem, Resettlement 449w
Kuwait, Human rights 409w
Law of the Sea Convention, Seabed mining 145w
Libyan Arab Republic, Military aid 608w
Lithuania, Privatisation 608w
Lithuania, Recognition of states 449-50w
Namibia, Constitutions 525w
Namibia, Military aid 145-6w
Nuclear test ban 525w
Nuclear test ban, International conferences 450w
Occupied territories, Universities 264-5w
Romania, Human rights 35w
South Africa, Political prisoners 35w
Sudan, Arrests 716-7w
Sudan, Human rights 525w
USSR, Nuclear weapons tests 145w
USSR, War crimes 265w, 451w
West Germany 451w
West Germany, Privatisation 767w

Walden, Mr George
Debates etc.
Families (16:03:90) 801

Wales
Arson 138w
Articled teachers 517-8w
Cancer 15w, 143w, 349-50w, 400w, 444w, 516-7w
Channel tunnel 143w
Community charge 246w, 344w, 347w, 442-3w, 617-9w
Community charge capping 878
Community councils 617-9w
Contracts for services 617-8w
Council housing 873-5
District health authorities 348-9w, 772-3w
Geriatric hospitals 444w
Headteachers 517w
Health education 870-1
Homelessness 873-4
Housing construction 517w, 874
Industrial health & safety 503w
Integrated development operations 349w
Interest rates 871-2
Land pollution 1103-4
Licensed teachers 517-8w
Local authorities 443-4w
Local Government Act 1972 11w
Local government expenditure 619w
Local government finance 344-8w
M4 13w
Meibion Glyndwr 11w, 16-7w
NHS 700w
NHS administration 15w, 700w
Public footpaths 772w
Refuges 246w
Road finance 878
School buildings 518w
Secretaries of State 876
Special education 244w
Teachers 517w
Telephone exchanges 13w
Terminal care 443w

***Wales**—continued*
Unemployment 137-8, 880
Uniform business rate 349w

Walker, Mr Bill
Debates etc.
Business statements (13:03:90) 447, (15:03:90) 679
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 182, 183-5, 221, 271, 272-3, 278, 280-2, 287, 293, 298, 410-1
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Allocation of time motion & Rep (14:03:90) 574-5, 582, 583, 588
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, 3R (15:03:90) 687
Rate support Grant (Scotland) Order 1990 (19:03:90) 979
Term & Quarter Days (Scotland) Bill, 1R (15:03:90) 683
Questions
Cochlear implants, Finance 560w
Confederation of British Industry, Labour costs 659
Health education, Scotland 158-9w
Nurses, Pay 1003
Textile industry, Economic sanctions 480

Walker, Mr A Cecil
Debates etc.
Appropriation (Northern Ireland) Order 1990 (12:03:90) 98-103, 107
Questions
Gaelic Athletic Association, Government grants to voluntary organisations 227w

***Walker, Rt Hon Peter**, Secretary of State for Wales*
Questions
Advertising, Welsh Office 14-6w
Agricultural land, North Wales 245w
Channel tunnel, Wales 143w
Coal mining, Occupational pensions 443w
Community charge, Administrative costs 246w
Community charge, Caerphilly 877
Community charge, Civil service manpower 619w
Community charge, Clwyd 877
Community charge, Local government revenue 617w
Community charge, Montgomery 879
Community charge, Newport 878-9
Community charge, South Pembrokeshire 878
Community charge, Wales 344w, 347w, 442-3w
Community charge capping, South Glamorgan 877, 879-80
Community charge capping, Wales 878
Community councils, Wales 617-9w
Dairy farming, Carmarthen 347w
Engineering industries, Skilled workers 619-20w
Floods, North Wales 243-4w
Floods, Towyn 143w, 872-3
Integrated development operations, Wales 349w
Interest rates, Wales 871-2
Laura Ashley, Government assistance to industry 616w
Local authorities, Wales 443-4w
Local government expenditure, Rates & rating 619w
Local government services, Contracts for services 617-8w
Management consultants, Welsh Office 15w
Meibion Glyndwr, Wales 11w
Privatisation, Welsh Office 14w
Public relations, Welsh Office 13-4w
Road finance, Wales 878
Statistics, Welsh Office 14w
Telephone exchanges, Wales 13w
Unemployment, Wales 880
Uniform business rate, Wales 349w
Veterinary medicine, Bangor 773w
Welsh assembly 443w
Welsh Office, Cash limits 245w, 350w

Walking
Access to countryside 1113

Wall, Mr Pat
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990, Industry (22:03:90) 1290-3
Questions
Home helps, Community care 553w

Wallace, Colin
355w, 514w

Wallace, Mr James
Debates etc.
Business statements (15:03:90) 674
Walker, Peter, Ministerial changes (13:03:90) 456
Questions
Balance of trade 270w
Community charge benefits 662w
House of Commons staff, Manpower 441w
Inland Revenue, Civil service manpower 689w
Inland Revenue, Manpower 761-2w
Members' interests 440w
National Institute of Economic & Social Research, Vocational training 210w
Personal savings 374w
Social security benefits, Take-up 153w
Universities' Funding Council Scottish Committee 627w
Unofficial strikes, Eastern Europe 143

Waller, Mr Gary
Debates etc.
Public transport (23:03:90) 1368-72
Questions
North Sea, Nature conservation 670-1w

Walley, Ms Joan
Questions
Disabled facilities grants, Lifts 395w
Family doctors, Prescription drugs 549w
Land pollution 1104
Planning permission 393w
Planning permission, EC law 393w
Planning permission, Sites of special scientific interest 393-4w
Training & enterprise councils 575w
Transport of hazardous materials, Import controls 103w

Walters, Sir Dennis
Debates etc.
Bazoft, Farzad (15:03:90) 669

Waltham Forest
Local government expenditure 680w
Rates & rating 661w

Waltham Forest Health Authority
Finance 762w

Wandsworth
Revenue support grant 663w
Uniform business rate 678-9w

Wandsworth Borough Council
665w

Wandsworth Prison
Crimes of violence 508w

War crimes
USSR 265w, 451w

War Crimes Bill 1989/90
Debates etc.
2R & Money res• (19:03:90) 887-975

War Crimes Inquiry
(19:03:90) 887-975

War pensions
Administrative delays 594-5w

Ward, Adrian
43w
Securities & Investments Board 305w

Ward, Mr John
Questions
Budget March 1990, Personal savings 1232

Wardell, Mr Gareth
Questions
Channel tunnel, Wales 143w
Litter 311w
M4, Wales 13w
Occupational deafness, Handicap benefits 68w
Sea pollution, Kinmel Bay 12w
Self-regulating organisations, Investor protection 303w

Wardle, Mr Charles
Questions
Business statements 1241-2
Insolvency Service 696w

Wareing, Mr Robert N
Debates etc.
Arts finance (13:03:90) 161
Questions
Housing problems, Liverpool 1117-8
Junior hospital doctors, Working hours 116w, 477w
Mersey tunnel, Road tolls 127w
NHS hospital trusts, Mersey Regional Health Authority 57-8w
Official engagements 157w
Social Fund, Income support 74w
Speech therapists, Pay settlements 564w
Vietnam, Development aid 20

Warrant sales
Scotland 157w

Warships
Exercise Northaxe 2/90 332w
Ports 638w

Waste disposal
Chemicals 105-6w
Chlorofluorocarbons 490w
Incinerators 196w
Industrial wastes 314w
Irish Sea 84w
Licensing 75-7w, 186w
North Sea 670-1w
Refrigerators 311w
River pollution 683w
Scotland 116w
Sewage 116w, 314-5w, 679w
South West Water 679w
Trade fairs 587w
Tyres 682w

Water Act 1989
Questions
184w

Water charges
Housing associations 605w
Infrastructure 312w
K formulae 490-1w

Water companies
Immunity from prosecution 160w
Public access 184w

Water filters
Bacteria 104w

Water pollution
Capital investment 311w
Conifers 269w
EC action 313w
Fertilisers 269w
Lake Baikal 490w
Phosphorus 269w

Water supply
714w

Water supply industry
Consultants 185-6w, 714-5w
Privatisation 102w, 185-6w, 266w, 712w
Public sector assets 712w

Water treatment
EC law 314-5w

Water Undertakings (Rateable Values) (Scotland) Order 1990
Debates etc.
(12:03:90) 29

Watson, Mr Mike,
Questions
Child workers, Local education authorities 368w
Hospitals, Health service staff 544w
Stock Exchange 294w

WDA
see Welsh Development Agency

WE 177 nuclear bomb
524w

Wealth
Church of England 439w
Company accounts 42w, 432w, 695w

Weedkillers
Railway track 148-9w

Welding
Harmonisation of standards 501-2w
Vocational training 502w

Wells, Mr Bowen
Questions
Citizens' Advice Bureaux, Political impartiality 476
Political refugees, Lebanon 360w

Welsh, Mr Andrew
Questions
Business statements 1248-9

Welsh Affairs Select Committee
143w

Welsh assembly
443w

Welsh Development Agency
616w, 876

Welsh districts
Public libraries 11w

Welsh language
Adult education 350w
Departmental forms 287-8w
Educational finance 518-9w
Government grants 869
Languages education 12w, 869-70
Legislation 11-2w
Primary education 518w

Welsh Office
349w, 616w, 619w
Advertising 14-6w
Cash limits 245w, 350w
Management consultants 15w
Privatisation 14w
Public relations 13-4w
Statistics 14w

Wessex Health Authority
Finance 544w

West Africa
Educational aid 381-3w
Technical assistance 63w, 381-3w

West Bank
264-5w

West Germany
39w, 302w, 451w
Armed forces 51w
Economic situation 609w
European monetary system 369w
Export promotion 478
Privatisation 767w
Science & technology research 609w
Shipbuilding 301w

West Lambeth Health Authority
NHS hospital trusts 995

West Middlesex University Hospital
Hospital waiting lists 999-1000

West Midlands
Employment 204w
Industrial investment 475
Manufacturing industries 466

***West Midlands**—continued*
Railway travel 122w
Uniform business rate 265w

West Midlands Development Agency
466

West Midlands Police
Domestic violence 748w
Inquiries 458w

West Midlands Regional Health Authority
177w
Manpower 1005-6

West Midlands Residuary Body
Public appointments 769w

West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive
Government grants 496w

West Yorkshire Residuary Body
Public appointments 769-70w

Western Europe
Infant mortality 726w

Western Scottish Omnibuses
Buy outs 582-3w

Westminster City Council
489w

Westminster Hall
883-4
Access to Parliament 884-5
Monuments 885-6

Wheal Jane mine
Redundancy 147

Wheat
Green pound 193-6w

Wheel clamps
Newham 508w

Wheeler, Sir John
Debates etc.
War Crimes Bill, 2R (19:03:90) 928-9
Questions
Community health councils, Expenditure 555w

White fish
North Sea 155w
Prices 261w
Scotland 261w

White fronted geese
Islay 116w

White papers
Environment 674w

Whooping cough
177-8w

Widdecombe, Miss Ann
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990 (21:03:90) 1200
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 204-8, 211

Widowers' benefits
395w

Widows
Housing benefits 743w
Scotland 743w

Wigley, Mr Dafydd
Debates etc.
Business statements (13:03:90) 445
Walker, Peter, Ministerial changes (13:03:90) 455, 457
Questions
Agricultural land, Tourism 672w
Arson, Wales 138w
Coal mining, Occupational pensions 443w
Community charge, Civil service manpower 619w
Community charge, Local government revenue 617w

***Wigley, Mr Dafydd**—continued*
Community charge, Wales 347w
Community councils, Wales 617-9w
Conway tunnel road scheme, Construction costs 349w
Departmental forms, Welsh language 287-8w
Disabled Persons (Services Consultation & Representation) Act 1986 565-7w
Disabled Persons (Services Consultation & Representation) Act 1986, Ministerial responsibility 567w
District health authorities, Performance related pay 348-9w
Family doctors, Medical education 181w
Immigration controls, EC countries 458w
Inflation, Local government finance 371w
Integrated development operations, Wales 349w
Invisible trade balance 9w
Local government expenditure, Rates & rating 619w
Local government finance, Wales 344-8w
Local government services, Contracts for services 617-8w
Low Pay Unit 149
Meibion Glyndwr, Wales 11w, 16-7w
No-fault compensation 790w
Pedestrian crossings, Tremadog 244w
Pensioners, Personal income 152-3w
Postage stamps, Forgery 170w
University of Wales, Student numbers 626-8w
Welsh language, Adult education 350w
Welsh language, Educational finance 518-9w
Welsh language, Legislation 11-2w
Welsh language, Primary education 518w

Wild animals
Animal welfare 459w, 794w

Wilding Committee
see Arts Support Review Group

Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981
Questions
647-8w

Wilkinson, Mr John
Questions
Mortgages, Debts 655

Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Debates etc.
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 323-4, 334-6
Questions
Community charge, Administrative costs 246w
Development aid 61w
Electricity supply industry, Privatisation 6w
Enterprise initiative, Companies 306-8w
Kleinwort Benson, Contracts 591w
Kleinwort Benson, Dept of the Environment 104w
Kleinwort Benson, Dept of Transport 152w

Williams, Mr Alan W
Questions
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Carmarthen 656w
Dairy farming, Carmarthen 347w
Financial Services Act 1986, Investor protection 298w
Hospitals, Health service staff 544w
Waste disposal, North Sea 670w

Wilson, Mr Brian
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990, Points of Order (20:03:90) 1028
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 301
Questions
Child care, Equal opportunities 706w
Community charge, Northern Ireland 226w
Prison population 362w
Stock Exchange 294w

Winchester bypass
3

Wind
Building regulations 600w

Wind power
Conferences 630w
International conferences 630w

Winnick, Mr David
Debates etc.
Business statements (15:03:90) 678
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 361, 398
Political Parties (Income & Expenditure) Bill, 1R (13:03:90) 173-5
War Crimes Bill, 2R (19:03:90) 903-7, 919, 946
Questions
Community charge 1116
Director of Public Prosecutions 88-9w
Extradition, Republic of Ireland 485
Incitement to murder, Prosecutions 139w
Iraq, Judgments 24

Winterton, Mrs Ann
Debates etc.
Business statements (15:03:90) 677
Questions
Abortion, Advisory services 729w

Winterton, Mr Nicholas
Debates etc.
Business statements (15:03:90) 680
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Allocation of time motion & Rep (14:03:90) 501, 513-7, 526
Questions
Business statements 1239
Community charge, Transitional relief 665w
Hospital closures, Macclesfield Health Authority 1000-1
RU486, Licensing 541w

Wise, Mrs Audrey
Debates etc.
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 221-6, 361-2, 392-7
Questions
Community care, Footwear 69w
Community care, Preston 288w
Gas meters 3w
Mortgages, Debts 654
Natural gas, Gas pipelines 2-3w
Social Fund, Preston 405w

Wolfson, Mr Mark
Questions
Neighbourhood watch schemes 749w

Women
154
Crime victims 1230
Human rights 408-9w
Retirement pensions 598w
Schedule E income tax 409w
Special hospitals 181w

Women into information technology
293w

Women's employment
Civil service agencies 609w
Day care of children 144, 504-5w, 586w
Part-time employment 145
Pay 275w
Working mothers 214w

Wood
Hazardous materials 580w

Woodcock, Dr Mike
Questions
Defence land, Access to countryside 331w
Railway workers, Railway transport 123w
Water companies, Public access 184w

Worcester
Unemployment 137

Work permits
Teachers 209w

Working conditions
House of Commons staff 883

"Working for Patients White Paper"
Publicity 571w

Working hours
Disability employment credit 67w
Disabled workers 134-5w
Junior hospital doctors 116w, 477w

Working mothers
Women's employment 214w

World Cup
1114-6

Worthington, Mr Tony
Debates etc.
Budget March 1990 (21:03:90) 1140, 1156-9, 1204-6
Questions
Assisted places scheme, Costs 158w
Central Council for Education & Training in Social Work 562w
Education, Local government expenditure 585w
Educational buildings, Scotland 454w
Educational finance, Scotland 353w
Electronics industry, Skill shortages 303w
Government grants to local authorities, Scotland 414w
NHS finance, Inflation 621w
Public expenditure, Scotland 646-8w
Self-governing schools, Scotland 158w
Speech therapists, Greater Glasgow Health Board 454w
Speech therapists, Manpower 584w
Speech therapists, Vacancies 454w
Student grants, Scotland 157-8w, 647w
Student loans, Scotland 523w
Technology academies, Expenditure 159w, 413w
Technology academies, Glasgow 452w
Technology academies, Scotland 452w
Terminal care, Community care 454w
Women's employment, Day care of children 586w

Wray, Mr Jimmy
Questions
Community care, Finance 120w
Eye disorders, Expenditure 119w
Eye tests, Scotland 119w
Factories, Strathclyde 119w
Financial Services Act 1986, Investor protection 298w

Wray, Mr Jimmy—continued
Hazardous wastes, North Sea 187-8w, 768-9w
Health, Social problems 453w
Heart diseases, Death 118w
Heart diseases, Hospital patients 118w
Heart diseases, Medical research 261-4w
Homelessness, Scotland 259-60w
Mental health, Research 120w
Mental health services, Scotland 117w
Mental illness, Medical research 117-8w
Mental illness, Scotland 116w
NHS, Scotland 453-4w
North Sea, Waste disposal 671w
Pollution monitoring, Algae 492w
Post-neonatal mortality, Death rate 453w
USA, Law enforcement 427w

Wrecks
River Thames 776w

Yeo, Mr Tim
Debates etc.
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 344, 345, 349
Questions
Exports, Japan 296w
Interest rates 372w
Prison population 744w

York
Housing starts 601w

York City Council
660w
Uniform business rate 660w

York University
Deaf 763w

Yorkshire & Humberside
Bovine spongiform encephalopathy 79-80w
Derelict land grants 669w
Employment training 210w
Fisheries 446w
Homelessness 657
Hospital beds 364w
Hospital finance 469-72w
Hospital waiting lists 462-6w
Households 684w
Housing starts 711w
New businesses 766-7w
Sea pollution 682w

Yorkshire Regional Health Authority
Finance 564-6w

Young, Mr David
Questions
Bombings, Birmingham 745w
Hospitals, Health service staff 544w

Young, Sir George
Debates etc.
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Rep (13:03:90) 226-8, 254
National Health Service & Community Care Bill, Allocation of time motion & Rep (14:03:90) 603-4
Public transport (23:03:90) 1395-8
Questions
Derelict land, Privatisation 669w
School administration, Ealing 144w

Young offenders
Custodial treatment 457w
Hull Prison 1229
Parental responsibility 458w, 746w, 1228-9
Prison population 1224-5
Prisoners on remand 1229

Young people
Alcoholic drinks 351w
Further education 628w
Gaming machines 755w
Hard core unemployed 203w
Homelessness 621w
Income support 68-70w
Unemployment 204w

Youth training scheme
Community charge 391w, 484w, 599w
Educational qualifications 209w
Handicapped 415w
Housing benefits 639w
Income support 576w
Per capita costs 499-500w
Peterlee 500w
Special education 342w, 576w
Take-up of employment 209w
Training allowances 342w, 416w, 576w, 784w

Ysgol Belmont
617w

Ysgol Gymraeg Treganna Cardiff
580w

Zimbabwe
Human rights 515w

Zoonoses Order 1989
Questions
81w